

THE RECENSIONS OF THE ŚUKLA YAJURVEDA*

C. L. Prabhakar, Bangalore

I. Introduction

Yajurveda is known for its multiplicity of recensions or schools unlike the other Vedas. Śukla Yajurveda (= SYV) is known by its fifteen/sixteen recensions while the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda by its eightysix recensions. Unfortunately, several recensions of each branch of the Yajurveda are lost.

SYV is available in print even, in two recensions, viz. Mādhyandina and Kāṇva. The other recensions of the Veda are known by name only. Those two recensions of the Veda are identical except for a few differences. Such close resemblance is an interesting point worth our note because such a feature is absent in the Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda recensions.

It is proposed, therefore, to compare the two recensions of the SYV formally to support the view stated above. Indeed such an attempt warrants a larger space. However, hereunder are pointed out broadly the distinctive features of the Saṁhitās of the SYV in respect of Form and Character.

II. The Form of the two Saṁhitās.

Vājasaneyā Mādhyandina Saṁhitā (= VMS) and Vājasaneyā Kāṇva Saṁhitā (= VKS) are the representatives of the said schools of the SYV. Both contain equal number of chapters eventhough the respective arrangement of the text (Kaṇḍikās) differs to some extent.

The SYV, a sacrificial Saṁhitā, contains forty chapters while the last chapter (40) being (Īśa) Upaniṣad. The remaining chapters (39) deal with various sacrifices as shown below:

Sr. No.	Sacrifice	VMS Chapters.	VKS Chapters.
1	Darśapūrṇamāsa	1—2	1—2
2	Agnihotra	3	3
3	Soma	4—8	4—9
4	Vājapeya	9	10
5	Rājasūya	9—10	11
6	Agnicayana	11—18	12—20
7	Sautrāmaṇi	19—21	21—23

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Sr. No.	Sacrifice	VMS Chapters.	VKS Chapters.
8	Aśvamedha	22—25	24—28
9	Puruṣamedha	30—31	34—35.1—22
10	Sarvamedha	32—33.1—54	35.23—34—32.1—56
11	Pitṛmedha	35	33.35—54
12	Pravargya	36—39	36—39

TABLE A

Chapters 26—29 and 33.57—34.1—54 of the VMS are said to be *Khilas*. Of these, chapters 26—29, as tradition lays down, belong to sacrifices, viz. 3, 6—8 (from the table above) while the rest to describe Brahmayajña. This portion of the SYV is not recognised by its later literature. However, we come across one or two Kaṇḍikās from 26th chapter of the VMS being quoted by the Śrauta Sūtra.

At the middle portion of the Samhitās, we find difference in the distribution of Chapters between the recensions of the SYV. The opening and concluding Chapters of the Veda are common to both the recensions.

The mantras of Vājapeya and Rājasūya are found mixed up in the VMS, while they are distributed into independent chapters in the VKS.

The sacrifices No. 3, 6 (Table A) show more number of Chapters in the VKS. But they contain no new portion untraceable to the VMS. On the other hand, that text of the VMS is spread into a length of one more Chapter in each of the sacrifices.

The difference maintained by the VKS in comparison with the VMS, is seen made up by its (VKS) Chapters 30 and 35 which accommodates the Kaṇḍikās of the five Chapters viz. 28, 29, 31, 33, 35 of the VMS. This equalises ultimately the final arrangement of the text between the Samhitās.

Such an arrangement in the VKS might speak for its clarity in arrangement of text.

Generally, the distribution of the Kaṇḍikās into Chapters is common to both the recensions. However, we have instances where the VKS has disturbed the order of the VMS-Kaṇḍikās. For example, the 35th Chapter of the VKS has mixed up the Kaṇḍikās pertaining to sacrifices No. 9—11 (Table A). See *ibid*. Therein one notices the sequence of rites of the Sarvamedha being altered.

Each Chapter of the Samhitā is divided into a definite number of Kaṇḍikās. They are mostly metrical. Prose and mixed (metrical + non-metrical) forms are also seen in them.

Thus the form of the two Samhitās is the same irrespective of the distribution of Chapters in detail. This, of course, supports the recensions to vary in texts.

III. The Character of the two Saṁhitās.

It was mentioned in the Introduction that the recensions show verbal variations. Most of such verbal variations can be classified. Hereunder are pointed out a few items of classification:

1. Change in the word-order of the Kaṇḍikās in the respective recensions of the Veda. For example, the expression *dhūrvati tam dhūrva* [VMS 1.8] > *dhūrvati dhūrva tam* [VKS 1.11].

Many examples can be cited under this category.

2. Change within the word itself.

The word *parājaghnū* [VMS 1.13] > *parājaghāna* in the VKS [1.19].

Similarly the word *br̥hadgrāvāsi* [VMS 1.15] > *br̥hangrāvāsi* in the VKS [1.23].

3. Addition within a word.

Divaskambhinī [VMS 1.9] > *divaskambhinyasi* in the VKS [1.32].

Likewise *Sada āsīda* [VMS 2.6] > *sadasī āsīda* in the VKS [2.8].

4. Additions in the expressions.

The expression *dhinuhi prāṇāya* [VMS 1.20] is added with some more words in the VKS [1.33] viz. "...*yajñapatim dhinuhi mām yajñanyam*...". Likewise at VMS 1.30 the VKS [1.47] reads additionally *indrānyai sannahanam* and this is not common to the VMS.

5. Position of the verb.

The position of the verb *vadhyāsam* in the VMS occupies fifth place in the Kaṇḍikā [1.23] while in the VKS the word occupies second position.

The above examples describing the verbal variations indicate that the recensions do not bear any serious differences rather they support identity in the texts.

Apart from such verbal variations there are instances where the sequence of the Kaṇḍikās is different in the respective recensions. This difference slightly affects the sequence of the rites of the sacrifices performed by the corresponding traditions. Added to that any other kind of bodily variations in the arrangement of the Kaṇḍikās would only refer to the system of the sacrifice.

The VKS contains about twenty-eight Kaṇḍikās which are untraceable to the VMS. Many of them are significant. Such exclusive Kaṇḍikās may be given below:

VKS: 1.5, 2.20—22, 24—26, 38, 42—43, 52—53, 3.9—10, 13, 71, 72—73, 3.75—76, 5.43, 8.27, 10.29, 16.52, 23.14, 24.21, 28.7, 14, 40.16.

These untraceable Kaṇḍikās are found in the context of mantras of the Darśapūrṇamāsa, Agnihotra, Soma sacrifice, Vājapeya, Agnicayana, and Aśvamedha sacrifices. But, most of those Kaṇḍikās are found in the Darśapūrṇamāsa only.

The Kaṇḍikās 2.19; 20—22 are significant because thereat the Brahman priest and his role in sacrifice are mentioned. This information

is not possible to obtain from the VMS. So also, 2.38, 42 are equally remarkable because the names of various utensils employed in the sacrifice are mentioned.

The Agnihotra-Kaṇḍikās in the VKS introduce another rite Vājibhakṣaṇa yāga which is uncommon to the VMS. Further those Kaṇḍikās indicate the function of priests and this contributes to the aspect of "Priesthood" of the SYV.

In the Vājapeya, the VKS insists on mentioning the name of the King and the country specifically while the VMS does not. That is, VKS reads (11.3): *eṣa vaḥ kuravo rāje ṣa vaḥ pāncālā rājā*; where the VMS (9.40) reads: *eṣa vo amī rājā*. Here we note the VMS to be giving general formula while the VKS seems to grow particularising and regional.

Such disparities are seen between the recensions in regard to the subject matter. Obviously this does not affect identity in recensions of the SYV. Discussions of such cases will be undertaken separately.

If we consider the whole literature of the SYV at a glance, we notice that the saṁhitās of the SYV are not supported of their difference fully. That is, the Satapatha Brāhmaṇa which is also available in two recensions show to some extent (1—5 Kāṇḍas = 1—7 Kāṇḍas) the form and character of the Saṁhitās repeated mutually. Later, the two recensions agree except for a few distinctive readings which are listed out by Caland (*Kāṇva Satapatha Brāhmaṇa*, Vol. III) who strongly felt that the texts are the same though they are in two recensions, particularly after the Rājasūya and onwards. So far as the Sūtrās of the SYV, they are common to both the traditions of the SYV. This indicates ultimate convergence. The Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra, for example, manages both the recensions indicating here and there certain exclusive features of the respective traditions.

Thus the Sūtrās of the SYV at least seem to be interested in unification, while those of Kṛṣṇa Yajurveda are not so. Now we turn to

III. The Relation of the Śukla Yajurveda with the Ṛgveda.

Ṛgveda (= RV) is a treasure from which the later Vedas borrowed quite freely. In so doing the Saṁhitās have shown several ways. Yajurveda, particularly SYV, is no exception.

The VMS contains 1975 Kaṇḍikās. But only 980 Kaṇḍikās are peculiar to the SYV while the rest are found partly or fully in the RV and Atharvaveda. RV dominates the SYV in that portion.

As it is not possible to elaborate here this issue, it is proposed to point out only certain common observations regarding the RV-verses found in the SYV.

Generally, RV-verses are found in the SYV, as they are without any

change. Regarding those verses which undergo some changes in the SYV we observe that there are certain definite ways shown as below:

1. By changing letters of words within the verse itself.
2. By replacing words, viz. substituting different word or words in place of original words of the RV.
3. By introducing different pādas to verses while retaining one verse-half of the original verse.
4. By making additions like 'Svāhā, ādityebhyaḥ to the original verses at the end.
5. By showing prose line at the beginning or at the middle or at the end of the original (RV-)verses.
6. By making omissions of certain words of the original verses without substituting another word in place of such omissions.
7. Making up a single verse out of the two verse-halves of the RV.
8. By transposing the pādas of the original verses, i. e. the first pāda of certain original verse and the second pāda of another original verse are brought together and another verse is composed.
9. By composing a few more lines in the manner of the original verse (e. g. VMS 3.60).

Even so it is possible to collect yet several other ways that the SYV has exhibited in incorporating the RV-verses. These observations are true to both the recensions of the Veda.

Now we note below a few peculiarities in particular, between the recensions of the SYV.

VKS has omitted several RV-verses which VMS has. The VMS contains greater number of RV-verses compared to the VKS. Hereunder is given a list showing RV-verses that are found in the VMS but not in the VKS. (The references are with respect to VMS.)

RV	VMS
1.22.9	= 26.20
1.105.1	= 33.90
1.161.17—22	= 25.40—45
3.27.7	= 18.66
3.35.6	= 26.23
5.25.7	= 26.12
6.47.27—28, 30—31	= 29.53, 54, 56—57
6.75.7—10, 12	= 29.45—48, 50
7.2.2	= 29.27
7.41.63—67	= 34.34, 36, 40
8.3.8	= 33.97
8.60.9	= 27.43
8.88.1	= 26.11

TABLE B

Likewise, the VMS too does not have some RV-verses which VKS contains. Such number, however, is small. For example, 3.30.21 = VKS 28.14, 5.26.2 = VKS 24.21, etc. Thus, we note that the recensions vary in having the stock of the verses from RV even—though they agree to have good number of RV-verses.

Now a few observations in respect of the SYV in its two recensions relating to the RV may be given below:

1. The point that verses from the RV are seen without changes in the SYV needs no further illustration. It is held that Kāṇva recension is faithful to RV on a reason that the VKS and the RV agree in some peculiar notations (see e.g. Venkatarāma Sastry, *Critical Studies on Kātyāyana Śukla Yajurveda Prātisākhya*, pp. 22). But it may be said that such peculiar statements viz. that Kāṇva recension is more faithful to the RV than the Mādhyandina can be doubted because one comes across (balancing examples) peculiar features in respect of both the recensions to claim each of the recensions to be faithful to the RV. Moreover, it is difficult to determine the extent of faithfulness of the recensions to the RV.

2. There are many examples of the RV-verses in the SYV whereat, both the recensions do not agree with the RV-version. On the other hand, they have their own different versions which perhaps suit the sacrificial context (e.g. 8.76.10 = 8.39 VMS).

3. Sometimes the VKS alone contains variant reading. For example, 1.82.2—3 = 3.51—52 VMS, 1.91.23 = 34.23 (= VKS 33.17).

4. Sometimes the VKS alone reads verbal variations which is not attested by the later literature. Even the Kāṇva Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa does not support and attest. For example, 1.82.2 = VMS 3.51, also 7.92.1 = 7.7.

4. The SYV seems to admit only required number of verses from the RV. In this respect, sometimes the recensions even show some discrepancy. For example, the RV 1.161.1—22 (whole Sūkta) is found in the VMS (25.24—45) while the VKS omits the last six verses (17—22) of the *sūkta*.

5. Repetition of the verses, of course, is the common feature of Veda. In such YV is no exception. Usually a RV-verse is repeated twice, occasionally thrice and rarely four times in the SYV. Sometimes, the VMS and VKS do not contain equal number of repetitions of a verse. That is, each of the recensions observe its own convenience, cf. 1.115.1 = 7.42 (VKS 9.7), VKS 8.24, 13.46 (VKS 14.48). Here only the VKS repeats the verse one more time.

Apart from such differentiating characteristics yet we find certain examples where the VMS and the VKS have independently operated the RV-verses. That is, they have additions, omissions and alterations done mutually for RV-verses independent of the other recensions. For example, in the instance 8.72.13 = VMS 33.21, the VKS adds a word

{*codayat*} more to the RV-verse uncommon to the VMS. So also in 4.9.8 = VMS 3.36, the VKS alone adds a prose tag while the VMS does not.

Further as an example of Omissions we may note 1.50.1 = 7.41, 8.41, etc. Here the VKS drops *Svāhā* while the VMS contains the same. Similarly, as an example for Alterations we may cite 3.47.1, 25, 3.31.7 = 7.38—35 as an example. Here the VMS reversed the order of the RV-verses. VMS 7.38 is found in the VKS in its supplementary portion, viz. Chapter 29.

Thus the respective recensions have envisaged certain characteristic differences in regard to the RV, perhaps to keep a thin line of distinction between the recensions. Despite all that, the recensions maintain combined relationship with the RV showing concordance to a very large extent.

IV. Conclusion.

Summarily, it may be concluded that

- a) the recensions of the SYV are identical for all academic purposes.
- b) The Form of the two Saṁhitā-recensions of that Veda is the same. There lies difference only in respect of the system of arrangement of the text, even though there is agreement in the extent of the text.
- c) The Character of the two recensions is also equally the same. The exclusive Kaṇḍikās of the Kāṇva recension of the Veda in its Saṁhitā are significant. They enhance the ultimate contributory value of the SYV to the Vedic Literature.
- d) RV is dominant in the SYV. SYV has well utilised the verses of the RV effecting convenient changes to the verses wherever necessary. It is mostly suiting to the needs of the sacrifice.