ύδρία

Lexicalia / Containers

var. ὑδρεία, ὑδρεῖον (Ion. ὑδρήϊον); dim. ὑδρίσκη (var. ἑδρύσκη), ὑδρίσκιον (pap.), ὑδρίδιον (inscr.), ὑδρινεῖον (pap.) lat. hydria

Definition

Water-jar conventionally pictured as having two horizontal side-handles for easy lifting and a vertical handle for carrying the vessel or when pouring. The primary function, made clear by the etymology of the term from \mathring{v} δωρ, is well established in ancient evidence. In documentary papyri this container is filled not only with water but also other contents (e.g. foodstuffs). Moreover, small-sized pots called \mathring{v} δρίσκη served as receptacles for cosmetics, such as perfume and unguents, and for therapeutic ointments and eye-salves. Medical writers occasionally refer to these containers, as do writers of private letters, such as a papyrus letter dating to the late-IV century CE (P.Oxy. LIX 4001).

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A. Linguistic section

1-2. Etymology – General linguistic commentary

The derivation ὑδρία (Lat. hydria) < ὕδωρ is clear and reveals the content par excellence of this vessel, as well as its original function. The etymology was already pointed out by ancient sources, particularly by Isid. Orig. XX 6,4 hydria genus vasis aquatilis per derivationem vocata; ὑδωρ enim Graeci aquam dicunt.

Along with the feminine ὑδρία (var. ὑδρεία)² the neuter ὑδρεῖον (Ion. ὑδρήϊον) occurs many times. The most common diminutive form also in medical sources is ὑδρίσκη, attested in the variant ἑδρύσκη in papyrological evidence.³ Furthermore, Gal. *Ling. s. dict. exolet. expl.* υ (XIX 148,6 K.)

 $^{^{1}}$ Cf. Chantraine, DELG I 1152-3 s.v. ὕδωρ; Frisk, GEW II 957-9 s.v. ὕδωρ; Beekes, EDG II 1526-7 s.v. ὕδωρ.

On the very common vocalic interchange $\iota > \epsilon \iota$ in the papyri, cf. MAYSER, GGP I/1 66-70 and GIGNAC, GGP I 190-1.

³ On the phonetic interchange $\upsilon > \epsilon$ and $\iota > \upsilon$ in the papyri, see Mayser, GGP I/1 80-2. On the variant ἑδρύσκη, see Gignac, GGP I 273. Only the papyrus SPP XX 46r,14-5 (II-III CE, ?) attests the double diminutive suffix ὑδρίσκιον, whereas ὑδρίδιον appears in several Attic and Delian inscriptions. For other forms and compounds of the term, no one of which is attested in medical sources, see Bonati 2014 s.v. 2[1].

s.v. ὑδρίον ἡ μικρὰ ὑδρία ὑποκοριστικῶς testifies to ὑδρίον as a diminutive of ὑδρία referring to a passage by Hippocrates ([1]), but the most likely form of the word in the Hippocratic text is the Ionic neuter ὑδρήϊον.

The Greek term is paralleled by Mycenaean u-do-ro (/udros/ or /udron/), alike denoting a water-pot, larger and bucket-shaped in this case.⁵

The word ὑδρία was borrowed into Coptic (forms 2γΔριΔ / ΘεΔριΔ)⁶ and remains in modern Greek as an archaeological *terminus technicus* denoting the ancient item, though it does not have a lexical and functional continuity in everyday life.⁷

3. Abbreviation(s) in the papyri

ύδρί(αι): O.Buch. 95,3 ὑδ(ρείας): P.Bingen 120,24 ὑδ(ρίας): P.Ryl. IV 589,82-3 ἑδρύσκ(ας): P.Mich. II 121,2 ii 8

έδρ(ύσκας) / έδρ(ύσκην): P.Mich. II 121,3 i 3 and 4 i 3 (respectively)

B. Testimonia – a selection of representative sources

1. Hp. *Hum.* 11,7-9 (V 492,4-6 L.) – V-IV BCE

ώσπερ **ύδρήϊον** νέον διαπηδά, παλαιούμενον στέγει, οὕτω καὶ ἡ γαστὴρ διίει τὴν τροφὴν, καὶ ὑποστάθμην ἴσχει ώσπερ ἀγγεῖον.

As a water-pot, when new, lets the liquid pass through it, but holds it as time goes on, so the stomach lets nourishment pass, and like a vessel retains a sediment. (Transl. W.H.S. Jones [Cambridge-London 1959] 83)

2. Gal. De comp. med. sec. loc. I 2 (XII 437,2-5 K.) – II CE

ὅταν δὲ δὶς ἢ τρὶς ἀναβράσῃ, ἐκθλίψας τὸ ὑγρὸν καὶ σακκίσας ἐπιμελῶς ἀπόθου εἰς ὑδρίαν, [...] χρῶ, περιαλείφων δὶς τῆς ἡμέρας τὰς τρίχας.

Whenever it is boiled two or three times, and the fluid is squeezed and well strained, put it **in a pot** [...] and use, smearing the hair twice a day.

3. P.Oxy. LIX 4001,22-30 – late IV CE

ἔσχαμε(ν) | δὲ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα πάντα χωρὶς μόνης | τῆς ϋδρείας (Ι. ὑδρίας) τοῦ οξυγγείου (Ι. ὀξυγγίου). ὅθεν | σπουρρασάτω ὁ ἀδελφὸς ἡμῶν | Θεόρωρος ζητῆσαι ηπο τον | να καὶ γνῶναι περ[ὶ] αὐτοῦ | [. . .] ὑδρείαν (Ι. ὑδρίαν), παρέσχεν ἀν|τὶ τοῦ οξυγγείου (Ι. ὀξυγγίου) κολλουρίων ὑδρεί | [. . .] αν (Ι. ὑδρίαν).

We had all the other things too except only the **jar** of grease. So let our brother Theodorus be eager to search for it ... [make sure to look ...] and to know about it ... **jar**, he provided instead of the grease a **jar** of ointment.

(Transl. IOANNIDOU 1992, 159 [slightly modified])

⁴ ὑδρίειον cod. **A** (ὑδριεῖον in the apparatus of Littré's edition). Cf. LSJ⁹ 1844 *s.v.* Nevertheless cf. the wrong form ὕδρυον in the quotation of the Hippocratic passage in Ps.-Gal. *In Hipp. Hum. comment.* II 38,5 (XVI 344,8 K.).

⁵ Cf. Chadwick-Baumach 1963, 250 s.v.

 $^{^6}$ Cf. respectively CHERIX, IGC 166 s.v. ὑδρία and CRUM, CD 139b s.v. The term is not lemmatized in FÖRSTER, WGW.

 $^{^7}$ Cf. e.g. Dimitrakos, MA XIV 7367 s.v.; Stamatakos, ANEF 1023 s.v.; Babiniotis, ANEF 1824 s.v.

4. Paul. III 2, 2,4-6 (CMG IX 1, 132,19-21 Heiberg) – VII CE

όταν δὲ τοῦ ἐλαίου τὸ τρίτον ὑπολειφθῆ, τοῦτο διήθει καὶ μίξας τῆ ἀκακία ἀνελοῦ εἰς ὑδρίσκην καὶ χρῶ συγχρίων καθ' ἡμέραν.

When a third of the oil remains, strain it and, having mixed it with the acacia, put it aside in a little vessel, and anoint (sc. the hair) with it every day.

C. Commentary

1. ὑδρία and its medical sources

The word ὑδρία and its derivatives dominate in all our written sources. The earliest attestations of the feminine form with the core meaning "water-jar" date to the V-IV cent. BCE, especially in Athenian contexts, whereas the Ionic neuter ὑδρήϊον, i.e. ὑδρεῖον («bucket or pitcher», LSJ⁹ 1844 s.v.), is already attested in Hdt. III 14,7. Vessels called ὑδρία can also be found in connection with other products in addition to water: such as wine, ¹⁰ flour, ¹¹ oil ¹² and unguent, ¹³ so that the term loses specificity and acquires the generic meaning of «vessel of any kind» (LSJ⁹ 1844 *s. v.* II). ¹⁴

In medical literature the word ὑδρία occurs many times in the expression ὄνοι / ὀνίσκοι ὑπὸ ταῖς ὑδρίαις (γεννώμενοι), most likely referring to woodlice that are "born underneath the hydriai, 15 i.e. insects proliferating under the base or stand of vessels due to the safety, darkness, and humidity of the space. These many-legged arthropods are used in several therapeutic compounds, such as in a remedy for earache in which they are chopped fine and mixed with μύρον. ¹⁶ In Orib. *Coll.* X 8,25 (CMG VI 1,2, 52,22 Raeder) καταντλεῖσθαι γοῦν πλείοσιν ὑδρίαις – in a chapter on the virtues and effects of bathing in hot and cold water (περὶ θερμολουσίας καὶ ψυγρολουσίας) – the ὑδρία is used as a 'pitcher' or a 'washbasin' to pour the water down over the head during the bath. In a quite unclear and difficult simile Hippocrates employs the Ionic neuter ύδρήϊον to compare part of the digestive process of the stomach with a vessel ([1]). 17

Only two passages of medical authors refer to the ὑδρία as a container for pharmaceutical use: [2] and [4]. Although the two prescriptions involved are compounded with different ingredients, both of them are ointments to be applied to the hair. The former is an unguent intended to guard and preserve the hair (ἄλειμμα διαφυλακτικὸν τριχῶν), as well as color it black; the latter, taken from Cleopatra, may also affect the color of the hair, said to be gray, but the emphasis in the prescription is on the oiliness of the preparation itself. In both cases vessels called ὑδρία / ὑδρίσκη

⁹ Cf. e.g. Hellanic. FGrHist 4 F 67 ap. Athen. XI 462b; Diocl. Com. fr. 1 K.-A. ap. Poll. X 78,5; Ar. V. 926 and

12 Cf. e.g. Georg. Sync. Ecloga chronographica 223,14 Mosshammer σὺν τῆ ὑδρία τοῦ ἐλαίου; schol. P. N. X 64a,4-5 (III 174,14-5 Drachmann) τίθενται γὰρ Ἀθήνησιν ἐπάθλου τάξιν ἐλαίου πλήρεις ὑδρίαι and 64b,3-5 (III 174,21-3 Drachmann) φησὶν οὖν τὴν ὑδρίαν πλήρη ἐλαίου κεκομικέναι ἐξ Ἀθηνῶν εἰς Ἄργος τὸν Θειαῖον νικήσαντα. τοῖς γὰρ άθληταῖς τοῖς τὰ Παναθήναια νενικηκόσι δίδοται ὑδρία ἐλαίου πλήρης.

³ Cf. Ptol. Euerg. *FGrHist* 234 F 3 *ap.* Athen. X 438d-f κατὰ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ ὑδρίσκην ὑπὲρ δύο χοᾶς ἔχουσαν παχέος μύρου καταχυθήναι ἐκέλευσεν, ὡς καὶ τὸ πλήθος τῶν ἀγοραιοτέρων εἰς τὸ ἐκχυθὲν συγκυλισθήναι.

¹⁴ Other meanings of ὑδρία are «balloting urn» and «cinerary urn», cf. LSJ⁹ 1844 s.v. II 2-3 and BONATI 2014

ύδρίαις γινόμενον ὄνον πολύποδα καὶ συστρεφόμενον ἴουλον καλοῦσιν, as well as Phot. 1 149,4-5 Th. and Suda 1 442,3-5 Adler s.v.

⁸ See BONATI 2014 *s.v.*

Av. 602.

Thus in Ar. fr. 139 K.-A. ὑδρίαν δανείζειν πεντέχουν ἢ μείζονα according to Poll. X 74,5 ὥστ' οὐ μόνον ύδατος άλλὰ καὶ οἴνου ἂν εἴη ἀγγεῖον ἡ ὑδρία.

¹¹ Cf. e.g. LXX 1 Ki. 17, 12,3, as well as 14,2 and 16,1.

¹⁶ Cf. e.g. Gal. De comp. med. sec. loc. III 1 (XII 623,7-8 and 641,10-1 K.).

¹⁷ The passage is quoted and discussed by Ps.-Gal. *In Hipp. Hum. comment.* II 38 (XVI 344,3-345,14 K.), but no comment is made on this simile.

have the function of small containers for ointments employed for the storage of the remedies prior to their use, as confirmed by the verbal indicators ἀποτίθημι, in the sense of «put away», «store away» ([2]), and ἀναιρέω, «set aside» ([4]).

The function of the ὑδρία as a small container in which to store and transport therapeutic products is attested in just one documentary papyrus dating back to the late IV century CE, P.Oxy. LIX 4001 ([3]). The papyrus is a letter written by certain Eudaemon to his mother, grandmothers and a woman called Cyra. Eudaemon, who is a doctor, sends the letter to his surgery presumably in Oxyrhynchus, as the address on the back shows (ἀπόδος εἰς τὸ ἰατρεῖον). He is working away from home for professional reasons, and he now asks for the means to make some medical implements on his own. He also notifies his family that he received a «hydria of eye-salves» instead of a «hydria of animal grease». The medicinal use of the ὀξύγγιον, animal fat, is frequently confirmed by Greek medical authors, and it appears also in one of the four prescriptions for skin and eveointments preserved in SB XXIV 15917,21 (II CE, Ankyron [MP3 2398.12; LDAB 4702]). 18 Ancient eye-ointments commonly had the form of semi-solid sticks, as their ingredients were fashioned into loaf-shaped tablets and then dried for storage, 19 but it is likely that the κολλούρια mentioned in the papyrus letter were ready to use, already grounded down and mixed with a liquefying substance so as to be ready to apply. As a result the fact that both the ὀξύγγιον and the κολλούρια had, in all likelihood, an ointment-like consistency further underscores why they are said to be stored in small vessels called ὑδρία / ὑδρίσκη by various medical authors.

2. ὑδρία word and object

The passages of medical content (see [B] and C[1]) do not provide information about the physical appearance of the vessel. The word ὑδρία, however, corresponds to a well-recognized type of container in the (conventional) archeological vocabulary, and it is one of the commonest shapes depicted in Attic vase-painting, especially in the so called "fountain-house scenes" in which women fetch water from a fountain. ²⁰ A jar incribed ὑδρία, for example, appears in a representation of Achilles pursuing Troilos on the famous François vase (ca. 570 BCE) found near Chiusi and now in the Museo Archeologico at Florence. The most typical features of this vessel established by ancient evidence are the presence of three handles – the two horizontal ones on either side of the body for lifting, and the vertical handle at the back for pouring or carrying when empty – as well as the fairly narrow neck set off from body. Perhaps two quite puzzling adjectives attested in two documentary papyri might refer to these visual aspects of the container. In BGU XIII 2359,2 (late III CE, ?) a ύδρία κεντιτική (1. κεντητική) is mentioned, followed at 1.10 by a ύδρία μικρά ἔχουσα φάβα (1. φάβατα). The modifier κεντητικός appears only once in Thphr. HP III 9, 6,3,21 denoting the 'prickly' nature of the leaves of the male fir tree (ὀξύτερα γὰρ καὶ κεντητικώτερα τὰ τοῦ ἄρρενος [sc. τὰ φύλλα]).²² The author of the editio princeps of the papyrus translates ὑδρία κεντητική as «engraved vase» (p. 195).²³ But one might also suppose that κεντητικός alludes to the narrowing

¹⁸ The term is integrated also in P.Mich. XVII 758 (inv. 21) A,9, cf. YOUTIE 1996, 7-8. Among Greek documentary papyri it is attested in just four documents containing lists of goods and products: P.Köln VII 318,6 (VII-VIII CE, Herakleopolites); P.Lond. IV 1414,291 and 1415,11 (VIII CE, Aphrodites Kome); SB XXVI 16491,8, as well as 9 and 13 (VIII CE, Antinoites). The Latin forms exungia and axungia appear respectively in T.Vindol. II 182r,16 (104-120 CE) and 190 fr. C,29 (I-II CE).

⁹ The word κολλ(ο)ύριον is metaphorically named after the κολλ(ο)ύρα, the loaf of bread, cf. e.g. KIND 1921, 1100-6; BATTAGLIA 1989, 88-9; GOUREVITCH 1998, 366; VOINOT 1999, 41; FOURNET 2000, 401-7.

²⁰ For several examples see DIEHL 1964, 230-1.

²¹ Another derivative from κεντέω, the compound adjective παρακεντητικός, has a technical meaning in medical vocabulary and defines the παρακεντητική (τέχνη), the «art of making paracentesis» (cf. LSJ⁹ 1312 s.v.), in Gal. Thras. 24 (V 846,7 K.).

 ²² Cf. *ThGL* V 1438B s.v.: «cui pungendi vis inest, pungens, aculeatus»; LSJ⁹ 939 s.v. «prickly».
 ²³ From which LSJ^{Rev.Sup.} 174 s.v. «engraved». Cf. BGU III 781 col. IV,17 (sc. μήσυλαι) κεντηταί, «engraved tables» (see comm. ad I). Several technical terms of the mosaic art derive from κεντέω, e.g. κέντησις, «mosaic» (LSJ⁹ 939 s.v. II) and κεντητής, «mosaic-worker» (LSJ⁹ 939 s.v.), cf. CHANTRAINE, DELG I 515 s.v. κεντέω 3; FRISK, GEW I 821 s.v. κεντέω 3; BEEKES, EDG I 672 s.v. κεντέω 3. See also ROBERT 1958, 49 n. 9 with bibliography.

neck of this kind of vessel, resembling a pointed shape narrowing just before the top. ²⁴ A list of household items on papyrus, SB XXII 15250,10 (VI CE, Herakleopolites or Arsinoites), includes among the objects a ὑδρία μεγ(άλη) γρονθια(κὴ) στιλλ(). [. The adjective γρονθιακός, not attested elsewhere and not recorded in any dictionary, is a derivative from the noun γρόνθος, «fist». Since γρόνθος can also acquire a metrological value, ²⁵ Diethart 1993, 82-3 translates γρονθιακός as «eine "Faust" hoch» (p. 80). The adjective might rather be interpreted as «to be carried by hand», implying that one can make use of its handles, and thus highlighting an important morphological feature of the container. ²⁶

The history of this very common water-jar reaches back into the Bronze Age, 27 but the two principal types were established in decorated Attic pottery of the late VI and V centuries BCE: the former with flat shoulder and the neck set off from body (see *supra*), the other round-shouldered, with the neck forming a curve with the body. The latter is conventionally defined as a $\kappa\alpha\lambda\pi$ (κ) by archaeologists, even if no actual evidence for this distinction occurs in literary sources (cf. *e.g.* Ar. *Lys.* 327 and 358). From the IV century BCE onwards the body of the container grows taller and even more fusiform and narrow, with higher foot and more projection of the vertical handle. The household counterpart (household-ware hydria) was likewise very common and its simplified shape was more suitable for a daily use: the body became progressively broader and finally nearly globular, the rim was flat, the handles were rolled and the vertical handle tended to slip downward on the vessel. *Hydriai* used as balloting boxes or as cinerary urns were ordinarily bronze and completely similar in shape to the ceramic exemplars, but the *hydriai* dedicated as votive gifts and listed among temple treasures were often made of precious material such as gold and silver. Interesting is the case of core-formed glass miniatures (*hydriskai*), imitating the shape of the three-handled and narrow-necked pottery hydria, that very probably contained scented oils or cosmetics.

Beyond the conventional designation, the analysis of written sources suggests that the noun $b\delta\rho i\alpha$ was not always applied to a specific form of vessel but was rather used with a more or less generic value.³³

Even though in [2], [3] and [4] ὑδρία / ὑδρίσκη does not represent an actual technical term in the vocabulary for medical containers, it is likely that the word has been used in connection with remedies having an ointment-like consistency because of the shape and the considerable versatility and manageability of this little vessel. Assuming that the ὑδρία / ὑδρίσκη of medical sources has a narrow neck and a vertical handle like the aforementioned glass *hydriskai* for cosmetics and oils, its morphology seems to be particularly suitable for closing and sealing. Thus, it is likely that this kind of features represents the main reason why in the papyrus letter ([3]) a ὑδρία has been chosen

²⁴ The noun κέντημα from the same root defines the «point» for example of a weapon, cf. LSJ⁹ 939 s.v.

²⁵ Cf. SCHILBACH 1982, 177: «einen γρόνθος hoch»; DGE 846 s.v. Cf. e.g. Hero Geom. IV 11,6 (IV 192,6 Heiberg) and P.Lond. IV 1435,13 (716 CE, Aphrodites Kome) ἀπὸ γρόντ(ων) (1. γρόνθ(ων)) η κ(αὶ) ἄνω ε (trad. ed.pr. ad 1., p. 325: «of 8 palms long and upwards»).

²⁶ For further discussion on these passages see BONATI 20014 s.v. 1[2].

²⁷ See for example FÖLZER 1906, 27-30.

 $^{^{28}}$ On the typologies of the ὑδρία see especially FÖLZER 1906 and DIEHL 1964, as well as PANOFKA 1829, 8-9; RICHTER-MILNE 1935, 11-2; AMYX 1958, 200-1; SPARKES 1962, 129; VON BOTHMER 1965, 599-608; SPARKES-TALCOTT 1970, 53 e 200-1; FRANKENSTEIN 1916, 2516-20; POTTIER, DA III/1 319-21 s.v.; EAA II 501; COOK, GPP 213-4; KIPFER 2000, 246 s.v.

²⁹ Cf. AMYX 1958, 201 and SPARKES-TALCOTT 1970, 53 and 200-1 with Pll. 70-1 (no. 1579-96). An example from the Athenian Agora is P 26657, see at http://www.agathe.gr/id/agora/object/p%2026657.

Relevant is the case of the *hydriai* found in the cemeteries of Hadra and Gabbari in Alexandria, see *e.g.* EMPEREUR 1998, 159 and 2000, 612-3.

³¹ On the material features of the hydria in its different functions as these emerge from the various sources (literary, papyrological, inscriptional and archeological) see BONATI 2014 s.v. 1[1]-[4].

³² See BONATI 2014 s.v. 1[4] and STERN 1999, 29-39.

³³ See Bonati 2014 *s.v.* 3.

³⁴ Some ὑδρίαι ἐσφραγισμέναι used for transporting and sending products are mentioned in two documentary papyri, SB X 10559,1 (V CE, ?) and CPR XXV 25,4 (VI-VII CE, Arsinoites or Herakleopolites).

to contain the therapeutic products mentioned: the κολλουρία actually received by Eudaemon and the ὀξύγγιον previously requested by him but never dispatched. In all likelihood, these special details of the ὑδρία attended to by Eudaemon's family will have assured proper preservation of the remedies during their transport from the ἰατρεῖον in Oxyrhynchus to the village where Eudaemon was apparently working as a physician.

D. Bibliography

1. Lexicon entries

ThGL IX 51B-C *s.v.*; TLL VI/2 3133,39-3134,18; Forcellini, LTL II 691 *s.v.*; LSJ⁹ 1844 *s.v.*; Chantraine, DELG II 1152-3 *s.v.* ὕδωρ; Frisk, GEW II 957-9 *s.v.* ὕδωρ; Beekes, EDG II 1526-7 *s.v.* ὕδωρ; Babiniotis, ΛΝΕΓ 1824 *s.v.*; Dimitrakos, MΛ XV 7367 *s.v.*; Pottier, DA III/1 319-21 *s.v.*; Hilgers, LG 60-1 and 196-7 *s.v.*; Preisigke, Wb II/3 634-5 *s.v.*

2. Secondary literature

FÖLZER 1906; DIEHL 1964; PANOFKA 1829, 8-9; RICHTER-MILNE 1935, 11-2; AMYX 1958, 200-1; SPARKES 1962, 129; VON BOTHMER 1965, 599-608; SPARKES-TALCOTT 1970, 53 and 200-1; FRANKENSTEIN 1916, 2516-20; COOK, GPP 213-4; KIPFER 2000, 246; EAA II 501; GHIRETTI 2010, 112; BONATI 2014 *s.v.*

E. DDbDP reference(s)

P.Oxy. LIX 4001,24 as well as 28 and 29-30