

STANLEY INSLER

VEDIC *ĀNŪNA-*

1.1. For the later Vedic prose literature there is little doubt that *ūná-* means “wanting, lacking, deficient”. The testimony of the texts themselves makes this meaning apparent, since the term in question is employed in just a few stereotyped usages. Essentially there are two common constructions: (1) *ūná-* appearing in complementation with forms of (*á*) *prā* “fill (out), complete” or (2) *ūná-* set in contrast to the term *átirikta-* “excessive, superfluous”.

1.2. Examples of usage (1) are more frequent and may be exemplified by passages such as TS 1.5.5.4 *ágne yán me tanúvā ūnám tán ma á prā* “What I myself lack, complete that for me, Agni”, a statement varied somewhat later at TS 1.5.7.5 *yán me prajāyai pásūnám ūnám tán ma á pūraya* “What I lack in offspring and cattle, complete that for me”. Parallel usage may also be seen in ŚBr 11.5.3.7 *yát samátiṣṭhipam yát pṛthivyá ūnám tát ténāpūpuram* “When I ended (the sacrifice), with it I filled out what was lacking on earth”. The same contrast of the two terms is often exploited in juxtaposing the full moon (*pūrṇá-*) and the new moon (*ūná-*), appearing for example in KS XII.8 (170:11) *candramāḥ ... yat pūrṇo 'nyām vasaty ūno 'nyām*. Furthermore, this literary antithesis between *ūná-* and the root *prā* is old and inherited in that it equally appears in Avestan. Compare Vd. 22.5 *yā ūnəm pərənəm kərənaoiti* “which makes complete what is lacking” (verse passage).

1.3. Examples of usage (2) appear in TS 7.4.7.3 *ūnātiriktā vā etā rātraya, ūnās tād yād ekasyai nā pañcāśād, ātiriktās tād yād bhūyasīr aṣṭācatvarimśataḥ* “These nights are both deficient and excessive: deficient in that they are not 50 for (lack of) one, excessive in that they are greater than 48”. Similarly, TS 7.4.10.2 *té sámstutā virājam abhī sám padyante ... ekayā gāur ātirikta ekayāyur ūnāḥ* “These sung together amount to a *virāj*. The *go(ṣṭoma)* is excessive by one *ṛc*, the *āyus(stoma)* efficient by one”¹.

2.1. The negative form *ánūna-* “not lacking, not deficient” is attested far less frequently in Vedic prose. Indeed, the only example which I am able to locate occurs in a *yājyā* belonging to the *paśubandha* ceremony found in several YV texts, cited below according to the MS. Its context is as follows. Having given careful directions concerning the proper dismemberment of the various limbs of the sacrificial animal, the priest then says at MS IV.13.4 (204:1) *gātram-gātram asyānūnam kṛṇutāt* “Make (certain) every limb of it is not defective”.

2.2. On the other hand, the earlier poetic works of Vedic constitute the true domain of *ánūna-*. Among younger works of this period, *ánūna-* occurs in the meaning “not deficient, etc.” that was seen in the last cited *yājyā* at RVKh 2.10.2cd (Sheft. p. 81). Here the term is set in its usual contrast with *pūrṇá-* in a hymn dealing with the conception and birth of a foetus². Thus, *ánūnaḥ pūrṇó jāyatām, ánandhó 'śroṇo 'piśācadhītāḥ* “Let it be born complete, without defects, neither blind nor lame, nor sucked by demons”³. Compare also AVŚ vii 81.3cd *ánūnam darśa mā kṛdhi, prajāyā ca dhánena ca* “New moon, do not make me deficient in progeny and wealth”⁴. This last passage is of

1. On *ūna-* and *ātirikta-* referring to the female and male sexual organs, cf. Caland, ZDMG LXXII (1918), 3 = Kl. Schr. 239.

2. Cp. also AVP 11.1.8 and HirGr 1.25.1.

3. On *dhūtá-* ‘sucked’, cf. AVŚ vii 56.3. The sense is that the *piśācās* should not have sucked out the blood of the foetus while in the womb; cf. AVŚ v 29.10. A blood-drinking demon (*asṛkpāvan-*) is mentioned next to a foetus-eating one (*garbhād-*) at AVŚ ii 25.3.

4. The following section 4 of the hymn elaborates in prose: *sámagraḥ sámanto bhūyāsami góbhīr ásvaiḥ prajāyā paśúbhīr grhāir dhánena* ‘May I become abundant from beginning to end with kine, horses, progeny, animals, houses and wealth’. This

interest because it combines the two usual domains of *ūná-* encountered in the younger prose texts: (1) *ūná-* referring to the new moon (cf. KS XII.8 above) and (2) *ūná-* referring to a lack or deficiency among someone's possessions (cf. TS passages above). Their combination in the stanza is intended to ward off the possible sinister effects of sympathetic magic caused by the appearance of the new moon. That is to say, if the new moon, otherwise called "the deficient one" (*ūná-*), rules the night, it might cause the sacrificer to become deficient in a parallel manner. Hence the request expressed in the passage.

2.3. Slightly unusual is the textual use of *ánūna-* in AVŚ xii 3.48c *ánūnam pátram níhitam na etát* "This vessel of ours, set down (on the fire), does not lack (anything)", and the particular employment of the term in question stems from the fact that the expiatory offering being cooked contains all the necessary ingredients mentioned earlier in the hymn: *ghṛtá* (vss. 37, 44, 45), *mádhu* (44), *sarpís* (45).

3.1. A look at the Rigveda now reveals a quite different situation. The positive term *ūná-* "deficient, lacking" does not appear in the text apart from its incorporation in the young and secondary inj. aor. *ūnayīs* found at I 53.3d *má tvāyató jaritúḥ kāmam ūnayīḥ* "Do not leave wanting the wish (desire) of the singer devoted to thee". Although this collocation *kāmam ūnayīḥ* is quite unique, its creation has a clear literary history that can be traced in the text.

3.2. Since the expression *kāmam á prā* "fulfill a wish" is an idiom common to the whole of the Rigveda, and in fact one which belongs to the older Indo-iranian poetic tradition⁵, the contrasting expression *kāmam ūnayati** "leaves a wish wanting" must have been newly built to it and specifically in a particular bardic circle. This is evident because *ūná-* does not ordinarily occur in association with *kāma-* even in later prose works⁶. The poetic circle can be identified

paraphrase constitutes an old prose commentary on the preceding verse that was subsequently incorporated into the hymn.

5. Cf. Insler, IF 71, 221f.

6. Found only at KS XXXII.5 (23:3): *yebhya eva kāmebhya ūnas, tān pūrayate*.

by the fact that I 53.3d *mā ... jaritúḥ kāmam ūnayīḥ* has a parallel at VIII 24.6c *ā smā kāmam jaritúr ā mánah pṛna* "Fulfill the wish, the intention of the singer". Now, hymn I 53 is ascribed to the poet Savya Āṅgīrasa, hymn VIII 24 to Viśvamanas Vaiyaśva, the offspring of Vyaśva Āṅgīrasa, the poet of the neighboring hymn VIII 26. Consequently, it was the younger Āṅgīrasa poets who created the phrase *kāmam ūnayati** to function as an antonym to *kāmam ā pūrayati* (*pṛṇati*), and in so doing they extended the use of the *ūná*-family of words to *kāma*-, a noun otherwise excluded from normal employment with these related terms.

4.1. Let us now consider the attestations of *ánūna*- in the Rigveda. Among the 9 examples of the word in the text, *ánūna*- occurs as an adjective predominantly modifying *agní*- "fire" (3x), its splendor (2x), its growth (1x). It is less commonly associated with Indra (1x), his *mádāḥ* or stimulating drinks (1x), his *dákṣiṇā* or priestly gift (1x). In short, the terms which appear in employment with *ánūna*- in the RV are quite different from the those occurring in later usage. Despite this fact, translators have adopted variations of the later meaning of *ánūna*- to render its employment in the older hymn collection. Thus, Geldner translates the collocation *ánūnam agním* (I 146.1, II 10.6, IV 2.19) as "den vollkommenen Agni", Oldenberg (SBE 46) "Agni without flaw", "the faultless Agni", "the perfect Agni", or Renou (EVP 12 & 13) "(ce dieu) inférieur à nul (autre)" or "(ce dieu) sans déficience". Similarly, Agni's *śrī* or splendor (III 1.5) is translated by Geldner as "vollkommene Schönheit", by Oldenberg (ibid.) as "perfect beauty", by Renou (ibid.) as "ses beautés exemptes de déficience". Finally, *ánūna*- employed in a description of Indra (VI 17.4) or his priestly gift (VII 27.4) appears in Geldner's work as "vollkommen" and "mangellos" respectively.

4.2. These renderings of *ánūna*- are questionable for two reasons. First, as already noted, *ánūna*- is associated in the RV with nouns that are fully different from those co-occurring with the term in later Vedic literature. Secondly, although *pūrṇá*- is the true antonym of *ūná*- the Rigvedic poets never employ *pūrṇá*- to describe Agni, Indra or any of the other nouns which *ánūna*- modifies in the text. Hence *ánūna*- is

not a poetic substitute for *pūrṇá-*, and consequently the paraphrases “complete, whole, perfect” cannot be correct. If this is true, what then does *ánūna-* signify in the hymns?

4.3. The solution is reached by observing that *ánūna-* is predominantly an *agní-* word in the RV. It occurs either in the set collocation *ánūnam agnīm* or in association with attributes of the fire. Therefore this is the area where the answer to the problem is to be found.

4.4. Now, one verb appearing regularly with *agní-* in all of Vedic is *vāyati* “wears out, becomes extinguished”. Examples of its use occur at RV VIII 43.7ab *dhāsīm kṛṇvāná óṣadhīr; bāpsad agnīr ná vāyati* “Taking the plants as its nourishment, the fire does not become extinguished as it devours (them)” and at TS 5.7.5.1 *evām vā eṣá mriyate yásyāgnīr úkhyā udvāyati* “Likewise, that (sacrificer) dies whose fire becomes extinguished in the fire-pan”. The association of this verb with fire is Indo-iranian in fact, since the Avesta attests passages of the type Vd 5.37 ... *juō ātrəm frāvayeiti* (< **frāvāyati*) “while alive (the deceitful man) extinguishes the fire”⁷.

4.5. The textual association of *vāyati* with *agní-* suggests that the fixed phrase *ánūna- agní-* simply means “the inextinguishable fire”, with the typical alternate function of the negated past participle denoting what cannot or should not be done. In other words, *ánūna- agní-* means “the fire that cannot or should not be extinguished”. Therefore, the 3 passages containing this collocation are readily translated in the follow manner. I 146.1ab ... *grṇīṣe, (á)nūnam agnīm pitrór upáste* “I sing the inextinguishable fire in the lap of his parents”; II 10.6cd *ánūnam agnīm juhvā vacasyā, ... johavīmi* “I call upon the inextinguishable fire with the eloquence of my tongue”. Lastly, IV 2.19cd *ánūnam agnīm purudhā suścandrām, devásya mármṛjataś cāru*

7. Kellens, MSS 32, 92f., Verbe avestique 138, argues that *frāvayeiti* derives from the root *fru* (= Indic *pru*), which he glosses ‘fly away, disappear’. But it is foolish to separate the expression *ātr→m frāvayeiti* from Ved. *agnīr vāyati*. Moreover, there is no evidence that *fru* means ‘disappear’. On the difference in transitivity between *vāyati* and *frāvayeiti*, cf. § 7.4 below.

cākṣuḥ “(We have set down) the inextinguishable fire in many places, the one of fine lustre, cleansing the lovely eye of the god.” With this characterization of the *agnī-*, compare its qualification as *ājasra-* “not exhausted, inexhaustible” (II 35.8, III 1.21, 54.1, VII 1.18, X 6.2), a term closest in meaning to *ánūna-*.

4.6. From a description of the fire itself, it was simple to transfer the use of *ánūna-* to its splendor. If Agni is inextinguishable, then so must be his radiance and splendor. Hence the passage III 1.5cd *śocīr vāsānaḥ ... śríyo mimīte bṛhatīr ánūnāḥ* “Clothing himself in radiance, he measures out his lofty, inextinguishable splendors”⁸. Comparable in usage is the collocation *ājasraṁ śocīḥ* in VI 48.3cd *ājasreṇa śocīṣā śósucāt ... sú dīdīhi* “Mightily radiating with (thy) inexhaustible radiance, shine well” and its variant at VII 5.4d *ājasreṇa śocīṣā śósucānaḥ*, both with reference to Agni’s seemingly limitless brilliance. This same idea is varied in another Agni hymn at X 140.2ab *pāvakāvarcā śukrávarcā, ánūnavarcā úd iyarṣi bhānúnā* “Being of firey splendor, of bright splendor, of inextinguishable splendor, thou raisest (the sun) by thy shining”⁹, where *ánūnavarcas-* is an equivalent paraphrase of *śríyo ... ánūnāḥ* seen in III 1.5.

4.7. The final Agni passage is met at IV 5.1bcd:

*kathā dāśemāgnāye bṛhád bhāḥ
ánūnena bṛhatā vakṣáthena
úpa stabhāyad upamín ná ródhaḥ*

“How may we honor Agni? Lofty is his shine. With his inextinguishable, lofty growth he has held it up like a pillar the wall of defense”.

8. On the meaning of *śrī* in the RV, cf. Oldenberg, NG 1918, 830-40 = Kl. Schr. II 35-45.

9. Note that *úd iyarṣi* is not intrans., but requires the addition of *sūryam*. Agni is compared to the sun in the following *pādas*, and the verse really deals with the sympathetic magic of the flaming fire causing the sun to rise.

This use of *ánūna-* with *vakṣátha-* is singular, since the later noun otherwise appears in the RV without any adjectival qualification. However, the phraseology *ánūnena brhatā* recalls *brhatīr ánūnāḥ* of III 1.5, where both terms modified the *śríyaḥ* of Agni. If we now note that *brhád bháh* immediately precedes *ánūnena* in IV 5.1, it seems that the poet intended to say **brhád bhá ánūnam* “inextinguishable is his lofty shine”. But reaching the end of the half stanza, he was forced to adapt *ánūnam* into the following line, thereby triggering the appearance of *brhánt-* once again in the third *pāda*. This explains why *ánūna-* occurs with a singularly different noun in this particular *agní-*verse.

5.1. Let us now turn to the Indra verses and first consider VI 17.4:

*té tvā mādā brhád indra svadhāva
imé pītā ukṣayanta dyumántam
mahām ánūnam tavásam víbhūtim
matsaráso jarhṣanta prasāham*

“Indra, independent one, when drunk, these very stimulating drinks will strengthen thee on high, the majestic one. The exhilarating (drinks) will delight thee, the great, inexhaustible, strong and mighty prevailer (in battles)”.

The third *pāda*, as it stands, is a perfectly adequate characterization of Indra, but it could equally belong to an Agni hymn, since every adjective, apart from the final *víbhūti-*, occurs in descriptions of Agni, including *dyumánt-* which terminates the preceding line. Could the line simply be borrowed from an Agni verse? Or, is *ánūna-* to be understood as “never wearied, indefatigable”? This other sense of *vāyati* is encountered in a description of the Aśvins’ horses at VII 67.8c *ná vāyanti subhvò deváyuktāḥ* “the magnificent (steeds), yoked by the gods, do not become fatigued”. To my thinking, either explanation is possible.

5.2. This brings the discussion to VIII 16.3a, 4:

*tám suṣṭutyā vivāse ...
yāsyānūnā gabhīrā, mādā urávas tárutrāḥ /
harṣumántaḥ śúrasātau*

“I invite him with good praise ... to whom belong, when there is a contest of heroes, the inexhaustible stimulating drinks, deep and broad, victorious, offering delight”.

The use of the terms *gabhīrā-* and *urú-* reveals that stanza 4 has borrowed much of its imagery from poetic lines describing bodies of water, since the epithets deep and broad are regularly found in such contexts. I would suggest in particular that the poet had the vision of a spring (*avatá-*) in mind when he composed the verse. Indeed, these 2 adjectives qualify that noun in III 46.4 *urúm gabhīrám ... ugrám avatám*. Furthermore, when *ákṣita-* “imperishable” is also employed to qualify *avatá-* at VIII 72.10 and at X 101.6, it is apparent at once that *ánūna-* in VIII 16.4 is merely the simple semantic substitute for it. The poet of this last verse is enticing Indra to the sacrifice with the notion that the offerings of *soma* for him will never run dry like a large and limitless spring.

5.3. The final occurrence of *ánūna-* in the RV is encountered at VII 27.4cd:

*ánūnā yāsya dáksīṇā pīpāya
vāmám nṛbhyo abhívītā sákhībhyah*

“(Indra) whose inexhaustible sacrificial gift, like a pregnant cow¹⁰, milks out what is desirable to the men who are his comrades”.

Here the phraseology *ánūnā ... dáksīnā pīpāya* resembles *pāyah ... ákṣitam* of IX 31.4, with the focus shifted from the product (milk)

10. I take *abhívītā* as the equivalent of *právitā*. In general, cf. Insler, Studies in Memory of Warren Cowgill 58.

to its source (the cow). In fact, this is the typical usage found in the RV for the semantically related verb *úpa das* “become exhausted”. Cf. V 55.5c *ná vo dasrā úpa dasyanti dhenávaḥ* “Your milk cows, ye wondrous (Maruts), do not become exhausted”, I 135.8c *ná te vāya úpa dasyanti dhenávaḥ*, etc. The poet of VII 27, remembering the original meaning of *dákṣiṇā* is cow, has simply played upon this association in his verse.

6.1. Some details remain. First, RVKh 3.7.5ab (Sheft. p. 94) still attests the older Rigvedic meaning of *ánūna-*. Thus, *ád ít sāptásya carkirann, ánūnam ca máhi śravaḥ* “Then they shall commemorate (the glory) of Sāpta, and inextinguishable (shall be) his great fame”. Here the collocation *ánūnam mahí śravaḥ* is simply a poetic variant of the famous *prthú śrávo bṛhát ... ákṣitam* “broad and lofty imperishible fame” (I 9.7) and *ákṣiti śravaḥ* (I 40.4, VIII 103.5, IX 66.7).

6.2. Secondly, let us reconsider RV I 146.1 in detail:

*trimūrdhānam saptáraśmim grñṣe
(á)nūnam agnīm pitrór upásthe
niṣattám asya cárato dhruvāsya
vísṣvā divó rocanápaprivāmsam*

“I sing the inextinguishable fire in the lap of his parents, the one of three heads and seven reins, seated (on) his (seat) (in the midst) of what moves and what is fixed, now that he has filled up all the luminous bodies of heaven”.

Although there is little doubt that *ánūnam agnīm* in the verse is to be understood as “the inextinguishable fire”, the appearance of the perf. part. of *á prā* in the final line reveals that the poet certainly was also familiar with the later attested association of *ánūna-* “deficient” and *á prā* “complete”. Since this use of *ánūna-* is found only after the RV proper, the hymn must be a late composition and certainly belongs to the same period as the RV Khilas in which *ánūna-* appears in both meanings “inextinguishable” and “not deficient”.

7.1. We may summarize the textual results now. Later Vedic prose basically attests the part. *ūná-* in the meaning “deficient, lacking”; its negated form *ánūna-* “not deficient, not lacking” occurs only in one *yājyā*. At this period of literature, the meaning “extinguished” is expressed by *udvāta-*¹¹. For the earlier poetic literature, *ūná-* is virtually unknown, apart from the *Kunstbildung* *ūnayīs* in a late Rigvedic hymn, where the meaning “wanting etc.” lies at the basis of the form. On the other hand, it is the negated form *ánūna-* which is represented throughout the older works in poetry. For the Atharvan hymns uniformly, and once in the RV *Khilas*, “not deficient, not lacking” is the only meaning attested. For the Rigveda proper, in contrast, the sole meaning is “inextinguishable, inexhaustible”.

7.2. The difference in Atharvan and Rigvedic usage raises an important question. Are we dealing with 2 separate roots, as Bartholomae (AiWb 1406f.) suggested, or with a single root, according to Hoffmann’s proposal (Aufs. II 466 n. 3)? On semantic grounds alone, I tend to believe that there were originally 2 distinct roots, since I do not see how the meanings “lacks, wants” and “become extinguished, exhausted” can be derived from a single underlying concept. In truth, none of the passages discussed above shows any real confusion between the 2 values of *ánūna-*; the literary domains of each meaning are treated quite independently. It is only at RV VIII 47.6ab *parihvrtéd aná jáno, yuṣmádattasya vāyati* “By his duplicity a person lacks what is (otherwise) given by you”, that *vāyati* appears in the meaning “wants” rather than “is extinguished”.

7.3. However, if there existed two homonymous parts. *ūná-*, each built from a separate root, it is fully understandable that a younger poet could employ the “incorrect” present *vāyati* to express the notion “lacks” instead of the proper formation for that purpose. Vedic indeed possesses a number of homophones in its verbal system, and such a situation would have readily permitted the mistake just described, especially if the older present formation signifying “lacks” was disap-

11. Cp. KB VII 3.

pearing from usage. Furthermore, I note, if *vāyati* originally meant both “lacks” and “becomes extinguished”, what was the purpose of creating a formation *ūnayati** in Vedic and a supposed secondary intrans. pres. **ūyatai* in Avestan? Could not the original intrans. present function happily in its two meanings?

7.4. For these reasons I believe that there were 2 separate roots in IndoIranian. The root ¹*vā* “extinguish”, with intrans. pres. **vā-ya-ti*, trans. pres. **va-áya-ti*, past part. **ū-ná-*. The intrans. present survives in Ved. *vāyati*; the trans. pres. is continued in Aves. **frā-vāyeiti*, with the usual contraction of **-aaya-* > **-āya-* in that language. Attested *frāvayeiti* reflects the Aves. secondary shortening of **-āya-* > *-aya-*. Although similar on the surface, Ved. *vāyati* and Aves. **-vāyeiti* are different in origin. Vedic has replaced the old trans. present by *vāpáyati** (cf. *nír vāpayā*, RV X 16.13b), as it treated all *-ā*-roots, and the older *ūná-* by *vātá-** (cf. *udvāta-*).

7.5. The root ²*vā* “make or be wanting”, with intrans. pres **ū-ya-tai*, trans. pres. **u-ná-ti* or **ū-ná-ti* (with secondary lengthening)¹², past part. **ū-ná-*. In Vedic **ūnāti* was recast as *ūnayati** in the same way that *prīṇāti* (older *prīṇāti*) was remade as *prīṇayati*. The intrans. **ūyatai* remains in Aves. med. part. *uyamna-*, a form that cannot have been built to *ūna-* according to any attested model.

12. Type *kṣīyate* ‘perishes’: *kṣīṇāti* ‘destroys’.