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Early Vedic

Introduction — Part 2: Texts and Transmission

Roadmap

- Literature
- Ritual
- Transmission
- Periodization
- Selected Resources

Literature

- 5 major genres
 - Saṃhitās
 - Brāhmaṇas
 - Āraṇyakas
 - Upaniṣads
 - Sūtras

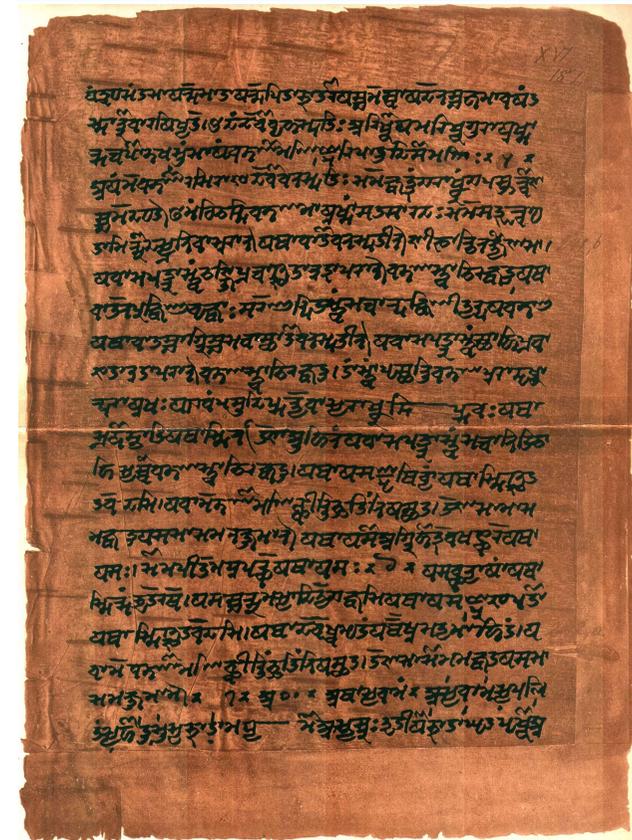


- Except for Sūtras considered “revealed” to authors (Śruti)
 - wording not to be altered!

Literature — Saṁhitās

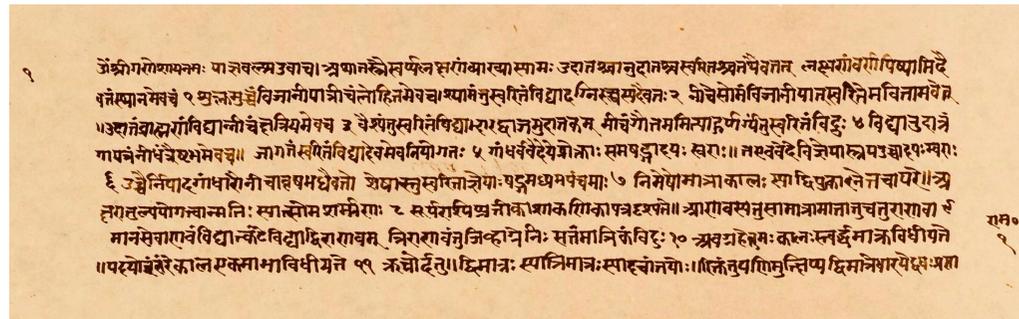
- 4 Saṁhitās
 - Ṛgveda (RV)
 - Sāmaveda (SV)
 - Yajurveda (YV)
 - Atharvaveda (AV)
- Often simply referred to as “Vedas”
- Consist of “Mantras”

Birch-bark manuscript of Atharvaveda from Kashmir,
University Library of Tübingen, ca 1500 CE



Literature — Vedāngas

- Vast ancillary literature (Vedānga)
 - phonetics (Śikṣā)
 - grammar (Vyākaraṇa)
 - etymology (Nirukta)
 - metrics (Chandhas)



Manuscript copy of Yājñavalkya-Śikṣā, Benares Sanskrit College, 1877 CE [Ms Sarah Welch](#) — [CC BY-SA 4.0](#)

➤ Host of valuable information on various aspects of Vedic

Ritual

- Majority of texts associated with ritual practice
 - recited during ritual
 - deal with exegesis
 - ensure orthopraxy
- Video shows Atyagniṣṭoma
 - with SV chanting
 - in Barsi, Maharashtra
 - February 2001



Replica of altar and utensils used during performance of Agnicayana ritual. [Arayilpdas](#) — [CC BY-SA 3.0](#)

Transmission

- Predominantly oral
- Vedas handed down in different recitations (Pāṭha)
 - includes grammatical analysis
 - using various mnemotechnical devices
 - tradition survives until today in Pāṭha-Śālas
- Transmission unmatched in detail and accuracy
- Written sources of little import if compared to other traditions

Transmission — Śākhās

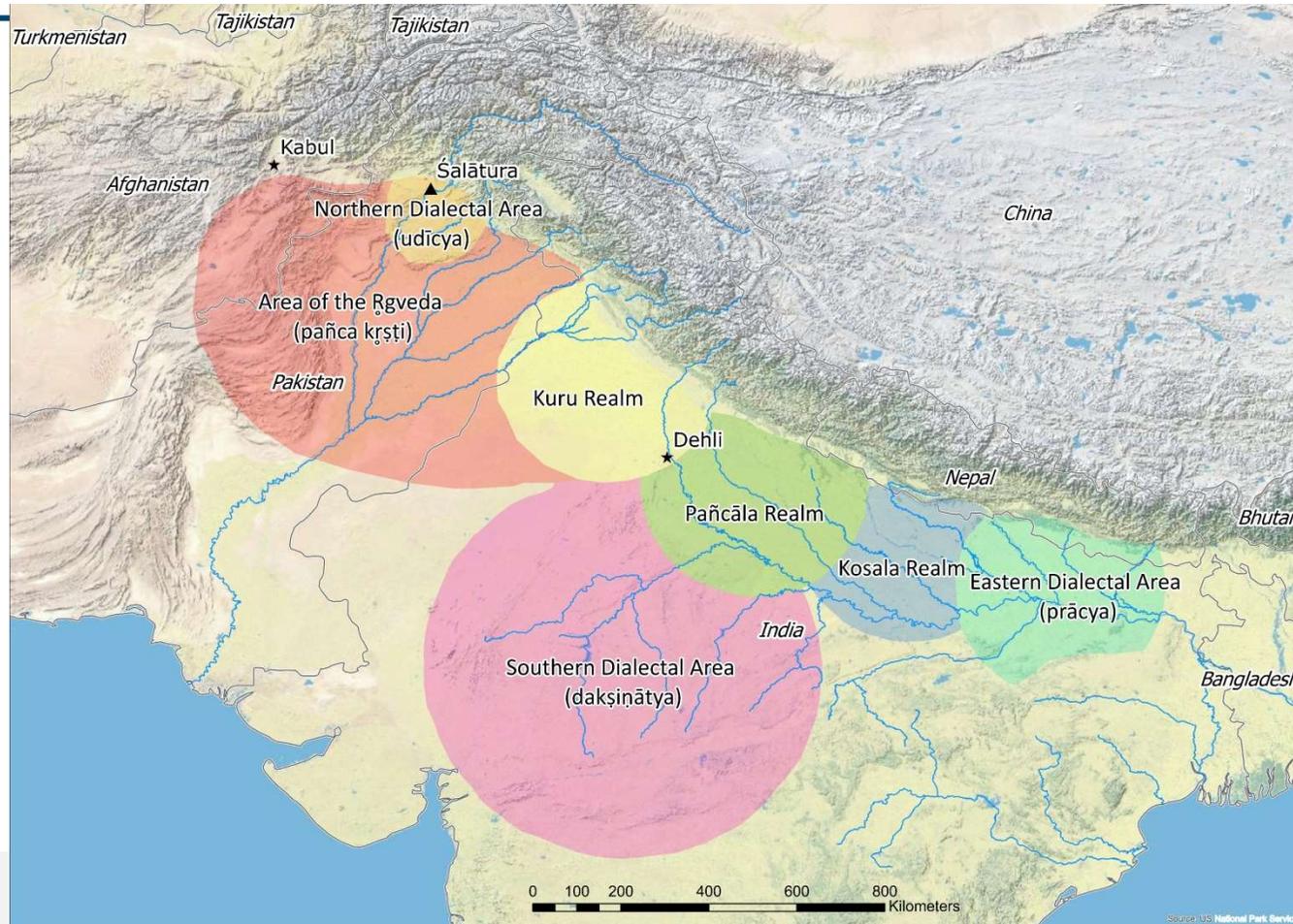
- Many texts preserved in different schools (Śākhās)
 - differ in content and arrangement
 - show minor dialectal differences
 - historical centers traceable

- But neither all Śākhās nor all texts survived

Transmission — Śākhās

	RV	SV	YV		AV
			Śukla	Kṛṣṇa	
Samhitā	Śākala	Kauthuma	Mādhyandina	Taittirīya	Śaunakīya
				Maitrāyaṇī	
		Jaiminīya	Kāṇva	Kāṭhaka	Paippalāda
				Kapiṣṭhala	

Vedic India and Its Dialectal Areas



Periodization

Stratum	Texts
Early Vedic	RV
Old Vedic	YV (Mantras), SV, AV
Middle Vedic	YV (prose), early Brāhmaṇas
Young Vedic	later Brāhmaṇas, early Upaniṣads
Late Vedic	later Upaniṣads, Sūtras

Selected Resources — Printed

- Wackernagel, J. 1896–1964. *Altindische Grammatik*. 3 vols. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.
- MacDonell, A. A. 1910. *Vedic Grammar*. Strassburg: Trübner.
- Delbrück, B. 1888. *Altindische Syntax*. Halle: Buchhandlung des Waisenhauses.
- Allen, W. S. 1953. *Phonetics in Ancient India*. London/New York/Toronto: Oxford University Press.
- Kobayashi, M. 2004. *Historical Phonology of Old Indo-Aryan Consonants*. Tokyo: Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.
- Mayrhofer, M. 1992–2001. *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. 3 vols. Heidelberg: Winter.

Selected Resources — Online

- GRETIL <<http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil.htm>>
- TITUS <<http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/indexd.htm>>
- CDSD <<https://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/>>
- NWS <<http://nws.uzi.uni-halle.de/>>

बहवो धन्यवादाः
Thank you for your attention!