Note on a corruption of a manuscript of the Atharvaveda-Paippalādasaṃhitā

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1. Many writing mistakes in manuscripts are due to the ambiguous shapes of the written letters or the similarity between certain ones, making the correct letter not always evident to someone who is not acquainted with the script. Thus, scholars who use or study these MSS have often found it worthwhile to compile examples of mistakes in them for their own reference and that of other researchers. Such is also the case with the study of the MSS of the Atharvaveda-Paippalādasaṃhitā (PS).¹ It may be thought that the causes of these writing mistakes could be explained easily by collating each instance of the relevant script in the concerned MSS. However, in the case of spelling errors that occur successively over several letters, we can consider them to be complex mistakes attributable to a group of scripts, between any two of which a spelling mistake may have occurred. The purpose of this paper is to deal with this kind of ‘compound mistake’ and to determine its cause.

2. The writing mistake treated here is found in the following verse.

PS. 10.12.9:

pratyagvadhena pracyutān bhrāṛtvṛyaṇ ghoracakṣasaḥ l 8—8
indrāgni enān vṛṣcatām maisām +uc +cheṣi kaś caṇa ll 8—8

‘Them, the rivals with frightful eyes, who are dispelled by a subduing(?) weapon, let Indra and Agni cut them down. Let not anyone of them be left.’

The purpose of the twelfth hymn of the PS 10, in tandem with the preceding eleventh hymn, is to call Indra and Agni to drive off the rivals of the king. The reference to this dual deity in each verse deserves to be noticed.

I treat here the reading of maisāṃ +uc +cheṣi in pāda d. The readings of this part in the concerned Orissa MSS,² which I was able to check first-hand, are as follows;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JM (folio 92 recto. line 2)</th>
<th>Ku (folio 46 verso. line 3)</th>
<th>Pa (folio 110. line 20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>maisāṃ uṭ +šeṣi</td>
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¹ 堺精業大学人文社会学部情報社会学科

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The emendation +uc +cheši is based on the result of the sandhi -t š-. As seen from
the above materials, mutše  hỏ [s in JM and Ku is corrupted into suro ้ in Pa. A
possibility of a writing mistake mu ग ~ su ल (ma ण ~ sa न) owing to addition or
omission of the diagonal can be assumed from similar cases like kṣa ॴ ~ ya ्
(kṣatram ॴ yatram JM, 10.4.11) and sa ५ ~ pa ् (avadhiśam ५ avadhipam Pa,
10.12.12). As for the case tše ฤ ~ ro ฤ, we presume that the base character sa ५
was miswritten rā ् and that the writing of the consonantal hook-sign for the t ‘ ’
of tše ฤ was omitted. At first glance, the possibility of the spelling error sa ५ ~ rā ्
seems unlikely. However, when we consider this phenomenon as one occurring in the
context of a group of letters (in this case, sa ५ ~ ga ६ ~ cā ् ~ rā ्), between any
two of which a spelling error may occur, we can understand the error as a result of a
combination of graphic mistakes. In what follows, I give some examples encountered
in the MSS* of PS 10: sa ५ ~ ga ६, ga ६ ~ cā ्, and cā ् ~ rā ् (ca ६ ~ ra ्).
Additionally, for each item, I investigate the phases of the mistake from a
paleographic viewpoint. At the end, I show examples of the mistake due to omission
of the consonantal hook-sign ‘ ’ for t.

3.
< sa ५ ~ ga ६>

PS 10.11.7d: kruddhau digdhāhir asyatām
‘Let them (Indra and Agni) being angered shoot with the
(poison-)besmeared (arrows).’

digdhāhir asyatām

diśvābhīr asyatām

The letter shapes of ga ६ and sa ५ have in common the loop at left but are different
in that the curve of ga ६ is joined with the top extremity of the vertical in a direct way
[Tripathi 1962: 58], while that of sa ५ is notched or shows a hollow in joining with the
vertical [Tripathi 1962: 71] in the MSS. Below are the examples of the shapes of ga and
sa in JM.

ga: [jā]gra[ta]m (10.11.2), [a]gni[š] (10.11.7)
sa: [s]a[yāṇam] (10.11.2), [ś]ro[tram] (10.11.9)

Here we can point out another writing mistake, Xdha X ~ Xva X. Thus, the
corruption in JM occurs as a result of a combination of these two writing mistakes.
< **ga** ambique ~ **cā** ambique >

PS 10.11.8cd: indraṣ ca tasmā agniṣ +cācchambaṇṭkāram asyatām
‘Let Indra and Agni shoot (arrows) at him (the rival) unfailingly.’

cāṭsamvaṭkāra [new line] m

The shape of **cā** here clearly differs from other similar letter shapes (e.g. **ta** ambique, **ra** ambique) in that it has a dot under the main part, which does not survive in modern Oṛyā [Friedrich 2002: 173]. In addition, the point of the upper curve of **cā** ambique comes downwards and joins with the vertical at right in the MSS, which sometimes results in a notched curve or a joint with the meeting point below the top extremity, as seen from the following examples.

cā[tanaḥ] (10.1.12):  JM  Pa

< **cā** ambique ~ **rā** ambique (ca ambique ~ ra ambique)>

PS 10.3.5c: atho eṣāṃ payo hara
‘And also bring forth their (rivals’) milk.’

hara  JM  Pa  hac  JM  Pa

The similarity of the basic part consisting of the loop and curve accounts for the occurrence of writing mistakes between **ra** ambique ~ **ca** ambique. Besides the dot characteristic of **ca** ambique as mentioned above, the difference between these letters lies in the peculiarity of the curve line: the curve of **ra** ambique ends in an outward curl, as follows.

[abhi]ca[ksṇe] (10.3.4)  JM  Pa

[śataśā]ra dahā (10.3.7)  JM  Pa

The outward curl of **ra** ambique is originally a tail under the loop [Tripathi 1962: 69], as can be ascertained in MS Ku.


< omission of the consonant al hook-sign ‘<’ for t >

I cannot find a case of omission of ‘<’ for t in PS 10. However, there are two cases of the omission of ‘<’ for other consonants: **ha** ambique ~ **da** ambique, as follows.
(1) 10.2.2a: tavaítam āśvinā havam
‘To your call Āsvins came.’

havam ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element JM  davat[ava] ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element Pa

(2) 10.4.13a: sapatnasāham pramrṇam
‘[Let the kingdom here be] one overcoming rivals and destroying.’

sapatnasāham ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element JM
sapatnasādam ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element Pa

Thus, it can be safely assured that the spelling mistake mutše ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element (JM, Ku) ~ suro ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element (Pa) is caused by a combination of errors: mu ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element ~ su ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element, tse ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element ~ ro ə̀ Javascript:MathML-Element, and omission of the hook-sign ‘<’ for t. The prior research into this corruption has mainly centred around MS Pa. As Griffiths has remarked of ‘the very carelessly written modern copies of ms. Pa’ [2003: 336], this MS has an especially large number of corruptions among the MSS of PS 10, which I have studied. The case taken up here is one of the more serious corruptions in Pa and appears in isolation in it, not in the other MSS. However, we have seen above that there is a class of corruptions, namely, that of compound mistakes, which we can explain as combinations of several spelling mistakes, each of which in itself is simple and sporadically encountered across the MSS. This case is one of them.

Notes


2. On the details of MSS JM, Ku, and Pa treated in this paper, see Griffiths 2003: 345–367, 2010: XXV–XXVIII.

3. The examples taken up here are limited to those from JM and Pa for the clarity of the point.

Bibliography


