Chapter I - Gotra and pravara in the Vedic age
Section I - Relation of gotra to the pastoral life of early Aryans:

The Rigvedic meaning of gotra points to the pastoral life of the early Indo - Aryans. Most probably, the term 'gotra' is somehow connected with keeping and tending of 'go' or cattle and does not mean a clan in its Rigvedic usage. As the Aryan clan is predominantly pastoral, measuring its wealth in the number of cattle, it obtains the name 'gotra' in course of time. The change of meaning through which the word 'gotra' passes is a clear evidence of the fact that the means of living of the early Vedic Aryans is mainly flock-keeping.

1 - Vide p. 167, What happened in history, V. Gordon Childe; also p. 5, A survey of Indian history, K.M. Panikkar, 2nd ed.; A. Kaegi says that the principal means of sustenance of the Aryans is cattle-keeping, p. 23, Life in ancient India; the opposite view is that the Vedic Aryans at the dawn of their history are a settled people, largely devoted to agriculture, p. 2, lecture I, The agrarian system in ancient India, U.N. Ghosal; also p. 34, ch. III, pt. I, An advanced history of India; H.C. Raychaudhuri holds that agriculture is the principal occupation of the Aryan village folk; it is undeniable that the Vedic Aryans are conversant with growing of grain, but in the first stage of their migration into India cattle-breeding seems to be their chief means of living.
The trait of cattle-breeding is revealed in the repeated prayers for the increase of cattle. The Vedic householder, while performing a ceremony or a sacrifice, desires that his cattle and progeny grow in number. He longs for the praja (progeny) and pasu (domestic animal) with eagerness. We know from a story of the Taittiriya Samhita that the cult of fire results in the increase of cows from one to one thousand. We are thus led to believe

1 - Rv VII. 94. 9 - gomat hiraṇyavat vasu yat vām aśvāvat īmahe ; also KS 4. 15 ; Rv I. 29. 1 - ā ... nah Indra sāmsaya goṣu aśveṣu sūbhrīṣu sahaṃreṣu ; KS 5. 1 - devayajyaya... pasūmān bhūyāsam ; VS 8. 63 - aśvavat Soma viravat vājam gomantam ābhara ; Uvata - aśvasaṃyuktam... gobhīḥ saṃyuktam ; Mahiddhara - ābhara āhara. annaṃ dhenūḥ cha dehi.

2 - Rv IV. 2. 5 & KS 5. 6 - gomān Agne avimān aśvī yajñāḥ ; KS 9. 14 - yājayet pasūkāmam ; KS 5. 1 - devayajyaya prajaniṣeyam prajāya pasūbhīḥ ; KS 1. 1 - Yajamānasya pasūṃ pāhi yajamānasya pasūpā asi.

3 - TS VII. 1. 5.
that breeding of domestic animals is an essential part of early Aryan social life.

The shed or shelter for cattle is perhaps the oldest significance of gotra. It is interpreted as 'cowstall' by

1. R. Roth and his followers. Geldner interprets it as 'herd' and A. B. Keith and A. A. Macdonell follow him. The former interpretation is preferred by S. C. Sarkar.

1 - Gotra - Kuhstall, p. 797, notes on gotra, Sanskrit wörterbuch, vol. II.

4 - Pp. 6 - 7, Some aspects of the earliest social history of India, S. C. Sarkar; he thinks that the suffix 'tra' is indicative of place and 'cowstall' is the possible meaning of gotra.
Geldner's suggestion seems to be favoured by Sāyaṇa's notes on the word in a few cases. The latter explains 'gotrāṇi' as 'gavāṃ vṛindāṇi', i.e. herds of cows; he has also explained 'gotrā gavāṃ' as 'gavāṃ gotrā samghāṇ' or herds of cows and 'gavāṃ gotrām' as 'gavāṃ samūham' or herd of cows. He takes recourse to the sense of 'collection' as indicated by the suffix 'tra'. But he cannot get rid of an anomaly, since the term 'gotrā' according to him signifies a collection of cows and consequently the word 'gavāṃ' joined to it becomes superfluous.

1 - Rv III. 39. 4 - ut gotrāṇi sasrīje; Sāyaṇa - gotrāṇi gavāṃ vṛindāṇi utsasrīje. tebhyaḥ Āṅgirobhyah dadvu.

2 - Rv VI. 65. 5 - gotrā gavāṃ; Sāyaṇa - gavāṃ gotrā samghāṇ Āṅgirosah āṇipanti utsrijanti.

3 - Rv II. 23. 18 - gavāṃ gotram; Sāyaṇa - samūhārthe tra - pratysyah . . . gavāṃ samūham udasrījah.
If we accept the interpretation of Roth, the words 'gotra gavam' would mean 'cowstalls for cows' and the words 'gavam gotram' would indicate 'cowstall for cows'. Building of cowstalls for cows would be signified by the words 'gotra ni sasrije'. Such explanation better suits the context of the passages in which these words occur. The Rigvedic verses referred to describe the activities of the Angiras clan consisting in the construction of sheds or stalls for cows.

The word 'gotra' is generally used in the Rigveda in connection with the exploits of Indra who is described as gotrabhid and govid in a passage. According to Sayana, gotra in this context means either 'cloud' or 'mountain'; Indra is one who rends the cloud or mountain (gotrabhid) and obtains water (govid).

1 - Rv X. 103. 6 - gotrabhidam govidam ; Sayana - gah udakani trayante iti gotrah meghah. yadvau gauh bhumihi. tam trayante iti gotrah parvatah ; govidam udakasya ladvaram; also TS IV. 6.4- gotrabhidam govidam ; Sayana - gotra parvatim bhinatti tadiya - paskan cihnatti iti gotrabhit tam, gam bhumim vindate labhate iti govit tam govidam ; KS 18. 5 - gotrabhidam govidam.
The same epithets are found in a passage of the Vājasaneyi - Mādhyandina Samhitā; Uvāṭa and Mahīdhara explain 'gotrabhid' as 'one who splits the cloud or destroys the Asura clan' and 'govid' as 'one who knows speech'. The better explanation is expected if gotra is rendered as 'cowstall'. Indra is called gotrabhid, as he tears asunder the cowstall of enemies, and govid, as he obtains cows from that cowstall. It is to be marked that sajātās or kinsmen follow Indra in his adventure. That is, Indra along with his clansmen attacks the cowstall of the enemy in order to obtain cows. Such activity very well corresponds to the pastoral life of the Aryan clan.

1 - VS 17. 38 - gotrabhidam govidam ... imāṃ sajātāh anuvirayadhvam; Uvāṭa - asuragotram bhinatti iti gotrabhit. yadvā ... gotrasya meghasya bhettāram vriṣṭyartham. govidam... vägvidam stutividam paṇḍitam ... imam Indram he sajātāh samāna - janmānah devāh. anuvirayadhvam vīrakarma kuruṇam anugamya vīrakarmaṇā eva prosṭhāyata; Mahīdhara - gotram asurekulaṃ bhinatti gotrabhit tam ... gotrah meghah tasya bhettāram. govidam gāṃ vāchaṃ vetti iti govit tam paṇḍitam.
The verse in which the words 'gotrabhid' and 'govid' are placed side by side is followed by a verse in which Indra is described as invading on a sudden the gotras (of enemies). The gotras in this connection perhaps indicate cowstalls which are attacked to procure cows.

In a verse of the Vājasaneyi - Saṃhitā the epithets 'gotrabhid' and 'purandara' are placed together and belong to Indra. If 'purandara' be taken as 'one who demolishes purs (of enemies)' in the mundane sphere, it is better to explain 'gotrabhit' as 'one who destroys cowsheds' perhaps lying beside the purs in the same earthly plane.

1 - Rv X. 103. 7 - abhi gotraṇi sahasā gāhamānāh ... Indrah ;
also KS 18. 5 ; VS 17. 39 ; Uvaṭa explains 'gotraṇi' as 'asura - kulāṇi' or 'meghevṛṇḍāṇi'.

2 - VS 20. 38 - purandarah gotrabhit ; Mahidhara explains 'gotrabhit' as 'one who splits clouds or mountains' and 'purandara' as 'one who demolishes purs' ; also KS 38. 6 - purandarah gotrabhit.
As regards the grammatical formation of the word 'gotra', it is better to take it as a compound of 'go' (cow) and 'tra' (traika, that which protects). The obvious meaning would be something like a shed which renders shelter to cows or an enclosure in which cows are kept. It appears that gotra is somehow connected with the protection and keeping of cows or cattle. In the pastoral background of early Aryan social life, the part 'go' of the word 'gotra' has the probable meaning of 'cow' and the part 'tra' is possibly related to protection of cows.

Gotra is similar to gośtha which perhaps means a place in which cows take shelter. Sāyaṇa identifies gośtha with vraja and the Taittirīya-Saṃhitā describes vraja as gosthāna, i.e., a place for cows. The Rigveda connects cows with gośtha and the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa associates cattle (pāṣu) with gośtha. Just as

1 - Pan III. 2, 3 (Bhat 2915)-ātah anusārāge kah; also vṛitti of Bhaṭṭojīdīkṣita; grammatically, it is not possible to derive gotra as go-tra (the suffix 'tral'), since according to a rule of Panini (V.3.10, Bhat 1957-saptamyāḥ tral), the suffix 'tral' has the significance of the seventh case-ending.

2 - Vide M. Muller's notes on gotra, pp. 54-55, Hindu law of marriage and strīdhana, G. Banerjee, 2nd ed.

3 - Sāyaṇa upon AB III. 2, 7 - sāyaṃkāle goṣṭhe vraje ye pāṣavah tiśṭhanti te sāyaṃgoṣṭhāḥ.

4 - TS I.1.9 - vrajaṃ gachchha gosthānam.

5 - Rv X. 97. 8 - gāvah goṣṭhāḥ iva.

6 - AB III. 2, 7 - Bharatānāṃ pāṣavah sāyaṃgoṣṭhāḥ.
the terms 'goṣṭha' and 'vreja' are related to cows or cattle, so also
the word 'gotra' seems to have connection with cows or cattle in
its original import. All these words point out the pastoral life
of early Aryans.

It may be supposed that the gotra or shelter for cows is a
structure or enclosure which belongs to the whole clan. As a
consequence the term undergoes a change of meaning and stands for
the clan itself.

Section II - Gotra indicative of clan:

We come across the compound 'visvagotryah' occurring in one
verse of the Atharvaveda. M. Bloomfield translates 'gotra' as
'clan' and his rendering of the word in this context appears to be
correct, since the compound bears some resemblance to 'sarvaganah',
the compounded form of two Vedic words 'sarva' and 'gaṇa'.
It appears that 'sarva - gaṇa' means 'associated with the whole

1 - Av, Berlin ed., V. 21. 3 - visvagotryah.
2 - M. Bloomfield renders 'visvagotryah' as 'at home with every
clan', vide p. 132, Hymns of the Atharvaveda, Eng. Tr. by
M. Bloomfield.
3 - Av XVI. 1. 4. 6 - sarvaganah asiya.
gaṇa or clan'; the same meaning is perhaps revealed by 'visvagotryah'.

The epithet 'sarvagaṇa' is found in the Kāṭhaka and Taittirīya Samhitās and probably signifies 'related to the whole clan'. Śāyāna explains it as 'one who is in possession of a troop of sons and servants'. The 'clan' sense of gaṇa seems to be more appropriate if we consider the context of the passages in which the epithet is used. Considering the similarity of the term 'sarvagaṇa' to 'visvagotryah', we may be warranted to explain the latter as 'related to the whole clan'.

1 - KS 38. 2 - idam havih prajananaṁ me astu dasāvīraṁ sarvagaṇaṁ svasteye.

2 - TS III. 1. 8 - prajāṁ me tarpayata. pasūn me tarpayata grihān me tarpayata gaṇān me tarpayata. sarvagaṇaṁ mā tarpayata; Śāyāna - sarvagaṇaṁ sarve putra-bhṛtyādisamūhāḥ yasya mama tāḍrisaṁ mām.

3 - See also sec. X, ch. III of the present book; W. Caland translates 'sarvagaṇaḥ' as 'accompanied by my whole troop', vide Eng. Tr. of PB 1. 5. 4.
In certain Brāhmaṇa passages the word 'gotra' more distinctly conveys the sense of clan. The Pañchavimsā Brāhmaṇa enjoins in connection with the Ritapeya performance that the Soma-cup must be given as sacrificial fee to the Brāhmaṇa priest who belongs to the same gotra as that of the sacrificer. The word 'sagotra' in this context means 'one of the same clan'.

In connection with the Gosava ceremony the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa prescribes that the mother or a sister or a sagotra, i.e., a woman of the same clan, should be approached. In the same Brāhmaṇa the words 'gotra' and 'nāman' are mentioned together and from the context the 'clan' sense of gotra is apparent.

1 - PB 18. 2. 12 - sagotrāya brāhmaṇe deyah; also W. Caland's Eng. Tr. of the Brāhmaṇa passage.
2 - JB II. 113 - upa mātaram iyāt upa svasāram upa sagotrām.
3 - JB I. 18 - nāmnā vā gotreṇa vā pravrute.
The Gopatha Brähmana makes a figurative use of the word 'gotra' and states that the syllable 'om' belongs to the Lātavya gotra and is the son of Brahman. The same Brähmana makes a similar statement that the word 'svāhā' is of the gotra of Lāmagayana. From the context it is clear that the sense of clan as indicated by gotra is known to the author of the Brähmana.

The Chhândogya Upaniṣat informs us of the social importance attached to gotra designation. In the story of Javālā and Satyakāma, the son asks his mother about the gotra to which he is affiliated and the mother replies that she is ignorant of her son's origin and gotra. The dialogue reveals the fact that a man is known in the society by his gotra.

1 - GB I. 1. 25 - Lātavyah gotrah Brahmapāḥ putrah ... omkārah vedānām.
2 - GB I. 3. 16 - svāhā vai kutah sambhūtā kena prakṛitā kim vā asyāḥ gotrem ... svāhā vai satyasambhūtā Brahmapāḥ prakṛitā Lāmagayana - sagotrā ; P. Chentsal Rao mentions 'Lāmagayana' as a sept of the Audala gotra - gana, p. 254, Gpnk ; Baudhāyana includes 'Lāmagayana' among the septs of Kuśika gotra, Baudh VI. 31.
3 - Chh. Up. IV. 4. 1=2 - Satyakāmanah ha Jāvālah Javālāṁ mātarem āmantrayāṁchakre brahmacharyam bhavati vivatsyāmi kiṁgotrah aham asmi iti. sā ha enam uvācha na aham etat veda tātā yadgotrah tvam asi ; Śāṅkara comments that while residing in her husband's house she was not inclined to keep in memory her husband's gotra etc. ; it is to be noted that the Upaniṣadic passage contains no reference to her husband.
From the above we may guess that the word 'gotra' has obtained the meaning of clan in the later Vedic age. It is probable that the term 'gana' was originally used instead of gotra to indicate the Aryan clan. We shall deal with the features of gana organisation in the third chapter of the present book.

Section III - Gotra appellations in Vedic literature:

We meet with gotra designations of persons here and there in Vedic literature. Even the Rigveda has preserved a number of such appellations. The appellations 'Bharata', 'Kāṇva', 'Vādhryasva', 'Ājamīlha', 'Ānava' etc. are formed of the names of ancestors and appear to be related to either clans or tribes. We may guess that the tribal name 'Bharata' is derived from Bharata, the founder - ancestor. Similarly,

1 - Rv III. 23. 2 - Bhāratā; Sāyaṇa - Bhāratā. Bharatasya putrā.
2 - Rv VIII. 1. 8 - Kāṇvasya; Sāyaṇa - Kāṇvasya Kaṇvaputrasya.
3 - Ibid X. 69. 5 - Vādhryasva; Sāyaṇa - he Vādhryasva Vādhryasvākule jāta agne.
4 - Ibid IV. 44. 6 - Ājamīlhasah.
5 - Ibid VII. 18. 13 - Ānavasya; Sāyaṇa - Ānevasyes Anoh svāvandineḥ valasya Anoh putresya vā.
Kāṇva is derived from Kāṇva, Vadhryasva from Vadhryasva, Ājamīlha from Ājamīlha (Ājamīḍha), Ānava from Ānu. The clan or tribe bears the name of its founder - ancestor. As lineage from a common ancestor is the essential characteristic of gotra, these appellations resemble gotra names.

When many persons are found to bear the same appellation, it may be regarded as a gotra name pointing to the clan - ancestor. For examples, Kṛiṣṇa, Ghora, Golomā, Vajra, Vyasva, Dāvasu, Snuṣṭi are called 'Āṅgirasa', because all of them claim descent from Āṅgiras, the founder - patriarch of their clan. Similarly,

1 - ŚNB 30, 9 - Kṛiṣṇah . Āṅgirasaḥ.
2 - Ibid 30, 6 - Ghoraḥ Āṅgirasaḥ.
3 - JB III, 163 - Golomā Āṅgirasaḥ pasūkāmah tapah atapyataḥ.
4 - Ibid III, 15 - Vajrah Āṅgirasaḥ pasūkāmah tapah atapyataḥ.
5 - PB 14, 10, 9 - Vyasvah Āṅgirasaḥ ; Caland translates 'Āṅgirasaḥ' as 'of the Āṅgiras clan'.
6 - PB 15, 5, 14 - Dāvasuh vā Āṅgirasaḥ ; Caland renders 'Āṅgirasaḥ' as 'of the Āṅgiras clan'.
7 - Ibid 13, 11, 22 - Snuṣṭih .. Āṅgirasaḥ ; Caland renders 'Āṅgirasaḥ' as 'the son of Āṅgiras'. 
Sāmyu, Kavandha, Dadhyach have the common designation 'Ātharvaṇa', i.e., regard themselves as the descendants of Atharvan. Thus, 'Ātharvaṇa' has the appearance of a gotra name. It is to be noticed that the Pravara - prāśa of Baudhāyana regards Āṅgiras as the name of a gaṇa and not of a gotra and includes it in the list of pravara - Riṣis, while the name of Atharvan is not found in the lists of gotras and pravaras.

In the list of teachers of the Vaṃśa - Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda we find the 'Kāśyapa' appellation of Agnibhu, Indrabhu, Mitrabhu, Vibhandaka, who are believed to be the descendants of Kāśyapa.

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1 - GB I. 2. 18 - Sāmyum Āthaṭyaṇām.
2 - Ibid I. 2. 10 - Kavandhasya Āthaṭyaṇasya putrah.
3 - JB III. 64 - Dadhyam ha vā Āthaṭyaṇah.
4 - Baudh I. 2 - ekah eva riṣih yāvat pravareṣu amuvertate tāvat samānagotratvam anyatra Bhṛigyaṅgirasāṁ gaṇāt.
5 - The Skandapurāṇa includes the name of Atharvan in the pravara of Kauśika gotra, vide Skanda, Brahmakhaṇḍa, Dharmāraṇyakhaṇḍa, 21. 24; the Atharvans are regarded as Pitaras in the Rigveda, Rv X. 14. 6; the name 'Ātharvan' corresponds to Āqravan of the Āvestā implying priest, vide notes on castes, p. 286, Index, Āvestā Reader, H. Reichelt.
6 - Vaṃśa - Brāhmaṇa of the Sāmaveda, pt. II.
The designation 'Vārṣṇa' is attached to the names of Praku, Varku and Govala; Susa is described as 'Vārṣneya'. Sayana derives 'Vārṣṇa' and 'Vārṣneya' from Vṛiṣṇi, while Śankara derives 'Vārṣṇa' from Vṛiṣṇa. Both the appellations point to an ancestor and have the appearance of gotra names.

The appellations 'Aikṣvāka', 'Kauravya', 'Bharata' seem to be gotra names, respectively derived from Ikṣvāku, Kuru and Bharata.

1 - JB I. 248 - tat u ha uvācha Prakuh Vārṣṇah.
2 - Br. Up. IV. 1. 4 - Varkuh Vārṣṇah; Sāṅkara interprets 'Vārṣṇa' as 'the son of Vṛiṣṇa'.
3 - TB III. 11. 9 - Govalah Vārṣṇah pasukāmah; Sayana - Vṛiṣṇēḥ putrah Vārṣṇah Govalah nāmatah.
4 - Ibid III. 10. 9 - Susah ha vai Vārṣneyah; Sayana - Vṛiṣṇi - nāmakasya muneh putrah Susa - nāmakah munih.
5 - JB II. 329 - Kāsyasya Kausalasya Aikṣvākasya; also SB XIII. 5. 4. 5 - Purukutsah . Aikṣvākah; AB VII. 3. 1 - Hariśchandrah . Aikṣvākah.
6 - JB II. 280 - Uchchaihśravēḥ . Kauravyah.
7 - JB III. 82 - Sindhukṣit Bhārataḥ.
8 - The non-Ṛṣi origin of these gotra names is obvious; though Kauravya is included among the septs of the Upamanyu gotra, its Ṛṣi origin is not inferable, vide p. 276, Gpuk.
Sometimes we get instances of address by the gotra designation ignoring the personal name. This is a clear evidence of the social value assigned to gotra names.

1. Uddalaka Aruni (son of Aruna), Devabhaga Srautarsa (son of Srutarsi), Nachiketah the son of Vajasravasa are addressed as Gautama. Uddalaka is also called 'Gautamasya putra' (son of Gautama), i.e., the gotra - progeny of Gautama.

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1 - SB XI. 5. 3. 1 - 2 - Uddalaka Aruni is addressed as 'Gautama'; Sayana interprets 'Gautama' as 'Gautama - gotrotpanna'; also Br. Up. VI. 2. 6 - 13; commenting upon VI. 2. 4, Sañkara remarks - Gautamah gotratah Gautamah Arunih; Chh. Up. V. 17. 1- atha uvācha Uddalakam Arunim 'Gautama kam tvam ātmānam upāssa' iti.

2 - TB III. 10. 9 - Devabhágah ha Srautarsah savitram vidāmohakāra; he is called 'Gautama' and addressed as 'Gautama'; Sayana - Gautamah Gautamagotrotpannah.

3 - Sayana explains it thus - Srautarṣah śrautaṁuṣṭhānābhiññah.

4 - TB III. 11. 8 - Nachiketah is addressed as 'Gautama'; Sayana - he Gautamagotrotpanna Nachiketah.

5 - SB XI. 4. 1. 3, 4.
Indradyumna Bhāllaveya (son of Bhāllavi), Vudila Āśvatarāsvi are addressed as 'Vaiyāghrapadya' and Satyayajñā Pauluṣi is addressed as 'Prāchīnayogya'.

We may note that the names 'Gautama', 'Vaiyāghrapadya' and 'Prāchīnayogya' are included in the list of gotras.

In this connection we may point out that the Vamsa-Brahmanas have recorded names of teachers which are in most cases really gotra appellations and not personal names. This confirms the social feature of the Vedic age which attributes more value to gotra names than to individual names. The interesting fact is that gotra designations have taken the place of personal names and in some cases different persons are represented by the same gotra name.


2 - Ibid V. 16. 1 - atha ha uvācha Vudilam Āśvatarāsviṁ 'Vaiyāghrapadya kaṁ tvam ātmānāṁ upāssā' iti.

3 - Ibid V. 13. 1 - atha ha uvācha Satyayajñā Pauluṣiṁ 'Prāchīnayogya kaṁ tvam ātmānāṁ upāssā' iti.

4 - Baudh II. 10 - 16.

5 - Ibid VIII. 45.

6 - Ibid I. 4.
In one list of teachers the names 'Sândilya', 'Bháradvája', 'Gautama', 'Párasárya' occur more than once. It is reported that Párasárya is the pupil of Bháradvája, Bháradvája of Bháradvája and Gautama, Gautama of Bháradvája and Bháradvája of Párasárya. Such a method of identification results in the overlooking of personal names and practically the majority of the teachers remain non-identified. From this fact we are warranted to guess that the gotra outlook places individuals below the clan.

In another list of teachers we find that Gargya is the pupil of Gargya, Gautama is the pupil of Gautama. This is enough proof of the social recognition of superiority of gotra name to personal name and of the clan to individuals.

It may be marked that the designations 'Sândilya', 'Bháradvája', 'Gautama', 'Párasárya', 'Gargya' are gotra names which are traceable to gotra-Rísis of the Bráhmanical tradition.

2 - Ibid II. 6. 2 - Párasáryah Bháradváját, Bháradvájah Bháradváját cha Gautamát cha, Gautamah Bháradváját, Bháradvájah Párasáryáti.
Gargyah Gautámát.
Gautamah Vátsyáti.
5 - Baudh VII. 43.
6 - Ibid III. 17.
7 - Ibid II. 10 - 16.
8 - Ibid VIII. 48.
9 - Ibid III. 19.
What attracts our attention is that according to the system of social recognition in Vedic society a person is known by his paternal designation and gotra. The affiliation to a gotra or clan is even more valued than the personal name.

In many cases the personal names have been left unnoticed, while the patronymics and clan designations have been recorded. 1 The Chhândogya Upaniṣāt mentions such persons as Saunaka Kāpeya, i.e., the son of Sūnaka belonging to the Kapi gotra, and 2 Haridrumata Gautama, i.e., the son of Haridrumat belonging to the Gotama gotra.

Section IV: The pravara rite and the belief in ancestral Fires:

The chief characteristic of gotra indicating clan is the belief in actual or imaginary descent from a common ancestor. A gotra is named after its founder - ancestor. The gotra tradition keeps in memory the more remote ancestors and cherishes the belief in sacred Fires, kindled by them. Some hymns of the Rigveda draw our notice to such ancestral Fires.

1 - Chh. Up. IV. 3. 5 - Sāunakam cha Kāpeyam; according to the Pravaraprasna of Baudhāyana, Sūnaka and Kapi are gotra names having no connection with each other; vide Baudh I. 9 and IV. 26.

2 - Chh. Up. IV. 4. 3 - Hāridrumatam Gautamam.
We come to know that Bharata, the founder-patriarch of a Rigvedic tribe, had his Fire, Vadhryasva kindled and kept up. Fire revered by posterity, Uchathā, Nahuṣ and Divodāsa owned Fires kindled by them.

Sometimes, in connection with the invocation of Agni, the names of ancestors with the suffix 'vat' are mentioned. The significance is perhaps that Agni is invoked by the descendants in the same manner as he was invoked in the past by the ancestors.

1 - Rv VII. 8. 4 - ayam agnih Bharataasya.
2 - Rv X. 69. 1 - 2 - agneh Vadhryasvasya ; X. 69. 4 - yaṁ tvā pūrvam .. Vadhryasvah samidhe.
3 - Rv I. 143. 6 - agnih Uchathasya ; Sāyaṇa - yadvā Uchathasya etannāmakasya maharṣeḥ gotaprabhavasya.
4 - Rv VII. 6. 5 - Nahuṣ saḥ ... agnih ; Sāyaṇa - Nahuṣah rājñāh.
5 - Rv VIII. 103. 2 - Daivodāsah agnih.

6 - M. Muller remarks that the sacrifice itself is sometimes represented as a thread which unites the living with the departed, vide p. 482, History of ancient Sanskrit literature.
In one Rigvedic verse the names of Aurva, Bhrigu and Apnavana are associated with the invocation of Agni and the suffix 'vat' suggests that the author of the verse regards himself as a descendant of the ancestors referred to by these names and intends to follow their example. These very names occur in the pravara of the Vatsa gotra.

The name of Manu with suffix 'vat' is similarly associated with the ceremony of kindling Fire and the persons addressing Agni seem to have the belief in descent from Manu and imitate him. The same ceremony is elsewhere connected with the name of Añgiras with suffix 'vat' and the implication appears to be similar.

1 - Rv VIII. 102. 4 - Aurva - Bhṛigu - vāt .. Apnavānavaḥ āhuve agnim ; Sāyaṇa - Aurva - Bhṛigu - vāt yathā Aurva - Bhṛiguḥ Apnavānavaḥ yathā Apnavānāḥ tathā huve.

2 - Baudh I. 3 - ityete Vatsāḥ teṣām pañchā - rṣeyah pravarah bhavati .. Jamadagnivist Urvavat Apnavānavat Chyavanasavat Bhṛiguvaḥ iti adhvaryuh.

3 - Rv V. 21. 1 - Manuṣvāt tvā nīdhiṃahi Manuṣvāt saṃdiḥiṃahi agne ; also KS 2. 9 and TB III. 11. 6.

4 - VS 11. 9 - agnim puṇiṣyam Añgirasavat ābhara ; Mahīdhara - Añgirasavat Añgirasah yathā agnim ājahrhuḥ ; also KS 16. 1 - agnim puṇiṣyam Añgirasavat bharāmah ; KS 16. 3 - agnim puṇiṣyam Añgirasavat Khanāmi.
The Satapatha Brahmaṇa explains 'Manusvat' as indicating imitation of Manu's performing a sacrifice by the people. What Manu did in the past is imitated by men.

In several cases the ancestral names with suffix 'vat' refer to founder - patriarchs of different clans who are recalled in the same verse. The person or persons recalling them do not, of course, claim descent from all of them. For examples:

1. the names of Manu, Aṅgiras and Yayāti with suffix 'vat' are mentioned in the same prayer to Agni;
2. the names of Atri, Virūpa and Aṅgiras with suffix 'vat' are pronounced in the same invocation of Agni;

1 - SB I. 5. 1. 7 - 'Manusvat Bharatavat iti. Manuh ha vā agre yajñena āje, tadanukṛitya imāh prajāh yajante, tasmāt āha Manusvat iti.
3 - Rv I. 45. 3 - Priyamedhavat Atrivat jātavedeh Virūpavat Aṅgirasvat . . śrudhi havam ; Sāyana — Priyamedha-Atri-Virūpa - Aṅgironāmakāh ēteśām āhvānam yathā śrīnāsi tadvat.
(iii) the names of Bhrigu, Manu and Angiras with suffix 'vat' are together mentioned in the same invocation of Agni.

It is to be noted that Angiras, Atri and Bhrigu are founder-patriarchs of separate clans according to the gotra tradition. It is not expected that the person or persons reciting their names may have a belief in descent from all of them.

Thus, the rite of invocation of Agni in its earlier form is not always associated with the recital of names of ancestors of the same clan. The pravara rite of the Sūtra age is a clear deviation from its original form and is generally regarded as the choice of Agni as associated with the names of ancestors of the same clan.

1 - Rv VIII. 43. 13 - Bṛguvāt ... Manuṣvāt agne ... Aṅgirasvāt havāmahe; Sāyaṇa - he sūche svabhāvataḥ sūdha āhutāgne tvā tvāṁ Bṛguvāt yathā Bṛguḥ tathā Manuṣvāt yathā cha Manuḥ tathā Aṅgirōvāt cha havāmahe.

2 - Baudhāyana regards Aṅgiras and Bṛguḥ as the founder-ancestors of gaṇas and Atri as the founder of a gotra; vide Baudh I. 2 and V. 27.
We have seen that the names of Nahus, Yayati and Bharata are uttered at the time of invoking sacred Fire. These names refer to Kṣatriya kings and have not been comprised in the list of the pravara - Rīsis.

The absence of the word 'pravara' from the Rigveda is remarkable. The word 'ārṣeya' occurs only once in this Veda and is interpreted by Śāyana as 'befitting the sons of Rīsis'. It perhaps means 'related to Rīsi - ancestors'. In later usage 'ārṣeya' is identified with pravara.


2 - Rv IX. 97. 51 - abhi yena draviṇem asnavama abhi ārṣeyam Jamadagnivat nah Śāyana - ārṣeyam ārṣānām rīṣiputrāṇām yogyam dhānem Jamadagnivat Jamadagneh yathā tvam prāpaya evam nah asmākam api abhyarṣa. yadvā ārṣeyam ārṣānām yogyam mantraṃ Jamadagneh svabhūtēṃ mantraṃ yathā .. asmākam tādṛśaṃ mantraṃ .. kuru.

3 - Gārgya Nārāyaṇa comments upon Āśv. Sr. S. -II.6.10- ārṣeyah pravaraḥ iti paryāyau. rīṣih iti vamā - nāmadheyaabhūtāh Vatsa - Vida - Āṛṣṭiśeṇādayaḥ sāvdāh uchyante.
The Taittiriya Samhita offers an exegetic account of the ceremony of choice of Fire. It is reported that Agni was the messenger of the gods and Usanas the son of Kavi of the Asuras. They two questioned Prajāpati who replied, 'We choose the messenger Agni'. Thereby the gods defeated the Asuras. This is the origin of the rite. In the same context it is stated that

1 - TS II. 5. 8 - agnih devānām dūtaḥ āśīt Usānāh Kāvyah asurāṇēṃ. tau Prajāpatim praśnam aitām. sa Prajāpatih 'agnim dūtaṃ vṛṣṇimāhe' iti abhi paryāvertata. tatah devāḥ abhavan paraḥ asurāḥ; Sāyana - tau ubhau api Prajāpatim upetya priṣṭavantu - āvayoh madhye .. kasya dautyam uchitam .. Prajāpatih 'agnim dūtaṃ vṛṣṇimāhe' iti mantreṇa uttaram uvācha .. tato devānāṃ vijayah abhūt asurāḥ cha parābhūtāḥ.
there are three Fires and of these the Fire who is the carrier of havya (oblation) of the gods is to be chosen and the choice of him is to be associated with names of Rishi. The choice of the human ancestors (connected with this choice of Agni) is to follow a downward course. That is, according to the commentary of Śāyāna, the gotra - ancestor and his progeny in the descending order are to be chosen. This coincides with the choice of ancestors by the Hotṛi priest, as enunciated in the Sūtras.

1 - Ibid — trayaḥ va agnayah .. vṛṇīḍhvam havyavāhanam iti āha ya 'eva devānām tam vṛṇīte ārṣeyam vṛṇīte .. saṃtatyai parastāt arvāchah vṛṇīte. tasmāt paścāt tām bhūte niśpadharm arvāṇchah maṇuṣyān pitarah anu pra pipate; Śāyāna — riṣeḥ apatyam ārṣeyam .. yathāpavravam vṛṇīte .. asmin vareṇa prakāravisēṣāṁ vidhatte parastāt arvāchā iti. vartamānāṁ yajamānam apekṣā yūrvabhāvi yah gotra - pravartakah tam ārabhya tadapatyaparamparayā arvāchāḥ nīchān vṛṇīte .. Bhṛigoh apatyam Chyavanah tasya apatyam Āpnānah tasya apatyam Āravah tasya apatyam Jamadagnih tasya saṃtaitiḥ yajamānān iti; here Śāyāna speaks of Bhṛigu gotra; but, according to the Sūtras, Bhṛigu is not a gotra name; vide Baudh I. 2 and Āśv. Sṛ. S., Parisāṣṭa, p. 467.
The same Samhita describes the choice of Fire in another passage in which the word 'pravara' is mentioned. According to this account Agni the god who is the messenger of the gods is identified with the Hotri priest and the choice of him gives prosperity to the gods and defeat to the Asuras. The person who knows this effect of the choice of Fire as Hotri and for whom the list of ancestors is chosen is destined to prosper himself and defeat his enemies. The choice of ancestors in this context is

1 - TS II. 5. 11 —agnih devanām dūtah āśīt daivyah
asurānām. tau Prajāpatiṁ prāśham aitām. sa Prajāpatih
brāhmaṇam avravit - 'etat hi vrūhi iti āsrāvaya iti'.
'idam devāḥ śrīnuta iti vāva tat avravit agnih deh
hotā iti', ya eva devānām tam śrīnīta. tatah devāh
abhavan parā asurāh. yasya evamviduśah pravaram pravṛṇate
bhavati ātmanā parā asya bhraṭrīvyah bhavati; see also
pp. 202 - 203, The Veda of the Black Yajus school, pt. I,
Eng. Tr. by A. B. Keith; also Sāyaṇa's com. upon
'agnih devānām etc.'

2 - Martin Haug remarks that pravara literally means 'choice'
and is actually the invocation of the sacrificial Fires lighted
by the principal Rishi ancestors of the sacrificer, pp. 479 - 480,
by Martin Haug.
according to Śāyaṇa made by the Adhvaryu priest and follows an upward course, so that it begins from the latest ancestor and proceeds upwards. This function of the Adhvaryu synchronises with his choice of the Hotrī priest.

Thus, the complete pravara rite is known to the Taittiriya Samhitā.

The choice of Agni as the ancestral Hotrī priest is related by the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa. The choice of ancestors of the sacrificer is hinted at.

1 - TS II. 5. 11—Śāyaṇa - tat idam adhvaryu - kartrikam hotrī - viṣayam varaṇam. sāmidheniprastāve tu ārṣeyam vṛṇiṇīte iti hotrī - kartrikam agni - viṣayam varaṇam uktam, tayoh ayaṁ viṣeṣah, ervāṇcham ārabhyeta ārdhvān uttarottaran adhvaryuh vṛṇiṇīte. hotā tu uttaman ārabhya adhastān vṛṇiṇīte. tat yathā Bhārgava - Chyāvana - Āpravāna - Aurvā - Jāmadagnya iti evam hotrī - kartrikam ... adhvaryu - kartrike tu .. Jāmadagnivat Urvavat Āpravānavat Chyavanavat Bhṛguvat iti prayoktavyam.

2 - SB I. 4. 2. 3 - atha ārṣeyam pravṛṇīte. riśibhyah cha eva enam etat devśibhyah cha nivedayati 'ayaṁ mahāvīryah yah yajñām prāpat iti' tasmāt ārṣeyam pravṛṇīte; see also Eng. Tr. by J. Eggeling, Satapatha Brāhmaṇa, pt. I, p. 115; also Śāyaṇa's com. upon SB I. 4. 2. 3 and I. 5. 1. 9.
1. The Taittiriya Brāhmaṇa refers to the choice of fire and the Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa to the choice of pravara.

2. The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa informs us of the complete Brāhmaṇised form of the pravara ceremony. It is stated that the Kṣatriya is not in possession of a pravara, but upon him is superimposed the pravara of the Brāhmaṇa priest. He takes the weapons of Brāhmaṇa caste and becomes transformed into a Brāhmaṇa and thus entitled to take part in the pravara rite. This system of substitution of the ancestors of the family priest for those of the Kṣatriya sacrificer is a clear deviation from the

3. 

1 - TB III. 5* 2 - vṛiṣah agnih samidhyate .. agnim dūtam vṛinimahe. hotāram visvavedasam .. vṛinidhvam havyavāhanam.

2 - JB II* 165 - te vāva samānāṃ pravaram pravṛiṇate samānīm āśisam āsāsate.

3 - AB VII* 4, 7 - nidhaya va esa avāni āyudhāni brahmaṇāh eva āyudhāih brahmaṇāh rūpeṇa brahma bhūtvā yajñām upāvartata tasmat tasya purohitasya ārṣeyeṇa dīkṣām āvedayeyuh purohitasya ārṣeyeṇa pravaram pravṛiṇīran u ; Sāyaṇa - brahmāyudha - svīkāreṇa brahmaṇāh bhūtvā yajñām prāptavān tasmat tasya yajamāṇasya purohitasaṃvandinā gotreṇa dīkṣāvedanam tathā pravarah api vijñeyah; see also sec. XII on 'Gotra and varṇa', chap. IV of the present book.
original form of the ceremony in which Kṣatriya ancestors who kindled Fire are also recalled. It has been already pointed out by us that in connection with the invocation of Agni the Kṣatriya as well as Brāhmaṇa ancestors of the past are mentioned by names. But, as the simple ceremony of invoking ancestral Fire develops into a regular rite, it is given shape according to priestly designs.

The pravara rite as represented in the Sūtras consists in choosing the names of ancestors in a descending order by the Hotri and the same in a reversed form by the Adhvaryu. The ancestral names are regarded as names of Brāhmaṇa Rishi or of Kṣatriya Rishi converted into Brāhmaṇas. The presence of names of Kṣatriyas in the list of pravara-Rishi proves the non-Brāhmaṇical form of the original rite.

1 - Apē Srē Sē 24. 5. 8 - atah ūrdhvān adhvaryuh vṛṣṇite amutah arvāchah hotā iti vijñāyate.
Section V - Gotra linked up with the tradition relating to seven Risis:

1

Asvalayana and Baudhayana have mentioned seven Risis and Agastya the eighth as the founders of gotras. The tradition of seven Risis is as old as the Rigveda which speaks of Risis of yore or seven Risis or seven vipras. It is quite probable that the seven Risis are the same as the seven vipras (Brāhmaṇas), but they are not specified by names. Such specification belongs to a later age in which the gotras are regarded as priestly clans, founded by Brāhmaṇa Rishi patriarchs whose number is eight (seven & one).

The earlier sense of gotra seems to be clan as such and not merely Rishi - clan, as founded by a Brāhmaṇa Rishi patriarch.

1.2 - Baudh X. 54 — Viśvāmitraḥ Jamadagnih Bharadvājah atha Gautamah. Atriḥ Vasisthah Kaśyapah iti ete sapta riṣayah, tēṣāṃ saptarṣiṇām Agastyāṣṭamānām yadapatyaṃ tad gotram, alae

Āśv. Śrī. S., Parisīṣṭa, p. 467.

3 - Rv X. 14. 15 - riṣibhyah pûrvajebhyah.

4 - Rv X. 82. 2 - saptarṣin ; also KS 18. 1 ; TS IV. 6. 2 ;


5 - Rv VI. 22. 2 - pûrve pitarah .. sapta viprāsah.
We have seen that certain appellations of Vedic literature have the appearance of gotra names, since these are derivable from names of progenitors of clans or tribes and indicate lineage from them in the same way as gotra names are traceable to clan patriarchs. Such designations are Yādva, Bhārata, Kauravya, Vārṣṇa, Vārṣṇeya, Aikṣvāka, Vaideha etc. These refer to the Kṣatriya patriarchs Yadu, Bharata, Kuru, Vṛṣṇi, Ikṣvāku, Videha etc.

1 - Rv VIII. 6. 48 - Yādvaṁ janam.
2 - Ibid III. 53. 12 - Bhāratam janam.
3 - JB II. 230, op. cit.
4 - TB III. 11. 9.
5 - Ibid III. 10. 9.
6 - JB II. 329.
7 - JB II. 303 - Janakah Vaidehaḥ.
8 - The names of Yadu, Bharata and Ikṣvāku do not occur in P. Chentsal Rao's list of gotras and Rīṣis, but the names 'Kauravya', 'Vaideha', 'Vārṣṇeya' are included in it.
It is apparent that Vedic designations seeming to be gotra names indicate origin from patriarchs of the past and point out that even names of Kṣatriyas are treated as tribal or clan appellations. Thus, a Vedic tribe or clan may be named after a patriarch who is a Kṣatriya and this gives us clue to the fact that the earlier meaning of gotra is not merely a Brāhmaṇa Rishi clan, but a clan as such.

The restricted sense of gotra is a Brāhmaṇa clan originating from one of the eight Rishiś and probably marks out a period in which the gotra system is Brāhmaṇised and interpreted according to priestly ambitions. The belief in the Brāhmaṇical origin of gotra seems to have no basis in actualities of early Vedic social life, since the Viśvāmitra clan is considered as having its origin from the Bharata tribe in the Ṛigveda.

1 = Ṛv III. 53. 24 - ime .. Bharatasya putrāḥ ; Sāyaṇa —
Bharata-vaṃśyāḥ ime Viśvāmitrāḥ.
Section VI - The Pitaras or clan - patriarchs:

The Pitaras of the Rigveda appear to be the early patriarchs of different clans. In one passage they are described as Brāhmaṇas. The patriarchs of the Aṅgiras, Atharvan, Bhṛigu and Vasiṣṭha clans are spoken of as Pitaras. This should not lead us to suppose that the Pitaras of the Rigvedic clans are all Brāhmaṇas. They are the ancestors adored by the descendants who claim lineage from them. We may note that the tradition of Pitaras shows the patriarchal structure of the Aryan clan. The early gotra tradition seems to be associated with the Pitaras.

1 - Rv VI. 75. 10 - brāhmaṇāsah pitarah somyāsah.
2 - Rv X. 14. 6 - Aṅgiraśah nah pitarah Atharvāṇah Bhṛigavah somyāsah; X. 15. 8 - pitarah somyāsah .. Vasiṣṭhāḥ.
3 - The ancient Pitaras (pūrve pitarah) mentioned in Rv X. 14. 2 may indicate patriarchs of any clan.
Section VII - The Rigvedic Rishi - clans of eminence forming the basis of the Brahmanical conception of gotra:

The Rigveda is conversant with the clans bearing the names of Aṅgiras, Atharvan, Bhrigu, Atri, Vasistha, Kusika, Gotama, Bharadvaja etc. Frequent mention of these names in the plural number has a clear indication of clans, named after their founder - patriarchs.

1 The Aṅgirasas and Atharvans appear to have been Fire - priests devoting themselves to the cult of Fire. Kindling of Fire is connected with the names of Aṅgiras and Atharvan. The Bhrigus also know the secret of Fire and the Vasisthas invoke Agni Isāna.

1 - Rv V. 11. 6 - tvam agne Aṅgirasah guhāhitam anvavindaṃ;
I. 31. 1 - tvam agne prathamah Aṅgirā riśiḥ; Sāyana - he agne tvam .. Aṅgiro - nāmakah riśih abhavah.
2 - Rv VI. 16. 13 - tvam agne puṣkarat adhi Atharvā niramanthataḥ;
also VS 11. 32; Mahīdhara upon VS 11. 32 - he agne, Atharvākhyah riśih puṣkarat adhi padmapatrasya upari tvām niramanthataḥ; also KS 16. 3; TS III. 5. 11; Sāyana - Atharvākhyah riśih puṣkarat adhi padmapatrasya upari tvām niramanthata nihśeṣeṇa mathitavān.
3 - Rv X. 122. 5 - tvām stomebhiḥ Bhrigavah viruruchuh;
KS 6. 9 - yam Apnavānāh Bhrigavah viruruchuh; also Rv IV. 7. 1.
4 - Rv VII. 7. 7 - tvām agne imahe Vasiṣṭhāḥ īśānam;
also VII. 12. 3 - agne tvām vardhanti matibhiḥ Vasiṣṭhāḥ.
The Visvamitras who are identified with the Kusikas in the tradition relating to them kindle fire and entreat Agni the god to bestow upon them wealth and happiness. Agni gives protection to Atri and Bharadvaja. Devotion to the cult of Fire is a feature of the clans which bear these names. These appear to be priestly clans founded by Risis of eminence.

The gotra tradition has preserved the names of the above clans leaving out to our surprise that of the Atharvans. We have cited instances of appellation derived from the name of Atharvan. But in the Sutras neither the gaṇa nor the gotra of Atharvan is mentioned.

The appellations 'Bhargava' and 'Aṅgirasa' of Brāhmaṇa literature seem to be gotra names, as these indicate descent from the patriarchs Bṛigu and Aṅgiras. But the Sutras regard Bṛigu and Aṅgiras as the names of gaṇas and not of gotras.

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1 - Rv III. 18. 4 - dhehi revat agne Visvamitresu soma.
2 - Rv X. 150. 5 - agnih Atrim Bharadvajam Gaviṣṭhiram prāvat.
3 - Vide sec. III of the present chapter.
4 - AB VIII. 4. 7 - Chyavanah Bhargavah; JB I. 166 - Kavilh vai Bhargavah.
5 - Vide sec. III of the present chapter.
6 - Saundh I. 2 - ekah eva rishih yayat pravareṣu anuvartate tāvat samāna - gotratvam anyatra Bṛigvaṅgirasam gaṇāt; also Āśv. Sr. S., Parisiṣṭa, p. 467.
According to the Sūtras the gana of Bhrigu like that of Arigiras is inclusive of Brāhmaṇa as well as Brāhmaṇised Kṣatriya gotras.

1. It appears that the Chyavana section of the Brārgavas has found a place in the gotra-list as a recognised Brāhmaṇa clan, while the Kāvyas have been left out perhaps because of their association with the non-Aryan Asuras.

The clans of Atri, Vasistha, Visvēmitra, Gotama and Bharadvāja are regarded as gotras by the Sūtras.

1 - The pravara of the Jamadagni group of Vatsas and other Vatsas contains the name of Chyavana, Āśv. Sr. S. II. 6. 10; Chyavana is a Brārgava according to the Aitareya Brāhmaṇa (VIII. 4. 7).

2 - Usānas the Kāvyas is regarded as the purohita of the Asuras; see JB I. 125 - Brihaspatih devānēm purohitah āsit Usānāḥ Kāvyah asurānām.

3 - Baudh X. 54; it is to be noted that the Vedic tradition ascribes five books of the Rigveda to the clans of Vēmadeva (a section of Gotamas), Visvēmitra, Vasistha, Atri and Bharadvāja, vide pp. 57-58, Introduction, History of Indian literature, vol. I, Eng. Tr.
The names of Jamadagni, Kasyapa and Agastya do not occur in the plural number in the Rigveda. The position held by the clans bearing these names in the Rigvedic period is not clear. The Brähmanas take cognisance of such appellations as 'Aurva' (=Jāmadagnya), 'Kāsyapa' and 'Agasti' which indicate lineage from ancestors and resemble gotra names. According to the Sūtra account, Kasyapa and Agastya are included among the eight principal gotras. It may be noted that Jamadagni is considered as one of these eight gotras, but this gotra-group seems to have been known as 'Vatsa' or 'Jāmadagnya Vatsa'.

1 - JB II. 285 - dvau Aurvau palitau samāgatyā na samjānāte.
2 - The Vamsā - Brähmana of the Samaveda mentions Agnibhū Kāsyapa, Indrabhū Kāsyapa etc., vide pt. II, Vamsā - Brähmanam (Sāmavedīyam).
3 - JB III. 234 - Dṛḍhachyut Āgastih.
4 - Āśv. Sr. S. II. 6. 10; Baudh I. 3.
Section VIII - The Āprisuktas and their bearing upon the gotra system:

The Riksamhita contains ten Āprisuktas, each of which was originally intended for members of a particular gotra. Their sole purpose is linked with the prayāja offerings at an animal sacrifice (pasūvandha). Four of these hymns contain verses addressed to the Narāśaṃsa form of Agni and four contain verses addressed to the Tanūnapat form of Agni. Each of the two remaining hymns contains verses one of which is addressed to Narāśaṃsa and the other to Tanūnapat. Only ten Rṣi - clans are in possession of these Āpri hymns and it is presumable that the other Rṣi - clans had their own Āpri hymns which have not been preserved.

2 - Rv II. 3. 2 ; V. 5. 2 ; VII. 2. 2 ; X. 70. 2.
3 - Rv I. 188. 2 ; III. 4. 2 ; IX. 5. 2 ; X. 110. 2.
4 - Rv I. 13. 3 ; I. 142. 3.
5 - Rv I. 13. 2 ; I. 142. 2.
According to Sayana, the Narasamsa hymns are attributed to the clans of Vasistha, Atri, Vadhryasva and Gritsamada, the hymns addressed to both Narasamsa and Tamunapat belong to the clans of Medhatithi (Kanva) and Dirghatamas, and the Tamunapat hymns belong to the other clans.

The Srauta Sutras have recorded an early controversy centring round the use of the verses addressed to Tamunapat or Narasamsa. Baudhayan insists that the Narasamsa verses are meant for the descendants of Atri, Vadhryasva, Vadhula, Vasiṣṭha, Kanva, Sunaka, Samkriti and Yaska and the Tamunapat verses for others. The reverse of this rule is laid down by Latyayana.

1 - Vide Sayana's introduction to Rv I. 142.
2 - Baudh X. 54.
3 - Latyayana Srauta Sutra VI. 4. 13 - 14 — susamiddhah (Rv I. 13) iti Atri - Vasiṣṭha - Sunaka - Kanva - Samkriti - Vadhryasvāṇāṁ tamunapatom. nārāsaṁsom anyeṣāṁ.
Asvalāyana prescribes for use two Narāśaṁsa hymns for the Sunakas and Vasiṣṭhas and one Tanūnapāt hymn for the other clans. But, according to him, this Tanūnapāt hymn is to be preferred by all clans including Sunakas and Vasiṣṭhas in the Prājāpatya variety of the animal sacrifice.

Kātyāyana says that in the case of Vasiṣṭhas and Sunakas the second prayāja ceremony of the animal sacrifice is associated with the Narāśaṁsa form of Agni and the same in the case of Atris may be associated with the Narāśaṁsa or Tanūnapāt form of Agni.

1 - Āsv. Śr. S. I. 3. 2 - 'samiddhah agnih' (Ṛv II. 3) iti Sunakānāṁ 'jusasva nah samidham' (Ṛv VII. 2) iti Vasiṣṭhānānāṁ 'samiddhah adya' (Ṛv X. 110) iti sarvēṣāṁ.

2 - Ibid - prājāpatye tu Jāmadagnyah (Ṛv X. 110) sarvēṣāṁ ; Nārāyaṇa - tusāvdena atra Vasiṣṭha - Sunakā-sahitānāṁ iti viśeṣāḥ labhyate.

The view of Saunaka, as represented by Narayana, is that a Rishi-clan is to be considered as Narasamsa or Tamunapat in accordance with its authorship of one of the Aprī hymns. Thus, only ten such clans are in possession of the Aprī hymns; some of them take the Narasamsa verses and others the Tamunapat verses.

In the midst of this controversy it becomes clear that some of the Rishi-clans have their own Fires. It is not at all improbable that every Rishi-clan adores its own Fire. The cult of Fire appears to be one of the dominating features of such a clan.

The Rishi-clans characterised as Narasamsa or Tamunapat are also included in the traditional list of gotras. If the tradition regarding the Aprisuktas contains some element of truth, we may assume that the Rishi-clans in possession of them have formed the early nucleus of the gotra system of a definitely priestly character getting shape in a later age.