

Bṛḥgu is a sage of almost entirely mythical character in the Rigveda and later. He counts as a son of Varuṇa,<sup>1</sup> bearing the patronymic Vāruṇi.<sup>2</sup> In the plural the Bṛḥgus are repeatedly<sup>3</sup> alluded to as devoted to the fire cult. They are clearly<sup>4</sup> no more than a group of ancient priests and ancestors with an eponymous Bṛḥgu<sup>5</sup> in the Rigveda, except in three passages,<sup>6</sup> where they are evidently regarded as an historic family. It is not clear, however, whether they were priests or warriors: in the battle of the ten kings the Bṛḥgus appear with the Druhyus, perhaps as their priests, but this is not certain.<sup>7</sup>

In the later literature the Bṛḥgus are a real family, with subdivisions like the Aitasāyana, according to the Kauṣītiki Brāhmaṇa.<sup>8</sup> The Bṛḥgus are mentioned as priests in connexion with various rites, such as the Agnisthāpana<sup>9</sup> and the Daśapeyakratu.<sup>10</sup> In many passages they are conjoined with the Aṅgrases:<sup>11</sup> the close association of the two families is shown

<sup>1</sup> Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, xi. 6, 1, 1; Taittirīya Āraṇyaka, ix. 1. Cf. Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, xviii. 9, 2; Nirukta, iii. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, iii. 34, and n. 14. For a different form of the legend, cf. Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, i. 8, 2, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Rv. i. 58, 6; 127, 7; 143, 4; ii. 4, 2; iii. 2, 4; iv. 7, 1, etc. See Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, 51. The legend of their chariot-making (Rv. iv. 16, 20; x. 39, 14) may be due, as Roth, *St. Petersburg Dictionary*, s.v., suggests, to a confusion with the Rbhus. It may, however, be an allusion to the historic Bṛḥgus, whom we find in the battle of the ten kings.

<sup>4</sup> As shown by the legend of fire having been brought to them by Mātariśvan, Rv. iii. 5, 10.

<sup>5</sup> i. 60, 1, where, however, Roth, *loc. cit.*, takes the singular in a collective sense, an interpretation which may be correct, but is not necessary.

<sup>6</sup> Rv. vii. 18, 6; viii. 3, 9; 6, 18, to which list, given by Macdonell, *loc. cit.*, Roth adds viii. 102, 4, *Aurva-Bṛḥgu-vat*, 'like Aurva and Bṛḥgu.' Cf. the fact that the Aurvas, in the Aitareya Brāh-

maṇa, vi. 33, take the place of the Bṛḥgus of the Kauṣītiki Brāhmaṇa, xxx. 5.

<sup>7</sup> In viii. 3, 9; 6, 18; 102, 4, the reference to a priestly family is the more natural; in vii. 18, 6, warriors may be meant. Cf. Hopkins, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 15, 262, n., where he cites ix. 101, 13, as perhaps denoting the same thing.

<sup>8</sup> xxx. 5. See n. 6.

<sup>9</sup> Taittirīya Saṃhitā, iv. 6, 5, 2; v. 6, 8, 6; Av. iv. 14, 5; Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā, i. 4, 1 (p. 48).

<sup>10</sup> Taittirīya Saṃhitā, i. 8, 18; Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, i. 8, 2, 5; Pañcaviṃśa Brāhmaṇa, xviii. 9, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Taittirīya Saṃhitā, i. 1, 7, 2; Maitrāyaṇī Saṃhitā, i. 1, 8; Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, i. 18; Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa, i. 1, 4, 8; iii. 2, 7, 6; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, i. 2, 1, 13, etc. Cf. Rv. viii. 35, 3; 43, 13; x. 14, 6, in the first and last of which passages the Atharvans also occur. See Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharvaveda*, xxvii. n. 2. Hence, in the Atharvanic ritual texts, the term *Bṛḥgvaṅgrasah* is applied to the Atharvaveda (Bloomfield, *Atharvaveda*, 9, 10, 107 *et seq.*).