



Some etymological thoughts on latin *aequus* 'even, level, equal', with notes on the words for 'one' in Indo-European

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ABSTRACT

(Re-)placing Latin *aequus* amongst the Indo-European words for 'one'. Examining the distribution of the OIE words for 'one': *sem- *sib_{1/3}-, *Hoino-/ *hoiwo-/ *Hoik^o-, and reviewing/revising Thurneysen-Havet's Law so as to secure *aequus*'s place as a word affected by it.

KEYWORDS: Latin *aequus*, one, Thurneysen-Havet's Law

1. Introduction

The Latin adjective *aequus* 'even, level, equal'¹ has had, for the last century or so, no recognized etymology. Thus, both Ernout and Meillet (1967: 18) and de Vaan (2008: 27) say it has «no convincing etymology» or the like. However, in the nineteenth century, when Indo-European comparative linguistics was young, the semantic similarity between Latin *aequus* 'even, level, equal', all one-to-one relationships, and Sanskrit *éka-* 'one' seemed self-evident and they were unhesitatingly put together as cognates, e.g., by Vaniček in his *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der lateinischen Sprache* (1883) and Monier-Williams in his *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (1899). However, as the twentieth century moved on, it became clear that, as Indo-European phonology was then known, to equate Sanskrit *éka-* with *aequus* meant that the Sanskrit would be divorced from Latin *ūnus*, Germanic **aina-* 'one',

¹ Whence the neuter noun *aequum* 'level ground; an equal footing, equality; what is fair/equitable', and the derived denominative verb *equāre* 'to equate'. In English one can say, using two words that I would say mean one, that if X and Y are the same, then one equates them. The same was true of Latin.

etc., because *ūnus* presupposed a PIE **oino-* rather than **aino-*. Thus, by 1938 and Walde and Hofmann's *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, the equation of *éka-* and *aequus* was one of several etymologies for the latter that were rejected, more or less out-of-hand².

Nonetheless, the semantic rapprochement seen by Vaniček and Monier-Williams remains striking and well-attested elsewhere, as we will see, and I think it worthwhile to re-examine it to see if somehow the etymological connection might be reinstated. The critical issue here is phonological³, but we will ignore that for the moment and look at the recognized words for 'one' in Indo-European, so as to measure the semantic closeness of *aequus* to them.

2. The words for 'one' and their derivatives in Indo-European

As already alluded to, the first thing we should note is that we can reconstruct three words for 'one' for Proto-Indo-European: (1) *Hoino-* (on which see below), (2) **sem-*⁴, and (3) **si(h_{1/3})-*⁵.

² Their own suggestion, that *aequus* was a derivative of PIE **ai-* 'give', had, so far as I know, no takers, nor should it have.

³ At the outset there seem to me to be two possibilities: (1) to show that a root **h₂ei-* (> already phonetically **h₂ai-* in later Proto-Indo-European) in *aequus* is possibly an ablaut variant **h₂oi-* (to account for *ūnus*, etc.), or (2) to show that Latin *aequus* possibly represents some inner-Italic or inner-Latin phonological development from an earlier **Hoik^wos*.

⁴ Greek (εἷς/μία/ἓν [*< *sēms/smih₂/sem*]), Armenian (*mi* [*< *smih₂*]), Tocharian (*se* [*< *sēms*]), and possibly Albanian (*një* [*< *myah₂?*]). Some, however, see the Albanian to be somehow from **Hoinos*, e.g., Jokl (*< *Honyóm < *Hoynom*). Neither suggestion is absolutely compelling. And both are phonologically difficult and unparalleled elsewhere in Albanian. BEEKES does not mention Albanian in conjunction with Greek εἷς, but MARTIROSYAN (2010: 468) does with respect to Armenian *mi*. Fortunately, the exact origin of the Albanian word for 'one' does not materially affect the overall argument presented here. It has sometimes been thought that the third form, **si-*, is somehow a reflex of the feminine **smyV-* of **sem-* (e.g., GIPPERT 2004 with previous literature). See now DE VAAN (2017) for a discussion and refutation of that notion.

⁵ It has been seen by many that it would seem redundant for Proto-Indo-European to have two (now three) different words for 'one'. But finding the differences in meaning, if any, between the three words for 'one' is elusive. SZEMERÉNYI (1996: 222), following BRUGMANN (1911: 6-7), suggests that **Hoinos* stressed singleness or isolation while **sēms* stressed togetherness or unity (the latter point emphasized by DE VAAN 2017). All this is a possibility. But what of **si(h_{1/3})-* (unknown to Brugmann and Szemerényi)? Still, some-

2.1. PIE **sem-*

**Sem-* is the primary word for ‘one’ in Albanian (?), Greek, Armenian, and Tocharian, and, in derivatives, it is found in everywhere save possibly in Anatolian⁶. Derivatives of **sem-* often show semantic overlap with the meanings of *aequus*, reinforcing the notion of “oneness” of the latter word. Thus, we have English *same*, Old Norse *samr* ‘same, equal’ (*samfedri* ‘having the same father’ [\approx Greek $\delta\mu\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma$]), and related Germanic words, Greek $\delta\mu\omicron\varsigma$ ‘common, one and the same, equal, level’, $\delta\mu\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\rho\iota\omicron\varsigma \sim \delta\mu\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\rho$ ‘having the same father’, Avestan/Old Persian *hama-* ‘equal, same’, Sanskrit *samá-* ‘even, smooth, flat, same’, Tocharian A *ṣoma-pācār* ($\approx \delta\mu\omicron\pi\acute{\alpha}\tau\eta\rho$) ‘having the same father’, Tocharian B *ṣemé-pālsko* ‘of the same mind/ of one mind’, *ṣemé-yārm* ‘in equal measure’ (= Sanskrit *sama-mātra-*, \approx Latin *aequālis/aequāliter*).

2.2. PIE **si(h_{1/3})-*

Though the data is much less abundant, we need to take into account the less familiar third word, **si(h_{1/3})-*, though its semantics offer little evidence not seen in **sem-* or **Hoino-* (on which immediately below). Hittite, along with Greek, Tocharian A, and probably Albanian offer reflexes for this word. Hittite has *sis* (nom. sg. common gender *sīs*

where in the Indo-European world all mean ‘one’, both ‘one alone’ and ‘one in unity/ be at one with’. And all major branches of Indo-European, save Albanian and possibly Anatolian, have both **Hoino-* or its variants/derivatives and **sem-* or its derivatives. (By contrast, as noted, **si(h_{1/3})-* has left reflexes in only Anatolian, Tocharian, and Greek, and perhaps Albanian.) In this particular context it is important to note that for Sanskrit *éka-* MONIER-WILLIAMS (1899) gives ‘alone, solitary, single’ and ‘the same, one and the same, identical’.

⁶ KLOEKHORST (2008: 719, 722-723) very cautiously suggests that *samnae-* ‘create’ (if $< *s\bar{m}\text{-no-ye/o-}$ and if ‘bring together?’) and *sani* ‘the same’ might be descendants of PIE **sem-*. For the first, the connection is quite plausible; while for the second the meaning is excellent but the *-n-* rather than *-m-* is difficult, perhaps $*s\bar{m} > *sam > *san + i$. Lycian *hēmene-* ‘combined, united’ (PUHVEL 2017: 102) and Hieroglyphic Luvian *saman-* ‘contract, agreement’ (PAYNE 2014: 149) would seem also to be reasonable candidates for cognancy with PIE **somo-*. Hittite *sa(m)mana-* ‘setting, layer, grounding, base, foundation’, on the other hand, seems semantically too distant to belong here (contra the cautious suggestion of PUHVEL 2017: 97-102). If either the Hittite words *samnae-* or *sani* are cognate, or the Lycian/Luvian, and they probably are, then PIE **sem-* would be universally represented in the daughter stocks.

[late Hittite also analogical *sias*], acc. sg. common *sian*, neuter nom./acc. sg. *siat* ~ *sie* ‘one’⁷, Greek (Homeric and some non-Attic dialects) has the psilotic⁸ nom. sg. fem. *ἄ* ‘one and the same; only, single’ (gen. sg. fem. *ἰᾶς* [and the sole non-feminine, the nt. sg. dat. *ἰῶ*]; cf. the discussion of Kloekhorst [2008: 750-751] which, though chronologically earlier, supersedes that of Beekes [2010: 571] which takes the Greek in isolation)⁹. Added by Pinault to this etymon, earlier yet (2006), is the Tocharian A adverb *ši* ‘once; for the first time’¹⁰. Brought to bear, earlier still, is Albanian *gjithë* ‘all’ (< **sih_x-ko-*; Demiraj 1997: 188-189; other Albanian etymologists have the equivalent of “no etymology”). A form found in Anatolian, Greek, Tocharian, and Albanian is certainly of Indo-Anatolian age.

2.3. A closer look at **Hoinos*

Though usually cited as **Hoinos* tout simple, we actually have **Hoi-* by itself in Hittite and at least a trio of derivative words to deal with: **Hoiwos*, and **Hoik^wos*, as well as **Hoinos*. Morphologically the pre-Hittite **Hoi-* is the most basic form. It appears as <a-an-ki> (or more commonly as <1-an-ki>) ‘once’. The trio of derivatives appear in the following forms. (1) **Hoiwos* appears as the primary word for ‘one’ in Iranian, e.g., Avestan *aēva-* ‘one’, Old Persian *aiva-* ‘alone, one’, and in Nuristani, e.g., Waigali (aka Kalāṣa-alā) *ew* ‘one’ (Degener 2002: 106). **Hoiwo-* is also found in Greek οἶος (Cypriot *oiwos*) ‘alone, only, sin-

⁷ There is also the Hittite derivative *siela-* ‘by oneself, single, (a)lone, apiece’. The Hittite meanings of the derivatives of this third word for ‘one’ are semantically more closely related to those of **Hoinos* than those of **sem-*, contrary to what one might have expected on the basis of Szemerényi, Brugmann, and de Vaan (fn. 5).

⁸ By crossing/contamination with the pronominal **h₁ei-*?

⁹ PUHVEL (2021: 59-63) treats the Hittite and Greek words very differently (feminine < PIE **swiyah₂*). Tocharian is not brought into the discussion. One might note that an initial PIE **sw-* would be possible in Hittite, Greek, and Tocharian, but not in Albanian.

¹⁰ Pinault is surely correct in taking *ši* ‘once; for the first time’ as belonging with the Hittite and Greek, but not, I believe, in taking the Tocharian B *še* and A *sas* nom. sg. masc. ‘one’ to be from **syó-*. Rather *še/sas* are from PIE **sēms* as usually supposed. Tocharian A *ši* might reflect an old dative **sih_{1/3}-ei* or the like. Albanian *gjithë* ‘all’ is usually taken as a reflex of **sem-ko-* (POKORNY 1959: 903; HULD 1984: 69-70, etc.) but as noted above **si(h_{1/3})-ko-* would do just as well and be easier phonologically. If the latter is the case, we have some data linking **si(h_{1/3})-* semantically with **sem-*.

gle’, οἰο-πόλος ‘walking alone’ [homophonous with οἰοπόλος ‘herding sheep’], οἰόθεν ‘all alone’, Sanskrit (in the adverbs *evá* ‘so, just so, exactly, only’ [again one might note the semantic similarity to *aequus*] and *evám* ‘thus’ [Mayrhofer 1956: 129; not adduced by Beekes 2010: 1060]), and Tocharian B (*aiwe-* ‘±unit’, attested only in the plural *aiwenta* ‘±groups’ [see Adams 2013: 111]). (2) Leaving aside for the moment Latin *aequus*, **Hoik^wos* appears as the word for ‘one’ only in Sanskrit *éka-* (and borrowed from pre-Sanskrit into Mitanni horse-racing terminology as *aika* ‘a single turning [in a horse race]’)¹¹. (3) Of the three words beginning in **Hoi-*, **Hoinos* is by far the most common. It occurs as the word for ‘one’ in Balto-Slavic (Old Prussian *aina-*, but see below for East Baltic and Slavic), Germanic (Gothic *ains*, English *one*, NHG *ein*, etc.), Celtic (e.g., Old Irish *óin*), and Italic (e.g., Latin *ūnus*, < Old Latin *oinos*), and as a secondary number-word in Greek (ὀῖνη ~ οἰνός ‘ace on a die’)¹². Sanskrit shows *ēna-* ‘he’ (< ‘this/that one’); in East Baltic (e.g., Lithuanian *vienas*) and Slavic (Proto-Slavic **edinъ* [~ *edъnъ*]) we have ‘one’ but **jъnokъ* (or **jinokъ*) ‘solitary’ (> Russian *inok* ‘monk’, Old Russian *inokyj* [adj.] ‘only, sole, solitary’, *inokyj* [n.] ‘hermit’)¹³. The East Baltic and Slavic forms require special attention.

2.3.1. *Special issues with East Baltic and Slavic*

These East Baltic and Slavic forms present three problems: the apparent prefix in the numeral itself (but not necessarily in its derivatives) before the **Hoi-*, the intonational contour (acute), and the ablaut of the vowel (**(e)i-*).

¹¹ It must be recognized at the outset that everyone, so far as I can see, routinely reconstructs the PIE antecedent of the *-k-* of Sanskrit *éka-* as **k^w-*. However, if one believes, as most do (and I do), that PIE had three dorsal series of stops, one cannot exclude the possibility that the *-k-* of *éka-* reflects PIE **k-* instead. If that should be true, the reader need read no further because the etymology proposed here is crucially dependent on the dorso-velarity of that consonant.

¹² Also Hesychian οἰνίζε/ο- ‘be alone regarding speech’ and οἰνώντα ‘solitary’. Some (e.g., POKORNY 1959; BLAŽEK 1999) see PIE **Hoi-no-* reflected also in Armenian *ēn* ‘god’ (i.e., ‘the One’) but others (e.g., MARTIROSYAN 2010) do not. If belonging here, the Armenian *ēn* may be almost matched by an Oscan feminine theonym *Oinai* (dat. sg.) (WALLACE 2007: 27). Though the form of the Oscan word is sure, its meaning is less so.

¹³ DERKSEN (2008: 138-139, 212-213).

As to the first, as noted, East Baltic has an initial *v-* (e.g., Lithuanian *vienas*) and Slavic an initial *ed-* (Proto-Slavic **edinō* [*~ edōnō*] ‘one’). Derksen (2015) takes the East Baltic *vie-* to be from Proto-Baltic **ai-* but without much of a rationale. For Slavic, Derksen (2008) surely correctly suggests a pronominal **h₁ed-*. However, Blažek (1999: 150), with previous literature (including Brugmann 1904: 110; Trautmann 1923; Hamp 1973: 4), takes the East Baltic form to be from **wV-oino-* where the **wV-* is the zero-grade of the pronominal seen in Old Persian *ava-*, OCS *ovŭ ~ ovŭ* ‘that’, not directly comparable with the Slavic, but similar typologically.

As for the second, the intonational patterns of East Baltic and Slavic suggest to many that a laryngeal preceded the **-n-*, thus **Hoi-Hno-*. That is certainly possible, at least if the laryngeal in question was **-h₁-*¹⁴. The combination **-oih₁C-* becomes Greek *-oiC-* and Indic *-eC-* in the endings of the thematic optative (e.g., third person singular Greek φέροι, Sanskrit *bharet*), so we might well expect the same outcome for ‘one’. If so, the putative **-h₁n-* might be the zero-grade of the definitizing suffix **-h₁e/on-* so prominent in adjective formation in various Indo-European groups, if that suffix begins with a laryngeal¹⁵. Blažek (1999: 151), however, suggests a starting point for the East Baltic-Slavic intonation as **h₁e-e/oino-* with a prefixed pronominal particle

¹⁴ DERKSEN takes the acute accent as secondary, after *ýnas* ‘real’, but the semantic distance makes that quite unrealistic.

¹⁵ OLSEN (2017) has shown how widespread old compounds in **-h₃onh₂-* are, but, such compounds are not relevant to the history of the definitizing adjectives and nouns of Germanic, Tocharian, and Albanian which are derivatives in *-(h₁)e/on-*, not **-h₃onh₂-*, as can be seen by the remnants of **-e-* and **-ē-* in the paradigms of both Germanic and Tocharian. Most Germanic languages, but not English any longer, maintain a distinction between definite adjectives (old *n*-stem derivatives) and non-definite adjectives (old non-*n*-stems). Tocharian has but a single declension but one with a mixture of old *n*-stems and non-*n*-stems (ADAMS 1988a: 121-122; 1988b). The earliest attested Albanian (continuous texts of some length only in the late 16th century) has a remnant of a Germanic-like system in having old *n*-stems and non-*n*-stems side-by-side, but apparently completely homonymous at that point. Thus, we have *shenjtë* ‘holy’ (< Latin *sanctus*) beside *shenjtënë* (Gheg)/*shenjtërë* (Tosk) ‘holy’ (MATZINGER 2006: 200). Some doublets remain even today: e.g., *shurdh/shurdhër* ‘deaf’, *verb/verbër* ‘blind person’. That this process includes Latin/Romance loanwords establishes it as a productive process well into the first millennium AD and perhaps longer. By the time they were first recorded, the Albanian forms had been remodeled to be as if the reflexes of **-o-no/ah₂-*.

creating a long diphthong which was the cause of the acute intonation rather than the presence of a following laryngeal. The same pronominal element is seen in Greek ἐκεῖνος ‘that’, Oscan *eco* ‘hic’, and Russian *étot* ‘that’. This solution obviates the need for a second laryngeal and is typologically consonant with the other prefixes needed to explain the forms found in East Baltic and Slavic¹⁶.

The third issue is less tractable. While the East Baltic forms could be traced to Proto-Baltic **-ai-* (and hence PIE **-oi-*), the Slavic forms seem to require both **-ei-* and **-i-*. Provided the initial laryngeal is **h₁-* that is possible, but neither the *e*-grade, nor the zero-grade, are otherwise paralleled in Indo-European in words for ‘one’. Perhaps the answer lies in the fact that the forms of ‘one’ with **-i-* and **-ei-* are all second members of compounds. They are thus like, for instance, Greek ἀγά-ννίφος ‘snow-capped (of Olympus, say)’¹⁷ (< **ḡgh₂-* + *snig^{wh}os*), or Sanskrit *yúvan-* (and its widespread Indo-European cognates, < **h₂yú-h₃onh₂-* [see Olsen 2017: 116, 134]) and Greek Ἄγα-μέμνων, with zero-grade (where possible¹⁸), in the first member and zero-grade or *e*-grade in the second¹⁹. In any case, it would seem that our initial **H-* must be **h₁-*. And, clinching the case for **h₁-*, is Hittite *ānki* ‘once’ (< pre-Hittite **ayanki* < PIE **h₁oyṅki*), since either **h₂-* or **h₃-* would have resulted in Hittite *h*-²⁰.

¹⁶ The adduction of Proto-Slavic (DERKSEN 2008: 213, so too DERKSEN 2015: 201) **jǫnъ* [prn.] ‘other’ (> OCS *inъ* ‘some[one], other’, Russian *inoj* ‘different, other’) and also Lithuanian *jnas* ~ *inas* ‘real’ is apparently universal but difficult. The difference in meaning invites much caution. It also separates Proto-Slavic **jǫnъ*, etc., from Latin *iterum* ‘again’ and Sanskrit *itara-* ‘the other of two’, taking the Latin and Sanskrit as belonging to a different etymon (so also both DE VAAN and MAYRHOFER). Derksen does not adduce the Latin/Sanskrit and de Vaan and Mayrhofer do not adduce the Slavic. But, despite the long-standing unity of opinion, I don’t believe it is correct. These latter words, Italic, Indic, and Slavic, can all be derived from a PIE **h_xi-* ‘other’ or the like, a word belonging with ‘two’ semantically and not ‘one’.

¹⁷ More literally, ‘great [with] snow’.

¹⁸ Neither **h₁e* nor **h₁ed* was capable of having zero-grade forms.

¹⁹ Unprefixed derivatives such as ‘solitary’, ‘monk’, ‘hermit’ would have their vowel by analogy with ‘one’.

²⁰ It’s a bit disappointing that the initial **h₁-* is not **h₂-*. If it had been **h₂-*, that would explain *aequus* without further ado and allow us to add the Armenian *ay-* found in the deictic pronouns *ays*, *ayd*, *ayn* ‘this one, that one, yon one’.

3. *The possibility of Latin aequus from PIE *h₂oik^wos*

So *aequus*, if related to ‘one’, cannot have its *-a-* from a hypothetical **h₂ai-/h₂oi-* ‘one’. But there is a second possibility, phonologically a bit messy admittedly, as noted above, that Latin *aequus* reflects an unrounding of pre-Latin **oiquos*.

That an **-o-* in an open syllable can sometimes appear as *-a-* before **-w-* in Latin (and Italic) is reasonably well-established as Thurneysen-Havet’s Law²¹. More contemporary discussions of this law can be found in Collinge (1985: 193-195), Schrijver (1991: 463), Vine (2006), and Weiss (2020: 152). On anyone’s account the data are messy, and it is not clear why some words are affected by this change and others not, e.g., *caveō* from **kouh_xéye/o-* is affected but *foveō* from **d^hog^{wb}éye/o-* is not. Is it because in the latter case PIE **-g^{wb}-* had not yet become **-w-* at the time of the change? The change is also restricted by some investigators to pretonic syllables²², but pretonic in Proto-Indo-European terms, not Italic, thus *cavus* ‘hollow’ shows the change because the PIE stress was **kouh_xó-*²³. But both these notions seem impossible to sustain when the change itself is usually dated, when a date is suggested, to around 200 BC. And that date seems reasonably certain: there are unchanged forms preserved in archaic texts or in geographically peripheral areas, e.g., pre-Classical/Republican Latin²⁴ and Iberian Latin *covus* ‘hollow’ (> Spanish *cueva* ‘cave’, Portuguese *covo* ‘hollow’) rather than Classical and general Romance *cavus*.

²¹ THURNEYSEN (1887) [written in 1884] and HAVET (1885).

²² E.g., VINE (2006). Thus *óvis* ‘sheep’, but *avillus* ‘newborn lamb’ (but also restored [or dialect variant?] *ovillus*). DE VAAN (2008: 30) takes *avillus* to be a diminutive of *agnus* ‘lamb’, i.e., from Proto-Italic **ag^wnolo-*, created before the delabialization of **-g^wn-* to *-gn-*.

²³ There are at least an equal number of difficulties if one seeks to use Italic/Latin stress as an environment as VINE (2006) would have it (cf. the problem posed by *manēre* vs. *monēre* in fn. 26).

²⁴ Witness Plautine (c. 254-184 BC) *vacīvus* ‘vacant, free’ vs. Gellius (2nd half of second century BC) *vacīvus* ‘id.’ (but Plautus also has *vacīvitās* ‘state of being empty’), *vacātiō* ‘exemption’ (in an inscription of 123 BC) vs. *vacātio* ‘id.’ (Cicero [106-43 BC] and subsequent authors). And, again, Plautus’ pun in *Cas.517: Fac habeant linguam tuae sedes. Quid ita? Quam ueniam, uocent* (quoted by LINDSAY 1897: 234).

While Thurneysen-Havet’s Law and the contemporary discussions thereof mentioned above are focused on the fate of **-o-* before *-wV-*, there are suggestions that unrounding can occur even in closed syllables, e.g., *vallēs* ‘valley’, though there are no absolutely compelling cases²⁵. Similarly, de Vaan (2008: 8), and others, would see **-o-* > *-a-* in open syllables after *b-*, *m-*, *l-*, and *k^w-*, e.g., *badius* ‘chestnut (of a horse)’ (= Old Irish *buide* ‘yellow’; no other cognates), *mare* ‘sea’ (< **mori*)²⁶, *lacus* ‘lake’ (< **loku-*)²⁷, *canem* ‘dog [acc. sg.]’ (< **k^wonm*)²⁸. The overall situation would appear to be that PIE **-o-* is often, if not with absolute regularity, unrounded in the vicinity of a labial or labiovelar (*b*, *m*, *u*, *w*, *k^w*) either preceding or following. In short, we seem to have a change whose exact scope eludes us. Perhaps we should speak of “Thurneysen-Havet’s Tendency” rather than Thurneysen-Havet’s Law (though we won’t). Certainly, any kind of linguistic change, phonological, morphological, syntactic, begins at a certain point in time and ends (or runs out of steam) at a later point. But, while in operation, that change runs ahead in certain individuals or geographical areas, behind in others, and affects certain possible items earlier or later. Sometimes the process ultimately affects everything possible and, as neogrammarians at heart, we feel satisfaction at its completeness. But sometimes, for whatever reason(s), the change is incomplete. Look at the fate of Middle English stressed *ō* before dentals; sometimes it ap-

²⁵ One might explore the possibility that *vallēs* and *vacca* ‘cow’ owe their unrounded vowels in “semi-open” syllables, i.e., those closed by a geminate (for both, see DE VAAN 2008: 649, 652, for very different [and dubious – as he would admit] suggestions).

²⁶ Another good example would be *manēre* ‘remain’ (< PIE iterative-intensive **moneye/o-* from the root **men-*). The originally homophonous causative (of a different though homophonous root) **moneye/o-* ‘warn’ retains the **-o-* in Latin *monēre*. In this instance adopting the changed (unrounded) variant in one verb and the unchanged (rounded) variant in another allowed a better distinction between the two (cf. the similar, though not identical, discussion of DE VAAN 2008: 362).

²⁷ An /l/ is of course neither bilabial nor quintessentially dorso-velar. But it was in many Italic varieties apparently a “dark l,” which merged with initial **w-* as *w-* (<*v*>) in Umbrian and South Picene (e.g., Umbrian *vuku* ‘in the woods’ [< **loukōd*], South Picene *veiat* ‘rests’ [< **legāti*] [WALLACE 2007: 14, 16]).

²⁸ A further example, which I do not recall being cited in this context, is Latin *varus* ‘pimple’ whose extra-Italic cognates all show regular *e/o/ē*-ablaut in the first syllable (DE VAAN 2008: 654). Thus, *varus* would appear to presuppose an earlier **vorus*.

pears in Modern English shortened and unrounded (e.g., *flood*, *stud* [uniquely respelled]), sometimes only shortened (e.g., *stood*, *good*), sometimes unaffected by either process (e.g., *mood*, *food*)²⁹. And there appears to be no variety of English that doesn't show some mixture of these three outcomes. Absolute certainty is denied us, but the supposition that an original (late Proto-Indo-European/Proto-Italic) **oik^wo-* might show up as Latin *aequo-* by at least a semi-regular phonological development seems well within the realm of possibility.

4. Conclusion

On the basis of the arguments presented here, I think there is a good chance that Vaniček and Monier-Williams were essentially right in equating Sanskrit *éka-* and Latin *aequus*. The equation is, admittedly, not so simple as they supposed. Both are descended from a PIE **h₁oik^wo-* but the Latin word has undergone something like Thurneysen-Havet's "Law" changing an Indo-European **-o-* to *-a-* when in the environment of a labial or dorso-velar. This law is certainly an "unruly" one whose exact scope and environment are difficult to pin down, but its existence in some form or another can hardly be doubted. The ability to give an etymology to *aequus* demonstrates that it may have affected **-oi-* just as it did **-o-*. There are very few etymologies in our science that are so compelling that no doubt can be entertained but that they are true. And this is not one of those. However, as an etymology for *aequus* I think this old/new proposal deserves serious consideration, especially as its only competitor is "no etymology".

Finally, some numbers may provide a bit of overall context. I count seven words for 'one' occurring in Indo-Anatolian stocks: **sem-*, **sih_x-*, **h₁oi-*, **h₁oino-*, **h₁oiwo-*, **h₁oik^wo-*. **sem-* (and/or its derivatives) occurs certainly in eleven stocks and possibly in Anatolian as well, **sih_x-* appears in four stocks. The "family of **h₁oi-*" (**h₁oi-*, **h₁oino-*, **h₁oiwo-*, and **h₁oik^wo-*) occurs in all stocks save Albanian.

²⁹ For English *stud* and *stood*, which "should" be homonyms, compare Latin *manēre* and *monēre*.

Most stocks (7) preserve two words, **sem-* and one of the **h₁oi-* words. Armenian may be exceptional in preserving only **sem-*, Albanian exceptional in preserving **sem-* and **sih_x-*, Anatolian exceptional in only preserving certainly **sih_x-* and **h₁oi-* (but **sem-* likely too). Three stocks certainly preserve three words (Italic, Indic, and Tocharian) and one may (Anatolian); Greek preserves four such terms. Certainly **sih_x-*, and **h₁oi-* are of Indo-Anatolian age, and **sem-* almost surely as well. **h₁oino-* (in five or six stocks), **h₁oiwo-* (in four), **h₁oik^wo-* (in two), all expansions of **h₁oi-*, on the other hand, would appear, on the basis of their distribution, to be of Indo-Tocharian age or, in the case of **h₁oino-* and **h₁oik^wo-*, possibly later, that is of Core Indo-European age.

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