

# Note on a corruption of a manuscript of the Atharvaveda-Paippalādasamhitā

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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-Paippalādasamhitā (PS).<sup>1</sup> 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:

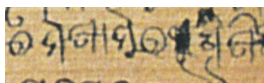
pratyagvadhena pracyutān bhrātrvyān ghoracakṣasaḥ | 8—8  
indrāgnī enān vṛścatām maiṣām +uc +cheṣi kaś cana || 8—8

‘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.

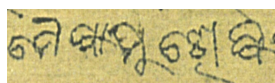
I treat here the reading of **maiṣām +uc +cheṣi** in pāda d. The readings of this part in the concerned Orissa MSS,<sup>2</sup> which I was able to check first-hand, are as follows;

JM (folio 92 recto. line 2)



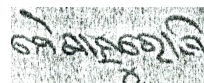
ମୈଷାମୁତ୍ତେଷି  
maiṣām ut śeṣi

Ku (folio 46 verso. line 3)



ମୈଷାମୁତ୍ତେଷି  
maiṣām ut śeṣi

Pa (folio 110. line 20)



ମୈଷାମୁତ୍ତେଷି  
maiṣāsuṛeṣi

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The emendation **+uc +cheṣi** is based on the result of the sandhi *-t ś-*. As seen from the above materials, **mutśe** ମୁତ୍ସେ in JM and Ku is corrupted into **suro** ସୁରୋ in Pa. A possibility of a writing mistake **mu** ମୁ ~ **su** ସୁ (**ma** ମା ~ **sa** ସା) owing to addition or omission of the diagonal can be assumed from similar cases like **kṣa** କ୍ଷା ~ **ya** ଯା (kṣatram ~ yatram JM, 10.4.11) and **ṣa** ଷ ~ **pa** ପ (avadhiṣam ~ avadhipam Pa, 10.12.12). As for the case **tśe** ତ୍ସେ ~ **ro** ରୋ, we presume that the base character **śa** ଶ was miswritten **rā** ରା and that the writing of the consonantal hook-sign for the **t** ‘<sub>୨</sub>’ of **tśe** ତ୍ସେ was omitted. At first glance, the possibility of the spelling error **śa** ଶ ~ **rā** ରା seems unlikely. However, when we consider this phenomenon as one occurring in the context of a group of letters (in this case, **śa** ଶ ~ **ga** ଗ ~ **cā** ଚା ~ **rā** ରା), 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<sup>3</sup> of PS 10: **śa** ଶ ~ **ga** ଗ, **ga** ଗ ~ **cā** ଚା, and **cā** ଚା ~ **rā** ରା (**ca** ଚ ~ **ra** ର). 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 ‘<sub>୨</sub>’ for **t**.

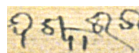
3.

< **śa** ଶ ~ **ga** ଗ >

PS 10.11.7d: kruddhau digdhābhir asyatām



‘Let them (Indra and Agni) being angered shoot with the  
(poison-)besmeared (arrows).’

digdhābhir a[syatām]  ଦିଗ୍ଧାଭିର Pa

diśvābhir a[syatām]  ଦିଶ୍ଵାଭିର JM

The letter shapes of **ga** ଗ and **śa** ଶ have in common the loop at left but are different in that the curve of **ga** ଗ is joined with the top extremity of the vertical in a direct way [Tripathi 1962: 58], while that of **śa** ଶ 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 **śa** in JM.

**ga**:  [jā]gra[taṃ] (10.11.2),  [a]gni[ś] (10.11.7)

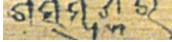
**śa**:  śa[yānam] (10.11.2),  śro[traṃ] (10.11.9)

Here we can point out another writing mistake, **Xdha** ଧ ~ **Xva** ବ. Thus, the corruption in JM occurs as a result of a combination of these two writing mistakes.

< **ga** ଗ ~ **cā** ଚା >


PS 10.11.8cd: indraś ca tasmā agniś +cācchambaṭkāram asyatām

‘Let Indra and Agni shoot (arrows) at him (the rival) unfailingly.’

cātsamvaṭkāra<sup>[new line]</sup> JM  ଚାତ୍ସମ୍ବଟ୍କାର JM

gātsamvaṭkīr a[syatām]  ଗାତ୍ସମ୍ବଟ୍କୀର Pa

The shape of **ca** ଚ here clearly differs from other similar letter shapes (e.g. **ta** ତ, **ra** ର) 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** ଚା 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[taṇaḥ] (10.1.12):  JM  Pa

[mā]ga[n] (10.5.7):  JM  Pa



< **cā** ଚା ~ **rā** ରା (**ca** ଚ ~ **ra** ର) >



PS 10.3.5c: atho eṣāṃ payo hara

‘And also bring forth their (rivals’) milk.’



hara  ହର JM haca  ହଚ Pa

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



[abhi]ca[kṣṇe] (10.3.4)  JM  Pa

[śataśā]ra[daḥ] (10.3.7)  JM  Pa

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

[gho]raca[kṣasaḥ] (10.12.9b) Ku:  cf., JM:  raca, Pa:  racca

< omission of the consonantal 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** ହ ~ **da** ଦ, as follows.

## (1) 10.2.2a: tavaitām aśvinā havam

‘To your call Aśvins came.’

havam ହାବଂ JM davan t[ava] ଦବନ୍ତ Pa

## (2) 10.4.13a: sapatnasāhaṃ pramṛṇam

‘[Let the kingdom here be] one overcoming rivals and destroying.’

sapatnasāhaṃ ସପତ୍ନସାହାଂ JM

sapatnasādaṃ ସପତ୍ନସାଦାଂ Pa

Thus, it can be safely assured that the spelling mistake **mutśe** ମୁତ୍ସେ (JM, Ku) ~ **suṛo** ସୁରୋ (Pa) is caused by a combination of errors: **mu** ମୁ ~ **su** ସୁ, **tśe** ତ୍ସେ ~ **ro** ରୋ, and omission of the hook-sign ‘ ˆ ’ 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

1. e.g. see Whitney 1905: cxiii–cxxvi, Tripathi 1962: 93–125, Witzel 1985a: 260–261, 1985b: 267, 282–284, Bhattacharya 1997: xxxii–xxxiii, Zehnder 1999: 15, Lubotsky 2002: 9–12, Griffiths 2003: 339–344, 2009: XXVIII–XXX, Lopez 2010: 32–36.
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.

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