A Look into the Indo-European Bedroom: Vedic yóni- and Greek εὐνή

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Vedic *yóni-* and Greek εὐνή

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Abstract: In this contribution I propose to etymologically connect Vedic *yóni-* 'safe place; bed, nest; womb' and Avestan *yaona-* 'safe place' with Greek εὐνή 'bed; lair' as well as Old Irish *úam* 'cave; lair, den'. I derive these words from a PIE formation **(H)ieu-mn-V-* meaning 'nest, private place' and derived from the root **(H)ieu-* 'to separate, set apart' (Vedic pres. *yuyóti*). Furthermore, it is argued that the Greek adjective εὖνις 'bereft' as well as the noun ὑμήν 'membrane' derive from the same root.

In a recent contribution, Oettinger (2016) has discussed the semantics of Vedic *yóni-*. He asserts that the concrete meaning 'womb' is primary, and that meanings like 'resting place, bed, seat, abode' arose by metaphorical extension. The etymology of *yóni-*, however, remains unclear[2] and we must also take into account that the denotation 'womb' may have arisen as a euphemism for a woman's private parts.

In the following pages, I elaborate in more detail an etymological proposal already made in my doctoral dissertation (van Beek 2013: 316–319).[3] Compared to this previous treatment, various details are added or modified in the present paper: I discuss the consequences of this new etymology for the issue of the double outcome of initial *yod* in Greek, and also deal extensively with the differences in gender and stem formation (*i*-stem versus thematic stem) between the attested forms. As for the root etymology, I now propose a derivation from PIE **(H)ieu-* 'to separate' (Vedic pres. *yuyóti*). Finally, it is argued that the adjective εὖνις 'bereft' derives from the same root and thus may have an identical origin with Vedic *yóni-*.

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[2] Cf. Mayrhofer (*EWAia* II, 420), who only mentions a suggestion by Adams (1986), on which see section 8.

[3] The dissertation was defended in December 2013, and published in unchanged form online (Open Access) in June 2017. A thoroughly revised version is forthcoming as van Beek 2022.

1. Greek εὐνή and derivatives

The substantive εὐνή is poetic and "rare in early prose" (*LSJ* s.v.).[4] Its Homeric meanings can be classified as follows (cf. *LSJ* and *LfgrE* s.v.):[5]

1. place where one takes shelter, private place
   a. *lair, nest*, etc. (of wild creatures); also of men sleeping in the open, *bivouac*;
   b. permanent sleeping place, *bed*; also *bedding* as distinct from the frame (δέμνια);
   c. *marriage bed*, and more generally any place where sexual intercourse takes place;
   d. *grave*.

2. as an action noun
   a. *sleep*;
   b. *sexual intercourse, lovemaking*.

The post-Homeric meanings do not change the picture, although it is remarkable that εὐνά in Pindar only occurs in the meanings 'marriage' and 'lovemaking'. Given that εὐνή is often used in connection with reproduction, it seems likely that εὖνις f. (gen. -ιδος) 'wife, bedfellow', attested in the tragedians, is related. As I will argue below (section 9), the same probably holds for the homonymous adjective εὖνις (gen. -ιος and -ιδος) 'bereft' (Hom.+).

Another derived form is the denominative verb εὐνάω 'to put to bed', middle 'to go to bed (with)', in Homer also the present stem εὐνάζομαι, with a metrically-induced suffix interchange that is common in epic Greek (cf. ἀτιμάζω, secondary beside ἀτιμάω, ἠτίμησε). In Homeric Greek, εὐνάω is to be compared primarily with its synonym κοιμάω. The latter is more frequent and is used without exception when the onset consonant is metrically irrelevant (i.e. in verse-initial position or after final

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[4] Cf. also Chantraine (*DELG* s.v. εὐνή): "Cet ensemble est caractérisé par sa couleur poétique et non attique, par le sens général de εὐνή « couche, gîte » distinct de λέχος (…)". In Classical prose, the word is well-attested only in Xenophon and in the Hippocratic corpus, sources where poetic or Homeric words are frequent.

[5] The meaning *'anchor-stones'*, only attested in the plural εὐναί, is often assumed to belong to the same lexeme and etymon (e.g. Chantraine, *DELG* s.v. and Kurt 1979: 173–174), but the semantic development from 'bed' is far from clear. It is more likely that the meaning *'anchor-stones'* is completely unrelated technical vocabulary. Szemerényi (1986: 425–434) has proposed a borrowing from the Semitic word for 'stone' (e.g. Akkadian *abnu*, Hebrew and Aramaic *'abn*). Since Greek ships in the Dark Ages used two stone anchors, it is fitting that, according to Szemerényi (1986: 433), an early Phoenician form of the dual at that time would have been *'abnā*, gen.-acc. *'abnay*.

syllables that are long by nature). Moreover, contracted present forms in -ᾶται, -ᾶτο are never formed from εὐνάω (the present is εὐνάζομαι), but 6 times from κοιμάω.[6] It therefore seems that εὐνή and its derivatives are poetic relic words.

2. Previous etymological proposals for εὐνή

There is currently no consensus on the etymology of εὐνή, as appears from the review of previous proposals by Balles (2007).[7] Early on, Brugmann compared εὐνή to Old Irish *úam* (f. *ā*) 'cave, boar's lair, den' (see Lidén 1906: 320).[8] To this Graeco-Hibernian isogloss, Lidén proposed to add Young Avestan *unā-* 'cavity (in the earth)', which is judged "relativ plausibel" by Peters (1980: 50).

There are, however, several problems. Brugmann reckoned with a root **eu-* to which different suffixes in -*m*- and -*n*- were added in the daughter languages. However, since there is no clear verbal root, all we are left with is a root etymology.[9] This means that the apparent difference in ablaut between the various formations (**h₁eu-neh₂* in Greek, **h₁u-neh₂* in Avestan, and **h₁eu-meh₂* in Irish) cannot be easily explained. Furthermore, a simpler analysis of the Avestan form is as a substantivization of the adjective *ūna-* 'empty, insufficient', whose long vowel implies that the root ended in a laryngeal (Nussbaum 1998: 74).

More recently, Klingenschmitt (1981) proposed to recognize the root of εὐνή in Alb. *vë*, aor. *un-* 'to put, place', and to explain εὐνή by positing a laryngeal metathesis **unh₁-eh₂-* > "**E₁un-eh₂-*". This laryngeal metathesis had been invented by Rix in order to derive εὐρύς and Ved. *urú-* 'broad' from a common pre-form **urh₁-u-*, and the idea was subsequently applied by Peters to the thematic aorist εὗρον 'found' and the noun εὐλή 'maggot', assuming that these are to be reconstructed as **urh₁-e/o-* and

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[6] κοιμάω may derive from a lost noun **ḱoimo-* or **ḱoimeh₂-* meaning 'sleeping, nest' or the like, derived from **ḱei-* 'to lie' and related to Goth. *haims* 'village', Lith. *šeimà*, *šeimýna* 'family', etc. (cf. *GEW* s.v. κεῖμαι). Chantraine calls these connections "très douteux" (*DELG* s.v. κεῖμαι), but without providing any argumentation. In reality, the semantic developments from 'nest' to 'family' and 'home' are easily paralleled, and if **ḱoimeh₂-* derives from **ḱoi-mn-eh₂-*, the morphological similarity with εὐνή is remarkable.

[7] Cf. also the discussion in Dieu 2016: 198–199.

[8] Other formations attested in Irish are *úaim* (f. *i*-stem) and *úama* (f. *d*-stem), in the same or similar meanings as *úam*.

[9] Hamp (1985: 183) posits a connection of OIr. *úam* with Gr. εὖνις 'bereft' and Arm. *unayn* 'empty'. This is accepted by *EDPC* (302), but Hamp does not explain the suffix alternation, nor does he provide an analysis of the root. As we will see, εὖνις 'bereaved' may ultimately be related to OIr. *úam* (and to *yóni-* and εὐνή), but the semantic connection is different from that envisaged by Hamp.

u̯lh₁-eh₂-, respectively (cf. Peters 1980: 31). More recently, Ziegler (2004) has proposed to recognize a root *u̯enh₁-* meaning 'to strew' in the Iranian root *van-* 'to cover'. However, the Iranian material is not easy to interpret, and Balles rightly remains somewhat skeptical about this etymology as far as including εὐνή is concerned.[10]

Klingenschmitt's etymology was adopted by the *LIV²*, but the proposed laryngeal metathesis remains problematic from a phonetic perspective.[11] Moreover, as appears from the discussion by Balles, most of the adduced examples are not compelling: she retains only εὐρύς, εὖρον, and εὐλή as possible cases, and rightly points out that the idea is contradicted by ἀρήν 'lamb' < *urh₁-en-* (cf. also Beckwith 1994: 26). What is more, both εὐρύς and εὖρον are susceptible to other analyses. The initial vowel of εὖρον (inf. εὑρεῖν) is now normally explained as a reduplication syllable, in spite of the lacking digamma reflex in Homer (Beckwith 1994), which remains unexplained.[12] In my view, this lack could be a recent Ionic feature of Epic Greek, given that the more archaic way of saying 'I found' in Homer appears to be ἔτετμον (8x Hom.), which would have been metrically equivalent with *weuron*. These data are compatible with a scenario in which εὖρον was first introduced in Epic Greek at a relatively late date, after its initial digamma had been lost in the Ionic vernacular.

As for εὐρύς, the problem is that a full grade root *h₁eur-u-* would not only be in conflict with Indo-European root structure constraints, but also with the Indo-Iranian evidence, which points to a full grade *(H)uerH-*.[13] Even so, the Greek form can be explained without resorting to Rix's laryngeal metathesis. For instance, if we posit a pre-form *h₁urH-u-* (vocalized in this way) and if *h₁u-* yielded *h₁əw-*, we automatically obtain εὐρύς.

In sum, whatever one's opinion about the assumed laryngeal metathesis, there is no commonly accepted etymology for εὐνή at the moment.

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[10] "the evidence for our root becomes rather meagre" (Balles 2007: 17). She concludes that εὐνή is "to be judged only as a possible [example]" for the supposed laryngeal metathesis. Dieu (2016: 199) equally judges that Ziegler's etymology for εὐνή is "nullement certaine".

[11] Thus also Willi 2018: 77.

[12] The commonly adopted reconstruction of this aorist (*LIV* s.v. *u̯reh₁-*, Willi 2018: 77 with lit.) is *u̯e-u̯rh₁-e/o-* with regular laryngeal loss via the "νεογνός rule". The root is reconstructed by *LIV²* as *u̯reh₁-* (following Klingenschmitt), but as Willi remarks, the Old Irish form *fo·fríth* 'was found' does not have to be the direct outcome of PIE *-u̯reh₁-to-* (which would have an unexpected full grade root anyway), but it could also be analogical after e.g. *do·gníth* 'was made'. Furthermore, as noted by Beckwith (1994: 27), both εὖρον and OIr. *fúair* derive from *u̯e-u̯r-e/o-* without root-final laryngeal. I therefore think that the root is best reconstructed as *u̯er-*.

[13] Cf. Ved. *váriman-, varimán-* 'breadth, width' and for the root-final laryngeal also Avestan *vouru-*.

3. A new proposal

Let us reconsider Brugmann's comparison with the Old Irish feminine *ā*-stem *úam*. From a semantic point of view, the comparison is impeccable, given that the meaning 'lair, den' (of wild animals and swine) is well-attested for εὐνή in Homer.[14] Indeed, already Boisacq 1916 (s.v. εὐνή) accepted the connection, positing a basic meaning "cavité servant de gîte à l'homme et aux animaux". Starting from this idea of an old word for 'private place, lair, nest', I propose to directly compare εὐνή and OIr. *úam* with Ved. *yóni-* m. 'womb, lap; seat, abode, bed' and to reconstruct the common pre-form as *(H)i̯eu(m)neh₂-, *(H)i̯eu(m)ni-.[15] In alphabetic Greek, initial *i̯- developed into /h-/, which was lost regularly in various dialects, including in many traditional epic lexemes.[16] In Irish initial *yod* was lost regularly, and *úam* has no cognates in other Celtic languages that might speak against reconstructing *i̯-.

As we will see below, it is attractive to consider *(H)i̯eu-mn-eh₂- and *(H)i̯eu-mn-i- as based on a *nomen rei actae* *(H)i̯eu-mn-. Old Irish *úam*, however, has a pre-form in *-mā instead of *-nā. Is it possible to assume that it reflects *-mnā, and that *-mn- was reduced after -u̯- in a different way in Celtic compared to Greek and Indo-Iranian? The conditions of this reduction still have not been completely clarified,[17] but the loss of *m after a labial glide in the ancestor(s) of Greek and Indo-Iranian is phonetically natural. In order to explain the retention of -m- in Irish, one may have to reckon with a different reduction of the cluster in Proto-Celtic, or perhaps with influence of a coexisting ablauting *-mn-stem (which is, however, not directly attested).[18]

There is, in fact, another piece of evidence for the reduction *-u̯mn- > *-u̯n-, and this example includes Celtic material: Ved. *róman-* 'body

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[14] *Il.* 11.115, *Od.* 4.338, 4.438, 14.4; cf. also *Il.* 2.783, of the place where the monster Typhoeus sleeps.

[15] See section 6 below on the conditioning of the Greek reflex ζ-. Since I am not confident about the possibility to decide the issue, I will write *(H)i̯- in reconstructions of the etymon at stake here.

[16] A Mycenaean counterpart of εὐνή is not attested; in Mycenaean initial *yod* appears to have become /h-/ in *o-te* /hote/ 'when'. Orthographic reflexes of *yod* (probably etymological spellings) are found in some lexemes, e.g. *ja-ke-te-re* beside *a-ke-te-re*.

[17] It seems likely that *-mn- was originally retained after a short vowel in Greek, cf. Hom. νώνυμνος (later ἀνώνυμος), but otherwise reduced to -ν- or -μ- under conditions that still have to be determined. See Nussbaum (2010) for examples of this reduction in larger clusters containing laryngeals.

[18] According to *EDPC* (302), a secondary suffix -m- was added to a Proto-Celtic form *own-; this seems unlikely to me.

hair' < PIE *Hreu-mn-* beside OIr. *rón* 'horse hair' and *rúainne* 'hair', OCS. *runo* 'sheepskin, fleece'. The Celtic and Slavic forms reflect a thematic derivative *Hreu-mn-o-* of the neuter attested in Indo-Aryan. This causes problems for the reconstruction of OIr. *úam* as *(H)i̯eu-mn-V-*. A possible way out would be that the thematic form *Hreu-mn-o-* was created after PIE, independently in Celtic and Slavic, and that the outcome of an old cluster *-u̯mn-* in Proto-Celtic was *-u̯m-* (as in the precursor of *úam*), while that of more recently created *-u̯mn-* was *-u̯n-*.

In sum, the Irish forms still pose problems of reconstruction, and they therefore will not play a crucial role in what follows. Before further examining the phonological and morphological issues involved in comparing εὐνή with *yóni-* and its Iranian cognates, let us first consider their lexical semantics.

4. The semantics of εὐνή in Homer

As we saw, εὐνή may denote the nest or lair of an animal, but also more broadly any kind of shelter, e.g. εὐνὰς δ' ἐν ψαμάθοισι διαγλάψασ' ἁλίῃσιν "having scooped out holes in the sand of the beach" (*Od.* 4.438). It also denotes the camp-bed or bivouac of soldiers, as in the phrase Τρώων φυλακαί τε καὶ εὐναί "the guard-posts and bivouacs of the Trojans" (*Il.* 10.408); and it may denote an improvised place to spend the night in the open, as when Odysseus prepares a bed of leaves for himself after he has landed on Scheria, the Phaeacians' island (*Od.* 5.482). Essentially, an εὐνή in this sense is a place where men or animals are safe, where they may spend the night, and which provides shelter against cold, wind, predators or enemies. As Laser (1968: 3) remarks, "Die allgemeine, unspezifische Bedeutung »Lagerstätte« wird die ursprüngliche gewesen sein".[19]

When εὐνή denotes a regular sleeping place, it usually does not refer to the physical bed (the frame, which in Homeric Greek is referred to with δέμνια or λέχος) but the totality of bed and covers (consisting of blankets, rugs and animal skins) as the place where one may sleep. On several occasions, εὐνή is used as a very intimate word. When Penelope speaks to Odysseus about their marital bed, of which he alone knows the characteristics because nobody else has ever seen it, she uses the words:

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[19] This also holds for the quasi-synonymous words κοῖτος and κοίτη: see Laser 1968: 3–4.

(1) νῦν δ’, ἐπεὶ ἤδη σήματ’ ἀριφραδέα κατέλεξας   (*Od*. 23.225)
      εὐνῆς ἡμετέρης, …

      "Now that you have enumerated the characteristics, plain to see, of our bed, …"[20]

Thus, the εὐνή is a private place where outsiders are not allowed. The same sense is also important in a repeated simile (2) in which the suitors, who wanted to sleep in Odysseus' marital bed, are compared to visitors of a lion's lair:

(2) ὦ πόποι, ἦ μάλα δὴ κρατερόφρονος ἀνδρὸς **ἐν εὐνῇ**
      ἤθελον **εὐνηθῆναι**, ἀνάλκιδες αὐτοὶ ἐόντες.
      ὡς δ’ ὁπότ’ ἐν ξυλόχῳ ἔλαφος κρατεροῖο λέοντος
      νεβροὺς κοιμήσασα νεηγενέας γαλαθηνοὺς
      κνημοὺς ἐξερέῃσι καὶ ἄγκεα ποιήεντα
      βοσκομένη, ὁ δ’ ἔπειτα ἑὴν εἰσήλυθεν **εὐνήν**,
      ἀμφοτέροισι δὲ τοῖσιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφῆκεν,
      ὣς Ὀδυσεὺς κείνοισιν ἀεικέα πότμον ἐφήσει.   (*Od*. 4.333–40 = 17.124–31)

      "O dear, did they really want to go to sleep in the bed of a fierce man, being weak-spirited themselves? As when a deer puts to sleep her [two] newborn suckling young in the lair of a fierce lion, and roams over the mountain slopes and grassy glens searching for food; and then the lion enters its own lair and inflicts an ugly fate on both of them; likewise Odysseus will lay upon them [the suitors] an ugly fate."

This simile crucially highlights that an εὐνή is in essence a nest where young are produced and reared, and that is vigorously defended by its possessor. In particular, εὐνή denotes the bed as a place where a man and his wife (or another bedmate) sleep together: thus, it is also a place of reproduction. When Ares secretly has sex with Aphrodite in the bed she shares with her husband Hephaestus, the poet says that he has "put to shame the bed and the εὐνή of Lord Hephaestus".[21] Penelope speaks about herself as "respecting my husband's εὐνή":[22] she has not slept with any of the suitors, nor has she in fact used the marital bed during Odysseus' absence; instead she sleeps in the upper room (cf. *Od*. 17.101).

It is perhaps conceivable that εὐνή in some of these examples actually refers to the wife's lap, i.e. that her organs of reproduction were viewed as the husband's property. In a phrase that occurs several times, we find a genitive εὐνῆς governed by a form of ἐπιβαίνω, as in the oath sworn by Agamemnon:

(3)   μή ποτε τῆς εὐνῆς ἐπιβήμεναι ἠδὲ μιγῆναι   (*Il*. 9.133 = 275 = 19.176)
      "never to have mounted her εὐνή and had intercourse with her"

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[20] Throughout this paper translations are the author's, unless otherwise indicated.

[21] λέχος δ’ ᾔσχυνε καὶ εὐνὴν / Ἡφαίστοιο ἄνακτος (*Od*. 8.269–70).

[22] εὐνήν τ’ αἰδομένη πόσιος (*Od*. 19.527).

This phrase is usually taken to mean "to mount the bed (of a woman)", with εὐνή in a concrete meaning.[23] However, we should also take into account that ἐπιβαίνω refers specifically to the act of reproductive animals mounting a female. In a formulaic verse naming three male sacrificial animals, ἀρνειὸν ταῦρόν τε συῶν τ' ἐπιβήτορα κάπρον (*Od.* 11.131 = 23.278), the boar is called "mounter of sows". It therefore seems possible that the expression εὐνῆς ἐπιβήμεναι originally referred to the man mounting a woman's most private place, her lap.

Finally, εὐνή may function as an action noun meaning 'sexual intercourse', especially when governing a genitive. In (4) Odysseus speaks to Circe after they have had intercourse, and before he leaves her:

(4)   χαῖρε, γύναι, φιλότητι· περιπλομένου δ' ἐνιαυτοῦ
      τέξεαι ἀγλαὰ τέκνα, ἐπεὶ οὐκ ἀποφώλιοι εὐναὶ
      ἀθανάτων·   (*Od.* 11.248–50)
      "Be happy, woman, with this act of love: when a year has passed you will give birth to splendid children, for pairings with (*or*: of) immortals are not ineffective."

This use of εὐνή is clearly old as it also occurs in the formula μίγη φιλότητι καὶ εὐνῇ "joined in lovemaking". This formula (with various transformations) is part and parcel of the diction of mating episodes, which probably figured prominently in genealogical catalogues. The medio-passive forms of μίσγω 'to mix, mingle, join' are frequently used on their own to denote intercourse. Since φιλότης is an abstract, it is likely that εὐνή denotes an action, too, and that φιλότητι and εὐνῇ are more or less synonymous in this formula.[24] It would make sense if the addition καὶ εὐνῇ was made for reasons of verse-making: placing the phrase μίγη φιλότητι at verse end would have entailed a caesura after the fourth trochee, which was avoided (Hermann's Bridge).[25]

It is difficult to say whether this use as an abstract is old or secondary. Its occurrence in formulaic language speaks in favor of an archaism, but on

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[23] When Circe tries to induce Odysseus to having sex with her, she uses the words εὐνῆς ἡμετέρης ἐπιβήομεν, ὄφρα μιγέντε / εὐνῇ καὶ φιλότητι πεποίθομεν ἀλλήλοισιν (*Od.* 10.333–4); Odysseus takes up the same phrase twice in what follows (σῆς ἐπιβήμεναι εὐνῆς 340, τεῆς ἐπιβήμεναι εὐνῆς 342).

[24] Thus also e.g. Führer (*LfgrE* s.v.).

[25] Cf. also ἀλλήλων ἀπέχονται / εὐνῆς καὶ φιλότητος "they refrain from having sex with each other" (*Il.* 14.207–8), about Zeus and Hera. Here the phrase εὐνῆς καὶ φιλότητος depends on ἀπέχονται, showing that their combination was not limited to the construction with μίσγω. Since both words also occur with a different meaning (φιλότης has abstract meanings like 'friendship', and εὐνή may denote a concrete place to sleep) and are presumably euphemistic in origin, the addition of one or the other probably helped to clarify that the poet was speaking of sexual intercourse.

the other hand, it may have arisen by reinterpretation of a more concrete use, where the object (a bed) stands for the action that takes place in it (intercourse). For instance, in (5) the goddess Thetis says about her having been given to the mortal Peleus:

(5)   ἔτλην ἀνέρος εὐνὴν
     πολλὰ μάλ' οὐκ ἐθέλουσα   (*Il*. 18.433–4)
     "I endured intercourse with a (mortal) man, very much against my will"

Here, we might still read "I endured the bed of a mortal man". Then, after this construction with the genitive of a person had been grammaticalized, phrases like (6) could be formed, where εὐνή is on a par with another action noun, ὕπνος:[26]

(6)   ὁππότε δή ῥ' Ὀδυσῆα ἐέλπετο ὃν κατὰ θυμὸν
      εὐνῆς ἧς ἀλόχου ταρπήμεναι ἠδὲ καὶ ὕπνου,   (*Od*. 23.345–6)
      "when she (Athena) judged that Odysseus had had his fill of making love
      with his spouse and of sleeping, …"

We may conclude that εὐνή denotes a private place, especially the marriage bed as connected with reproduction. In addition, it occurs as an action noun governing the genitive and meaning 'sexual intercourse'; this use may have developed secondarily. Finally, εὐνή possibly referred to the female lap, but there is no need to insist on this.

5. The semantics of *yóni-* in the *Rigveda*

The *Petersburger Wörterbuch* by Böhtlingk and Roth gives three basic meanings for *yóni-* in the *Rigveda* (the other meanings given there first occur later in Sanskrit):

1.   Schooss; Geburtsort, Mutterleib, vulva
2.   Heimath, Haus; Lager, Nest, Stall u.s.w.
3.   Stätte des Entstehens oder des Bleibens, daher Ursprung, Quelle, (zum Empfang zubereiteter) Raum, Behälter, Sitz u.s.w.;

It is remarkable how extraordinarily well the meanings under 2. coincide with those of εὐνή. Indeed, Grassmann's *Wörterbuch zum Rigveda* also cites the meanings 'Lager, Ruhebett', 'Nest', and more specifically 'Ehebett'.

But what about the meaning 'womb, lap'? That *yóni-* in this meaning is old within the *Rigveda* is demonstrated by a case like:

(7)   *ví jihīṣva vanaspate yóniḥ sūṣyantyā iva*   (RV 5.78.5 ab)
      "Open up, tree, like the womb of a woman who is about to give birth".

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[26] Likewise Führer (*LfgrE* s.v. *ad loc.*).

As noted above, according to Oettinger all other meanings can be understood from 'womb', the denotation of a concrete body part. In this, he essentially follows Grassmann (*WzRV* s.v.), who gives as an overarching translation "der Mutterleib", adding the remark: "als der festhaltende, in sich schliessende; daraus geht dann der Begriff des weichgebetteten Sitzes oder Lagers hervor." As we will now see, however, a more detailed comparison between the Greek and Indic uses renders a primacy of the meaning 'womb' unlikely.

On a large number of occasions, the *yóni-* of the fire-god Agni is mentioned. Oettinger (2016: 336) remarks on this: "Natürlich ist der Herd, in dem das Feuer ‚geboren' ist, zugleich sein ‚Mutterschoß' (…) und seine ‚Heimstätte' (…)," and he thinks that the hearth may have been referred to as a womb. However, given the Homeric attestations where εὐνή denotes an abode (nest, lair) of animals, let us hypothesize that this is also an older meaning of *yóni-*. Since protection from the elements is exactly what a fire needs in order to be kindled and grow strong, this would fit well. I therefore do not consider it plausible that we are dealing with a metaphorical use of 'womb'. Rather, the womb or lap is also a particular kind of sheltered place: it is the cradle where an embryo nestles.

In this connection, it may also be relevant that a Vedic fireplace is built with a bed of straw (*barhíṣ-*), just like a nest.[27] Indeed, the fireplace is actually compared to a nest in the following stanza:

(8) *ágne víśvebhiḥ s*ᵤ*vanīka deваír*   **ūrṇāvantam** *prathamáḥ sīda* **yónim**
     kulāyínaṃ *ghṛtávantaṃ savitré*   *yajñáṃ naya yájamānāya sādhú*
                                                              (RV 6.15.16)

"Fair-faced Agni, among all the gods be the first to sit down **on the woolly seat, the nest-like**, rich in ghee. Direct the sacrifice straight to Savitar for the sacrificer."

The following phrase, repeated a number of times in the *Rigveda* (including various transformations), is remarkable too:

(9) *śyenó ná yónim ā́sadat*   (RV 9.62.4c and passim)
     "Wie eine Falke ins Nest hat er (Soma) sich an seinen Platz gesetzt."
     (Geldner)

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[27] In hymns addressed to Agni or to Soma, the divinity is often requested to sit down on the *barhíṣ-* (cf. *barhiṣád-* 'sitting on the sacrificial straw') or on the *yóni-*. This might indicate that both nouns have the same referent in such contexts. Jamison (2018) *ad* 6.15.16 disagrees with Geldner *ad eundem loc.* about the reference of the epithet *ūrṇāvantam* 'wooly': Geldner thinks it refers to the *barhíṣ-*, but Jamison notes that "dry grass … might produce a conflagration disruptive to the ritual", and she therefore thinks "it must rather refer to twigs and foliage still present on the firewood".

Geldner's translation is in my view to be preferred over Jameson & Brereton's "Like a falcon he has set on his womb", but neither translation seems to take into consideration that *yóni-* may actually *mean* 'nest', even when applied to Soma, and that this is why the image of a bird is evoked here. Positing a lexical meaning 'nest' explains why *yóni-* is used not only for the place where something is born, but also for the place where something belongs, where something is at home and safe.

Like εὐνή, *yóni-* may also denote a place where one spends the night. Oettinger cites the following pada's, where praise is given to a host who offers the poet food and who is *syonakŕt-* (< *su-yona-kŕt-*), i.e. offers him a comfortable place to sleep:

(10) *svādukṣádmā yó* **vasataú siyonakŕj**   *jīvayājáṃ yájate sópamā́ diváḥ*
                                                                    (RV 1.31.15 cd)

"Wer süße Speise vorsetzt, in seiner Wohnung ein gutes Lager berei-tet und ein lebendes Tier opfert, der kommt zuoberst im Himmel." (Geldner)

"Whoever (as host), serving sweet food, providing a comfortable place in his dwelling, performs the sacrifice of a living thing, he is the very measure of heaven." (JB)

These two basic features of hospitality, food and a decent bed, are also named at *Od.* 20.129–30, which can be directly compared:

(11) μαῖα φίλη, πῶς ξεῖνον ἐτιμήσασθ᾽ ἐνὶ οἴκῳ
     εὐνῇ καὶ σίτῳ, ἦ αὔτως κεῖται ἀκηδής;

"Dear nurse, how have you honored the stranger in our house? With bed-ding and food, or does he lie down just like that, uncared for?"

A final remarkable common feature of *yóni-* and εὐνή is the fact that both may denote the bed as a place of sexual intercourse: "Zugleich ist das Bett aber auch oft der Ort, an dem für den Mann der ‚Mutterschoß' der Frau nahe ist," as Oettinger (2016: 336) puts it, citing:

(12) *anaśrávo ꞌₐnamīvā́ḥ surátnā*   **ā́ rohantu** *jánayo* **yónim** *ágre*
                                                                    (RV 10.18.7 cd)

"Without tears, without disease, adorned with beautiful jewels the wives must mount the bed first" (tr. LvB).

As Oettinger rightly remarks, the translation "let the wives first mount the womb" (Jamison & Brereton 2014: 1401) does not take into account the synchronic polysemy of *yóni-* and the possibility of semantic developments. Consider also:

(13) *yamásya mā yamₗyàṃ kắma ắgan* **samāné yónau sahaśéyₗyāya**

<div align="right">(RV 10.10.7 ab)</div>

> "Over me, Yami, a desire for Yama has come, to lie down together with him on the same bed." (tr. after Geldner)

Here, Jamison & Brereton translate "in the same womb [/place]", but although the fact that Yama and Yami are descended from the same womb may resonate here, the actual reference must be to a place of lovemaking. The same association with reproduction is found in various other passages.[28]

This overview of the semantics of *yóni-* in the *Rigveda* can be summarized as follows. Widespread and certainly old are the meanings 'nest', 'bed' (*Lager*, *Lagerstätte*), and more generally 'place to stay, abode'. These meanings neatly match those of Homeric εὐνή and to my mind, the coincidences leave no doubt that we have to reconstruct a PIE word for 'nest', a sheltered place where young are born and reared and where a family sleeps. Whether the meaning 'womb' is old remains an open question: it is present already in old portions of the *Rigveda*, but becomes predominant only later. If we follow Oettinger (2016), 'womb' is also attested for Avestan *yaona-*,[29] but that does not make it the primary meaning: it is plausible that 'womb' developed in Proto-Indo-Iranian as a euphemism out of an inherited word for 'nest, cradle'.[30]

Turning briefly to the Iranian cognates, **(H)i̯auna-* appears – rather surprisingly – to display meanings like 'way; movement', e.g. Khot. *gyūna-* 'movement, gait', Pashto *yun* 'id.', and also in Tocharian A *yoñi*, B *yoñiya* 'path, course; domain', which may be a borrowing from Iranian. In the older literature this led to the view that the original meaning of Skt. *yóni-* was 'way, course' and that the entire etymon **(H)i̯auna/i-* derives from a root PIIr. **Hi̯au-*, an extended form of PIE **h₁ei-* 'go'.[31] In Indo-Aryan, however, there appears to be no solid evidence for such a root (cf. *EWAia* s.v. *YAV₁*), and there is no compelling evidence in Vedic that *yóni-* means 'way, course'. Therefore, Iranian **(H)i̯auna-* 'way; movement' is either

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[28] Other places (cited by Oettinger) where *yóni-* denotes the bed as a place for lovemaking are RV 4.3.2, 10.123.2, 10.34.11, and 10.107.9.

[29] For the analysis as an *a*-stem *yaona-* (only acc. *yaonəm*), see below.

[30] I therefore disagree with Oettinger (2016: 339), who states: "Da es methodisch korrekt und auch üblich ist, die konkreteste Bedeutung von Wörtern bis zum Erweis des Gegenteils für die ursprünglichste zu halten, und da Körperteilbezeichnungen etwas sehr Konkretes sind, ist ‚Mutterschoß' als älteste Bedeutung anzunehmen." Note that 'nest' is also a concrete referent. Moreover, even those who assume that concrete referential meanings are, as a default, to be considered more original must take into account that we are dealing with a body part that is susceptible for taboo.

[31] Cf. Mayrhofer, *KEWA* s.v. *yóniḥ* for arguments and literature. This view was later rejected by Mayrhofer in *EWAia* s.v. *yóni-*.

unrelated to *(H)i̯auna/i- 'nest, safe place', or it is due to a secondary semantic development. In the latter case, one could speculate that 'path, course' developed from a specialization of *(H)i̯auna- to denote a river bed or watercourse, a use which is also attested for *yóni-* in the *Rigveda*.[32]

Whatever the ultimate origin of Iranian *(H)i̯auna- 'way, movement', it cannot be doubted that the meaning '(private, safe) place' is old also in Iranian, cf. Sogd. *ywn* 'place' and Avestan *yaona-* in phrases like the following:

> yehe. ząϑaēca. vaxṣ̌aēca. yaonəm. daδāt̰. ahurō. mazdā̊

> "to whom Ahura Mazdā has appointed a safe place for offspring and growth" (V. 21.4).[33]

6. Phonological issues: *h-* (and zero) versus ζ- in Greek

There are two potential phonological issues connected with the proposed etymology:[34] the unaspirated reflex of *yod* in εὐνή, and the reconstruction of the PIE onset (*Hi̯- or *i̯-). The first point is easily addressed: εὐνή, being an almost exclusively poetic form, may have undergone psilosis. Comparable case from Homeric Greek are εἰνατέρες 'wives of the husband's brothers, *ianitrices*' < PGr. *i̯enateres (with metrical lengthening of the first syllable) and ἄκος 'remedy', ἀκέομαι 'mend, heal, cure' < earlier *i̯ak-es- n. (cf. Myc. *a-ke-te-re* beside *ja-ke-te-re*, where *yod* is preserved orthographically).[35] The second issue concerns the question why Greek does not have the reflex ζ- corresponding to Skt. *y-*. Since the double reflex of *yod* in Greek is an unsettled issue, which would merit a more extensive treatment of its own, I will limit myself here to highlighting some points of interest.

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[32] Mayrhofer *EWAia* q.v. judges that Skt. *yóni-* can be connected to Iranian 'way, course' only "in weitherziger semantischer Auslegung". Sasha Lubotsky (p.c.) prefers a scenario in which the semantic change into 'way, course' took place in compounds; he assumes that combinations like *huuāiiaonā̊ŋhō paṇtānō* 'comfortable roads' were reinterpreted as 'roads providing a good course'.

[33] For more similar instances in Avestan, see Oettinger 2016: 337.

[34] I will not consider the question why Greek εὐνή is oxytone; on the accentuation of nouns in -η, see Dieu 2016.

[35] In Van Beek 2013: 318–319, I discussed the compounds χαμαιευνάδες 'who nest on the earth' (of swine, *Od*. 10.243 and 14.15), and χαμαιεῦναι 'who sleep on the ground' (of the Selloi / Helloi, priests of Zeus at Dodona at *Il*. 16.235). The correption of -αι- in these words is problematic because this license is extremely rare word-internally in Homer. I suggested that the first member was originally χαμα- (as in χαμά-δις and χαμᾶζε < *χαμά-αζε) and that the hiatus in *χαμα-εύνης represents a trace of word-initial *yod*. I now doubt, however, whether prosodic traces of word-initial *yod* can be expected to be preserved in compounds.

First of all, the theory that words with ζ- were taken from a rural dialect related to Proto-Greek, or from a different sociolect, is untenable. Such scenarios are contradicted by the data: many words with ζ- are not typically associated with rural or lower register; even ζεύγνυμι is a normal verb meaning 'to connect, pair'.[36] Therefore, most scholars now suspect that the divergence between ζ- and *i̯- > h- correlates with a difference between *Hi̯- and *i̯- in the proto-language, possibly depending on the specific kind of laryngeal.[37] Indeed, it is attractive as a matter of principle to try and find a phonetic conditioning factor. Moreover, there is no evidence that an initial laryngeal was vocalized before *yod* (contrast the outcome of *Hu̯-, where we find a 'prothetic vowel' in lexemes like ἀείρω, ἀέξω).

However, determining whether it is *Hi̯- or *i̯- that correlates with ζ- appears to be difficult. Schindler[38] argued that *i̯- underwent fortition to yield Proto-Greek *di̯- (> ζ-), and that *Hi̯- was subsequently reduced to Proto-Greek *i̯- (> h-). The evidence for this claim is, however, not exactly compelling. The relative pronoun Gr. ὅς, Phrygian ιος, Ved. *yáḥ* (etc.) has been reconstructed as *h_1i̯o-* on account of the fact that the demonstrative Ved. *ayám* has an initial full-grade vowel, i.e. *$h_1$ei* plus IIr. *-am; the color of this initial laryngeal would appear from Lat. gen. *eius*. However, although it is likely that the relative pronoun arose by thematization of the demonstrative, it must be taken into account that most pronouns are clitic elements. As such, they need not observe the same rules of Indo-European root structure as lexical words; that is, it is not ascertained that we must reconstruct *$h_1$ei* rather than simply *ei* for the nom. sg.

A second example, which I used to consider a strong piece of evidence, is ὑγιής 'healthy'. This has been reconstructed as an original root compound *$h_2$iu-g^wih_3-* by Weiss (1994: 149–152), following Saussure (1892: 89–90), and sometimes assumed to be the smoking gun showing that *Hi̯- (or at least *h_2i̯-) did not develop into ζ-. However, it must be taken into account that other etymologies have been proposed for this word: *$h_1$su-g^wih_3-* (the traditional etymology that was preferred by Saussure) and more recently *$h_2$ugi-h_1éh_1s-* 'sitting strong' by Meissner,[39] who assumes

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[36] For more detailed criticism of the idea that words with ζ- < *(H)i̯- are rural borrowings, cf. García Ramón 1999.

[37] Important recent discussions are Ittzés 2012 and Bozzone 2013.

[38] In a talk with the title "Problems of Indo-European phonology" delivered at the 5th East Coast IE Conference at Princeton, 1986. The handout of this talk is not available to me.

[39] "If we take 'strong' as the basic semantics that would also fit the 'Homeric' attestation, it would be very tempting to compare it to Skt. *ugrá-* 'strong', and ὑγιής could contain the Caland form of this adjective + the root for 'to sit', thus *$h_2$ugi-h_1éh_1s-* 'sitting (i.e. ruling) strong, with might'." (Meissner 2005: 205).

a first member related to Skt. *ugrá-* 'strong'. Neither of these alternative proposals is particularly convincing in my view. In a future publication, I intend to elaborate the idea that the first member indeed contains the root of Skt. *ugrá-*, as hypothesized by Meissner, while the second member contains the PIE root *$*His$-* (cf. Ved. *íṣ-* 'refreshment, invigoration'). This is attractive because *$*His$-* is also reflected in Gr. ἰάομαι 'to heal', ἰατρός 'physician', which belong to the same semantic field as ὑγιής. In any case, the reconstruction *$*h_2iu\text{-}g^{w}ih_3$-* for ὑγιής is merely one among several possibilities.

A prominent role in previous discussions has been played by the group of Ved. *yáva-* 'grain, wheat, barley', YAv. *yauua-* 'id.', Lith. *jãvas* 'grain', which is to be compared to Gr. ζειαί 'spelt' and Hom. φυσίζοος 'which makes grain grow' (epithet of the earth). Now, the noun *yávasa-* n. 'grass; pasture' appears in the *Rigveda* in the possessive compounds *sūyávasa-* 'with good pastures' (also *sūyavasá-*) and *áyavasa-* 'without pasture', apparently with the phonological reflex of an initial laryngeal. If this word for 'grass; pasture' is related to 'grain', this would justify reconstructing the latter noun as *$*H\underline{i}ó\underline{u}Ho$-* or *$*H\underline{i}é\underline{u}o$-*, furnishing evidence for *$*H\underline{i}$-* > ζ-.[40] This identification is, however, not at all certain, as grass (eaten by animals) and grain (eaten by men) are two different things. Therefore, the root of Ved. *yávasa-* might be identified instead with that of *gávyūti-* f. 'pasture', *yūthá-* n. 'herd'.[41] The combination of *-ū-* in these forms and the lengthening in *sūyávasa-* led Schindler to reconstruct an Indo-Iranian root *$*H\underline{i}a\underline{u}H$-* 'pasture' that is unrelated to *yáva-* 'grain'. Nikolaev (2014) has argued that this *$*H\underline{i}a\underline{u}H$-* was originally verbal, in view of *$*y\bar{u}$-* 'eat' in Dardic and Nuristani languages, as well as Wakhi *yaw-* 'eat'. Furthermore, Nikolaev proposes to reconstruct the root as PIE *$*H\underline{i}e\underline{u}h_2$-* 'pasture' on account of Greek εἰαμενή 'meadow', which would be a substantivized adjective derived from the participle of a middle athematic root present meaning 'to graze'. Nikolaev takes this as another example in favor of Schindler's rule *$*H\underline{i}$-* > Gr. /h-/. However, the assumed derivational chain contains a large number of intermediate stages and therefore remains hypothetical in my view.[42]

As for the possibility to distinguish phonological and metrical traces of *$*H\underline{i}$-* in the *Rigvedic* evidence itself, and to use them for solving the issue of

[40] Thus, e.g., Bozzone 2013: 8.

[41] See Nikolaev 2014: 132 with lit.

[42] Cf. the judgment of Dieu (2015: 134) about Nikolaev's etymology: "le nombre important d'étapes reconstruites la rend peut-être plus ingénieuse que véritablement convaincante."

the Greek double reflex, a detailed treatment has been provided by Ittzés (2012). Ittzés concludes with a *non liquet*: "Vedic metrics and the collected data do not provide conclusive evidence" (2012: 102), and states that the Vedic data "cannot be used as independent evidence" for the presence or absence of a laryngeal before *yod* (2012: 105–106). To give an example, the root *YODH* seems to furnish strong evidence: it occurs in several formations with phonological lengthening of the preceding vowel in compounds: *amitrāyúdh-* 'who combats enemies', Young Avestan *aspā-iiaoδa-* 'fighting on a horse', and PN *frā-iiaoδa-* 'fighting in front' (PN). According to Ittzés, however, these lengthened vowels could also be due to Brugmann's Law. This would mean, in the case of *YODH*, that only *vṛṣāyúdh-* 'who fights bulls' (*hapax*) < **u̯ṛsṇ-* plus *yúdh-* remains as potential evidence.

Whatever one thinks of Ittzés's skeptical evaluation of the material, one verbal root provides fairly strong and consistent indications for the presence of an initial laryngeal: *YOJ* 'to connect' (Ittzés 2012: 102–103). It is precisely this root which speaks against Schindler's explanation of the Greek *zeta*-forms (cf. related ζεύγνυμι). Against this background, it may be relevant that Skt. *syoná-* 'comfortable', an old lexicalized form (cf. also Av. *huiiaona-*), has no lengthening of the vowel preceding the morphological boundary. This word clearly reflects an old compound PIIr. **Hsu-i̯auná-*[43] and strongly suggests that there was never an initial laryngeal in *yóni-*. This is confirmed, or is at least not contradicted, by the complete absence of lengthening (whether phonological or metrical) before *yóni-* on a total of 137 instances in the *Rigveda* (cf. Ittzés 2012: 107).

Thus, while the correspondence between Ved. *YOJ* and Gr. ζεύγνυμι may be taken to suggest that the reflex ζ- correlates with the presence of some initial laryngeal, that between *yóni-* and εὐνή can be taken to show that *h-* (or zero) reflects the absence of a laryngeal. As I will argue below, the etymon of *yóni-* and εὐνή is best derived from the precursor of *YAV₂* 'to keep away, separate'. Again, it may be significant that verb forms of *YAV₂* in the *Rigveda* are preceded by *brevis in longo* only once on a total of 131 forms, and never in the cadence (Ittzés 2012: 107). Moreover, there is only one ascertained form showing phonological lengthening in internal sandhi, the *hapax yūyuvi-* 'warding off' (Ittzés 2012: 99). These figures suggest that *YAV₂* did not start with a laryngeal, and are fully compatible with the picture gained from *syoná-*.[44]

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[43] This convincing interpretation of *syoná-* goes back to Wackernagel (1914: 267–271).

[44] The figures for *YAV₁* 'put together', which may or may not be related to *YAV₂*, show a similar picture.

To sum up, although the evidence for lengthening before word-initial *yod* in Indo-Iranian allows for more than one interpretation, the correspondence between *yóni-* (*syoná-*) and εὐνή constitutes an important addition to the dossier of the double reflex of initial *yod* in Greek. A picture emerges in which the Greek ζ-reflex is related to the original presence of some (though perhaps not any)[45] root-initial laryngeal, while the non-occurrence of ζ- correlates with the absence of an initial laryngeal.[46] Nevertheless, in view of the loose ends that remain, I will keep referring to the root that is here supposed to underlie *yóni-* and εὐνή as *(H)i̯eu-*.

7. Morphological issues: gender and stem formation

Let us now consider the divergences in gender and stem formation between the different branches. A feminine *ā*-stem is found in Greek (and perhaps Irish), a masculine (later feminine)[47] *i*-stem in Vedic, and a masculine *a*-stem in Iranian. Various explanations for this divergence are conceivable. Let us start with the Indo-Iranian evidence.

First of all, we must note that the Avestan simplex is securely attested only as an acc. *yaonəm*, from an *a*-stem *yaona-* (m.).[48] It was first argued

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[45] If the root of ἵημι, ἧκα 'send, let go' is to be reconstructed as *H̥i̯eh₁-* on account of the Attic evidence for long *iota* in the reduplication syllable (Peters 1976), it would show that *H̥i-* did not yield ζ- for at least one of the laryngeals. The same conclusion could be drawn from ἅζομαι 'shun, revere' if the Indo-Iranian perfect indeed points to a root with *Hi-* (cf. *LIV²* s.v. *H̥i̯aǵ-*). The evidence for *h₃i-* > ζ- is uncertain. The etymological connection of ζέφυρος 'West wind' with the verbal root *h₃ieb^h-* 'enter' > 'penetrate' (Skt. *yabh-*, OCS. *jebati*) is often repeated without further comment (e.g. Bozzone 2013: 7), but since this is merely a root etymology (what would the suffix -υρος represent?), it seems more prudent to regard it as uncertain, especially since the word for a local wind in the Aegean could easily be a loanword. The derivation of ζόφος 'darkness' from *h₃ieb^h-* is made difficult by the existence of similar words for 'darkness' (δνόφος, κνέφας), which entails the possibility of contaminations.

[46] Note that Old Hittite *iūk-* 'yoke, pair', later *iuka-* (n.), preserves initial *yod*, while this sound seems to be lost in Hitt. *eka-* 'ice' < *i̯ego-* and *eu̯an-* 'some kind of grain' < *i̯eu̯on-*. It might then seem problematic that both *iūk-*, *iuka-* and *eu̯an-* correspond to a Greek form with ζ-, but this can be resolved by assuming that initial *yod* was lost only before *e* (*EDHIL* 89). Since the etymology of *eu̯an-* is not completely ascertained (cf. *EDHIL* s.v.), an alternative would be to assume that only *H̥i-* was retained as initial *yod* in Hittite, while plain *i̯-* was lost. The material is too scanty to allow for definite conclusions.

[47] In the *Rigveda*, *yóni-* is always masculine, but from the *Atharvaveda* onwards, it also occurs as a feminine.

[48] If *yaona* is real at Yt. 5.87, it would be an *i*-stem locative, as accepted by Mayrhofer (*EWAia* s.v. *yóni-*, with references). However, as the recent discussion by Oettinger (2016) shows, the interpretation of the passage is highly disputed and the text has been emended in various ways. Oettinger himself attractively proposes, following in essence Wackernagel (1914: 267 with n. 1), to read a nom. pl. ⁺*vaδri.yaonā̊* "mit nicht empfangendem Schoss", in agreement with the preceding *kaininō* 'girls' (emendating *vaδri.yaona*

by Wackernagel (1914: 266–267), and still accepted by Mayrhofer (*EWAia* s.v. *yóni-*), that the spelling of acc. *yaonəm* may represent original *-im*, but this claim rests on the now doubtful idea that Young Avestan vowel spellings are uninformative. Secondly, in compounds we find the thematic form, not only in Avestan (*hu.iiaona-, huuā.iiaona-, pərəθu.iiaona-*) but also, as we already saw, in Vedic *syoná-* (adj.) 'hospitable, agreeable', *dur-yoṇá-* (n.) 'bad place to stay'. This raises the question whether Proto-Indo-Iranian had an *i*-stem, a thematic noun, or both.

Concerning the coexistence of an *i*-stem with a thematic 2nd compound member, a consultation of *AiGr.* (II, 1: 118–119) teaches us that there is only one serious parallel supporting an old alternation *yóni-* beside °*yoṇá-*: this is *aṅgúri-, aṅgúli-* f. 'finger; toe' (AV+) beside the compound *daśāṅgulá-* (n.) 'length of ten fingers' (RV). The *i*-stem is found in the compound *s*$_u$*vaṅgurí-* 'with beautiful fingers' (RV) and also supported by Ossetic (Ir. *æng*^{w}*ylӡ*, Dig. *ængulӡæ* 'finger'). On the other hand, the thematic compound form is also preserved in Young Avestan *zairimiiaṇura-* 'tortoise, turtle' = "whose toes are in a house". Since etymological relatives of the 'finger' word point to a thematic pre-form *$h_2$engulo-* (e.g. Lat. *angulus* 'hook, corner', OHG *enchil* 'ankle'), one may suspect that the *i*-stem was secondarily introduced in the simplex form of this body part term in Indo-Aryan (or perhaps already in Proto-Indo-Iranian), and that the compounds Ved. *daśāṅgulá-* and YAv. *zairimiiaṇura-* preserve the older form. Thus, it does not seem likely to me that °*yoṇá-* beside *yóni-* represents an old type of suffix substitution in compounds.[49]

One option is now to assume that the thematic formation of Avestan *yaona-* is older, and that Vedic *yóni-* obtained its *i*-stem inflection (and, perhaps, also its root accent) from the semantically close body part term *śróṇi-* 'hip, buttock, loin'.[50] The *i*-stem inflection of *śróṇi-* and its Avestan cognate *sraoni-* is clearly inherited from PIE *$\acute{k}louni$-.[51] In such a

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found in the best manuscript F1) instead of Geldner's conjecture ⁺*vaδre.yaona*. Under these circumstances, nothing can be based on the transmitted form *yaona*.

[49] This conclusion is different from the one reached by Sasha Lubotsky, with whom I discussed this matter in detail. In his forthcoming etymological dictionary of Indo-Iranian, Lubotsky assumes that the alternation between a simplex *yóni-* and thematic compounds in °*yoṇá-* is old, and he accounts for the thematic form in Iranian by decomposition.

[50] For this idea see van Beek (2013: 319) and independently Oettinger (2016). We may note the parallelism in phraseology between Av. *pərəθu.iiaona-* 'providing a broad place' (cf. Ved. *pr̥thúṃ yónim* RV 10.99.2, referring to the earth) and *pərəθu.sraoni-* 'having broad hips' (Ved. *pr̥thú-śroṇi-* ŚB).

[51] Cf. Lat. *clūnis* 'buttocks, tail bone', MW. *clun* 'haunch', pl. *cluniau* (and also the homonym meaning 'meadow', OIr. *clúain*, OW. *clun*, etc. < PCelt. *klowni-*), Lith. *šlaunìs* 'hip, thigh', ON *hlaun* 'buttocks, loin'.

scenario, it would be logical that the compounds *syoná-* and *dur-yoṇá-* were not changed into *i*-stem forms, as they had become semantically and/or morphologically detached from the simplex. However, the masculine gender of *yóni-* in the *Rigveda* (unexpected for a body part of this meaning) is not accounted for by this contamination with *śróṇi-*, which is feminine. In theory, this problem could be resolved by viewing the gender of *yóni-* as a remnant of the older thematic form (Avestan *yaona-* has masculine gender). A more serious problem for this explanation, however, is that *yóni-* not only designates a body part, but more generally any sheltered place. Since the meaning 'sheltered place' remains frequent and is probably older than 'womb' (as argued above), I no longer consider the idea of a contamination with *śróṇi-* to be plausible.

An alternative would be that the *i*-stem and the thematic stem are both old. We would have to assume that Indo-Aryan and Iranian independently made a selection between both options. At first sight, this is difficult to maintain: there are no indications suggesting an original semantic distinction between two stems,[52] and other languages offer no unambiguous support for the antiquity of an *i*-stem meaning 'bed, nest'.[53] It is true that Irish also attests an *i*-stem *úaim* (f.) 'lair', but there seems to be no clear reason for the fluctuation with *úam* (and the *d*-stem *úama* 'id.'), and it does not appear to be possible to determine whether *úaim* or *úam* is the older form.

There are, however, other reasons for reconstructing an *i*-stem beside a thematic stem. First of all, the coexistence of masculine *o*-stem and feminine *eh_2*-stem forms suggests that the original formation was an adjective *$(H)ieu$-mn-o-*. As we will see below, there are independent reasons to suspect a meaning 'private' for this adjective. Whenever this adjective modified nouns meaning 'place', the gender of these nouns would have determined the gender of the substantivized form of adj. *$(H)ieu$-mn-o-*. This means that εὐνή may have modified a feminine noun like ἡ χώρᾱ 'place'. The masculine gender of Avestan *yaona-* is somewhat problematic, given that most words for 'place, room' in Indo-Iranian are neuter; still, we may think of words like Skt. *lóka-* m. 'place' and Ved. *nīḍá-* m./n. 'nest'.

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[52] One could suppose, for instance, that the *i*-stem had a more concrete meaning 'nest' while the thematic stem referred to a private place more generally, but this would remain mere speculation.

[53] There is, however, evidence for an *i*-stem in the Greek adj. εὖνις 'bereft' (see below).

Following this scenario, we may suppose that *yóni-* is an old *i*-stem substantivization created from an *o*-stem adjective, a derivation for which well-known parallels exist, such as:

- Lat. *ravis* f. 'angina' from *ravus* 'hoarse';
- Av. *tiγri-* f. 'arrow' from *tiγra-* 'pointed';
- Ved. *jīrí-* f. 'rapids' from *jīrá-* 'swift';
- PIE *h_2eḱri-* (Gr. ἄκρις f. 'peak', ὄκρις f. 'point', Ved. *áśri-* f. 'corner') beside *h_2eḱro-* (Gr. adj. ἄκρος 'top, highest').

According to Schindler (1980: 390), followed by Nussbaum (1999: 399), turning a PIE *o*-stem adjective into an *i*-stem created abstract nouns.[54] However, Nussbaum (2014) also allows for the possibility that *-i-* could make substantivizations of masculine gender. If this is true, *yóni-* 'sheltered place' could be a derivation of this type from the thematic adjective *(H)i̯eu(m)no-* 'private'. This adjective, though not directly preserved in any daughter language, would be continued in substantivized form in Greek (εὐνή f.) and Iranian (Avestan *yaona-* m.).[55] Such a scenario finds a parallel in the following *i*-stem nouns, where an original thematic base adjective has only been preserved in substantivized form:

- PIE *$n̥b^hri-$* (Lat. *imber* 'rain') beside *$n̥b^hro-$* (Ved. *abhrá-* 'cloud', perhaps Gr. ἀφρός 'foam');
- PIE *$d^heg^{wh}ri-$* (Lat. *febris* 'fever') beside *$d^heg^{wh}ro-$* *'glowing, burning' (Gr. τέφρᾱ 'ashes').

8. The root etymology

Before discussing some final issues concerning the status of the *i*-stem in section 9, let us now first consider the root etymology of *(H)i̯eu-mn-*.

In Indo-Aryan, there are two verbal roots with a shape matching the reconstruction *(H)i̯eu-*.[56] In the *Rigveda*, YAV_1 (mostly with preverbs) is

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[54] It is now widely accepted, but in my view not certain, that *-i-* made adjectival abstracts: cf. Balles 2006: 272–287; Vine 2006; Meusel 2015. In support of this idea, Schindler drew attention to feminine abstracts in *-i-* in Slavic languages, remarking that abstracts may lexicalize as concrete nouns, as in German *Flüssigkeit* 'liquid'.

[55] Alternatively, it could be assumed that PIE had already lost the adjective *(H)i̯eu-mn-o-* and preserved two nouns, a substantivized feminine *(H)i̯eu-mn-eh₂-* (reflected in εὐνή and OIr. *úam*) and a masculine substantivization *(H)i̯éu-mn-i-* (in Ved. *yóni-*). One would then have to assume that the masculine thematic form in Iranian arose by contamination with a semantically close word, for instance the reflex of PIE *nisdó-* 'nest' (cf. Ved. *nīḍá-* m. and n., Lat. *nīdus* m.), which is not attested in Avestan.

[56] In my dissertation, I proposed another option (first suggested to me by Karl Praust) that is also quite attractive from a semantic point of view: *(H)i̯eu-* could reflect the root *$h_3i̯eb^h-$* 'enter', with a conditioned development *b^h* > *$u̯$* before the cluster *-mn-*, or

usually given the basic meaning 'bind together, connect' and forms a class VI present *yuváti* (also *yáuti* AV+); on the other hand, *YAV₂* means 'keep away, ward off', with a reduplicated pres. *yuyóti*, as well as an intransitive pres. *yúcchati* 'stays away from'. It is generally agreed that these are synchronically distinct roots in view of their different verbal stem formations. Still, many scholars are attracted by the idea that they have an identical etymological origin; the idea is that *YAV₂* 'separate' developed from a specific use of *YAV₁* with the preverb *ví* 'apart'.[57]

Vedic *YAV₁* has been proposed as the basis for *yóni-* by Adams (1986: 340), starting from a basic meaning 'connecting part', but the semantic development assumed by him, from 'girdle' to 'waist' and then to 'belly, womb', is highly speculative.[58] A derivation from *YAV₂* 'keep away', on the other hand, seems much more attractive because a nest is a confined place from which intruders are barred. However, it is somewhat problematic that the direct object of *YAV₂* in Vedic is not the protected place or person (which may stand in the ablative or instrumental), but the thing that is warded off. In other words, if a *nomen rei actae* underlying *yóni-* were derived synchronically from *YAV₂*, its meaning should have been something like 'what is excluded' or 'intruder'.

Notwithstanding this issue, I wish to plead for a derivation from the PIE precursor of *YAV₂*. That verb's main meanings attested in the *Rigveda* are 1. 'ward off' (e.g. an arrow); 2. 'keep something at bay'; 3. (especially

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perhaps rather with an isolated development *$b^h m$ > *u. In view of the lack of parallels, it is difficult to be more precise about the phonetic development. The root *h_3ieb^h- is well-known as an example where Nuclear Indo-European has undergone a semantic specialization: Toch. B *yäp-* means 'enter' (notably a house) but cognate forms in other branches specifically mean 'penetrate' in a sexual sense: Ved. *yábhati*, Gr. οἴφω, Russ. *jebat'*. Here, it may be noted that Vedic *yóni-* means both 'homestead, proper place' and 'womb', that εὐνή in Homer is several times the object of a verb meaning 'to go into', and that important PIE words for 'settlement' derive from the verbal root *$ueik$- 'to enter'. One might therefore envisage a PIE *nomen rei actae* *h_3ieb^h-mn- denoting "that which one enters" (a house, nest, or private place). This reconstruction would contradict the often-accepted derivation of ζέφυρος 'the West wind' and ζόφος 'darkness' from the root *h_3ieb^h-, but this is not a decisive objection as these etymologies are hypothetical, too. In the end, since this derivation from *h_3ieb^h- 'enter' is phonetically speculative, the connection with *$(H)ieu$- 'separate' proposed in the main text must be preferred.

[57] Phonologically this is possible, as neither root provides evidence for lengthening preceding short syllables in the *Rigveda* (cf. above on Ittzés 2012).

[58] A PIE *$Hiéuni$- 'connecting part' would have developed to 'girdle', then to 'waist', and finally 'womb'; Adams compares Greek ζώνη 'girdle; waist' < *ieh_3s-neh_2- for the semantics. This is obviously nothing more than a guess.

with *ví*) 'deprive of, exclude from'. An older root meaning, however, was probably 'separate, set apart', as appears from Vedic *vyòman-* (n.) 'heaven, sky', which has been analyzed by Wackernagel (1914: 269) as a compound of *ví* and **yóman-*.[59] Now, *vyòman-* does not by itself secure the existence of an old neuter PIE **(H)i̯eu-mn-*: in view of its prefix, *vyòman-* looks like a productive and relatively recent derivation from the compounded verb. The form does show, however, that the direct object of *YAV₂* could refer to an enclosed space. This is, of course, highly relevant for the etymology of *yóni-*.

A second point is that the semantic range of *YAV₂* is reminiscent of the Greek verb ἐέργω (ἔργω, εἴργω, εἴργνυμι), which has two seemingly opposed basic meanings:

1. 'shut out, keep away', cf. ὡς ὅτε μήτηρ παιδὸς ἐέργῃ μυῖαν "as when a mother keeps away a mosquito from her child" (*Il.* 4.131). This meaning then developed into 'exclude from', 'hinder', and so on (cf. *LSJ* and Cunliffe s.vv. for examples).

2. 'shut in', cf. phrases like κατὰ συφεοῖσιν ἐέργνυ "she (Circe) shut them (the suitors) up in the pig-sty" (*Od.* 10.238). This meaning then developed into 'enclose, contain': ὅσα λάϊνος οὐδὸς ἀφήτορος ἐντὸς ἐέργει "as much [treasure] as the stone threshold of the Shooter (Apollo) keeps inside" (*Il.* 9.404).

How both meanings of ἐέργω are related has been the subject of debate.[60] The meanings can be reconciled if we start from the image of a herdsman driving his animals towards a certain place. Such a use seems to be reflected in the following Homeric battle description, where Patroclus cuts off the fleeing Trojans and drives them into confinement:

Πάτροκλος δ' ἐπεὶ οὖν πρώτας ἐπέκερσε φάλαγγας,
ἂψ ἐπὶ νῆας **ἔεργε** παλιμπετές, οὐδὲ πόληος
εἴα ἱεμένους ἐπιβαινέμεν, ἀλλὰ μεσηγὺ
νηῶν καὶ ποταμοῦ καὶ τείχεος ὑψηλοῖο
κτεῖνε μεταΐσσων, πολέων δ' ἀπετίνυτο ποινήν.　　(*Il.* 16.394–398)

"Now Patroclus, when he had cut through the first ranks, drove them back towards the ships again, and did not allow them to haste back towards town, but he chased and killed them in between the ships and the river and the high wall, thus exacting vengeance for many."

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[59] Followed by *EWAia* s.v. *vyòman-*.

[60] See Beekes 1969: 62–63 and Tichy 1983: 286–288, who both argue that different roots have merged in ἐέργω, ἔρξα.

Such a movement of cutting off[61] could serve either to confine animals ('shut in'), but also to isolate them from the crowd or to divide them into groups ('separate'). Now, if an older meaning of the root *(H)i̯eu- was indeed 'enclose, confine', a neuter result noun *(H)i̯eu-mn- 'enclosure, confinement' would be a fitting starting point for an adjective *(H)i̯eu-mn-o- 'cut off, private', which was then substantivized in the meaning 'nest, private place'. The derivative εἱρκτή 'confinement, prison' to ἐέργω, which is also the substantivized feminine of an adjective meaning 'enclosed', may serve as a parallel.[62]

Outside of Indo-Iranian the verbal root *(H)i̯eu- 'separate' is not abundantly attested, but this does not preclude it from having Indo-European origins.[63] In this context I would like to draw attention to the noun ὑμήν (m.) 'thin skin, membrane', one of the few reflexes of hysterokinetic men-stems retained in Greek.[64] This is normally derived from the root *siuH- 'to sew' (GEW, EDG s.v. ὑμήν) as *si̯uH-mén- 'which binds', comparing Skt. syū́man- (n.) 'tie, strap; seam' as a morphological counterpart. However, as Chantraine remarked (DELG s.v.), the short root vowel of ὑμήν is problematic, and the Sanskrit word differs in gender and accentuation. Moreover, the semantic connection with the verbal root *si̯uH- meaning 'to sew' is not immediately

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[61] Interestingly, a trench also appears as the subject of the same verb ἐέργω 'shut in', delimiting a surface area: ὅσον ἐκ νηῶν ἀπὸ πύργου τάφρος ἔεργεν (Il. 8.213) "as much [space] as the trench enclosed, measured between the wall and the ships".

[62] In my view, it is plausible that YAV₁ and YAV₂ are indeed etymologically identical, but this is not strictly relevant for the present argument. The commonly-found rendering of YAV₁ as 'bind' seems wrong to me. In the Rigveda, this root without preverb means 1. 'to harness' (of horses), 2. 'to keep in check, control' (in seine Gewalt bringen, Grassmann WzRV s.v. 2. yu-), and perhaps 'to grant, give'. It seems possible that 'to control, constrain' (whence perhaps 'harness' as a technical term) developed from an older meaning 'put together, confine', and that the older meaning is similar to that of Greek ἐέργω. At any rate, preverbs may have played an important role in determining the meaning of the verb: cf. συν-είργω 'bind together' (e.g. Od. 9.427) as opposed to δι-είργω 'keep apart, separate' (e.g. Il. 12.424). As Chantraine remarked (DELG s.v. εἴργω), "on constate que dans ces thèmes verbaux, c'est le préverbe qui détermine le sens". Something similar may have happened with the two homonymous roots YAV: cf. Grassmann's remark (WzRV s.v. 1. yu), "bei den Richtungswörtern, die eine Trennung ausdrücken (nís, ví) lässt die Bedeutung nicht zwischen 1. und 2. yu entscheiden; hier muss die Form den Ausschlag geben."

[63] Note the cautious remark by Mayrhofer, EWAia s.v. YAV²: "auch ist davor zu warnen, aus dem bisherigen Fehlen eines glaubhaften idg. Etymons für iir. *i̯au- 'trennen' (…) "e silentio" auf sekundären, erst iir. Ursprung dieser Verbalsippe zu schliessen". Indeed, if the etymological reconstructions of ὑμήν 'membrane' and εὖνις 'bereft' to be proposed below are correct, the root must be inherited.

[64] The only other cases are ἀϋτμήν 'gust of wind', λιμήν 'harbor', ποιμήν 'shepherd', and πυθμήν 'bottom'.

obvious.[65] In the light of the present analysis, a reconstruction *(H)i̯u-mén-* 'that which seals off, shuts in' naturally presents itself. This is not only attractive as a definition of the membrane enveloping internal organs, but it also resolves the phonological issues involved in the reconstruction *si̯uH-mén-*. However, note that *(H)i̯eu(m)no-* / *(H)i̯eu(m)ni-* cannot be directly derived from this hysterokinetic *(H)i̯u-mén-* in view of their *e*-grade root.

9. The etymology of εὖνις 'bereft of'

In this connection, the adjective εὖνις (acc. εὖνιν, gen. -ιος and -ιδος) 'bereft of, severed' appears to be relevant. It is one of a few *i*-stem adjectives in Greek and therefore evidently an archaism.[66] Etymologically, it is usually derived from the root of Latin *vānus* 'empty, idle', Gothic *wans* 'lacking', Vedic *ūná-* 'insufficient' (see *DELG* s.v. εὖνις, Peters 1980: 51). This root has verbal forms in Indo-Aryan (Ved. *vā́yati* 'wane, fade away') and has also been identified with PIE *h_1ueh_2-* underlying Gr. ἐάω 'let, allow' by Nussbaum (1998: 73–74). However, the appurtenance of εὖνις to these words, though semantically conceivable, is impossible in terms of phonology (cf. *EDG* q.v.): *h_1uh_2-ni-* should have yielded PGr. *ūni-* or *ewani-*, but certainly not *euni-*.[67]

As a matter of fact, εὖνις 'bereft' can be given a much more straightforward etymology. I propose to analyze it as an *i*-stem derived from the adjective *(H)i̯eu-mn-o-* 'separate, private'. Parallels for a semantic development from 'separate' to 'deprived' are easy to find. In epic Greek, νόσφι 'apart, away from' gives rise to denominative νοσφίζω, which means not only 'to set apart' but also 'to deprive, rob'. Similarly, Latin

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[65] For the semantics of ὑμήν, cf. the discussion in Steer 2014: 338–339. Steer's proposal to compare the Latin term *fasciae* (literally 'bandages') to denote the same types of membrane (fibrous tissue) is ingenious, but this does not imply that the connection with *siuH-*, which he retains, must be correct. In this connection, note that *siuH-* 'sew' belongs to the domain of human industry, whereas a ὑμήν is normally a thin membrane that occurs naturally in living organisms. Alternatively, Pronk (2014) has proposed to derive ὑμήν from a root which he reconstructs as *h_3eu-* 'to put on clothes, cover with skin' and which he also recognizes in a Slavic group of words for 'skin' (e.g. Russ. *usmá*, Czech *usnije*, Slovene *úsnja*, *úsno*) and in Toch. B *ewe* 'skin, hide'. This is semantically possible, but note the Greek word does not denote an outer skin or hide, but a thin membrane (cf. Steer 2014: 333). Moreover, it presupposes that *h_3uC-* yielded Greek ὑC-, which remains uncertain.

[66] On *i*-stem adjectives in the oldest Indo-European languages, see Balles 2006: 272–287 and 2009.

[67] The scenarios discussed by Peters (1980: 51–52) are *ad hoc* hypotheses designed to save the etymology (i.e. they presuppose that εὖνις *must* reflect *h_1uh_2-ni-*). They become unnecessary in view of the etymology proposed here.

prīvus 'separate, on its own' gives rise to *prīvāre* 'to deprive of sth.' (+ abl.), no doubt from an original meaning 'to set apart'.[68] Note that the Vedic verbal root *YAV₂* may mean 'exclude from' and 'deprive of': cf. *mártaṃ yuvanta rāyáḥ* "they exclude a man from wealth" (RV 8.71.4b), *mā́ naḥ sū́ryasya saṃdṛ́śo yuyothāḥ* "do not deprive us of the sight of the sun" (RV 2.33.1b), especially with the preverb *ví*, e.g. *mā́kir na énā sakhyā́ ví yauṣuḥ* (RV 10.23.7) "let no one exclude us from this companionship".

In view of these semantic parallels, it is attractive to assume that εὖνις 'bereft' reflects **(H)ịeu(m)ni-* 'separate, private'. But how does this form relate to the thematic adjective **(H)ịeu(m)no-*? How to account for the fact that εὖνις is an adjective, when it has just been argued that Ved. *yóni-* reflects a substantivizing *i*-stem derivation?[69] To put my cards on the table: I suspect that the suffix **-i-*, in its original function, turned attributive thematic adjectives (i.e. modifiers) into forms that could serve as a predicate. To show this would require a separate treatment of the entire evidence for *i*-stem adjectives; the following may suffice at this point.

Uncompounded *i*-stem adjectives are found mainly in Anatolian (e.g. Hitt. *harki-*), Italic (e.g. Lat. *fortis*) and Celtic, branches usually thought to be among the first to split off from PIE. In most other languages, including Vedic and Greek, *i*-stem adjectives are rare, and most *i*-stems are nouns (compare the examples cited in section 7, among others). Nussbaum (2014) explains this by assuming that *i*-stem substantivizations and abstracts could become adjectives by 'secondary re-adjectivization'. Alternatively, one may suppose that such *i*-stems were adjectives to begin with, as argued by Balles (2009). We may point to instances like Ved. *pṛ́śni-* 'variegated, speckled' beside Gr. πράκνον· μέλανα (Hsch.):[70] it is not excluded that such adjectival *i*-stem derivations from *o*-stems are relic forms.[71]

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[68] Latin *prīvātus* 'private, personal, particular' (i.e. not open to the public) preserves the more original meaning. Both meanings appears in French *privé* 'private; deprived, robbed'; cf. also Middle English *private of*, which could mean 'deprived of; free from' (now obsolete).

[69] The noun εὖνις f. 'wife, bedmate' is normally considered to be derived from εὐνή (cf. *DELG*, *GEW* s.v.), but the details of the derivation are left unexplained. In my view, it is conceivable that εὖνις f. is a substantivized form of the original adjective meaning 'private', i.e. 'private woman'.

[70] Nussbaum (1998: 80) adduces these forms as parallels for the comparison between εὖνις 'bereft' and Ved. *ūná-* 'deficient' which he advocates.

[71] In my view, Balles (2009) goes too far when claiming that the categories of noun and adjective were not yet clearly distinguished in early PIE.

Turning to the Greek evidence, it is remarkable that the few adjectives in -ις are often placed in apposition or used as predicative nominals, and hardly ever occur in attributive function.[72] To give an example, ἴδρις is usually considered an adjective and translated as 'skilled, skilful, experienced', but in Homer and Hesiod its syntactic behaviour is also consistent with that of a noun meaning 'expert, skilled person'. Compare the following lines, where ἴδρις is a runover word in apposition to ἀνήρ:

> ἀνὴρ
> ἴδρις, ὃν Ἥφαιστος δέδαεν καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη
> τέχνην παντοίην   (*Od.* 6.232–4 = 23.159–61)
> "a man, an expert, whom Hephaestus and Pallas Athena have taught a versatile craft".

Normally, ἴδρις is supposed to be a contamination of an older simplex form *μid-ró-* (as reflected in Old Norse *vitr* 'smart') with compounds like ἄιδρις 'dumb', πολύιδρις 'expert'.[73] However, Meusel (2015) has argued that Pindar preserves a trace of an older abstract noun ἴδρις 'expertise', and that ἄιδρις and πολύιδρις are possessive compounds. He considers the adjectival use of ἴδρις to be a late development, starting from its use in apposition to ἀνήρ or γυνή, as in the Homeric passage above.

In other words, the different between ἴδρις and the adjective *μid-ró-* may lie in their syntactic behavior. Something similar may be visible in εὖνις: in both its Homeric attestations, this adjective appears to be used predicatively, as the object of a light verb:

> ὅς μ' υἱῶν πολλῶν τε καὶ ἐσθλῶν εὖνιν ἔθηκε
> κτείνων καὶ περνὰς νήσων ἔπι τηλεδαπάων.   (*Il.* 22.44–5)
> Priam about Achilles: "he robbed me (literally: made me bereft) of many noble sons, by killing them or selling them to far-away islands";

> αἲ γὰρ δὴ ψυχῆς τε καὶ αἰῶνός σε δυναίμην
> εὖνιν ποιήσας πέμψαι δόμον Ἄϊδος εἴσω   (*Od.* 9.523–4)
> Odysseus to Polyphemus: "if only I could deprive you (literally: make bereft) of your soul and life and send you into the house of Hades".

In particular, we might compare the phrase εὖνιν ἔθηκε to the so-called *cvi*-construction in Sanskrit, i.e. the phenomenon that a thematic adjective is turned into a form in -*ī*, possibly the fossilized instrumental of an *i*-

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[72] See Van Beek fthc. for an elaboration of this claim. The main exceptions are the odd feminine form θοῦρις 'fierce' (which, as I argue there, is an artificial formation of epic Greek) and θέσπις 'wonderful'.

[73] Cf. e.g. Le Feuvre 2016: 184 n. 17.

stem, when it is used predicatively with a telic light verb.[74] For instance, *krūrī-kṛ-* 'to wound' derives from *krūrá-* 'bloody'. The combination of light verb plus *cvi*-form has been grammaticalized to predicate a change of state of the subject or object, and this is exactly the same function we find in εὖνιν ἔθηκε. The only difference is that in Greek, the adjective εὖνιν is still in agreement with its referent (in both cases, the object of the light verb).

Of course, these last remarks remain speculative, and I intend to bolster them in the near future with further arguments. The main point is that εὖνις < *(H)ịeu(m)ni-* may be old *as an adjective* derived from PIE *(H)ịeu-mn-o-* 'secluded, separate' if we assume that the original function of the *i*-suffix was to turn attributive adjectives into predicative forms. When the difference between the attributive (modifying) and predicative functions ceased to be marked morphologically on nouns, only Anatolian and Italo-Celtic productively retained the *i*-stems as adjectives. If *i*-stems were predicative adjectives in origin, this would also explain why they were so prone to become substantivized.

10. Conclusions

The following reconstructions have been proposed:

- A PIE thematic adjective *(H)ịeu(m)no-* = *(H)ịeu-mn-o-* 'secluded, separate, private' is reflected in substantivized form in Greek εὐνή f. 'nest, bed' and Avestan *yaona-* m. 'safe place' (perhaps also 'womb').
- The related Vedic *yóni-* 'seat, nest, bed; womb' reflects an old *i*-stem *(H)ịeu(m)ni-* derived from the thematic adjective.
- The same formation(s) could be reflected in Old Irish *úam* and/or *úaim* (both f.) 'den, lair, cave', provided that their -*m*- is a possible outcome of *-ṃn-*.
- The root *(H)ịeu-* was probably that of Vedic *YAV₂* 'separate, shut in/out'. The base form of our words was a neuter *(H)ịeu-mn-* 'confinement, seclusion'.
- The Greek adjective εὖνις 'bereft' reflects *(H)ịeu(m)ni-* 'secluded'. It may reflect the same formation as Ved. *yóni-* and is therefore unrelated to Latin *vānus* 'empty, idle', Vedic *ūná-* 'insufficient', etc.
- Gr. ὑμήν (m.) 'thin skin, membrane' is to be reconstructed as *(H)ịu-mén-* 'that which encloses, seals off'. This resolves the semantic and phonological problems involved in the old connection with Skt. *syū́man-* (n.) 'tie, strap; seam'.

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[74] On the *cvi*-construction cf. generally Balles 2006.

The problem of the double reflex of *yod* (*$H\underbar{i}$- versus *$\underbar{i}$-) in Greek still requires further investigation, but whatever the eventual solution will be, the etymologies for εὐνή, εὖνις and ὑμήν proposed here will have to be taken into account. Since *yóni-* and the verbal root *YAV₂* (and also *YAV₁*, which may ultimately be related) display no evidence for the presence of an initial laryngeal (cf. especially the lexicalized compound Ved. *syoná-*), it is likely that the root was PIE *$\underbar{i}eu$-, rather than *$H\underbar{i}eu$-. Moreover, if the root of Ved. *YOJ* 'couple, connect', *yugá-* 'yoke' had an onset *$H\underbar{i}$- in view of the evidence for lengthening of preceding short vowels in Vedic, this would be compatible with the ζ-reflex of Gr. ζεύγνυμι, ζυγόν.[75]

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[75] This would mean that *$H\underbar{i}eug$- is not an extension of *$\underbar{i}eu$-. Note that *$H\underbar{i}eug$- 'connect' usually refers to the coupling of pairs or the linking of two sides (hence its application to marriage and bridges in various daughter languages), while *$\underbar{i}eu$-, in the way understood in section 8, originally referred to the confinement of groups of animals.

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