

An Etymological Note on Homeric ὑπόδρα

Ruobing Xian

PINDARIC LYRICS, as is well known, preserve some archaisms of the IE root **derk-* ('see', Gr. δέρομαι).¹ Less established is the view that "epic has its own fossils associated with the root, e.g. ὑπόδρα."² 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 (< **dʰr̥k-*), the zero-grade of the IE root **derk-*.³ The attestation of the word is entirely restricted to the ὑπόδρα ἰδών formula. According to the analysis of Holoka,⁴ the formula is used twenty-six times in

¹ On IE **derk-* see H. Rix, *Lexikon der indogermanischen Verben: die Wurzeln und ihre Primärstammbildungen*² (Wiesbaden 2001) 122. In contrast to the traditional view that the aorist participle δρακεῖς 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, "Δρακεῖς," *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, "δρακεῖς, 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 **dedórke* as a stative-intransitive perfect meaning initially 'is seen, is visible'. Barnes further argues that the archaisms in Pindaric δρακεῖς and δέδορκε(ν) go back to the tradition of choral lyric.

² Barnes, *HSCP* 107 (2013) 76 n.15.

³ For a survey of such compounds in Homer see E. Risch, *Wortbildung der homerischen Sprache* (Göttingen 1974) 364–365.

⁴ J. P. Holoka, "'Looking Darkly' (ὑπόδρα ἰδών): Reflections on Status

the Homeric epics, always serving as speech introduction. It has long been noted that ὑπόδρα is etymologically connected to Vedic *upa-dṛś-* ('sight, appearance'),⁵ as argued by Chantraine: "Dans l'adverbe homérique ὑπόδρα (ὑπόδρα (F)ιδών 'qui regarde en dessous') il faut sans doute reconnaître un nom-racine répondant au sanskrit *upadṛc-*."⁶ Frisk also suggests a root-noun **upo-dṛk-* as pre-form for both ὑπόδρα and Vedic *upa-dṛś-*. He argues that ὑπόδρα is "[a]us **πό-δρακ* zu *υποδέρκομαι* und mit aind. *upa-dṛś-* f. 'Anblick' formal identisch, wohl eig. Neutr. einer adj. Bahuvrihibildung in adverbialer Funktion."⁷ This etymological correspondence has been widely acknowledged in etymological dictionaries⁸ and historical grammars alike.⁹

Yet in examining Homeric ὑπόδρα and Ṛgvedic *upa-dṛś-* in more philological detail, we encounter difficulties. First, there is a great semantic disparity between the two words: while in the Homeric epics ὑπόδρα (ιδών) throws into relief the gaze of a furious speaker, in the Ṛgveda *upa-dṛś-* is merely used two times (VIII 102,15c; IX 54,2a) in the phrase *sūrya ivopadṛk*: the first refers to the footprint of Agni (VIII 102,15 *padāṃ devāsya mīlhūso / anādhyṣtābhīr utībhīh / bhadrā sūrya ivopadṛk*, "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

and Decorum in Homer," *TAPA* 113 (1983) 1–16, at 3 n.6.

⁵ On the meaning of Vedic *upa-dṛś-* see J. Wackernagel and A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik* II.2 (Göttingen 1954) 8; L. Renou, *Etudes védiques et pāninéennes* VIII (Paris 1961) 87; Th. Krisch, *RIVELEX, Rigveda-Lexikon* II (Graz 2012) 339 ("Determinativkompositum/verbales Rektionskompositum (Nom. rei actae) aus dem Adverb/Präverb *upa* '(her)zu, zu, (hin)zu' (s.d.) + *dṛś-* f. 'Anblick' (s.d.), oder + *-dṛś-* 'sehend, sichtbar, aussehend'"); S. W. Jamison and J. P. Brereton, *The Rigveda: The Earliest Religious Poetry of India* III (Oxford/New York 2014), who translate *upa-dṛś-* as 'sight'.

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

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

⁸ M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen* I (Heidelberg 1956) 105; R. S. P. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek* II (Leiden 2010) 1536.

⁹ E. g. Wackernagel and Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik* II.2 4.

sight like the sun (IX 54,2 *ayám sūrya ivopadṛg / ayám sárāṃsi dhāvati / saptá praváta á divam*, “This one is a sight like the sun; this one runs to the lakes, along the seven slopes, to heaven”).¹⁰ Second, the prepositional prefix ὑπό in ὑπόδρα seems to be functioning quite differently than in the case of *úpa* in *upa-dṛś-*. As Schindler and Scarlata have convincingly shown, *úpa* hardly modifies the meaning of the compound *upa-dṛś-* (=‘appearance, sight’).¹¹ 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.¹² Moreover, the Homeric ὑπόδρα and Rgvedic *upa-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 *upadraṣṭár-* (‘onlooker’) that has not been included in etymological discussions of ὑπόδρα. It will be argued that comparison of Homeric ὑπόδρα ἰδών and Vedic *upadraṣṭár-* sheds new light on the prehistory of both items whereby the issues raised above simply disappear.

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

¹⁰ Transl. Jamison and Brereton 1214 and 1278. The syntactic problem raised in the verses quoted has been discussed by G.-J. Pinault, “Le substantif épithète dans la langue de la *Rk-Samhitā*,” in E. Pirart (ed.), *Syntaxe des langues indo-iraniennes anciennes* (Barcelona 1997) 125 and 139–141, who translates the phrase *sūrya ivopadṛk* as ‘soleil-spectacle’, ‘soleil-image’, ‘aspect-soleil’.

¹¹ J. Schindler, *Das Wurzelnomen im Arischen und Griechischen* (diss. Würzburg 1972) 26; S. Scarlata, *Wurzelkomposita im Rg-Veda* (Wiesbaden 1999) 229. H. Hettrich, A. Casaretto, and C. Schneider, “Syntax und Wortarten der Lokalpartikeln im Rgveda, IV: I. Allgemeines, II. *úpa*, III. *áva*,” *MSS* 64 (2004 [2010]) 17–130, at 80, note that in the Rgveda the local particle *úpa* in combination with the verbal root *darś* draws “keine sichtbare semantische Modifizierung des Verbs nach sich.”

¹² See Holoka, *TAPA* 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. ἐσάντα ἰδών).”

positional prefix *úpa* and the verbal root *darś* ('see'),¹³ the same roots inherited from IE as found in Greek *υπόδρα*. Moreover, as a Nomen agentis Vedic *upadraṣṭár-* provides a well-matched parallel with the Homeric phrase *υπόδρα ἰδών*, as they are "semantisch vergleichbare Bildungen," as pointed out by Tichy.¹⁴ The Vedic word *upadraṣṭár-* first occurs in the Atharva-veda, the second-oldest text of ancient India, and is attested several times in the Brāhmana literature as well. Commenting on the occurrence of *upadraṣṭár-* 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 *upadraṣṭár-* is in a position to take notice of the deviations and failures of the ritual performer.¹⁵ This interpretation is further supported by a passage in MS I 9.7(2),¹⁶ where *upadraṣṭár-* explicitly refers to a Brahmán, a ritual expert *stricto sensu*.¹⁷

To be sure, *upadraṣṭár-* 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

¹³ On the verbal root see M. Mayrhofer, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen I* (Heidelberg 1986–2001) 704–706, 'einen Blick auf etwa werfen'; on the etymology of Vedic *úpa* ('herzu, zu, hin, hinauf') and Greek *υπό* see Mayrhofer 218–219.

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 [*upadraṣṭár-*] 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 *upadraṣṭár-* is "wohl die Bezeichnung für einen, der bei einer rituellen Handlung zusieht, die er auch selbst beherrscht, so daß er Fehler finden könnte."

¹⁷ On the meaning of *Brahmán* in the classical Vedic rite see J. P. Brereton, "Brāhman, Brahmán, and Sacrificer," in A. Griffiths and J. E. M. Houben (eds.), *The Vedas: Texts, Language and Ritual* (Groningen 2004) 325–344.

(MS III 2,4: 20,3).¹⁸ In addition, the occurrence of *upadraṣṭár-* 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.¹⁹ Moreover, Kim has also observed that the occurrences of *upadraṣṭár-* occasionally describe a furious onlooker who brings about damage against the offender.²⁰ In JB I 138, 13, for instance, *upadraṣṭár-* is linked to a ritual expert who might curse a ritual wrongdoer.²¹ Such features of Vedic *upadraṣṭár-* strongly invite us to compare it to the Homeric expression ὑπόδρα ἰδών.

The first two occurrences of the formula ὑπόδρα ἰδών in the *Iliad* are sufficient to demonstrate its semantics. At *Il.* 1.148 ὑπόδρα ἰδών 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 ἰδών· 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):

ὥς φάτο νεικείων Ἀγαμέμνονα ποιμένα λαῶν,
Θερσίτης· τῷ δ’ ὄκα παρίστατο δῖος Ὀδυσσεύς,
καί μιν ὑπόδρα ἰδὼν χαλεπῷ ἠνίπαπε μύθῳ·

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

¹⁸ J.-S. Kim, “Die Nomina agentis auf *-tar-* im Vedischen: Funktion und Gebrauch,” in I. Balles and R. Lühr (eds.), *Indogermanische Nomina agentis* (Berlin 2007) 71–160, at 87–88.

¹⁹ According to A. Lubotsky, “PS 8.15. Offense against a Brahmin,” in A. Griffiths and A. Schmiedchen (eds.), *The Atharvaveda and its Paippalādaśākhā: Historical and Philological Papers on a Vedic Tradition* (Aachen 2007) 23–33, at 23, this hymn, “which represents an appeal to the Brahmins 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 Paippalādasamhitā des Atharvaveda: Kāṇḍa 8 und 9* (Dettelbach 2014) 140–152.

²⁰ Kim, in *Indogermanische Nomina agentis* 88.

²¹ See W. W. Caland, *Das Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa in Auswahl* (Amsterdam 1919) 40–41; H. W. Boderwitz, *The Jyotiṣṭoma Rītuḥ: Jaiminīya Brāhmaṇa I, 66–364* (Leiden 1990) 78.

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.”²² In addition, Cairns points out that Homeric *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* “presupposes a claim to superiority only in the sense that it takes upon itself the right to rebuke, to criticize, or to protest.”²³ Holoka’s and Cairns’ observations also square well with the use of the formula in the *Odyssey*. In two places *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* is linked to a suitor of Penelope and thus local aristocrat, who rebukes Odysseus aggressively, taking him to be a wandering beggar (*Od.* 17.458–459, 18.387–388). By contrast, the other seven attestations of the formula in the *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 ἰδών* formula is consistent in the Homeric epics as well as in its two appearances elsewhere (*Hom. Hymn Bacch.* 48, *Scutum* 445). Note that like *upadrasṭár-* in Vedic literature, *ὑπόδρα ἰδών* can also be used of gods—unsurprisingly Zeus to whom a furious gaze is ascribed (*Il.* 5.888 and 15.13, *δεινὰ δ’ ὑπόδρα ἰδών Ἥρην πρὸς μῦθον ἔειπεν*).²⁴

Some conclusions may be drawn as our evidence allows. In addition to the etymologically unmistakable correspondences between Homeric *ὑπόδρα* (*ἰδών*) and Vedic *upadrasṭár-* 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 **(h₁)upo-derk* might be reconstructed which underlies both Homeric *ὑπόδρα* and Vedic *upadrasṭár-*. While the survival

²² *TAPA* 113 (1983) 4; cf. also Rakoczy, *Böser Blick* 44.

²³ D. L. Cairns, “Ethics, Ethology, Terminology: Iliadic Anger and the Cross-cultural Study of Emotion,” *YCS* 32 (2003) 11–49, at 44.

²⁴ See Holoka, *TAPA* 113 (1983) 10–11.

of the archaisms in the Vedic Nomen agentis *upadrasṭár-* is likely due to its exclusive use in ritual context, one may suppose that the archaisms rooted in the strictly fixed Homeric formula ὑπόδρα ἰδών²⁵ are 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.”²⁶

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Fudan University
Shanghai, China
ruobingxian@fudan.edu.cn

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. ὑποδράξ (Callim., Nic.) is a late form, built after ἐπιμίξ, ὀδάξ, 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 ἰδών, which is the semantically equivalent to Vedic *upadrasṭár-*. On the other hand, ὑπόδρα ἰδών is also noteworthy in displaying the so-called ‘pléonasmе impliqué’, since the phrase incorporates the verbal roots **derk-* and **ueid-*, both of which are *verba videndi*; cf. C. J. Ruijgh, *Autour de “te épique”*: études sur la syntaxe grecque (Amsterdam 1971) 66, with special reference to Apollonius Dyscolus.

²⁶ T. G. Barnes, “Homeric ΑΝΔΡΟΤΗΤΑ ΚΑΙ ΗΒΗΝ,” *JHS* 131 (2011) 1–13, at 13, who continues: “Only bits and pieces of it resurface in the newly shaped literary genres of the first millennium. The project of identifying such bits and pieces would likely have important implications for our understanding of the early development of epic.” Such “bits and pieces” seem not to be confined to epic composition. See Barnes, *HSCP* 107 (2013) 73–98; A. Nikolaev, “Showing Praise in Greek Choral Lyric and Beyond,” *AJP* 133 (2012) 543–572; J. M. Macedo, “Two Divine Epithets in Stesichorus: Poseidon ΠΗΠΟΚΕΛΕΥΘΟΣ and Aphrodite ΠΗΠΟΔΩΡΟΣ,” *CP* 111 (2016) 1–18.

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