

The Etymology of "Ἀρετή"

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1. Preliminaries

Frisk's and Chantraine's etymological dictionaries state that the etymology of ἀρετή is not clear.¹ Similarly, Beekes's recent etymological dictionary suggests that "an Indo-European etymology exists for the entry concerned, but it is not entirely convincing."² Even so, all of these scholars suggest that ἀρετή is cognate with ἀρείων and ἄριστος (better, best).³ In fact, Vine calls this the "traditional comparison."⁴ And Massetti, who also includes the verb ἀρέσκω (to please, satisfy) as a cognate, describes this as the "*theoria recepta*" of the etymology of ἀρετή.⁵

Massetti's inclusion of ἀρέσκω in fact mischaracterizes the received view. Scholars of the early twentieth century maintain a connection between ἀρετή and ἀρέσκω.⁶ But in a footnote to his chapter "Nobility and Areté" in volume 1 of *Paideia* Jaeger criticizes this position.⁷

¹ "Die Bildung von ἀρετή ist nicht ganz klar." (H. Frisk, *Griechisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bd. I [α-κο], Heidelberg, 1960, 136) "[Étymologie.] Elle ne peut se préciser dans le détail." (P. Chantraine, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, tome 1, Éditions Klincksieck, 1968, 107. Cp. B. Vine, *Aeolic ὄρπετον and deverbative *-etó- in Greek and Indo-European*, Innsbruck, 1998, 61: "the formation [of ἀρετή] remains unclear."

² R. Beekes, *Etymological Dictionary of Greek*, vol. 1, Brill, 2010, ix. This description explains the symbol < IE? > associated with his proposed etymology < IE? *h₂erh₁- >.

³ Frisk (1960) 136; Chantraine (1968) 107; Beekes (2010) 129. Cp. also A. Sihler, *New Comparative Greek and Latin Grammar*, Oxford University Press, 1995, 362.

⁴ Vine (1998) 61.

⁵ L. Massetti, "Gr. ἀρετή, ved. ṛtá-, av. aša-, e l'eccellenza come ordine aggiustato," *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft* 67 (2013/14) 123-48, at 125.

⁶ W. Prellwitz, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der griechischen Sprache*, Göttingen, 1905², 49; M. Hoffmann, *Die ethischen Terminologie bei Homer, Hesiod und den alten Elegikern und Iambographen*, Tübingen, 1914, 92; E. Boisacq, *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*, Heidelberg, Paris, 1916, 76. Cp. J. Ludwig, *Quae fuerit voci ἀρετή vis ac natura ante Demosthenis exitum*, Leipzig, 1906; K. Koch, *Quae fuerit ante Socratem vocabuli ἀρετή notio*, Jena, 1900. Contrast the earlier position of G. Curtius, *Grundzüge der griechischen Etymologie*, Leipzig, 1879⁵, 339.

⁷ W. Jaeger, *Paideia*, Hightet, trans., Oxford University Press, vol. 1, 1945² (orig. German 1933), 418, n.10: "The Greeks felt that areté was above everything a power, an ability to do something. Strength and health are the areté of the body, cleverness and insight the areté of the mind. It is difficult in view of. this to accept the modern subjective explanation which derives the word from ἀρέσκω ... It is true that areté often contains an element of social recognition—its meaning then alters to 'esteem', 'respect'. But that is a secondary sense, created by the highly social

Schwyzler endorses Jaeger's criticism;⁸ and Frisk, Chantraine, and Beekes all also disfavor the association between ἀρετή and ἀρέσκω, on semantic grounds.

Following an earlier discussion by Brandenstein,⁹ Vine suggests an "alternative" etymology according to which ἀρετή is cognate with ἀραρίσκω (fasten together, join).¹⁰ Massetti has recently defended and elaborated on Vine's account.¹¹

These contributions make it seem as if interpretations of the etymology of ἀρετή that associate this word with ἀρείων/ἄριστος, with ἀρέσκω, or with ἀραρίσκω must be exclusive. But that is not so. For instance, almost a century ago Prellwitz had suggested a derivation from IE **aro-s*, whose meaning he renders as 'füglich, gut, passend'.¹² In treating these German terms as semantically akin, Prellwitz in effect allows a derivation of ἀρετή cognate with both ἀρείων/ἄριστος and ἀραρίσκω.¹³ More recently, in his discussion of ἀρείων and ἄριστος, Sihler says that ἀρέσκω is "obviously [etymologically] related somehow."¹⁴ And Dieu begins his recent discussion of the etymology of ἀρείων and ἄριστος with the statement that they share an IE root with ἀραρίσκω.¹⁵

In fact, it is generally maintained that ἀρείων/ἄριστος, ἀρέσκω, ἀραρίσκω all derive from a common root *ἄρ- (IE **h₂er-*).¹⁶ In light of this – and granting that morphosyntactic and semantic considerations conjointly inform etymological inquiry – it may be helpful to distinguish the question of the morphosyntactic derivation of ἀρετή, ἀρείων, ἄριστος (or any other cognate) from the root *ἄρ- from the question of the semantic derivation of the meaning of ἀρετή, ἀρείων, ἄριστος (or any other cognate) from the meaning of the root *ἄρ-. Or rather, since the morphosyntactic derivation of an expression often cannot be completely insulated from semantic considerations, we may insulate those semantic aspects of morphosyntax that are related to so-

character of all human values in early times. The word must originally have been an objective description of the worth of its possessor, of a power peculiar to him, which makes him a complete man."

⁸ E. Schwyzler, *Griechische Grammatik I. Lautlehre, Wortbildung, Flexion*, Munich, 1939, 501: "Doch ἀρετή nicht zu ἀρέσκω ... sondern zu ἀρε-ίων."

⁹ W. Brandenstein, "Studien Zu Platons Atlantiserzählung," *Archiv Orientalní* 17 (1949) 69-84, at 81-2.

¹⁰ Vine (1998) 61.

¹¹ A. Nikolaev, "K dejstviju zakona Riksa v drevnegreceskom jazyke," in N. Kazansky et al., eds., *Hrda Manasii. Studies presented to Professor Leonard G. Herzenberg on the occasion of his seventieth birthday*, St. Petersburg, 2005, 38-72, argues for another interpretation cognate with ἀνήρ (man).

¹² W. Prellwitz, "Zur griechischen Etymologie," *Glotta* 19 (1930) 85-89, at 88-89.

¹³ The connection is in fact explicit in Prellwitz (1905) 49.

¹⁴ Sihler (1995) 362. He does however acknowledge syntactic complications, on which more below.

¹⁵ E. Dieu, *Le supplétisme dans les formes de gradation en grec ancien et dans les langues indo-européennes*, Droz, 2011, 77.

¹⁶ Beekes (2010) 128, s.v. ἀρείων; J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Francke, 1959, 55-6; Sihler (1995) 362; H. Rix, *Lexicon der indogermanischen Verben*, Wiesbaden, 2001, 269 (for ἄριστος and ἀραρίσκω, cp. 761). This is also true of earlier contributors such as Prellwitz (1905), Boisacq (1916) 76.

called grammatical or functional meaning from those related to so-called lexical meaning. This is how I propose to proceed in the immediately following remarks.

Regarding the morphosyntactic derivation, a key question is whether the root is thematic or athematic. In particular, both **h₂er-* and **h₂erh₁-* have been proposed. Assuming an athematic root, the formation of the superlative ἄρ-ιστος is regular.¹⁷ On the other hand, the formation of the comparative ἀρείων seems based on a thematic root: **ἀρε-*.

The Greek comparative affix *-ων-* derives from **-ison-*, which is itself morphologically complex. Its first constituent is the comparative, perhaps an originally intensifying, affix **-is-* (the zero grade of **-ios-*),¹⁸ meaning "very." Its second constituent is the affix **-on-*, which possibly originally functioned as an indefinite determiner.¹⁹ If so, for a root *R*, the derivation would be **R-is-on-*, literally "a very *R* one." Sihler, who presents this interpretation, offers the example of ἡδίων (sweeter) < **sweh₂d-is-on-* (a very sweet one).²⁰ In the case of ἀρείων, then, the "spurious" diphthong εἰ would derive from contraction of the epsilon at the end of the thematic root **ἀρε-* and iota the beginning of the comparative affix *-ισ-*.

Dieu criticizes this interpretation, however, for two reasons. One is that it contradicts Pinault's Law.²¹ Sihler's reconstruction assumes an IE stem **h₂erh₁-ios-*, which yields the Greek stem **ἀρεῖοh-*.²² According to Pinault's Law, a laryngeal in medial position, that is, following a consonant or sonant and preceding an antevocalic yod (ἰ), is elided. In that case, the IE and therefore Greek stems should be: **h₂erios-* and **ἀρεοh-* respectively.²³ But the latter would yield the comparative stem **ἀροvh-*.

The second problem is that the reconstruction ignores the evidence of the Mycenaean forms *a-ro₂-a* and *a-ro₂-e*, attested in several Knossos tablets.²⁴ On these expressions, Chadwick and Ventris remark: "the parallel declension of *me-zo-a₂* and *me-zo-e* [cp. μείζονα/μείζονες] suggest the comparative ἀρείων."²⁵ And Dieu argues: "the grapheme *a-ro₂-a* must correspond to a form **ἄρῖοha*, which derives from **ἄρῖοσ-* ... given synthesis according to Sievers' Law."²⁶

¹⁷ So, Dieu (2011) 78. More precisely, the derivation of the superlative is ἄρ-ισ-το-ς. The form **-isto-* is a morphological composite derived from **-is-* and **-to-*, a definite determiner.

Compare the formation of the superlative in French *le plus grand* (biggest). Cp. Sihler (1995) 357-8; M. Meier-Brügger, *Indo-European Linguistics*, de Gruyter, 2002, 220-22.

¹⁸ Throughout, I have used the symbol ἰ rather than y to represent yod.

¹⁹ Cp. Sihler (1995) 357-8; R. Beekes and M. de Vaan, *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics*, John Benjamins, 2011², 222. This is contested and I return to the point below.

²⁰ Sihler (1995) 358.

²¹ G.-J. Pinault, "A neglected phonetic law: The reduction of the Indo-European laryngeals in internal syllables before yod," in A. Ahlqvist, ed., *Papers from the 5th International Conference on Historical Linguistics*, John Benjamins, 1982, 265-272. Cp. A. Byrd, *The Indo-European Syllable*, Brill, 2015, 208-40.

²² Sihler (1995) 362.

²³ Dieu (2011) 78. Cp. Beekes (2010) s.v. ἀρείων.

²⁴ Cp. F. Jorro and F. Adrados, *Diccionario Micénio*, vol. 1, Madrid, 1985, 107.

²⁵ *a-ro₂-a* is neuter plural; *a-ro₂-e* is feminine plural or dual. Cp. J. Chadwick and M. Ventris, *Documents in Mycenaean Greek*, Cambridge University Press, 1973², 317-18. As Dieu (2011, 80) remarks: "L'emploi mycénien ... oppose *a-ro₂-a* au comparatif *ka-zo-e* [cp. κακίονα]."

²⁶ Dieu (2011) 80. Cp. P. Barber, *Siever's Law and the History of Semivowel Syllabicity in Indo-European and Ancient Greek*, Oxford University Press, 2013, 145-86. But cp. Vine (1998)

(Observe that the Mycenaean forms provide evidence for the view that the affix *-on-* in the Greek comparative is post-Mycenaean.²⁷)

Assuming the athematic root **ǎp-*, Dieu's interpretation elaborates a proposal by Seiler,²⁸ according to which *ἀρείων* derives from a positive form *ǎp-εἰος*. Among other considerations, Dieu suggests "traces" of this positive form in Homer and Theognis.²⁹ I will return to this topic in the semantic discussion below.

Turning now to *ἀρετή*, the epsilon again requires an explanation; and again the assumption of a thematic root **h₂erh₁-* would solve the problem, in this case with the feminine suffix **-téh₂* serving as an abstract nominalizer. Evidently, this would render the morphosyntactic derivation of *ἀρετή* inconsistent with those of *ἀρείων* and *ἄριστον*. However, there is an alternative possibility, advanced by Vine, who in turn develops a thesis and suggestion of Waanders.³⁰

Waanders first proposed that alongside **-to/-teh₂*, there existed an Indo-European suffix **-eto/-eteh₂*.³¹ He suggested that the primary function of this suffix was to produce nouns, perhaps specifically "action nouns," from zero-grade verbal roots. Among examples he provides

n.145; M. Peters, *Untersuchungen zur Vertretung der Indogermanischen Laryngale im Griechischen*, Vienna, 1980, 80-81, n.38.

²⁷ Cp. Meier-Brügger (2003, 221): "Researchers are split on the origin of the Greek *-n-* forms: They are either a post-Mycenaean Greek-internal innovation, or the result of a longstanding co-existence of *-jos-* and *-is-on-* stems." In defense of the former view, cp. O. Szemerényi, "The Mycenaean and the Historical Greek Comparative and their Indo-European Background," in A. Bartoněk, ed., *Studia Mycenaea*, Brno, 1968, 25-36; E. Risch, *Wortbildung der homerischen Sprache*, Berlin, 1974, 89. In defense of the latter view, cp. H. Rix, *Historische Grammatik der Griechischen*, Darmstadt, 1976, 167.

²⁸ H. Seiler, *Die primäre grieschischen Steigerungsformen*, Hamburg, 1950, 116-19.

²⁹ Dieu (2011) 81-87.

³⁰ Vine's account is in turn noted sympathetically in Dieu's (2011, n.70) discussion and has since been endorsed by Massetti (2014, *passim*).

³¹ F. Waanders, "The suffixes *-to/tā* and *-eto/-etā-* in Greek action nouns: the structure of nouns of the type *θάνατος, κάματος*," *Mnemosyne* 227 (1974) 1-6. Waanders' contribution in fact forms part of lineage of scholarship unrecognized by Vine and worth noting here. This line of work extends back to research in the late nineteenth-century by A. Stratton, some of which he published as "The History of Greek Noun-Formation I. Stems with *-μ-*," *Studies in Classical Philology* 2 (1899) 115-243. Stratton's material was subsequently transmitted to C. Buck to be mined and elaborated by him and his students; cp. C. Buck, "Studies in Greek Noun-Formation: Introductory Note," *Classical Philology* 5 (1910) 323-5. Among numerous works in the ensuing series, C. Carruthers, "Studies in Greek Noun-Formation: Dental Terminations IV.1," *Classical Philology* 26 (1931) 178-95, esp. 181-3, discusses so-called "*nomina actionis*" terminating in *-τη*, including *ἀρετή*. Chantraine in turn refers to Carruthers' treatment in the context of his own discussion the nominal suffix *-to-*, where he notes "un petite groupe de féminins en *-tā/-τη-* qui jouent le rôle de noms d'action," also including *ἀρετή*. (*La formation des noms en grec ancien*, Paris, 1933, 301, n.1) Finally, Waanders indicates his debt to Chantraine in the first footnote of his article.

are: πνιγετός (choking), τυπετός (beating the breast, mourning), and βρυχετός (chattering of the teeth).³² In this context, Waanders mentions ἀρετή as a possible case.³³

In his own study, whose point of departure is the morphological interpretation of the Aeolic noun ὄρπετον (creature), Vine develops Waander's thesis of the existence of an *-ετο/-ετη (IE *-eto/-eteh₂) suffix.³⁴ His discussion includes an interpretation of the morphology of ἀρετή, which he suggests derives from the athematic root *h₂er- and the feminine abstract nominalizing suffix *-etéh₂. This formation in turn derives from the deverbal adjectival (or gerundive) form *h₂er-etó-.³⁵

In short, the combination of Dieu's Seiler-inspired treatment of ἀρείων and ἄριστον and Vine's Waanders'-inspired treatment of ἀρετή yields a consistent morphosyntactic derivation of all three words from the root *ἄρ-.

Before turning to the (lexical) semantic derivation of ἀρετή, one final consideration is worth noting. In Rix's *Lexicon der indogermanischen Verben*, the first footnote to the treatment of the IE root *h₂er- reads: "In case the Hittite word *āra* 'right, appropriate' usw. belongs here ... [*h₂er-] should be replaced by *(h₁)ar-."³⁶ Dunkel has recently drawn precisely this inference.³⁷ He claims that Hittite *āra* makes the standardly cited root *h₂er- impossible. Instead, he maintains that the root is *h₁ar- (passen, sich fügen), "not on theoretical grounds, but in order to connect this form with Vedic *sūrī-*, Greek ἐρί-, and Phrygian ἐρα."³⁸

Within his discussion of the root *h₁ar-, Dunkel does not mention ἀρετή. However, he does include ἀρείων and ἄριστον. Since the root in question is athematic, the formation of the Greek superlative remains regular. With respect to the comparative, Dunkel's suggestion reiterates a view proposed over a century ago by Güntert,³⁹ namely an analogical reconstruction ("Umbildung") of the expected form ἀρίων > ἀρείων following the pattern of χείρων (worse) < *χερίων and μείων (smaller, fewer) < *meju-ijon- (Myk. *me-wi-jo*, *me-u-jo*) as well as Attic μείζων (larger) and κρείττων (stronger).⁴⁰

³² Waanders (1974) 3.

³³ Waanders (1974) 4.

³⁴ E.g. Vine shows that -ετος forms are denominative and deadjectival as well as deverbal. (1998) 10-12. (For others who have provided supporting evidence for the thesis, cp. Vine (1998) n.19.)

³⁵ Vine (1998) 61.

³⁶ Rix (2001) 270, n.0. In support of this possibility, the authors refer to the unpublished MA thesis of K. Praust, *Studien zu den indogermanischen Nasalpräsentien*, Vienna, 1998, 46, n.100.

³⁷ G. Dunkel, *Lexicon der indogermanischen Partikeln und Pronominalstämme*, Winter, Bd. 2, 2014, 288, where he also refers to the footnote in Rix (2001).

³⁸ Dunkel (2014) 288. Cp. G. Dunkel, "Luvian -tar and Homeric τ'ἄρ," in *Evidence and Counter-Evidence: Festschrift für Frederik Kortlandt*, vol. 1, Rodopi, 2008, 137-49; A. Vijiūnas, *The Indo-European Primary t- Stems*, Innsbruck, 2009, 104-7.

³⁹ H. Güntert, "Zur Geschichte der griechischen Gradationsbildungen," *Indogermanische Forschungen* 27 (1910) 1-72, at 67-68.

⁴⁰ Dunkel (2014) 291, n.21. (One might also cp. Rau (2010, 175) on κείρω < *kerjo/e-.) Dieu (2011, n75) suggests the following critical remark on this proposal: "Cette hypothèse doit ... être rejetée, dans la mesure où il est plus probable que la forme χερείων est secondaire par rapport à χείρων, précisément sous l'influence de ἀρείων." Dunkel also suggests as derivative of *h₁ar- the

In short, Dunkel's position provides an alternative account of the formation of the comparative ἀρείων and an alternative view of the IE root of both the comparative and superlative. And while Dunkel does not discuss ἀρετή, there is, at least in principle, no reason why the Vine-Waanders proposed suffix -ετή (or its IE source) could not be joined to the root **h₁ar-*.⁴¹

Finally, with respect to this suggested root **h₁ar-*, it should also be noted that in his discussion of the Hittite word *āra* Kloekhorst suggests, on the basis of a cognate Anatolian stem *era-*, that both expressions derive from a proto-Anatolian root **ʔor-*, which in turn derives from an IE root **h₂or-*. Even so, Kloekhorst maintains that the Sanskrit terms *āram* (fittingly) and *ṛtā-* (truth, order, etc.) and the related Greek verb ἀραρίσκω all derive from the root **h₂er-*. For our purposes, the significance of Kloekhorst's proposal is this: it is in principle possible to accept a view such as Dunkel's or Kloekhorst's regarding the existence of an IE root **h₁ar-* or **h₂or-*, while also maintaining the subsequent development of **h₂er-* specifically in the emergence of the Greek language.

In considering this last point, bear in mind the following dates and linguistic developments.⁴² In the fourth to third millennium BCE a Greco-Indo-Iranian branch splits from IE. In the early to mid third millennium, phonological and morphological innovations distinguish a branch of Greco-Indo-Iranian, constituting a pre-Proto-Greek, whose speakers are located in the Balkans, and whose language subsequently branches into Greek, Armenian, and Phrygian.⁴³ In the late third millennium, perhaps *c.* 2300-2100 BCE, Greek emerges as a distinct language of a people who have arrived in the territory of modern-day Greece. By the acme of the Mycenaean period, *c.* 1400-1200 BCE, the three or four dialects of Greek that would become the main dialect groups of the first millennium: Aeolian, Aeolic, and West Greek (later differentiating into Northwest Greek and West Greek proper) have developed.⁴⁴ So, according to these dates and developments, an IE root **h₁ar-* or **h₂or-* would exist in the fourth millennium BCE. A proto-Anatolian root **ʔor-* would exist in the third millennium.⁴⁵ Now, in proto-Greek, laryngeals are replaced by epenthetic vowels.⁴⁶ So, assuming the present chronology, the root **h₂er-* would have emerged in the early to mid third millennium and then, *c.* 2300/2100, been replaced by **ἀρ-*.

With these morphosyntactic considerations in mind, I turn now to the semantic derivation of ἀρετή. Insofar as they mention or discuss ἀρετή, many of the scholars cited in the preceding discussion, especially the most recent contributors, state that the meaning or at least a primary

prefix ἀρι- (good, very), which appears, for example, in ἀρίγνωτος, ἀριφραδής. However, I see no evidence that the prefix means "good" here or in any other cases.

⁴¹ A. Kloekhorst, *Etymological Dictionary of the Hittite Inherited Lexicon*, Brill, 2008, 198-99.

⁴² This information principally derives from J. Rau, "Greek and Proto-Indo-European," in E. Bakker, ed., *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 171-88, at 173-4.

⁴³ Cp. I. Hajnal, "Das Frühgriechische zwischen Balkan und Ägäis – Einheit oder Vielfalt?" in G. Meiser und O. Hackstein, eds., *Sprachkontakt und Sprachwandel*, Wiesbaden, 2005, 185-214.

⁴⁴ Cp. S. Colvin, "Greek Dialects in the Archaic and Classical Ages," in E. Bakker, ed., *A Companion to the Ancient Greek Language*, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010, 200-12, esp. ...

⁴⁵ C. Melchert ("The Position of Anatolian," in M. Weiss and A. Garrett, eds., *Handbook of Indo-European Studies*, Oxford University Press, forthcoming) suggests that Proto-Anatolian began to diverge from IE *c.* 3000 BCE or no later than *c.* 2500.

⁴⁶ So, Rau (2010) 175.

sense of this word is "excellence."⁴⁷ What they may dispute is precisely how this meaning is derived. I'll begin with Vine's account.

Recall that Vine follows Brandenstein in maintaining that ἀρετή is cognate with ἀραρίσκω. Accordingly, Vine derives the meaning of ἀρετή as "excellence" from the meaning of "join, articulate."⁴⁸ Vine's derivation proceeds as follows. First, he suggests that deverbal adjectives and nouns ending in -ετο/ετη tend to have a passive meaning.⁴⁹ Examples include: ἐξ-αίρετος (taken out), ἀρι-δείκετος (very renowned), πολυ-εύχετος (much wished-for).⁵⁰ Furthermore, he suggests that the subset of these adjectives and nouns that derive from zero grade roots tend to have an additional "potential" meaning (in other words, a dynamic modal meaning). This can often be rendered in English by the suffix "-able." Examples include: ἄρητος (unsaid or unsayable), ἄατος (insatiable), ἄφατος (unsaid or unspeakable), ἄσχετος (invincible).⁵¹ Given this, the deverbal adjectival ἀρ-ετό- would mean "join-able, fasten-able," which is to say – as Vine puts it: "good to join, articulate (vel sim.)." This in turns would yield meanings such as "well-proportioned, well-coordinated, etc." And from this, an abstract noun ἀρετή with meanings such as "excellence, beauty, prowess, etc." would result.⁵²

In support of this semantic derivation, Vine cites evidence from other early Indo-European languages, including the Vedic ṛtá- < *h₂r-tó and Avestan aša < *árta- < *h₂ér-to- meaning "truth, (world) order."⁵³ And he suggests "a similar semantic development" in the Tocharian A and B adjectives *ārwar/ārwer* (orig. meaning ready, subsequently noble).⁵⁴ Consider also Sanskrit *ar-p-āyati* "affix, fasten"; Hittite *har-ap-* "arrange, situate," as well as the Greek ἄρμενος "annexed, attached."⁵⁵ Finally, it is may also be significant, as Dieu suggests, that the Mycenaean comparative *a-ro₂-a/e* (ἀρείων) is attributed to objects, in particular wheels and textiles, rather than persons or their actions. If so – and I return to this point below – then Chadwick and Ventris' gloss "being in a good/better condition" may derive from the sense of "well-constructed/fashioned."⁵⁶

⁴⁷ Chantraine (1968) 107; Beekes (2010) 129; Massetti (2014) *passim*; Vine (1998) 61; Waanders (1974) 3; Sihler (1995) 362. Curiously, the German contributors all suggest alternatives: Frisk (1960, 136) has "Tüchtigkeit, Stärke, usw."; Prellwitz (1930, 88) has "Tugend, eigntl. das Gutsein." On Brandenstein (1949), see below.

⁴⁸ Cp. Brandenstein (1949, 81-82) who suggests the primary meaning of ἀρετή as "Fug" (cp. "Fügung"), and secondarily, "Fähigkeit, einen Fug, eine Ordnung, herzustellen." Cp. also K. Keyssner, *Gottesvorstellung und Lebensauffassung im griechischen Hymnus*, Stuttgart, 1932, 50 and 160ff.

⁴⁹ Vine (1998) 17, 22.

⁵⁰ Vine (1998) 16.

⁵¹ Vine (1998) 25-31.

⁵² Vine (1998) 61.

⁵³ Vine (1998) 61-62; cp. Massetti (2014) *passim*, for elaboration of these associations.

⁵⁴ Vine (1998) n.146. Cp. the remarks of D. Adams, *A Dictionary of Tocharian B*, Rodopi, 1999, 53: "these adjectives reflect a PTch *ārwer, a derivative of PIE *h_aer- '± fit together' [: Avestan *arānte* 'they attach themselves together firmly,' Armenian *arnem* 'make,' Greek *ararisko* 'fit together' ...]".

⁵⁵ Cp. J. Pokorny, *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bd. 1, Francke, s.v. *ar-, 55-58; H. Rix et. al, *Lexicon der indogermanischen Verben*, Wiesbaden, 2001, s.v. *h₂er-⁰, 269-70.

⁵⁶ Cp. Dieu (2011) 80: "On peut faire l'hypothèse que ce comparatif appartenait à l'origine au vocabulaire des techniques. Notamment, l'emploi technique de ce terme appliqué à des roues a

Perhaps the most intuitive way to express Vine's conception of the semantic derivation of ἀρετή is in the terms of the concepts of fitness and suitability. If so, I in turn suggest that these concepts can explain the semantic relations between ἀρετή, ἀρείων/ἄριστον, and ἀρέσκω. To see how, it is necessary to offer some general remarks on the nature of value.

[...]

des chances d'être ancien: des roues en bon état peuvent être des roues qui sont bien ajustées aux essieux."