The Problem of ‘Apadha in the Rgveda

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Interpretation of Vedic hymns in general and of individual words in particular, has been a knotty problem right from the day of Yāska and not all the ingenuities of the commentators of the Rgveda and scholarly labours of the Western and Eastern Orientalists have been able to unveil the mystery about a number of obscure Vedic words. One of them is the Vedic word ‘Apadha’ in the RV. II, 12, 3. The word occurs in the second quarter of the above Rk which is as follows:

यो गा उदार्ज्ञविपश्च कृलस्यः
Y o' ga' Udājad apadhå valasya.
The Pada text traditionally handed down to this day runs thus:

य: गा: उत्तरार्ज्ञाः अपुष्ठाः कृलस्यः
Sāyaṇa interprets this quarter in the following manner:

यद्य कृलस्य वक्तमाकस्यापुरस्याप्पात्ती तत्त्वं कानिदत्ता गा उदार्ज्ञाः निर्गम्यत्

Here in his rendering of अपुष्ठ निर्गम्यत्, he unwittingly reveals that the ultimate sense is ‘imprisoned’ and the word is an adjective of गा:। But while grammatically analysing, he seems to derive it from the root अ + √घ to which the termination अर्ज्ञ is applied in the impersonal sense. The word thus becomes अपधा अर्ज्ञ whose ablative singular.

Venkaṭa Mādhava too renders the word as विज्ञाविष्टविष्टित्ता: and takes it as an adjective of गा:, which he renders as परस्त.

Western scholars have created more confusion in trying to identify the exact grammatical form. Thus Roth takes it to be the instrumental of अप + √घ

Ludmig2 suggests that this word is instrumental in sense and we must take it to mean wedge or key (quasi reserator).

Hillebrandt3 thinks that अपधा is a locative from अपधा. Grassman4 translates it

1. Sanskrit-Wor, St Pt, 1855, p. 282
2. Peterson, Hymns from the Rigveda, Second Selection, Notes, p. 116
3. Veda Chrestomathic, p. 70
4. Wörterbuch Zum Rigveda, p. 71

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as 'a hiding place'. Griffith\(^1\) translates it as 'from the cave'. Peterson remarks that this word is a Vedic locative of the same kind as 'guhā' in the next verse and translates it as 'cave':

Zimmerman\(^3\) translates it as 'from the enclosure'. He compares it with 11, 14, 3; । यो गा उदासु । हि वृह व: ।

Macdonell\(^4\) also translates it as 'by the unclosing'. On the basis of feminine forms, he remarks that it can only be the instrumental singular of Apadhā'. He takes 'Valasya' as objective genitive i.e. by opening (the cave of) Vala. Velankar\(^5\) seems to follow Roth when he takes 'Apadhā' as instrumental singular of Apadhā on the analogy of एक्षया प्रवतिः - प्रवतिःपणेन in VIII; 77, ।

Sayāṇa\(^6\) took it as irregularity for the ablative, by सुपा सुब्रमण्यम प्रकारः ।

Durga,\(^7\) the commentator on Nirukta explains the form by अपघाः as meaning उदासुपणेन by the enclosing.

As has been seen above, Venkata Madhava\(^8\) too while explaining it as किलान्तरमृगितम has indicated indirectly to the feminine base with 'स' ending.

It seems that अपघ is really अपघाः: accusative plural of अपघ, feminine form from अपघ धाः by applying the affix 'अथा' in accordance with the Pārśvanāja rule III, 3, 106.

An analogous case is that of the word लोक्ष्य occurring in the form of लोक्ष्यम in RV, X, 73, 11:

वर्ग: सुपा वर्ग तेव्रित्रु मन्दमव्रक्षु ठर्यायो नाग्रमानः ।
वर्ग ठर्यायाहं घुर् पुर्ण बशु-मुर्षस्तर-समान निम्नवेषे बुधानु ।

The word लोक्ष्य is found in the Naigamakāṇḍa of the fourth chapter of Nirukta.

Mukund Jha Bakshi\(^9\) in his notes on Nirukta explains लोक्ष्य as "आत्रवोपसन" इति (पा. ३०२.१२२) क प्रच्छेदे भविष्य (पा. ३२.१०६) व। दानिहिति स्वतंत्रति ।

This supports our thesis about the nature of the form of अपघ. In point of accent too, the form अपघाः resembles लोक्ष्य.

\(^1\) Hymns from the Rigveda, Vol. II, p. 273
\(^2\) Peterson, op. cit,
\(^3\) Vedic Selections, Notes, p. 124
\(^4\) Vedic Reader, pp. 46 ff
\(^5\) Rksākta vaijayaṇti, p. 72
\(^6\) Sayāṇa's commentary on II/2, 3: अपघाः-अप पुजाद्वारसः (पा. ३२.१०६)
\(^7\) Durga's commentary on Nirukta, Adhyāya, 8, 1.
\(^8\) Rgarthadipīka, Vol. III, p. 75.
\(^9\) Mukund Jha Bakshi, (Ed.), Nirukta, p. 160
Now the Padapāṭhakāra has noticed the form as अयुधा without the final ‘Visarga’. Can it not be possible that in the Samhitā-Pāṭha, there was elision of of original visarga of अयुधा:, the originally intended form and anyhow the author of Padapāṭha missed it?

There are many instances in which the older authors of Padapāṭhas differed from one another in splitting Samhitā text into its component padas. This has been adduced to by Yāska himself. Thus Yāska takes note of difference of opinion of various authors of Padapāṭha with regard to the word आदित्यः :—
शाक्तुर्याच्याश्रयंभृतितिहृदिमिति तदेव कारणूः, विचित्रा: पदकारणामिनिर्म्या:, कवितुपस्मानिपतिवं नावगृहः गृहमि यथा शाक्तैः अत्योक्तासम् इति नावगृहीतविः, बायेैः तु “अत्योक्तासम्” —इत्यवृहितम्। तस्मादवः गृहितवभवः।।

Similarly with regard to the word भाष्कुत्त्र in RV I, 105, 18, Yāska takes it as an Upapada compound and hence as one word, thus:
मायकुत्त्र वासानां चार्च्याबासाना च कतः मयति वन्नमाः।।

But Śakalya splits the word into two padas, as मृ मः कुय तृ।।

Thus this possibility of the presence of originally existent but morphophonemically elided Visarga sets at rest all the unnecessary efforts of the traditional commentators and modern orientalists.

2. Nirukta, V, 21

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