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Studies in Classical and Indo-European linguistics  
in honor of

**Alan J. Nussbaum**

on the occasion of his sixty-fifth birthday

*edited by*

*Adam I. Cooper, Jeremy Rau  
and Michael Weiss*



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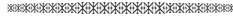


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## The Vedic Paradigm for ‘water’

In the Ṛgveda, *udán-* n. ‘water’ is inflected as follows: instr. sg. *udná́*, gen. abl. sg. *udnás*, loc. sg. *udán(i)*, nom. acc. pl. *udá́*, instr. pl. *udábhīḥ*. Neither in the RV nor in later texts do we find a nom. acc. sg. of this stem. In Proto-Indo-European, the word for ‘water’ was a heteroclitic *r/n*-stem, cf. Hitt. nom. acc. sg. *uātar*, obl. *uītēn-*, Gk. nom. acc. sg. *ῥῶρ*, gen. *ῥῶ-α-τ-ος* < \**ud-η-t-os*, U. nom. sg. *utur*, abl. sg. *une*, etc. We therefore expect something like \**vādar* in Indo-Iranian, but the *r*-forms are found in Sanskrit only in derivatives (*udrín-* adj. ‘abounding in water’, *samudrá-* m. ‘broad stream, confluence of rivers, sea’, *udrá-* m. ‘otter’, etc.).

In *AiGr.* III (p. 316), Wackernagel suggested that the nom. acc. sg. of *udán-* was supplied by *udakám*: “dieser [NASg.] wird nur vom Stamm *udaká-* [...] gebildet [...], der offenbar zuerst auf diese Kasus beschränkt war, später aber durchflektiert wird.” The best argument in favor of this suggestion, which, incidentally, was not mentioned by Wackernagel, is RV 7.50.4ab *yáḥ praváto niváta udváta, udanvátīr anudakás ca yáḥ* ‘Die Wasserläufe, die Tiefen, die Höhen, die wasserreichen und die wasserlosen...’ (Geldner), where *udanvátīr anudakás* are used as antonyms. Nevertheless, there are no indications that *udakám* was ever considered by speakers as nom. acc. sg. of *udán-*: except for the compound, mentioned above, *udaká-* does not occur in the Family Books of the RV and is later also used in other case forms (RV *udakāt*, AV *udakéna, udakásya, udaké*, etc.). Most importantly, *udaká-* in the oldest texts has a different shade of meaning, namely ‘water (for drinking)’. Here is a representative sample of passages with *udaká-* from the Ṛgveda and Atharvaveda:

- RV 1.161.8a *idám udakám pibatéty abravātana-* “‘Drink this water,’ so you said.”  
 RV 1.161.10a *śronám éka udakám gám ávājati* “The one drives the crippled cow down towards the water.”  
 RV 1.191.14cd *tás te viśám ví jabbrira, udakám kumbhínīr iva* “They brought your poison away, like women with jars [bring] water.”  
 RV 10.102.10c *násmai tṛṇam nódakám á bhvaranti-* “They bring him neither grass nor water.”  
 RV 1.164.40 = ŚS 7.73.11cd *addhí tṛṇam aghnye viśvadánīm píba súddhám udakám ācāranti* “Eat grass, o inviolable one, at all times; drink clear water, while moving hither.”

ŚS 9.6.4b *yád udakám yácaty apáḥ prá ṇayati* “When he offers water (to a guest), he brings forward the (sacrificial) waters.”

ŚS 4.16.3cd *utó samudraú varuṇasya kuṅṣṭi, utásmín̄n̄ álpa udaké n̄l̄n̄aḥ* “also the two oceans are Varuṇa’s paunches; also in this petty water is he hidden.” (Whitney)

This means that in *udaká-*, the suffix *-ka-* does not have the meaning of a collective (as hesitatingly assumed by *AiGr.* II.2:529), but rather the usual one of a diminutive. On the other hand, *udán-* does not have this connotation and means just ‘water’, cf.

RV 5.45.10c *udná ná nāvam anayanta dbírāḥ-* “The wise ones led (him) as a ship through water.”

RV 5.85.6cd *ekam yád udná ná pr̄n̄ánty éñ̄, ās̄iñcánt̄r avánayaḥ samudrám* “. . . that the pouring, shining streams do not fill one ocean with water.”

It follows that *udakám* can hardly have been a suppletive nom. acc. sg. of *udán-*, since it had a different meaning. In my view, the nom. acc. sg. of *udán-* was rather supplied by *vár-* n. ‘water’ (RV+), which is only attested as a nom. acc. sg. (the dat. pl. form *vārbhayaḥ*, found at VS 22.25, is clearly artificial: *adbhayaḥ svāhā vārbhayaḥ svāhā* “hail to waters, hail to waters!”) and has the same broad meaning as *udán-*, cf.

RV 2.4.6b *vár ṇá pathá ráthyeva svānīt* “(Agni) makes sounds like water on its way, like the chariot (wheels).”

RV 4.19.4ab *ákṣodayac chāvasā kṣāma budhnám, vár ṇá vātas táviṣ̄ibhir indraḥ* “Indra made the bottom of the earth tremble through his strength, like the wind (makes tremble) the water through his powers.”

In order to provide definitive proof that it indeed was a suppletive paradigm and that *vár* was considered nom. acc. sg. of *udán-* by the poets themselves, we have to analyze the poetic formulas and show that when the same formula was used in a different case, *vár* was replaced by *udán-*. Let us first look at the formula *ghṛtám vár* ‘the ghee, the water’, referring to rain. In the RV, the formula is attested twice in the accusative:

RV 10.12.3d *dubé yád éñ̄ divyám ghṛtám váḥ* “. . . that the spotted (cow) yields the heavenly ghee, the water”

RV 10.99.4cd *apádo yátra yújyāso ʼrathá, dronyàs̄vāsa ʼtrate ghṛtám váḥ* “. . . where (his) associates without feet, without chariots, with troughs for horses, unleash the ghee, the water.”

In the Atharvaveda, the same formula is used in the instrumental case, and *vár* is replaced by *udán-*:

ŚS 3.12.4c (= PS 3.20.4, 7.6.6) *ukṣánt, udná marúto ghṛténa* “Let the Maruts sprinkle (it) with water, with ghee” (see Griffiths 2009:310ff. for comments on this passage and Kiehnle 1979:162f. for the meaning of *ukṣ-*).

The ‘heavenly water’ is further found in the genitive at ŚS 7.18.1cd (≈ PS 20.8.3cd) *udnó divyásya no dhātar, śśāno ví syā dṛtīm* ‘untie for us, O Dhātar, that art master, the skin-bag of the water of heaven.’ (Whitney)

Yet another formula is a quasi-figura etymologica *vār vr̥-* ‘water stops, annihilates’, which is once attested in the Atharvaveda:

PS 5.8.8ab (≈ ŚS 4.7.1ab) *vār idam vārayātai, varuṇāvata ābhṛtam* ‘The water brought from the Varuṇāvant will check this (poison).’ (Lubotsky 2002:52)

When used in the instrumental case, *vār* is again replaced in the formula by *udán-*, even though this ruins the alliteration:

PS 20.14.5cd *etām etasyersyām hṛda, udnāgnim iva vārāye* ‘I extinguish that envy for his heart, like fire with water’

PS 1.44.1cd *sarvā viśasya dhāmāny, +udnevāgnim avīvare* ‘I have extinguished all types of poison, like fire with water.’

These alternating formulas unequivocally show that *vār* was considered by the Vedic poets to be nom. acc. sg. of *udán-*, so that we can with confidence reconstruct the Vedic paradigm nom. acc. sg. *vār*, obl. *udn-*. The question is how old this paradigm is.

In the RV, *vār* is at least three times attested with disyllabic scansion, in the formulaic pāda opening *vār ná /vāar ná/* ‘like water’ (2.4.6b, 4.19.4b, 8.98.8a; the first two have been cited above). This /vāar/ presupposes *\*vaH-ar*, which must reflect PIIr. *\*uaH-r̥* (for the disyllabic scansion of *vār* see further Lubotsky 1995:231 with refs.). The Iranian cognates of *vār* are thematic (YAv. *vāra-* m., Sogd. *wʾr*, Par. *γār* ‘rain’; Parth. *wʾr* ‘drip of rain’, etc.) and do not provide evidence for the original paradigm.

The further etymological connections of *vār* have been established by Watkins (1987:402f.; cf. also Watkins 2009). He demonstrated that this word has a perfect correspondence in CLuv. *ua-a-ar* ‘water’ (nom. acc. n. sg. *ua-a-ar(-ša)*, n. pl. *ua-a-ra*). As in Vedic, this word is only attested in the nom. acc. and is parallel to Hitt. *uātar* in the formulas, as already indicated by Watkins: Hitt. *uātar nai-* ‘to lead water’ vs. Luv. *ua-a-ar-ša [na-n]a-am-ma-an* ‘led water’.

It is attractive to agree with Watkins that our word is further related to OIr. *fír* ‘milk’ and MW *gwin-awt* ‘strong drink, liquor’ < *\*uēro-*, which points to a PIE reconstruction *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>-r-*. ON *ūr* ‘drizzle’ and Lat. *ūrīnārī* ‘to dive’, as well as Lith. *jūra* ‘sea’, OPr. *wurs* ‘pond’ (for which see Kortlandt 1997:7 = 2003:120), may be derived from a zero-grade *\*uh<sub>1</sub>r-*.

PIE *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>-r-* looks like a neuter *r*-stem, but it is doubtful that such a category of neuters existed in Proto-Indo-European. We only find heteroclitic *r/n*-neuters where the oblique cases are supplied by *n*-stems. The fact that neither Vedic nor Anatolian attests oblique cases of the stem *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>-r-* strengthens the conclusion that this was the nominative-accusative of an original *r/n*-stem. On the other hand, the expected forms

of the oblique stem *\*uh<sub>1</sub>-n-* are found nowhere, and a root *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>-* is otherwise unknown. In a 1986 article, Melchert tried to relate *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>-* to a putative root *\*(h<sub>1</sub>)euh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘to suckle’ (with *Schwebeablaut*), which he reconstructed for the Hittite hapax *uuas̄*, possibly ‘nurse’, and for the first part of the word for ‘udder’, *\*h<sub>1</sub>(o)uh<sub>1</sub>d<sup>h</sup>-r-* (Gk. *ὄθηρ* ‘udder’, Lat. *ūber* ‘udder’, MHG *üter* ‘udder’). This etymology seems a very shaky basis for a root *\*h<sub>1</sub>euh<sub>1</sub>-* and, *a fortiori*, for a root *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>-*.

These considerations make me believe that we must reconstruct a heteroclitic paradigm nom. acc. sg. *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>r* (or *\*uoh<sub>1</sub>r*), oblique *\*ud-en-* for the Indo-European proto-language, so that the Vedic paradigm is a precious archaism. The Anatolian situation with the synonymous Luv. *ya-a-ar* and Hitt. *uātar/uītēn-* also points to an Anatolian heteroclitic paradigm. As to the choice between *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>r* and *\*uoh<sub>1</sub>r*, both Luvian and Vedic are ambiguous, but the reconstruction *\*uoh<sub>1</sub>r*, *\*ud-en-* has the advantage that we can now explain the Hittite paradigm *uātar, uītēn-* < *\*uód-γ*, *\*ud-én-* (cf. Kloekhorst 2008:987 for this analysis) by simple restoration of *-d-* in the Hittite nominative.

Considering the fact, mentioned above, that the root *\*ueh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘water’ is unknown, it seems very probable to me that the PIE paradigm nom. acc. *\*uoh<sub>1</sub>r*, oblique *\*ud-en-* was originally not suppletive at all and had developed by sound change from *\*uodr*, *\*ud-en-* (see already de Vaan 2009:644). It is well-known that *\*d* can become *\*h<sub>1</sub>* in several positions (within the glottalic interpretation, *\*ʔd > \*ʔ*):

Before *\*k̄*:

- Gk. *ἐκατόν* ‘100’ < *\*h<sub>1</sub>k̄mtom* < *\*dk̄mtom*, *πεντήκοντα* ‘50’ < *\*penk<sup>w</sup>e-h<sub>1</sub>k̄omt-* < *\*<sup>o</sup>dk̄omt-*, *ἐβδομήκοντα* < *\*septm-h<sub>1</sub>k̄omt-* < *\*<sup>o</sup>dk̄omt-*, etc. (Kortlandt 1983 = 2010: 105–9)
- Skt. *dāśváms-* ‘devout, pious’, original perfect participle of the root *das-* < *\*de-dk̄-uós-* (Klingenschmitt 1982:129 n. 4)

Before *\*g̃*, if the following syllable starts with a dental:

- Gk. *ἑξήκοντα* ‘60’ < *\*é̃ḱkosi* < *\*h<sub>1</sub>g̃idk̄mti* < *\*dg̃idk̄mti* (Kortlandt 1983 = 2010: 105–9);
- Skt. *ví* < *\*Hgi* < *\*dgi*; cf. the long scansion of the augment in *ávidhat* (10× in the RV) < *\*Ha-Hgi-d<sup>h</sup>H-a-t*, the Skt. root *√vidh-* having arisen by univerbation of the preverb *ví* and *dhā-* (Lubotsky 1994).

Root-final. We frequently encounter root variants ending in *h<sub>1</sub>* and in *d*. It seems probable that the variants in *h<sub>1</sub>* are due to the sound change *\*d > \*h<sub>1</sub>* in some contexts (for instance, before an obstruent), although these contexts are hard to determine. Here are a few examples of *\*d / \*h<sub>1</sub>* variation in verbal roots (for the reconstructions I refer the reader to *LIV*):

- *\*h<sub>2</sub>eh<sub>1</sub>-* (Pal. *hāri, hānta* ‘to be hot’, Av. *āt(ə)r-* m. ‘fire’) ~ *\*h<sub>2</sub>ed-* (Hitt. *hāt-i/ hat-* ‘to dry up, to become parched’, Gk. *ἄζω* ‘to dry up’).

- \**meh*<sub>1</sub>- (Skt. *mā-* ‘to measure, measure out, assign’, Lat. *mētor* ‘to measure’, etc.) ~ \**med-* (OIr. *midithir* ‘to measure, judge’, YAv. *vī-mad-* ‘healer, physician’, Gk. *μέδω* ‘to rule’, Go. *mitan*, *miton* ‘to measure, consider’, etc.).
- \*(*s*)*penh*<sub>1</sub>- (Gk. *πένομαι* ‘to exert oneself, toil’, Lith. *pinti* ‘to twist’, OCS *peti* ‘to stretch’, Arm. *henum* ‘to weave’, Go. *spinnan* ‘to spin’, etc.) ~ \*(*s*)*pend-* (Lat. *pendō* ‘to weigh, pay’, Lith. *spęsti* ‘to set a trap’, OCS *pečъ* ‘span’).
- \**temh*<sub>1</sub>- (Gk. *τάμνω*, Mlr. *tamnaid* ‘to cut’, Lat. *temnō*, *-ere* ‘to scorn, despise’) ~ \**tend-* (Lat. *tondeō* ‘to cut the hair, shear’, Gk. *τένδω* ‘to gnaw at’), cf. Kümmel’s remark about the root \**tend-* in *LIV* (p. 628): “Gilt als Erweiterung von \**temh*<sub>1</sub>- ‘schneiden’, kann aber, da ohne \**h*<sub>1</sub>, höchstens eine parallele Erweiterung \**tem-d-* neben \**tem-h*<sub>1</sub>- sein oder auf einem *d*-Präsens zu unerweitertem \*\**tem-* beruhen.”
- \**terh*<sub>1</sub>- (Lat. *terō* ‘to rub, grind’, *terebra* ‘drill’, Gk. *τείρω* ‘to oppress’, *τέρετρον* ‘drill’, etc.) ~ \**terd-* (Skt. *tard-* ‘to split, pierce, open’, Lith. *trėndu* ‘to be eaten by moths or worms’).

The PIE paradigm nom. acc. \**uoh*<sub>1</sub>*r*, oblique \**ud-en-* seems to suggest a rule \**dr*# > \**h*<sub>1</sub>*r*# and thus offer yet another position for the change \**d* > \**h*<sub>1</sub>. I have been unable to find other examples of word-final \**dr*# in Indo-European, but since this sound change is phonetically understandable, even one example may suffice.

## Abbreviations

*AiGr* II.2 = Wackernagel, Jacob. 1954. *Altindische Grammatik*. Vol. 2, Part 2: *Die Nominalsuffixe*, ed. Albert Debrunner. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.  
*AiGr* III = Debrunner, Albert, and Jacob Wackernagel. *Altindische Grammatik*. Vol. 3: *Deklination der Nomina, Zahlwörter und Pronomina*. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht.  
*LIV* = Rix, Helmut, ed. 2001. *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben*. 2nd ed. Wiesbaden: Reichert.

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