The following notes on various Ancient Greek words with initial ὐ-, as discussed in Frisk 1963 (henceforth, GEW), clarify aspects of the development of this vowel in Greek.

GEW 352-3, s.v. ὀδών (Ion.) ‘tooth’ has a fine account of the Greek as far as it went at the time of publication of his work (1963). Beyond the Greek, as it turns out (especially for the Armenian, Latin, and ultimately Lithuanian), the total Indo-European history is far simpler, richer, and more instructive than it seemed then. At that time, only separate details were noted in isolation, e.g. “ablaut” without motivation. Thus Armenian atamn, an ancient participle, did not show secondary vocalization in the initial vowel, but together with Greek ὀδοντ- (see Hamp 1978) rather simply regular vocalization of initial pre-consonantal Schwundstufe *ʔ-, hence *ʔd-. This laryngeal (*ʔ) disappeared regularly in Indic, Lithuanian, German: *ʔdónt-, and Indic, Latin, Old Irish, English: *ʔdnt-. Greek νοςός ‘toothless’ (GEW, p. 330) must be formed somewhat later, when *ve- would merge with od- < *odo- < *ʔdónt-, because νοςός means ‘zahn-los’ and not ‘ess-los’ or ‘aß-los’.

ὀνομα ‘name’ as a headword is justified by its presence but GEW should note that it is restored from derivatives. That is shown by the by-form ἐνομα, which has the regular o > u between nasal and labial and thus no *ʔ- > o-assimilated to -o- in a following syllable. ὀνομα as discussed in GEW 396-7 is excellent except for two points. The Latin form (nomen) does not equate to Indic nāma in length; rather, Indic must be explained by Brugmann’s Law (*o > ā /R_CV) and Latin must, by Warren Cowgill’s genius, by a cross with *gnōmen. Greek νόνυμνος ‘nameless’ can be later, with –ω- from ε-ο- after
colouring of *ʔ, which is assured by Old Prussian emmens ‘name’;¹ Tosk Albanian emër ‘name’ must show e- via umlaut from *a < syllabic *ņ.

These are different from ôνεηδος ‘reproach’ (GEW 394), Armenian anici, apparently with *ʕʷn-, and ôνας ‘dream’ and Armenian anurj, Geg Albanian âdërrë, apparently from *ʕʷonr(n)ā-² and Armenian *ʕʷnōr-jo, or better the latter from earlier *ʕʷnɾ+jo-, or more exactly *ʕʷnɾH₂+. The last fits with what I have proposed for Helleno-Armenian as seen in Greek ôδωρ ‘water’ (see Hamp 1983-84, 1990).

Finally, regarding ôβολο- ~ ôδελο- ‘spit’, GEW (s.v.) has βελ- but ô- “unerklärt”. I compare Albanian bell ‘spit’ < *ʰəʊgʷe/o/olo- (> hagʷe-i/ala- > hāk- (cf. gen ‘dog’ < cαnν- and qelq ‘glass’ < cαlιcε, both borrowed from Latin)), as well as halë ‘fishbone’ < *ʰəʊgʷe/o-l(n)(o)-ā (where –ā is the collective suffix).³

References


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¹ Cf. Hamp 2008, on Gaulish anman ‘name’.
² Giving * án(ə)rīnā > *ándrnā > *âd(ə)rīrā, with North European *o > *a.
³ On *ʰəω-, cf. ὁλισθάνω ‘slide’.