

## On the Vedic Denominative Type *putrīyánt-*

Though long treated as a scholarly backwater of Indo-European verbal morphology, denominative formations have begun to elicit more attention in recent years: note, for example, Melchert 1997 for Anatolian, Martzloff 2006:688ff. for Italic, and Alfieri 2008 and Schaffner 2008 for Indo-European in general. Indo-Iranian has also benefited in this way: witness important treatments by Insler (1997) and by Tucker (1988, 2004), among others. There is, however, a puzzling subtype of denominative formation in Sanskrit that remains unexplained, namely denominatives in *-īyá-* (and *-iyá-*) based on *o*-stems (in Indo-European terms), as in Ved. *putrá-* ‘son’ → RV *putrīyá-* ‘desiring sons’ (AV *putriyá-*), *ánna-* ‘food’ → RV *ánniya-* ‘desiring food’.

Not even the extent of the phenomenon is entirely clear: thus, for example, Ved. *tavisīyá-* ‘be strong’ is often placed in this category (as if to *taviśá-* ‘strong’; so e.g. Macdonell 1910:399); but others (recently e.g. Schaffner 2008) may be correct in viewing this rather as a denominative to *táviṣī-* ‘strength’. An example of this kind also raises semantic questions, concerning the desiderative meaning apparently shown by some of the forms, but not others; cf. Tucker 1988 on similar issues with other denominative patterns.

The semantic analysis is linked, in turn, with the historical/comparative interpretation of the morphology of the formation: such forms have traditionally been compared to a small set of Latin denominatives, likewise based on *o*-stems and showing *i*-conjugation, with desiderative meaning, e.g. *equīre* ‘be in heat’ (of mares, i.e. ‘desire the stallion’). According to one recent proposal (Olsen 2004:237n9), this comparison may involve an *i*-stem (derivationally related to the basic *o*-stem) followed by the optative suffix. Nevertheless, the *i*-conjugation of thematic denominatives is general in Italic (cf. Lat. *servus* ~ *servīre*, U. *seritu/seritu*), and may not actually continue an inherited *i*-formation of any kind (Vine 2009). The comparison between forms like Ved. *putrīyá-* and Lat. *equīre* therefore calls for reconsideration, and may lead to a new conception of the Indic formation.

### References

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