

hymns addressed to the deified drink Soma. The tenth comprises hymns ascribed to very different authors;¹ while the first consists of fifteen² minor groups, each attributed to some ancient poet-sage.

§ 78. The general history of the text of the Rigveda was touched upon by Professor Roth in a very instructive little essay³ entitled *Vedische Studien*. Some of his conclusions may be briefly stated. The assembling of the Mantras into a collection was accomplished by the aid of writing.⁴ The first Rik collections were probably single books and parts of books, each an aggregation of material of such moderate compass as to be easily handled by a single collector. The small collections were later united into one large collection, which, completed by the addition of books ix. and x., and uniformly edited, constitutes our RV. Samhitā.

§ 79. Roth recognizes three stages in the tradition: 1. the oral transmission from the authors to the time of the collectors; 2. the reduction from the oral form to the written form; and 3. the transmission of the written text to us. We may admit that in the last stage the text—carefully preserved as it was, see § 98—has suffered no very important corruptions. The collectors themselves, however, did not by any means write down the texts precisely as they heard them. The reciters from memory must have recited rhythmically. The collectors (writers—redactors or diaskeuasts) have often destroyed the rhythm by putting the texts into the strait-jacket of the rules of grammar, and especially by writing the words according to the later rules of *saṁdhi*. To the first stage are to be referred the many mistakes which are ascribable to carelessness in listening,⁵ and which may be called blunders of the ear rather than of the eye.

§ 80. That the hymns themselves are of diverse origin, both in respect of place and of time, is probable *a priori* and is shown by internal evidence.⁶ Accordingly, if we find, for example, two hymns involving inconsistent conceptions of the same deity or of different deities, this is to be deemed quite natural, inasmuch as they originated among clans dwelling in diverse regions. Moreover, after the aggregation of the small collections into the large one, interpolations and later additions were still made. To discriminate between the different elements that now make up the canonical Vedic text is therefore an important problem.

§ 81. Again, in the course of time, and in part as a result of the wrangling pedantry of narrow teachers, the stock collections became ramified into slightly divergent recensions. These were called *çākḥās* or ‘branches,’ because so related to each other as are different branches from the same tree-stock. The *Çākḥās* often supply to criticism the various readings for which the classical philologist looks to good and independent manuscripts. The community in which such a *Çākḥā* attained definitive authority was called a *carana* or ‘school.’ There once existed, presumably, many branches and schools⁷ of the RV. The school of the *Çākalas*,⁸ however, seems

¹ The orthodox Hindu conception of the hymns is that they had existed from eternity; it recognizes no human authors. The Hindus do not call Atri, for example, the “author” of a given hymn, but rather the “Rishi,” i.e. the “seer,” who was so fortunate as to “see” it the last time it was revealed. — Müller, ASL. p. 95.

² Bergaigne, JA. viii.8.263 (= 71).

³ Published, 1883, in KZ. xxvi. 45–68. See especially p. 52–62.

⁴ This is entirely consistent with the facts that the

tradition in the schools was oral and by memory, and that the open use of a written text was disgraceful. Compare, e.g., *Sarva-sammata Çikshā*, ed. A. O. Franke, rule 36. But this thesis of Roth is denied by some scholars.

⁵ Such as *nāmasā* for *mānasā*, etc., Roth, l.c., p. 62.

⁶ Cf. Ludwig, iii. p. IX.

⁷ See Müller, ASL. p. 368.

⁸ See Müller, RV. Prātiçākḥya, *Einleitung*, p. 7.