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Harald Bichlmeier und Velizar Sadovski

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‘THE LIGHT OF TRUTH, THE WAGE OF RIGHTNESS,  
THE REMEDY OF EXCELLENCE.’  
ON THREE INHERITED COLLOCATIONS OF GREEK  
*APETH*, VEDIC *ṛtá-*, AVESTAN *aša-*

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## 1 Introduction<sup>1</sup>

### 1.1 Vedic *ṛtá-*, Avestan *aša-*, Greek ἀρετή

This paper concerns three phraseological matches between Vedic (Ved.) *ṛtá-* ‘cosmic order, truth’, Avestan (Av.) *aša-* ‘justice, truth, rightness, correctness’ and their putative Greek (Gk.) congener ἀρετή ‘excellence, virtue’. It has long been proposed that these terms belong closely together from an etymological point of view.<sup>2</sup> Ved. *ṛtá-* and Av. *aša-* reflect \*‘joined (together)’ > ‘rightness/truth’, a *tó-*derivative<sup>3</sup> to the Proto-Indo-European (PIE) root \*[H]ar- ‘fit, join (together)’, which can be reconstructed as \**h<sub>2</sub>er-* or, possibly, as \*[*h<sub>1</sub>*]ar-<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This paper was written in the framework of the project ‘Family Myths: Phraseology and Inherited Indo-European Thematic Structures in Greek Myth’. This project has received funding from the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No. 793479. Translations are based on Race 1997 (Pindar) and Jamison/Brereton 2014 (*Rigveda*).

<sup>2</sup> Prellwitz 1931; Brandestein 1949.

<sup>3</sup> Avestan (Av.) *aša-* can be reconstructed in more than one way: PIr. \**ar-tá-* (Hoffmann 1986; Hoffmann/Forssman 1996: 40), cf., e.g., Av. *mašīia-* < *mártīia-* ‘mortal’: OPers. *martiya-*, Ved. *mártīya-*; \**ár-ta-* (*AirWb.*: 46+), with substantivisation through secondary full-grade/vjddhi (Rau 2007: 166), cf., e.g., YAv. PN *Hao-srauuah-* (Yt. 5.49+) vs. *hu-srauuah-* (: Gk. εὐκλε[Ε]ής) or \**í-ta-* or \**ár-ta-* (Cantera 2003).

<sup>4</sup> PIE \*(H)ar- stands here for a root reconstructed on the basis of two sets of derivatives, namely: those listed under LIV<sup>2</sup> 1. \**h<sub>2</sub>er-* ‘fit, join’ and LIV<sup>2</sup> 2. \**h<sub>2</sub>er-* ‘take for oneself.’ To 2. \**h<sub>2</sub>er-* ‘fit, join’ belong a root-aorist \**h<sub>2</sub>ér-/h<sub>2</sub>r-*, cf. Arm. *arī* ‘took’, Gk. ἀρόμην ‘obtained, got, took’, and present \**Hḡnéu/mu-*, cf. <sup>3</sup>YAv. *ərənaoŋ* ‘distribute,’ Arm. *arnowm* ‘take,’ Gk. ἄρνημαι ‘struggle (to get something).’ The reconstruction \*(H)ar- (‘gagner le prix’, Pinault 1999–2000; Sadovski 2018: 154) is suggested by the Anatolian congeners of the root which display no trace of an initial laryngeal 2,

(: LIV<sup>2</sup> s.v. 1 \**h<sub>2</sub>er-*), cf. Ved. *sám aranta* ‘they join together’, YAv. *arānt* (V. 15.4) ‘they fastened themselves,’ Gk. ἄρμενος ‘appropriate’ (: aor. \**h<sub>2</sub>ér-/h<sub>2</sub>r-*); Ved. *ῥνός* (2.sg.inj.), *ῥνvánti* ‘join’ (: pres. \**h<sub>2</sub>ῥnéu/nu-*); Gk. ἀῤρηται ‘was jointed together’ pf. (\**h<sub>2</sub>e-h<sub>2</sub>ór-/h<sub>2</sub>r-*).<sup>5</sup> Gk. ἀρετή might reflect:

a) A feminine/collective of a *-etó*-derivative to PIE \*(*H*)*ar-*, \*‘good to join/articulate’ > ‘excellence’, which might have existed beside a *tó*-derivative (cf. Vine 1998: 61).<sup>6</sup>

b) A feminine/collective of a *-etó*-derivative to PIE \*(*H*)*ar-*, with an elative semantic nuance. Derivatives of this description exhibit a ‘Caland-behavior’ and pair with *u*-stems and/or *s*-stems (Solta 1963: 168–178; Vine 1998: 61; Pinault 2017: 349), cf. *παχύς* ‘thick’ :: *παχετός* ‘massive’; *μῆκος* ‘length’ :: *περιμήκετος* ‘very high.’ Caland derivatives can be certainly be identified for \*(*H*)*ar-* ‘fit, join (together)’, cf. Gk. ἄριστος ‘the best’, YAv. *aršō*, OAv. *arəšō* ‘right, rightly, truthfully.’ It is thus possible to interpret Gk. ἀρετή as \*‘the thing(s), which is/are best joined/fitted together, hence: excellence, virtue.’<sup>7</sup>

In any case, the etymological connection between ἀρετή and the Gk. linguistic congeners of PIE \*(*H*)*ar-* (ἀραρίσκω ‘to join, fashion’, ἀρμόζω ‘to fit together’, ἄρμα ‘chariot’ etc.) is confirmed by a Hesychian gloss, which connects ἀρετάω ‘thrive, prosper / choose the path of valor’ (LSJ s.v. ἀρετάω) and ἀρμόζω ‘to fit together, join, harmonize’ (LSJ s.v. ἀρμόζω), cf.

- (1) Hsch. α 41 L ἀρέτησαν ἤρμοσαν  
“*arētēsan*: they fitted together/harmonized”

The aim of the paper is to provide further support to the proposed etymology, by analyzing a restricted number of phraseological matches between compounds and collocations of Ved. *ῥτά-*, Av. *aša-* and Gk. ἀρετή.

## 1.2 Ved. *ῥτά-*, Av. *aša-* and Gk. ἀρετή and the Graeco-Aryan *Bildersprache*

As I have tried to point out in a past contribution (Massetti 2013–2014), Gk. ἀρετή, Ved. *ῥτά-* and Av. *aša-* share associations with the same poetic images. In turn, such an array of common poetic features (*Bildersprache*) can be interpreted as

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such as CLuw. *ārlanuwa-* ‘suit’ (Melchert 1999:24) and Hitt. *ara-* adv. ‘appropriate’ (\*[*H*]ar-*o-*, cf. Dunkel 2014: II 288–293; *contra* Kloekhorst 2008 s.u.: \**h<sub>2</sub>oro-* with Saussure effect). OInd. *āram* ‘appropriate’ and Hitt. *āra-* ‘id.’ have few collocations in common, namely: [to BE – FIT]: ‘to be right/fit’: RV 8.92.24ab *āram ta indra kuṣāye* ‘*sómo bhavatu* “let the soma be fit for your cheek, o Indra”; KUB xxxi 106 4 *n-at-mu ara ēsdu* “be it my due”; [to MAKE – FIT]: ‘to make right/ready’: RV 1.170.4a *āram kṣṇvantu vēdim* “let them ready the altar”; KUB xxx 24 i 1 *āra iyan harak* “have (it) duly made!”

<sup>5</sup> The synchronic etymological interpretation, which connects Vedic *ῥτά-* with the Vedic root *ῥ-* ‘to go’ (cf. Jurewicz 2016: 29), can be discarded on the basis of its semantic weakness.

<sup>6</sup> The semantic shift from ‘to join/align’ to ‘make/be appropriate/right’ parallels that of other PIE roots, such as PIE \*(*h<sub>s</sub>*)*reith<sub>2</sub>-* ‘join, mix, combine’ → ‘fitting, proper’, cf. Lat. *rīte* ‘correctly, properly’, To. AB *rittwatār/ritetār* ‘is fitting’ (Weiss 2015); \**h<sub>2</sub>ent-* ‘set the warp, begin to weave’ → ‘right, proper’: Hitt. *ḫandā(i)-* ‘to align’, Hitt. *ḫandānt-* ‘just, moral, right(eous)’, \**kes-* ‘organize’ (Puhvel 1976); Gk. κέ(σ)ω\* ‘brust’, Gk. κόσμος ‘order.’

<sup>7</sup> Pinault, *ex auditu*.

a reflex of a poetic system, which Greek and Indo-Iranian inherited from a common ancestor. On the one hand, Ved. *ṛtá-* and Av. *aṣa-* are compared to the ‘joined’ objects *par excellence*: wheel (2) and chariot (3), or the idea of ‘conveyance’ (4), cf.

- (2) RV 1.164.11b *várvarti cakráṃ pári dyám ṛtásya*  
“the **wheel of truth** (ever) rolls around heaven”
- (3) RV 2.23.3ab *jyótiṣmantaṃ rátham ṛtásya*  
“You mount (*á ... tiṣṭhasi*) **ṛta’s** light-bearing **chariot**”<sup>8</sup>
- (4) Y. 46.4 *aṣahiiā vaḍrāṅg*  
“**Conveyors of the truth**”

On the other hand, the collocations of Gk. ἀρετή reveal that ‘excellence’ is connected to complementary images or concepts. Even though [WHEEL – of ἀρετή]\* and [CHARIOT – of ἀρετή]\* are unattested, Parmenides describes [TRUTH] as ‘having a beautiful circle’, εὐκυκλῆς Ἀληθείη (fr. B1.28–29 DK, on which see Jackson 2019); while Simonides mentions the ‘chariot of justice’, ἄρμα δίκης (fr. 11.12 W). ‘Truth’ and ‘justice’ share semantic structural components with Ved. *ṛtá-* and Av. *aṣa-*. However, not only is ἀρετή often associated with both ‘truth’ (Pi. fr. 205 SM ἀρχὰ μεγάλας ἀρετᾶς, ὄνασσοῦ Ἀλάθεια ‘starting point of great *areté*, Queen Truth’) and ‘justice’ (Phocyl. fr. 10 W ἐν δὲ δικαιοσύνη συλλήβδην πᾶσ’ ἀρετῆ ὅτι “in the justice there are virtues all together”), but it is also depicted as a vehicle by Pindar’s *Nemean* 3 (5), cf.

- (5) Pi. N. 3.74–75 *ἐλᾷ ... τέσσαρας ἀρετὰς ὁ θνατὸς αἰών*  
“(Our) mortal life **drives** (a team of) **four *aretai*** (: virtues)”

Finally, Ved. *ṛtá-*, Av. *aṣa-* and Gk. ἀρετή are associated with the ‘right/straight path’ (6)–(8), as they are opposed to ‘crooked’ things and/or beings (9)–(10), cf.:

- (6) RV 1.46.11ab *ábhūd u pārám étave ‘pánthā ṛtásya sādhuṃyá*  
“And the **path of truth** has come into being to lead **right** to the far shore.”
- (7) Y. 34.12 *sīṣā nā aṣā paṭhō vanjhāus x’aētāṅg mananjhō*  
“Show us **through truth the paths** of good thought, **easy to pass**”
- (8) Pi. fr. 108a.3 SM *εὐθεΐα δὴ κέλευθος ἀρετᾶν ἐλεΐν*  
“**Straight** indeed is the **path to achieve *areté***”
- (9) RV 4.23.8b *ṛtásya dhītír vjṛiná ni hanti*  
“The vision **of truth smashes the crooked**”
- (10) Pl. *Phaedr.* 253de *ἀρετῆ δὲ τίς τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ ἢ κακοῦ κακία [...]* νῦν δὲ λεκτέον. **ὁ μὲν** τοίνυν αὐτοῖν [...] εἶδος ὀρθός **καὶ διηρθρωμένος** [...] κελεύσεται μόνον καὶ λόγῳ ἠνιοχεῖται· **ὁ δ’ αὖ σκολιός** [...] μάλιστα μετὰ κέντρων μόγις ὑπέικον  
“We have now to define [...] **what the goodness of the one and the badness of the other is. The one of them [...] is upright and has clean limbs** [...] he is guided only by the word of command and by reason. Instead, **the other is crooked** [...] hardly obedient to whip and spurs”

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also the collocations ‘bridle of *ṛta*’ *ṛtásya raśmí-* (RV 1.123.13ab), ‘chariot-pole of *ṛta-*’ *ṛtásya dhūrṣáda-* (RV 1.143.7a), *rathí-* *ṛtásya* ‘charioteer of *ṛta-*’ (Watkins 1979).

In what follows, I will restrict my focus to collocations of *aequabilia*,<sup>9</sup> which exhibit a remarkable poetic character, namely:

- [LIGHT – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\*Har-[e]to/éh₂-)]
- [WAGE – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\*Har-[e]to/éh₂-)]
- [REMEDY – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\*Har-[e]to/éh₂-)]<sup>10</sup>

By ‘remarkable poetic character’ I mean that the collocations are not simply or necessarily attested in versified texts, but that they can be defined as ‘marked’ in a poetic sense; for example, a collocation is *metaphoric*, i.e., expresses a concept through images.

The three poetic collocations of ἀρετή occur almost exclusively in the corpus of the Greek choral lyric, a literary genre celebrating the winners at the Panhellenic games as if they were heroes (Nagy 1990: vi §9).<sup>11</sup> The nature of this Greek literary genre played an important role in the choice of the themes and poetic images attested in the victory odes. ‘Excellence’ and ‘excellent deeds’ (*aretai*, pl., commonly translated as ‘achievements’) are the means by which Panhellenic winners gained victory and glory in the competitions. Therefore, it is not surprising that Greek choral lyric poets preserve a consistent part of the phraseological material concerning ἀρετή.

As for the Indo-Iranian evidence, I will refer to the collocations of Ved. *ṛtá-* in the *Rigveda*, those of *aśa-* in Old and Young Avestan and those underlying Iranian personal names. Ved. *ṛtá-*, ‘the backbone of Aryan religion’ (Rupawate 1982: 2), is a complex concept to which the hymns of the *Rigveda* make constant reference. The term exhibits an array of positive semantic components: ‘appropriateness’ (Roth 1855 s.v.), ‘law’ (Bergaigne 1878–83: iii 249), ‘truth, authenticity’ (Geldner 1951–1957), ‘cosmic order’ in micro- and macro-cosmos (Oldenberg 1888, 1917: 167–80), ‘truth’ (Lüders 1959: 403–406), ‘kind of force or power which is foundation and source for freedom, safety etc.’ (Heckaman 1980: 72). Moreover, it is often documented in speech-act contexts (Lüders 1959: 421–442)<sup>12</sup> and is opposed to *drúh-* ‘(spoken) lie’ (e.g. RV 2.23.17d) in

<sup>9</sup> On the concept of phraseological *aequationes* and *aequabilia* cf. García Ramón 2008; Massetti 2019: ix. An *aequatio* is a perfect formal overlap among two or more forms, e.g., Ved. *śrávas-* : Av. *srauuah-* : Gk. κλέ(φ)ος ‘das Gehörte.’ Conversely, an *aequabile* is an imperfect formal overlap among two or more forms, e.g., Skt. *Satya-śrávas-* ‘having real glory’ : Gk. Ἔτεο-κλής ‘id.’ In this paper, the reconstruction of inherited phraseological material is made rely upon the *aequabilia*.

<sup>10</sup> For a broader discussion on all the possible comparanda between Gk. ἀρετή and the Indo-Iranian terms, with specific focus on the collocations documented in the poems of Pindar and Bacchylides cf. Massetti 2019: 139–158.

<sup>11</sup> “What is being praised about the man of the present, such as the athlete, is ideologically parallel to what is being praised about the hero.” (Nagy 1990, *loc. cit.*)

<sup>12</sup> Lüders 1959 *passim* emphasizes the ‘spoken’ dimension of Vedic *ṛtá-* and proposes a meaning ‘spoken truth, true speech.’

the same way as *aša-* ‘truth’ is opposed to *drug-* ‘(spoken) lie’ (e.g. Y. 60.5). As noted by Schlerath/Skjærø 2011, who argue for a meaning ‘truth’:

\**Rtá-* is a poetical formulation of religious knowledge and judgment where the main stress is laid on the fact that the single parts of the utterance are properly joined together. The point is not the conformity with the reality but the internal correctness.

In this paper, I will translate Ved. *ṛtá-* and Av. *aša-* as ‘truth/rightness/correctness’. It is certainly true that *ṛtá-* is the ‘spoken truth’ in most of the contexts; however, the comparative phraseological analysis has brought to light that Ved. *ṛtá-* and Av. *aša-* share semantic components with ‘justice’ (Gk. δίκη), i.e., ‘rightness’, grounded on ‘correctness’ (Watkins 1979).

In the end, the paper will contribute to the identification of Gk. ἀρετή as an *aequabile* of Ved. *ṛtá-* and Av. *aša-* from a formal and semantic point of view.

## 2 Selected Collocations of Greek ἀρετή, Vedic *ṛtá-*, Avestan *aša-*

### 2.1 [LIGHT – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE]

In several poetic passages ἀρετή is associated with the semantic field of ‘light’. According to Pindar, winners at Panhellenic games possess ‘shining excellence’ (Gk. λάμπω), Pi. *I.* 1.22 Λάμπει δὲ σαφῆς ἀρετά || ἔν τε γυμνοῖσι σταδίοις σφίσις ἔν | τ’ ἀσπιδοδούποισιν ὀπλίταις δρόμοις “and their **excellence shines** clearly in the naked foot races and in the races of armor with clanging shields.” In a different passage, it’s Argos, the winner’s native city, ‘which is ablaze (φλέγομαι) for his excellent deeds’, cf. Pi. *N.* 10.2–3 φλέγεται δ’ ἀρεταῖς || μυρίαῖς ἔργων θρασέων ἔνεκεν “It (: the city of Argos) **is ablaze with achievements (excellent deeds, aretai)** beyond number because of its valiant deeds.” Moreover, the metaphor ‘light of excellence’ occurs at least twice in Gk. choral lyric. In (11) and (12) ‘light’ is expressed by means of two synonyms, namely: φέγγος and φάος,<sup>13</sup> cf.:

- (11) Ba. 3.90–91 ἀρεταῖς γε μὲν οὐ μινύθει  
βροτῶν ἅμα σώματι φέγγος [...]

“The light of excellence, however, does not certainly vanish with the body of the men”

- (12) Pi. *O.* 4.9–10 δέξει Χαρίτων θ’ ἕκατι τόνδε κῶμον  
χρονιώτατον φάος εὐρυσθενέων ἀρετῶν

“Receive (scil. Zeus) [...] with the aid of the Graces, this celebratory revel, longest-lasting light for achievements of great strength.”

In a bunch of further passages the term ἀρετή is described through Greek terms, which are derivatives to the Indo-European roon *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-* ‘to shine’:

- (13) Pi. *N.* 7.50–52 Αἴγινα, τεῶν Διός τ’ ἐκ-  
γόνων θρασύ μοι τόδ’ εἰπεῖν  
φαενναῖς ἀρεταῖς ὁδὸν κυρίαν λόγων  
οἴκοθεν

<sup>13</sup> Hesychius glosses φέγγος as φῶς (cf. Hsch. φ 265 L φέγγος: φῶς ἡμέρας, φέγγος σελήνης) and juxtaposes φῶς and φέγγος in a list of synonyms for ‘light’ (cf. Hsch. δ 241, κ 2628, φ 255 L etc.).

“I am emboldened to say that **for the splendid *aretai*** (Race: “achievements”) of your offspring and Zeus’ there is a royal road of words stretching from your home”

(14)Ba. 13.175–181 οὐ γὰρ ἀλαμπεῖ νυκ[τός  
**πασιφανῆς Ἄρετ[ῆ**  
 κρυφθεῖσ’ ἀμαυροῦται καλύπτρα,  
 ἀλλ’ ἔμπεδον ἀκ[αμάτα  
 βρύουσα δόξα  
 στρωφᾶται κατὰ γᾶν [τε  
 καὶ πολυπλάγκτον θ[άλασσαν

“For **Excellence, shining among all men**, is not dimmed, hidden by the lightless (veil) of night: flourishing constantly with untiring fame she ranges over the land and the sea that drives many from their course”

Passage (14) deserves special attention. Bacchylides ascribes to ἀρετά features, which traditionally belong to the sun:

To begin with, the ‘shining’ ἀρετή is opposed to the dark veil of the night (cf. ἀλαμπεῖ νυκτός ... καλύπτρα). Moreover, the epithet πασιφανῆς ‘shining among all (men)’ is reminiscent of the epithet φαεσίμβροτος ‘shining on the mortals’, which in Greek poetry applies to the Sun-god Helios, cf. *Od.* 10.138 ἄμφω δ’ ἐκεγγάτην φαεσιμβρότου Ἥελίοιο “both were born by Helios, who shines on the mortals.”<sup>14</sup> Indeed, compounds with a second member X<sup>o</sup>μβροτος exist beside collocations of type [πᾶς, πᾶσα, πᾶν – X], cf. δαμασίμβροτος ‘taming/overpowering mortals’ (*Pi. O.* 9.79+) :: πανδαμάτωρ ‘all-overpowering/taming’ (*Il.* 24.5+); μελησίμβροτος ‘object of care for the mortals’ (*Pi. P.* 4.15) :: πᾶσι μέλουσα ‘object of care for all (men)’ (*Od.* 12.70). Furthermore, the epithet ἀκάμας, which Bacchylides refers to ‘fame’, the driving force of ἀρετή (vv. 178–179), describes the Sun in the hexametrical poetry, cf. *Il.* 18.238 Ἥελιον δ’ ἀκάμαντα “untiring Helios (Sun, acc. sg.).” Finally, the idea of a continuous, constant movement (στρωφᾶται, v.180) is vaguely evocative of the travel of the Sun-god, a common *topos* in Greek poetry.

The image of ‘light of the truth/rightness’ is reflected by one Vedic compound and two Iranian personal names (PN), namely:

- The Vedic compound *ṛta-dyumna-* (voc. in RV 9.113.44a) displays a second member <sup>o</sup>*dyumna-* ‘beacon’ to IE *\*dyeu-* ‘to glow’;
- The YAv. PN *Ašō.raocah-* (: *\*ṛta-raučah-*<sup>15</sup> ‘having the light of *aša-*’) contains a second member <sup>o</sup>*raocah-* to the IE root *\*leuk-* ‘to become white’ (cf. Gk. λευκός ‘white, bright’, Lat. *lūna* < [*\*louk-s-neh₂-*] ‘moon’), cf. Yt. 13.97g *ašō.raocahō frāniiehe ašaonō frauuašīm yazamaide* “we worship the *frauuaši* of the *aša*-worshipper *Ašō.raocanah*, (son) of Frāniia.”
- The Iranian PN *\*ṛta-bānu-* ‘possessing the light of the *ṛtá*’, which is preserved in the Gk. historical sources of the Classical Age as **Ἀρτάβανος**<sup>16</sup> and in Par-

<sup>14</sup> Cf. also *Od.* 10.191; Hes. *Th.* 958; Theogn. 1183.

<sup>15</sup> Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 150.

thian as *\*rtānw / Artabān*<sup>17</sup> can be identified as a formal *aequabile* for the Gk. collocations of the type [ἀρετή – φαίνω/φαεννός/φάος]. The compound member *\*ḡta-* is juxtaposed to an Iran. derivative of PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-*: Ved. *bhānū-* ‘ray of light’ and YAv. *bānu-* ‘dass.’ equate Ir. *°bānu-* ‘light’(?). The three terms can be interpreted as *u*-substantivations of a *nó*-adjective, *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-nó-* ‘glowing’, which underlies OIr. *bán* ‘white’ (Nussbaum 1998: 527; Pinault 2019).

It is possible to identify a further *thematized* reflex of the motif ‘light of the *ḡtá-*’ in a stanza of RV 1.164 (the so-called ‘Riddle-Hymn’),<sup>18</sup> cf.

(15)RV 1.164.11ab *dvādaśāraṃ nahí táj jārāya*  
*vārvarti cakráṃ pári dyām ṛtāsya*

“Twelve-spoked, the **wheel of truth** [=the Sun] **ever rolls around heaven**—yet not to old age.”

Since the wheel of the *ḡtá-* is provided with ‘twelve spokes’ and ‘rolls around in heaven’, it is commonly identified with the sun. Indeed, the sun is commonly described as both (i) a wheel in the *Rigveda* (RV 1.130.9+) and (ii) rolling around the sky (RV 10.12.7d). Furthermore, the expression Ved. *nahí táj jārāya* ‘yet not to old age’ (RV 1.164.11a) can be compared to descriptions of the un-tiring sun in Vedic and Greek, cf. *sūrye jyótiḥ ... ájasra-* (RV 10.12.7cd); Ἡέλιον δ’ ἀκάμαντα (acc., Hom.+). Significantly, Bacchylides described the δόξα (‘fame’), i.e., the driving force of the shining Excellence, as ἀκάμας (Ba. 13.179–180). Finally, the use of the intensive form *vārvarti* (to Ved. *vart* ‘to turn’, cf. PIE *\*uert-* ‘to turn’, Lat. *uertō*) adds to the set of similarities which the *cakráṃ ... ṛtāsya* and the sun have in common, cf. (RV 2.11.20c *ávartayat sūryo ná cakráṃ* ‘he [Indra] rolled it [Namuci’s head] like the sun its wheel’). To sum up: the association between the semantic field [LIGHT] and [RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (*\*Har-[e]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-*)] is preserved in Greek, Old Indic and Iranian, where it is thematized through a variety of expressive means, namely:

- a) Collocations of the type [*\*Har-(e)to/éh<sub>2</sub>-* – SHINE], cf. Gk. [ἀρετή – λάμπω], [ἀρετή<sub>instr.</sub> – φλέγεται];
- b) Collocations of the type [LIGHT – of RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (*\*Har-[e]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-*)], which underlie both poetic iuncturae (Greek), compounds and personal names (Old Indic, Iranian). The term [LIGHT] is expressed by means of synonymous lexemes within Greek, Old Indic and Iranian, cf. Gk. φάος (Pi.), φέγγος (Ba.); OInd. *°dyumna-*; Av. *°raocah-*, *°bānu-*. The coincidence between Gk. φάος ... ἀρετῶν (Pi.) and Ir. *\*ḡta-bānu-* is significant, as both phraseological structures are built with the same lexical materials, a

<sup>16</sup> Hdt. 4.83+ Ἀρτάβανος ὁ Ὑστάσπεος, ἀδελφεὸς ἐὼν Δαρείου “*Artabanos*, son of Hystaspes, who was Dareios’s brother.”

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Schmitt 2006: 81–83, 135–137; Benveniste 1966: 107–108: “Glory of the Arta” (?).

<sup>18</sup> Cf. AVŚ 9.9.13ab; AVP 16.67.1ab.

- derivative of PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-* ‘to shine’ and *\*Har-(e)to/éh<sub>2</sub>-*. Further derivatives of PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-* occur in Gk. collocation with the structure [EPITHET – ἀρετή];
- c) The thematized metaphorical motif [TRUTH/RIGHTNESS/EXCELLENCE] :: [SUN], which is attested at least once in Greek (Ba. 13.175–181) and Vedic (RV 1.164.11).

## 2.2 [WAGE – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE]

The collocation [WAGE – (of) EXCELLENCE] is attested only twice in Greek. It firstly occurs in Pindar’s *Second Pythian Ode* as ἄποιν’ ἀρετᾶς, with ἄποινα reflecting *\*a(po)-k<sup>u</sup>ojnh<sub>2</sub>-* (pace West 2001: 121). Later, it occurs in a passage of Plato’s *Republic* as ἀρετῆς μισθός, with the inherited word for ‘wage’, cf. Ved. *mīdhá-* ‘(competitive) price’, Av. *mīžda-* ‘wage’, Got. *mizdo*, OCS *mozda* ‘id.’:

- (16)Pi. P. 2.13–14 ἄλλοις δέ τις ἐτέλεσσεν ἄλλος ἀνὴρ  
εὐαχέα βασιλεῦσιν ἕμνον ἄποιν’ ἀρετᾶς

“Various men pay the tribute of a resounding hymn to various kings **as recompense for** (their) **excellence**”

- (17)Pi. Rep. 363d ἡγησάμενοι κάλλιστον ἀρετῆς μισθὸν μέθην αἰώνιον

“(Acting) as if the fairest **meed of virtue** were an everlasting drunk”

Although Pindar and Plato document different terms for ‘wage/recompense’, ἄποινα and μισθός can be considered as synonyms. The two words share a number of significant associations in Pindar’s poems. They are both connected – to χάρις ‘grace’, cf.

- (18)Pi. I. 3.7–8 εὐκλέων δ’ ἔργων ἄποινα [...]  
χρῆ δὲ κομᾶζοντ’ ἀγαναίς χαρίτεσσιν βαστάσαι

“As **recompense** for glorious achievements it is fitting [...] to exalt the one celebrating the *kōmos* **with** gentle **graces**”

- (19)Pi. P. 1.75–77 ἀρέομαι [...] Ἀθηναίων χάριν || μισθόν

“I will earn, as my **wage**, **the k<sup>h</sup>aris** of the Athenians” (Nagy 1990:188–189),

– and to αἰνέω ‘to proclaim’, cf.

- (20)Pi. O. 7.15–6 ὄφρα [...] ἄνδρα παρ’ Ἀλφειῷ στεφανωσάμενον  
αἰνέσω πηγμῆς ἄποινα

“In order **to praise** a man crowned beside the river Alpheios, as **recompense of boxing**”

- (21)Pi. N. 7.63 κλέος ἐτήτυμον αἰνέσω ·  
ποτίφορος δ’ ἀγαθοῖσι μισθός οὔτος

“I will **proclaim** authentic glory. This is a **wage** worthy of good men.”

The association between ἄποινα, μισθός and the idea of public celebration/praise of the Panhellenic winner is a recurrent *topos* in Pindar’s poetry.<sup>19</sup> Passage (16)

<sup>19</sup> For μισθός as a metaphorical designation of the victory ode see Pi. I. 1.47–54. On ἄποινα and the semantic shift from ‘ransom’ (Il. 1.12–13 ὁ γὰρ ἦλθε θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν || λυσόμενος τε θύγατρα φέρων τ’ ἀπερείσι’ ἄποινα ‘For he [Chryses] had come to the swift ships of the Achaeans to free his

can be interpreted in this very sense, since ἄποινα is an apposition of ὕμνος. Given the fact that the sequence ἄποινα ἄρετᾶς (—υυυ—#) cannot metrically overlap with μισθὸν ἄρετᾶς (—υυυ—#) nor with ἄρετᾶς μισθὸν (υυ—#), it is legitimate to consider ἄποινα as a metrical non-equivalent synonym of μισθός in Pindar’s odes. Though documented in the corpus of a later author, the collocation ἄρετῆς μισθός (17) might preserve a poetic inheritance, at least reconstructable as such within the Greek poetic tradition. A look at Iranian collocations of *aša-* may allow us to shift the reconstruction of the collocation [WAGE – (of) \**Har-*[*e*]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-] beyond the level of pure Greek.

A collocation [WAGE (\**misd*<sup>h</sup>*h*1ó-) – of RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/CORRECTNESS (\*[*H*]ár-to-)] lies at the basis of the Avestan compound *ašō.mižda-* ‘the wage of truth/correctness’, cf.

(22) Y. 55.2i            *tā nō buiiṇ humiždā aš.miždā ašō.miždā*

“May these be for us (givers of) the good reward, the great reward, **the reward of *aša-***”

Finally, it is possible to identify a variant of the Avestan collocation, in which a different term than *mižda-* expresses ‘recompense’. OAv. *aši-* ‘recompense’ can be considered a synonym of Av. *mižda-* in the light of similar phraseological uses, such as ‘to obtain a recompense/wage’ [*aši-* – *ərənu-*]\* (Y. 9.3+) :: *miždahē afrərəiti* (Vyt. 30), which partially matches Gk. μισθὸν ἄρνυμαι (Hom.+). The formal resemblance between *aša-* and *aši-*<sup>20</sup> might have played a role in shaping the collocation [*ašahiiā* – *aši-*].

(23) Y. 54.1eg            *yā daēnā vairīm hanāi miždam*  
                                  *ašahiiā yāsā ašīm*  
                                  *yam išūiṇ ahurō masatā mazdā*

“By the view/religion by which one will win a desirable **prize**. I request the invigorating **reward of truth**, which (to accord) the Wise Lord will be delightful.” (Humbach/Faiss 2010)

To sum up: the collocation [WAGE – of RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\**Har-*[*e*]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-)] is attested in Greek and Iranian: Gk. ἄρετῆς μισθός (Plato) matches Avestan *ašō.mižda-* (Y. 55.2) almost perfectly, while ἄποινα ἄρετᾶς (Pindar) and *ašahiiā ... ašīm* (Y. 54.1) can be recognized as variants of the same collocation *einzel sprachlich*, on the strength of the phraseological material.

### 2.3 [REMEDY – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE]

The expression [φάρμακον – ἀρετά<sub>gen.</sub>] occurs only once in the entire Greek literature, namely: in Pindar’s *Fourth Pythian Ode*:

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daughter and he brought with him ransom past counting”) to ‘victory ode’ (Pi. *O.* 7.15–16, *N.* 7.16, *I.* 3/4.7, 8.4) cf. Kurke 1991.

<sup>20</sup> According to Hintze 2000: 75–77, *aši-* ‘recht gemäßigter Lohn’ may reflect \**Har-ti-* and thus be etymologically related to *aša-*.

(24) Pi. P. 4.185–187 [...] μὴ τινα λειπόμηνον  
τὸν ἀκίνδυνον παρὰ μητρὶ μένειν αἰ-  
ῶνα πέσσοντ', ἀλλ' ἐπὶ καὶ θανάτῳ  
**φάρμακον** κάλλιστον ἔαυς **ἀρετῆς** ἕ-  
λιξιν εὐρέσθαι σὺν ἄλλοις

“...so that no one might be left behind to remain with his mother and coddle a life without risk, but rather, even if it meant death, to gain the most noble **remedy for his own areté** (Race: **achievement**) in the company of others of his age”

Such an isolated collocation can be interpreted as a ‘substitution kenning’ for ‘fame/glory’<sup>21</sup>, as ancient commentators suggest, cf. *Schol. in Pi. P.* 4.330b Dr. τῆς ἰδίας ἀρετῆς κάλλιστον φάρμακον τὴν μετὰ ταῦτα εὐδοξίαν σὺν τοῖς ἄλλοις ὁμήλιξιν εὐρέσθαι “to gain the most noble remedy for his own *areté*, the glory for that, in the company of others of his age”; *Schol. in Pi. P.* 4.332a Dr. φάρμακον θανάτου ἢ ἀρετῆ καὶ ἢ εὐκλεία “the remedies to death are excellence and glory”. The collocation [REMEDY – of EXCELLENCE (Gk. ἀρετῆ)] is a remarkable *aequabile* to the YAv. compound *ašō.baēšaza-*, which is commonly translated as ‘healing through *aša-*’,<sup>22</sup> cf.

(25) Yt. 3.6bd **ašō.baēšazō** *dātō.baēšazō*  
*karətō.baēšazō uruuarō.baēšazō*  
*maqθrō.baēšazō*

“(Es gibt) einen (Arzt, **der**) **mit dem aša heilt**, einen, (der) mit dem Gesetz heilt, einen, (der) mit dem Messer heilt, einen, (der) mit den Pflanzen(säften) heilt, einen, (der durch Besprechungen) mit dem heiligen Wort heilt” (Wolff 1910)<sup>23</sup>

The second compound member <sup>(o)</sup>*baēšaza-* is a derivative to the Indo-Iranian root *\*b<sup>h</sup>iš-* ‘to heal’, cf. Ved. *bhišáj-* ‘physician’, Av. *bišazaiia-* ‘to heal’.<sup>24</sup> Since Av. <sup>(o)</sup>*baēšaza-* is attested both as an adjective ‘healing’ and a substantive ‘remedy’, it is also possible to interpret *ašō.baēšaza-* as a possessive compound with the meaning ‘provided with the remedy of *aša*’.

<sup>21</sup> A kenning (pl. kenningar) is a compact and complicated, riddling metaphor. It has been defined as “a bipartite figure of two nouns in a non-copulative, typically genitival grammatical relation (A of B) or in composition (B-A/A-B) which together make reference to, ‘signify’ a third notion C” (Watkins 1995:44). Specifically, the substitution kenning replaces one term in the poetic discourse, and can therefore be schematized as [A+B] → [C].

<sup>22</sup> Duchesne-Guillemin 1936: 59: “guérissant au moyen de l’A.”.

<sup>23</sup> On the passage and possible IE comparanda to the ‘three types of healers’ cf. Darmesteter 1877; Bénveniste 1945; Dumézil 1958; Puhvel 1970; Watkins 1995: 537–539; Sadoski 2005: 531.

<sup>24</sup> The etymology of the Ved. *bhišáj-* and the origin of the root *\*b<sup>h</sup>iš-* is debated. According to Rix (1995: 246) Vedic *\*b<sup>h</sup>išáj-* is a compound with a zero-grade *s*-stem as first member and with a root noun as a second member. The following interpretations are possible: (i) *\*b<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>S-h<sub>1</sub>ég-* ‘pronouncing/ uttering spells’ (with *\*b<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>S-* to PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-* ‘to speak’ and *\*h<sub>1</sub>ég-* to PIE *\*h<sub>1</sub>ég-* ‘to utter’); (ii) *\*b<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>S-h<sub>1</sub>ág-* ‘leading (away)/repelling spells’ (with *\*b<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>S-* to PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-* ‘to speak’ and *h<sub>1</sub>ág-* ‘to lead’); (iii) *\*b<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>S-h<sub>1</sub>ág-* ‘leading to the light’ (Ginevra 2017, with a zero-grade of the *s*-stem ‘light’, to PIE *\*b<sup>h</sup>eh<sub>2</sub>-* ‘to shine’, cf. Ved. *bhās-*, which is often counted as disyllabic, *bhā.as-*, in the *Rigveda*, Schindler 1972: 34); (iv) *\*b<sup>h</sup>h<sub>2</sub>S-h<sub>1</sub>ág-* ‘leading the light’ (Masseti 2017, cf. φάος ἄγαρας ἐν σκοτῆί “you have led light in the darkness” in Adesp. fr. 101.8 P).

To sum up: The collocation [REMEDY – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\**Har*-[*e*]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-)] is attested in Iranian and Greek, where it is expressed through different terms. From the one part, Av. *aša*- and Gk. ἀρετή are etymologically close and can be considered formal and semantic *aequabilia*; while [REMEDY] is expressed by synonymous words, Gk. φάρμακον and Av. *baēšaza*-.

### 3 Conclusion

In this paper I have focused on three collocations that Gk. ἀρετή, Ved. ṛtá- and/or Av. *aša*- have in common, namely:

- [LIGHT – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE]: φάος ... ἀρετῶν (Pi.) and Ir. \**ṛta-bānu*- (PN) point to [LIGHT (\**b<sup>h</sup>eh*<sub>2</sub>-) – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\**Har*-[*e*]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-)], although several variants of the collocation are attested in both Greek and Indo-Iranian texts.
- [WAGE – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE]: ἀρετῆς μισθός\* (Pi.) and Av. *ašō.mišda*- point to [WAGE (\**misd<sup>h</sup>h*<sub>1</sub>ó-) – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\**Har*-[*e*]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-)], for which variants (ἄποιν’ ἀρετῶς, Pi; *ašahiia* ... *aši*) are documented  *einzelsprachlich*.
- [REMEDY – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE]: Although φάρμακον ... ἀρετῶς (Pi.) and YAv. *ašō.baēšaza*- are a partial match, they can be regarded as a remarkable semantic match: both collocations are isolated in their respective contexts. It is possible to transpose the collocation as follows: [REMEDY (X) – (of) RIGHTNESS/TRUTH/EXCELLENCE (\**Har*-[*e*]to/éh<sub>2</sub>-)].

The comparative phraseological analysis of three case-studies thus supports the identification of ἀρετή as *aequabile* of Ved. ṛtá- and Av. *aša*- from a formal and semantic point of view.

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