An Etymological Note on Homeric ὑπόδρα

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PINDARIC LYRICS, as is well known, preserve some archaisms of the IE root *derk- (‘see’, Gr. δέρκωμαι). Less established is the view that “epic has its own fossils associated with the root, e.g. ὑπόδρα.” This article aims to illuminate the prehistory of ὑπόδρα with special reference to Vedic material. The adverb ὑπόδρα is a compound of the prepositional prefix ὑπό and the second half δρα (< *dérk̑-), the zero-grade of the IE root *derk-. The attestation of the word is entirely restricted to the ὑπόδρα ἱδών formula. According to the analysis of Holoka, the formula is used twenty-six times in

1 On IE *derk- see H. Rix, Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben: die Wurzeln und ihre Primärstammbildungen (Wiesbaden 2001) 122. In contrast to the traditional view that the aorist participle δρακείς found in three Pindaric passages (Nem. 7.3, Pyth. 2.20, fr.123.3) is to be understood as derivative from of an otherwise unattested aorist passive in -η, B. Forssman, “Δρακείς,” MSS 16 (1964) 17–19, has convincingly shown that it should be traced back to the originally athematic paradigm of the root aorist active, which is fragmentarily attested in Indo-Iranian cognate forms. Recently, T. G. Barnes, “δρακείς, δέδορκε, and the Visualization of κλέος in Pindar,” HSCP 107 (2013) 73–98, has pointed to another archaism of IE *derk- in Pindar: the perfect form δέδορκε(ν) (Ol. 1.93, Nem. 3.84, Nem. 9.41), which serves to visualize the κλέος of heroes, reflects IE *dedórkē as a stative-intransitive perfect meaning initially ‘is seen, is visible’. Barnes further argues that the archaisms in Pindaric δρακείς and δέδορκε(ν) go back to the tradition of choral lyric.

2 For a survey of such compounds in Homer see E. Risch, Wortbildung der homerischen Sprache (Göttingen 1974) 364–365.

3 J. P. Holoka, “‘Looking Darkly’ ὑπόδρα ἱδών: Reflections on Status

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the Homeric epics, always serving as speech introduction. It has long been noted that ὑποδέρα is etymologically connected to Vedic upa-dṛṣ- (‘sight, appearance’), as argued by Chantraine: “Dans l’adverbe homérique ὑποδέρα (ὑποδέρα (ἢ)ιδὼν ‘qui regarde en dessous’) il faut sans doute reconnaître un nom-racine répondant au sanskrit upadṛṣ-. “6 Frisk also suggests a root-noun *uṣpat- as pre-form for both ὑποδέρα and Vedic upa-dṛṣ-. He argues that ὑποδέρα is “[a]us *ὑπό-δṛṣ- zu ὑποδέρκομαι und mit and. upa-dṛṣ- f. ‘Anblick’ formal identisch, wohl eig. Neutr. einer adj. Bahuvrihibildung in adverbieller Funktion.”7 This etymological correspondence has been widely acknowledged in etymological dictionaries8 and historical grammars alike.9

Yet in examining Homeric ὑποδέρα and Rgvedic upa-dṛṣ- in more philological detail, we encounter difficulties. First, there is a great semantic disparity between the two words: while in the Homeric epics ὑποδέρα (ἰδὼν) throws into relief the gaze of a furious speaker, in the Rgveda upa-dṛṣ- is merely used two times (VIII 102,15c; IX 54,2a) in the phrase sūrya ṣvopadṛṣ: the first refers to the footprint of Agni (VIII 102,15 padāṁ devāya mālāsah / ānādyatābhic āthihi / bhadrā sūrya ṣvopadṛṣ, “The footprint of the generous god, with his unassailable forms of help, is an auspicious sight, like the sun”), and the second calls Soma a


6 P. Chantraine, La formation des noms en grec ancien (Paris 1933) 4–5.

7 H. Frisk, Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch II (Heidelberg 1970) 972.


9 E. g. Wackernagel and Debrunner, Altindische Grammatik II.2 4.
sight like the sun (IX 54.2 ayām sūrya īvopadṛg / ayām sārāmsi dhāvati / saptā pravāta ā dīvam, “This one is a sight like the sun; this one runs to the lakes, along the seven slopes, to heaven”).

Second, the prepositional prefix ὑπó in ὑπόδρα seems to be functioning quite differently than in the case of úpa in úpa-dṛś-. As Schindler and Scarlata have convincingly shown, úpa hardly modifies the meaning of the compound úpa-dṛś- (=‘appearance, sight’).

On the contrary, Homeric ὑπόδρα is unmistakably linked to a facial expression, namely “looking (out) from beneath (scil. beetling or knit) brows,” underpinned by the prefix ὑπό. Moreover, the Homeric ὑπόδρα and Rgvedic ṛ-pa-dṛś-differ in that the former is an adverb only attested in combination with the aorist participle ἰδών whereas the latter is a root-noun. In this short note I wish to draw attention to Vedic upadraṣṭār- (‘onlooker’) that has not been included in etymological discussions of ὑπόδρα. It will be argued that comparison of Homeric ὑπόδρα ἰδών and Vedic upadraṣṭār-sheds new light on the prehistory of both items whereby the issues raised above simply disappear.

Vedic upadraṣṭār- (‘onlooker’) is a Nomen agentis of the pre-


12 See Holoka, TAP A 113 (1983) 4 n.8; cf. Th. Rakoczy, Böser Blick, Macht des Auges und Neid der Götter (Tübingen 1996) 45: “Das [ὑπόδρα ἰδών] hebt sich deutlich ab von dem sonst ‘üblichen’ geraden Blick ins Gesicht des Gegenüber (e.g. ἐσόντα ἰδών).”
positional prefix úpa and the verbal root darś (‘see’), the same roots inherited from IE as found in Greek ὑπόδρα. Moreover, as a Nomen agentis Vedic upadraṣṭār- provides a well-matched parallel with the Homeric phrase ὑπόδρα ἱδὼν, as they are “semantisch vergleichbare Bildungen,” as pointed out by Tichy. The Vedic word upadraṣṭār- first occurs in the Atharvaveda, the second-oldest text of ancient India, and is attested several times in the Brāhmaṇa literature as well. Commenting on the occurrence of upadraṣṭār- in AV XI 3.53, Tichy observes that the word often designates a ritual expert in full command of the rite. While looking on the ritual performance an upadraṣṭār- is in a position to take notice of the deviations and failures of the ritual performer. This interpretation is further supported by a passage in MS I 9.7[2], where upadraṣṭār- explicitely refers to a Brahmán, a ritual expert stricto sensu.

To be sure, upadraṣṭār- can also be used in other contexts. Kim has rightly shown that it “ist im YV häufig mit den Göttern (und Dämonen) in Verbindung gesetzt, z.B. mit Vāyu (TS III 3,8,5), mit Agni (KS XXXVI 13: 80,4-5), mit Nirṛti

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14 E. Tichy, Die Nomina agentis auf -tar- im Vedischen (Heidelberg 1995) 19. However, Tichy did not give any further account for this correspondence.

15 Die Nomina agentis 154 n.20: “Das [upadraṣṭār-] heißt wohl: wer bei einer rituellen Handlung zusieht, die er auch selbst beherrscht, d. h. wer Abweichungen und Fehler bemerken könnte.”

16 See K. Amano, Maitrāyaṇī-saṃhitā: Übersetzung der Prosapartien mit Kommentar zur Lexik und Syntax der älteren vedischen Prosa (Bremen 2009) 345, who also argues that upadraṣṭār- is “wohl die Bezeichnung für einen, der bei einer rituellen Handlung zusieht, die er auch selbst beherrscht, so daß er Fehler finden könnte.”

In addition, the occurrence of *upadraṣṭār*-in a newly edited hymn (AVP 8.15.3) describes gods as critical spectators examining the behavior of mortals by using the power of their gaze. Moreover, Kim has also observed that the occurrences of *upadraṣṭār*- occasionally describe a furious onlooker who brings about damage against the offender. In JB I 138, 13, for instance, *upadraṣṭār*- is linked to a ritual expert who might curse a ritual wrongdoer. Such features of Vedic *upadraṣṭār*- strongly invite us to compare it to the Homeric expression ὑπόδρα ἱδών.

The first two occurrences of the formula ὑπόδρα ἱδών in the Iliad are sufficient to demonstrate its semantics. At Il. 1.148 ὑπόδρα ἱδῶν is linked to Achilles when he feels that he is being wronged by Agamemnon and so responds to him with a ‘dark look’ (schol. D Il. 1.148 ὑπόδρα ἱδῶν· δεινὸν ὑποβλεψάμενος). Odysseus aggressively criticizes Thersites at Il. 2.246–264, because Thersites, despite his low social status, spoke to Agamemnon ill-judged words (2.243–245):

> ὡς φάτο νεικείων Ἀγαμέμνονα ποιμένα λαῶν, θερσίτης· τὸ δ’ ὀκα παρίστατο δίως Ὀδυσσέας, καὶ μιν ὑπόδρα ἱδῶν χαλεπῷ ἡνίπαπε μύθῳ·

As argued by Holoka, ὑπόδρα ἱδῶν “conveys anger on the part

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19 According to A. Lubotsky, “PS 8.15. Offense against a Brahmin,” in A. Griffiths and A. Schmiedchen (eds.), *The Atharvaveda and its Paippalādāśākhā: Historical and Philological Papers on a Vedic Tradition* (Aachen 2007) 23–33, at 23, this hymn, “which represents an appeal to the Brahmans to stay united in their protest when one of them is abused,” is “unique in its subject matter.” On this hymn see also J.-S. Kim, *Die Paippalādāsāṃhitā des Atharvaveda: Kāṇḍa 8 und 9* (Dettelbach 2014) 140–152.

20 Kim, in *Indogermanische Nomina agentis* 88.

of a speaker who takes umbrage at what he judges to be rude or inconsiderate words spoken by the addressee ... dark looks signal irritation and resentment and are meant to stop short an offender against social decorum.”\textsuperscript{22} In addition, Cairns points out that Homeric ὑπόδρα αἰδῶν “presupposes a claim to superiority only in the sense that it takes upon itself the right to rebuke, to criticize, or to protest.”\textsuperscript{23} Holoka’s and Cairns’ observations also square well with the use of the formula in the \textit{Odyssey}. In two places ὑπόδρα αἰδῶν is linked to a suitor of Penelope and thus local aristocrat, who rebukes Odysseus aggressively, taking him to be a wandering beggar (\textit{Od.} 17.458–459, 18.387–388). By contrast, the other seven attestations of the formula in the \textit{Odyssey} show Odysseus as aggressor, who in reality is the king of Ithaca and thus justified to rebuke the suitors besieging his palace. The use of the ὑπόδρα αἰδῶν formula is consistent in the Homeric epics as well as in its two appearances elsewhere (\textit{Hom. Hymn Bacch.} 48, \textit{Scutum} 445). Note that like \textit{upadraṣṭār-} in Vedic literature, ὑπόδρα αἰδῶν can also be used of gods—unsurprisingly Zeus to whom a furious gaze is ascribed (\textit{Il.} 5.888 and 15.13, δεινὰ δ’ ὑπόδρα αἰδῶν Ἡρην πρὸς μοῦθον ἔειπεν).\textsuperscript{24}

Some conclusions may be drawn as our evidence allows. In addition to the etymologically unmistakable correspondences between Homeric ὑπόδρα αἰδῶν and Vedic \textit{upadraṣṭār-} as to the verbal root and the prepositional prefix, their semantic similarities are also too striking to be coincidences: both are applied to the authority of a superior onlooker who is justified to rebuke or criticize the one who violates social or religious decorum. An Indo-European (or at least Graeco-Indo-Iranian) pre-form *\textit{h1u-p-s} \textit{dθ} \textit{r} \textit{k} \̑ might be reconstructed which underlies both Homeric ὑπόδρα αἰδῶν and Vedic \textit{upadraṣṭār-}. While the survival

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{TAPA} 113 (1983) 4; cf. also Rakoczy, \textit{Böser Blick} 44.


\textsuperscript{24} See Holoka, \textit{TAPA} 113 (1983) 10–11.
of the archaisms in the Vedic Nomen agentis upadṛṣṭār- is likely due to its exclusive use in ritual context, one may suppose that the archaisms rooted in the strictly fixed Homeric formula ὑπόδρα ῥίδων are likely due to its exclusive use in ritual context, one may suppose that the archaism is inherited from “a religious literature comparable to the archaic and highly conservative poetic traditions of India and Iran [which] existed in second millennium Greece, transmitted by a sacerdotal élite—a sort of Mycenaean counterpart of the Vedas, which vanished along with that civilization.”

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25 Two other linguistic features of this formula stand out. On the one hand, ὑπόδρα differs from other adverbial compounds of the same muster in omitting final sigma, which marks the adverbial function. See Chantraine, La formation 5, “Noter la forme sans s”; cf. Risch, Wortbildung 364–365. ὑποδράς (Callim., Nic.) is a late form, built after ἐπιµίξ, ὀδάς, etc. While Frisk’s thesis cited above that the form ὑπόδρα goes back to a neuter in adverbial function would account for the absence of final -s, I attempt to illuminate the prehistory of ὑπόδρα in light of the fact that the form is attested only in the fixed Homeric formula ὑπόδρα ῥίδων, which is semantically equivalent to Vedic upadṛṣṭār-. On the other hand, ὑπόδρα ῥίδων is also noteworthy in displaying the so-called ‘pléonasme impliqué’, since the phrase incorporates the verbal roots *deik- and *neiδ-, both of which are verba videndi; cf. C. J. Ruijgh, Autour de “le épique”: études sur la syntaxe grecque (Amsterdam 1971) 66, with special reference to Apollonius Dyscolus.


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