

Dropping of the Visarga before Sibilants

Abstract

Dropping of the visarga before a sibilant which is followed by an unvoiced consonant is a Vedic rule mentioned in the Prātiśākhya and a Vārttika of Kātyāyana on the Pāṇini sūtra 8.3.36. According to the Vyāsa Śikṣā, the Śamāna texts and Bondalākṣaṇa the consonant after the sibilant can either be unvoiced or voiced.

Pāṇini / Kātyāyana

वा शरि ॥ ३६ ॥

vā śari ||8.3.36||

ḥ + (ś, ṣ, s) = (ḥ/s) + (ś, ṣ, s)

खर्परे शरि वा विसर्गलोपो वक्तव्यः

kharpare śari vā visargalopo vaktavyaḥ (Vārttika of Kātyāyana)

It should be said that the visarga is optionally dropped before a sibilant (śar) which is followed by an unvoiced stop-consonant (khar)

ḥ + (ś, ṣ, s) + unvoiced stop = (a) (ś, ṣ, s) + unvoiced stop / (b) ḥ + (ś, ṣ, s) + unvoiced stop / (c) s + (ś, ṣ, s) + unvoiced stop => (śś, ṣṣ, ss) + unvoiced stop (8.4.40-41)

Example:

mandibhiḥ + stomebhiḥ = mandibhi stomebhiḥ / mandibhiḥ stomebhiḥ / mandibhis stomebhiḥ (RV 1.9.3)

Ṛgveda-Prātiśākhya

ऊष्मण्यघोषोदये लुप्यते परे नतेऽपि ॥

ūṣmaṇy aghoṣodaye lupyate pare nate 'pi ||4.36|| (4.12)

If a sibilant (ūṣman) followed by a voiceless consonant follows, (visarjanīya) is dropped, even if the (following) sibilant is cerebralized.

ḥ + (ś, ṣ, s) + voiceless consonant = (ś, ṣ, s or ṣ) + voiceless consonant

The only combinations in the Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā starting with a sibilant and followed by a voiceless consonant are: śc, sk, st, sth, sp and sph. This sandhi is called 'Anvaṣaravaktra' in sūtra 4.37.

Examples:

stokāḥ + ścotanti = stokā ścotanti (RV 3.21.2)

yajuḥ + skannam = yaju ṣkannam (RV 10.181.3)

mandibhiḥ + stomebhiḥ = mandibhi stomebhiḥ (RV 1.9.3)

duḥ-stutī = duṣṭutī (RV 2.33.4)

nīcīnāḥ + sthuḥ = nīcīnā sthuḥ (RV 1.24.7)

viśvāḥ + spridhaḥ = viśvā spridhaḥ (RV 10.18.9)

naḥ + sphātim = na sphātim (RV 1.188.9)

The printed Ṛgveda Saṁhitās with the exception of the transliterated edition of Aufrecht do not show this sandhi. They read stokāḥ ścotanti, yajuḥ ṣkannam etc. with the exception of duṣṭutiḥ (1.53.1), duṣṭutī (2.33.4, 7.32.21) and niṣṭhitaḥ (1.182.7)

See the [list of all dropped visargas](#) in the Aufrecht edition of Ṛgveda Saṁhitā.

Śamāna-Śikṣā

This text enumerates those words of the Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā ending in āḥ which drop the visarga (1) before a voiced consonant and (2) **before a sibilant (ś, s) which is followed by a consonant.**

āḥ + (st, sth, sp) = ā (st, sth, sp)

āḥ + (śr, śv, sm, sy, sv) = ā (śy, śv, sm, sy, sv)

Śamāna-Śikṣā refers to a Saṁhitā in which the visarga is dropped before a sibilant which is followed by an unvoiced or voiced consonant.

Example:

candramās cetās cakṣās cakraṇās cakṣānā **matau caniṣṭhās** citrā rodhasvatīr-yāmebhiḥ-paro 'śvāpaś candrā riśādasah-paras ca cakramānā rihanti-paro nava 14

vayaṁ te asyāṁ sum**matau caniṣṭhā(h)** syāma varūthe aghnato nṛpītau ||RV 7.20.8||

vayaṁ | te | asyāṁ | su-**matau** | **caniṣṭhāḥ** | **syāma** | varūthe | aghnataḥ | nṛ-pītau ||

Reference: <https://sites.google.com/site/vedalaksana/shamana-shiksha-with-commentary-T.pdf>

Bondalakṣaṇa

As seen in the following sūtra Bondalakṣaṇa refers to a Ṛgveda-Saṁhitā in which the visarga is dropped before a sibilant which is followed by an unvoiced or voiced consonant.

śnathayan svarṣāḥ [svāhā] pibatu starya sravitave svabhiṣṭisumnaḥ svasvayuspaṭ śmaśrūṇīndro visargeṇa |
indraḥ in the Padapāṭha; in the Saṁhitā indra with dropped visarga before a sibilant followed by a consonant

1.051.09a anuvratāya randhayann apavratān ābhūbhir **indra(h) śnathayann** anābhuvah |
 anu-vratāya | randhayan | apa-vratān | ā-bhūbhiḥ | **indrah | śnathayan** | anābhuvah |
 3.034.04a **indra(h) svarṣā** janayann ahāni jigāyośigbhiḥ pṛtanā abhiṣṭiḥ |
indrah | svaḥ-sāḥ | janayan | ahāni | jigāya | uśik-bhiḥ | pṛtanāḥ | abhiṣṭiḥ |
 3.050.01a **indra(h) svāhā pibatu** yasya soma āgatyā tumro vṛṣabho marutvān |
indrah | svāhā | pibatu | yasya | somah | ā-gatya | tumrah | vṛṣabhaḥ | marutvān |
 4.019.07c dhanvāny ajrāṃ aprṇak tṛṣāṇāṃ adhog **indra(h) staryo** damsapatnīḥ ||
 dhanvāni | ajrān | aprṇak | tṛṣāṇān | adhok | **indrah | staryah** | dam-sapatnīḥ ||4.019.07||
 4.019.08c pariṣṭhitā atrṇad badbadhānāḥ sīrā **indra(h) sravitave** pṛthivyā ||
 pari-sṭhitāḥ | atrṇat | badbadhānāḥ | sīrāḥ | **indrah | sravitave** | pṛthivyā ||4.019.08||
 6.020.08a sa vetasum daśamāyam daśoṇim tūtujim **indra(h) svabhiṣṭisumnaḥ** |
 saḥ | vetasum | daśa-māyam | daśa-oṇim | tūtujim | **indrah | svabhiṣṭi-sumnaḥ** |
 8.045.07a yad ājim yāty ājikṛd **indra(h) svaśvayur** upa |
 yat | ājim | yāti | āji-kṛt | **indrah | svaśva-yuḥ** | upa |
 8.061.15a **indra(h) spaḥ** uta vṛtrahā paraspā no vareṇyah |
indrah | spaḥ | uta | vṛtra-hā | paraḥ-pāḥ | naḥ | vareṇyah |
 10.023.04a so cin nu vṛṣṭir yūthyā svā sacāṃ **indra(h) śmaśrūṇi** haritābhi pruşṇute |
 so iti | cit | nu | vṛṣṭiḥ | yūthyā | svā | sacā | **indrah | śmaśrūṇi** | haritā | abhi | pruşṇute |

Reference: <https://sites.google.com/site/vedalaksana/Bondalakshana-with-commentary.pdf>

Taittirīya-Prātiśākhya

ऊष्मपरो ऽघोषपरे लुप्यते काण्डमायनस्य ॥ ९.१ ॥

ūṣmaparo 'ghoṣapare lupyate kāṇḍamāyanasya ||9.1||

Visarjanīya, when followed by a sibilant which has an unvoiced letter after it, is dropped, according to Kāṇḍamāyana.

Examples:

divaḥ + skambhaniḥ = diva skambhaniḥ (TS 1.1.6)

vaḥ + stena = va stena (TS 1.1.1)

citaḥ + stha = cita stha (TS 1.1.7)

garbhāḥ + spṛtāḥ = garbhā spṛtāḥ (TS 4.3.9)

Weber's edition (<http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/texte/etcs/ind/aind/ved/yvs/ts/ts.htm>) shows this sandhi.

<http://www.parankusa.org/KrYajurBrowse.aspx> reads divasskambhaniḥ, vasstena, citasstha, garbhāḥ spṛtāḥ

http://vedicreserve.mum.edu/yajur_veda/taittiriya_krishna_yajur_veda.pdf reads divaḥ skambhaniḥ, vaḥ stena, citaḥ stha, garbhāḥ spṛtāḥ

Vyāsa-Śikṣā

लुप्यते संयुतोष्मोर्ध्वोऽप्यवर्णाद्धोषवत्परः २१५

[lupyate saṁyutoṣmordhvo](#)'pyavarṇādghoṣavatparaḥ ||215||

(Visarjanīya) is dropped if placed before a sibilant which is followed by a consonant.

ḥ + (ś, ṣ, s) + consonant = (ś, ṣ, s) + consonant

Examples:

a) voiced consonant

tisraḥ + śyāmāḥ = tisra śyāmāḥ (TS 5.6.12)

cakṣuḥ + śrotram = cakṣu śrotram (TS 1.1.10)

namaḥ + śvabhyaḥ = nama śvabhyaḥ (TS 4.5.4)

lokāḥ + snuvanti = lokā snuvanti (TS 2.1.4)

grhyāḥ + smaḥ = grhyā smaḥ (TS 1.8.6)

kṛṣṇāḥ + syuḥ = kṛṣṇā syuḥ (TS 2.3.1)

namaḥ + srutyāya = nama srutyāya (TS 4.5.7)

ūrjasvatīḥ + svadhāvinīḥ = ūrjasvatī svadhāvinīḥ (TS 4.4.11)

The printed or online Taittirīya Saṁhitās do not show this sandhi. They read tisraḥ śyāmāḥ, cakṣuḥ śrotram etc.

b) unvoiced consonant

āyuh-stomam = āyuṣtomam (TS 7.4.11)

agneḥ + stomam = agne stomam (TS 5.5.6)

harīḥ + stha = harī stha (TS 1.4.28)

catuḥ-sthanām = catustanām (TS 5.1.6)

In the German book “Die Vyāsa-Śikṣā besonders in ihrem Verhältnis zum Taittirīya-Prātiśākhya” Heinrich Lüders (1894) compares the Vyāsa-Śikṣā with the Taittirīya-Prātiśākhya. He says: *This rule of the Śikṣā has not the restriction of the Prātiśākhya that the consonant following the sibilant has to be unvoiced. In the manuscripts the visarga is dropped when the sibilant is followed by an unvoiced or voiced consonant. In the South Indian manuscripts this happens regularly, also in non-Vedic texts. In Nāgarī manuscripts it happens so frequently, that one has to consider the deviations as inaccuracy.*

Śamāna(prakaraṇa)

This text which is included in the Saptalakṣaṇa enumerates those words of the Taittirīya-Saṁhitā ending in āḥ which drop the visarga (1) before a voiced consonant and (2) before a sibilant (ś, s) which is followed by a consonant.

āḥ + (st, sth, sp) = ā (st, sth, sp)

āḥ + (śy, śr, śv, sn, sm, sy, sr, sv) = ā (śy, śr, śv, sn, sm, sy, sr, sv)

Śamānaprakaraṇa refers to a Saṁhitā (probably from South India) in which the visarga is dropped before a sibilant which is followed by an unvoiced or voiced consonant.

Examples:

syuḥ stha bhavanti bhavantu paraḥ bahudheti varjayitvā ||26||

prajā(h) syuḥ (TS 2.2.8, 2.3.4, 6.1.3)

śulkā(h) syuḥ, kṛṣṇā(h) syuḥ (TS 2.3.1)

madhyamā(h) syuḥ (TS 2.5.5)

asaṁyuktā(h) syuḥ (TS 2.5.7)

pramāyukā(h) syuḥ (TS 3.2.6)

rathā(h) syuḥ (TS 3.4.8)

daṁśukā(h) syuḥ (TS 5.2.9)

prapādukā(h) syuḥ (TS 5.6.9)

parāpātukā(h) syuḥ (TS 6.1.3, 6.1.7)

sarpā(h) syuḥ (TS 6.1.10)

prātaryājyā(h) syuḥ (TS 6.2.3)

vyatiṣaktā(h) syuḥ (TS 6.2.6)

mohukā(h) syuḥ (TS 6.5.3)

apraṭiṣṭhitā(h) syuḥ (TS 7.3.10)

paśukāmā(h) syuḥ (TS 7.4.3, 7.4.7)

prokṣitā(h) sthā'gnaye (TS 1.1.5)

prajātā(h) stha (TS 1.1.8)

saṁsrāvabhāgā(h) stheṣā (TS 1.1.13)

śvātrā(h) stha (TS 1.4.1, 6.4.4)

paśyateḍā(h) stha (TS 1.5.6)

māndā(h) stha vāsā(h) stha, tejasyā(h) stha, rāṣṭradā(h) stha (TS 1.8.11)

vadhyācchatrubādhanā(h) stha (TS 1.8.12)

nigrābhyā(h) stha (TS 3.1.8)

āpūryā(h) sthā mā (TS 3.2.5)

rtasthā(h) stha (TS 4.4.11)

Maitrāyaṇī-Saṁhitā

Examples from http://vedicreserve.mum.edu/yajur_veda/maitrayani_krishna_yajur_veda.pdf

showing dropped visarga if placed before a sibilant which is followed by an unvoiced consonant.

vāyava **stha**; va **stena** (MaiS 1.1.1)
huta **stokaḥ** (MaiS 1.1.3)
prokṣitā **stha** (MaiS 1.1.4)
saṁsrāvabhāgā **stheṣā** (MaiS 1.1.13)

Kāthaka-Saṁhitā

Examples from http://vedicreserve.mum.edu/yajur_veda/kathaka_krishna_yajur_veda.pdf
showing that the visarga is not dropped but changed into the following sibilant.

iṣe tvorje tvā vāyava**stho**pāyava**stha** devo vassavitā (KāthS 1.1)

Kāpiṣṭhalakāṭha-Saṁhitā

Examples from http://vedicreserve.mum.edu/yajur_veda/Kapisthala_Katha_Samhita.pdf
showing dropped visarga if placed before a sibilant which is followed by an unvoiced consonant.

iṣe tvorje tvā | vāyava **sth**opāyava **stha** | devo vaḥ savitā; mā **va stena** (KāpS 1.1)

Vājasaneyi-Prātiśākhya

लुङ् मुदि जित्परे १३

luṅ mudi jītpare ||3.13||

Visarjanīya is dropped before a sibilant (s, ṣ, ś) which is followed by an unvoiced stop consonant.

Examples from the Mādhyandina-Saṁhitā:

diva skambhanīrasi (MS 1.19)
divaḥ | **skambhanīḥ** | asi (MP 1.19)

grahai stomāśca (MS 19.28)
grahaiḥ | **stomāḥ** | ca (MP 19.26)

andha sthāndho vo bhakṣīya maha stha maho vo bhakṣīyorja sthorjaṁ vo bhakṣīya rāyaspoṣa stha
rāyaspoṣaṁ vo bhakṣīya ||MS 3.20||

andhaḥ | **stha** | andhaḥ | vaḥ | bhakṣīya | mahaḥ | **stha** | mahaḥ | vaḥ | bhakṣīya | ūrjaḥ | **stha** | ūrjam | vaḥ |
bhakṣīya | rāyaḥ | poṣaḥ | **stha** | rāyaḥ | poṣam | vaḥ | bhakṣīya ||MP 3.19||

sthālībhi sthālīrāpnoti (MS 19.27)
sthālībhiḥ | **sthālīḥ** | āpnoti (MP 19.25)

yadajaya spr̥dhaḥ (MS 19.71)
yad | ajayaḥ | spr̥dhaḥ (MP 19.69)

Example from the Kāṇva-Saṁhitā:

iṣe tvorje tvā vāyava stha | (KS 1.1)
iṣe | tvā | ūrje | tvā | vāyavaḥ | stha

Ṛktaṅtra (a Prātiśākhya of Sāmaveda)

ऊष्मा स्थानम्

ūṣmā sthānam ||177||

Visarjanīya is converted into the spirant corresponding to the place of articulation of the following letter.

ḥ + (k, kh) = jīvamulīya + (k, kh)
ḥ + (p, ph) = upadhmānīya + (p, ph)
ḥ + (c, ch) = (śc, śch)
ḥ + (t, th) = (st, sth)
ḥ + (ś, s, s) = (śś, śś, ss)

ḥ + (ś, s, s) + consonant = (śś, śś, ss) + consonant

Example:

devāḥ + sthana = devāssthana (SV 368)

In the Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā http://gretil.sub.uni-goettingen.de/gretil/1_sanskr/1_veda/1_sam/samavedu.htm the visarga before a sibilant is not converted into ś, ṣ or s. If the sibilant is followed by an unvoiced stop the visarga is usually dropped but there are eight exceptions:

Dropped visargas in the Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā:

viśvā yadajaya spr̥dhaḥ || (SV 211)
amī ye devā sthana madhya ā rocane divaḥ | (SV 368)
yo na idamidam purā pra vasya ānināya tamu va stuṣe | (SV 400)
stotā vāmaśvināvṛṣi stomebhirbhūṣati prati mādhvī mama śrutam havam || (SV 418)
sakhāya stomavāhasaḥ || (SV 740)
sa tvarṁ naścitra vajrahasta dhṛṣṇuyā maha stavāno adriṣaḥ | (SV 810)
yadā vājasya gomata stotṛbhyo maṁhate magham || (SV 829)
prāvīvipadvāca ūrmiṁ na sindhurgira stomānpavamāno maṁṣāḥ | (SV 945)
udu tye madhumattamā gira stomāsa īrate | (SV 1362)
bhūyāma te sumatau vājino vayan mā na starabhimātaye | (SV 1422)
agnim vo duryam vaca stuṣe śūṣasya manmabhiḥ || (SV 1564)
evā hi vira stavate sadāvṛdhaḥ || (SV 1684)

revām idrevata **stotā** syāttvāvato maghonaḥ | (SV 1804)

Maintained visargas in the Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā:

agnim vo duryam vaca**ḥ** stuṣe śūṣasya manmabhiḥ || (SV 87)

sakhāya**ḥ** stomavāhasaḥ || (SV 164)

tubhyaṁ sutāsaḥ somā**ḥ** stīṛṇaṁ barhivibhāvaso | (SV 213)

varūthye3 varuṇe chandyaṁ vaca**ḥ** stotraṁ rājasu gāyata || (SV 255)

eto nvindraṁ stavāma sakhāya**ḥ** stomyaṁ naram | (SV 387)

ā gha tvāvām tmanā yukta**ḥ** stotṛbhyo dhṛṣṇavīyānaḥ | (SV 1085)

ya ugraḥ sannaniṣṭṛta**ḥ** sthiro raṇāya saṁskṛtaḥ | (SV 1698)

balavijñāya**ḥ** sthaviraḥ pravīraḥ sahasvānvājī sahamāna ugraḥ | (SV 1853)

Śamāna (Sāmaveda)

This text which is included in the Saptalakṣaṇa enumerates those words of the Sāmaveda-Saṁhitā ending in āḥ which drop the visarga (1) before a voiced consonant and (2) before a sibilant (ś, s) which is followed by a consonant.

āḥ + (st, sth) = ā (st, sth)

āḥ + sv = ā sv

Śamāna refers to a Saṁhitā in which the visarga is dropped before a sibilant which is followed by an unvoiced or voiced consonant.

kaśā iṣṭāḥ sajoṣā nayanam somā**ḥ** karaṁ kāsthā yuktā na va tatyayau vardhatyaye | tu yā madhumattamā rudrā jīvā dvitīyaḥ 4

tubhyaṁ sutāsaḥ somā**(h)** stīṛṇaṁ barhivibhāvaso | (SV 213)

anāgāḥ padajñā vedhā avā ayakṣmā ajñātā vṛjanā niṣṭhāḥ prathamāḥ smṛḍīkāḥ priyāḥ saṁyogetyaye | sugopā devayā aruṇā yajamānāstā naḥ sahojāstā jayantūgrā anādhrīyāḥ kumārā vṛddhaśravā amitṛā aṣṭamaḥ 10

yatra naḥ pūrve pitarāḥ padajñā**(h)** svarvido abhi gā adrimiṣṇan .. (SV 1359)

svasti na indro vṛddhaśravā**(h)** svasti naḥ pūṣā viśvavedāḥ . (SV 1875)

Reference: http://peterfffreund.com/shiksha/sama_veda_saptalakshana.html#verse1

Caturadhyāyikā (a Prātiśākhya of Atharvaveda)

विसर्जनीयस्य परसस्थानोऽघोषे ॥ ४० ॥

visarjanīyasya parasasthāno 'ghoṣe ||2.40||

Visarjanīya before an unvoiced consonant becomes of like position with the following sound.

Whitney:

“The rule that the visarjanīya is to be dropped altogether before a sibilant followed by a surd mute, a rule which is laid down by the Ṛk and Vāj Prātiśākhya and not by our own but which is rather more usually although with very numerous and irregularly occurring exceptions followed in the Atharvan manuscripts has been uniformly carried out in the edition although many will doubtless be inclined to think with me that considering the varying usage of the manuscripts it would have been better to follow the authority of the Prātiśākhya and so to avoid the ambiguity occasionally arising from the omission of the final spirant.”

Examples showing dropped visargas:

jarāyujah prathama usriyo vṛṣā vātābhrajā stanayann eti vṛṣṭyā | (AV 1.12.1)
nīcaiḥ khananty asurā arusrāṇam idam mahat | (AV 2.3.3)
amī ye vivratā sthana tān vaḥ sam namayāmasi ||AV 3.8.5||
diva spaśaḥ pra carantīdam asya sahasrākṣā ati paśyanti bhūmim ||AV 4.16.4||
mā va stena īsata māghaśamśaḥ pari vo rudrasya hetir vṛṇaktu ||AV 4.21.7||
āsthāne parvatā asthu sthāmny aśvām atīṣṭhipam ||AV 6.77.1||
pra tad viṣṇu stavate vīryāni mṛgo na bhīmaḥ kucaro giriṣṭhāḥ | (AV 7.26.2)
paramebhiḥ pathibhi steno dhāvatu taskaraḥ | (AV 19.47.7)
matsvā suśipra mandibhi stomebhir viśvacarṣaṇe | (AV 20.71.9)
ā nūnam aśvinor ṛṣi stomam ciketa vāmayā | (AV 20.140.2)

Examples showing maintained visargas:

mā me sakhyuḥ stāmānam api ṣṭhātāśrāvayanto ni viṣe ramadhvam ||AV 5.13.5||
nirhastāḥ śatravaḥ sthanendro vo 'dya parāśarīt ||AV 6.66.2||
api nahyāmy asya medhram ya itaḥ strī pumān jabhāra ||AV 7.95.3||
sa tau pra veda sa u tau ciketa yāv asyāḥ stanau sahasradhārāv akṣitau | (AV 9.1.17)
yatra prepsantīr abhiyanty āvṛtaḥ skambham tān brūhi katamaḥ svid eva saḥ ||AV 10.7.4||
skambhe lokāḥ skambhe tapaḥ skambhe 'dhy ṛtam āhitam | (AV 10.7.29)
ye tāṭṣur devatrā jhamānā hotrāvidaḥ stomataṣṭāso arkaiḥ | (AV 18.3.47)
balavijñāyaḥ sthaviraḥ pravīraḥ sahasvān vājī sahamāna ugraḥ | (19.13.5)
semaḥ naḥ stomam jujusaṇa ā gahīndra pra citrayā dhiyā ||AV 20.97.2||

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