

## Abstract

My PhD dissertation aims to determine the exact relationship between a selection of Indo-European stems which all point to a Proto-Indo-European root *\*(h)ar-*. One of the most striking features of these stems is the fact that they all belong to remarkably divergent semantic fields. Notable examples include Greek ἄριστος ‘the best’, ἄρθρον ‘joint’, Latin *ars* ‘art, manner’, *artus* ‘narrow’ and Vedic *ṛtá-*. As a result my etymological research is not restricted to an examination of the phonological/morphological features of these stems, but primarily consists in a thorough semantic analysis of their oldest attestations. In this talk I will present the outcome of the (morpho-)semantic analysis of three Latin words starting with /arm-/: *armenta* ‘cattle’, *arma* ‘armour’ and *armillae* ‘arm-let’.

As a matter of fact, none of these three nouns is provided with a complete and satisfactory etymological analysis. To begin with, three derivations have been hypothesised for *armenta*: either from the verb(root) ‘to plough’ (e.g. Varro, *De lingua latina*, 5.96), or from *\*(h)ar-* ‘to join together’ (= *communis opinio*, e.g. Walde & Hofmann (1938-1954: 1, 68), Pokorny (1959-1969: 1, 72-73), Perrot (1961: 170), DELL (2001: 47), de Vaan (2008: 54)), or from a stem *\*h<sub>2</sub>an(h<sub>1</sub>)mn-* ‘breath of life’ (Nussbaum 2014). According to the first theory the noun would have originally denoted ‘the ploughing animals’, according to the second ‘the things grouped/joined together’, i.e. ‘a herd’, and according to the last ‘living thing; livestock’. Nevertheless, these three interpretations seem hardly convincing from a semantic standpoint. Nussbaum (2014) points out that the *armenta* do not indicate plough animals and that *\*(h)ar-* does not mean ‘to group’; yet, Nussbaum’s own theory appears semantically too vague.

Furthermore, unlike *armenta*, the root of *arma* is uncontroversial and commonly reconstructed as *\*(h)ar-*. However, information as to its suffix and precise semantic reconstruction is either completely missing (e.g. Walde & Hofmann (1938-1954: 1, 67- 68) and DELL (2001: 46-47)), or uncomplete/conflicting. De Vaan (2008: 54) reconstructs an adjective, Weiss (2020: 306) a substantive; the former ‘what is fitted together’ or ‘tools’, the latter ‘fittings’.

Finally, *armillae* is standardly derived from *armus* ‘arm’ due to obvious semantic reasons (see e.g. Walde & Hofmann (1938-1954: 1, 68), Leumann (1977: 307), DELL (2001: 48), de Vaan (2008: 55)). However, this derivation is untenable for phonological reasons: the diminutive of a *mo*-stem cannot result in a sequence *-illa-* (cf. already Strodach (1933: 39)).

In sum, there is no scholarly consensus on the root of *armenta*, nor on the exact suffix of *armillae* and *arma*, nor on the precise semantics of the stem of *armenta*, *arma* and *armillae*. In this talk I will give an overview of the thorough semantic analysis which leads me to conclude that *armillae*, *arma* and *armenta* most likely share the same *men*-stem ‘the attachment’ from the root *\*(h)ar-* ‘to join closely’.

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