

LATIN *AREA* AND GREEK αἴνω

The etymology of Latin *ārea* remains an unanswered riddle, and therefore seems especially annoying for such a basic element of the agricultural lexicon. The ancient authors, especially Cato, Varro, Vergil, Festus, and others, have informed us very well on the meaning and care of the *ārea*, and they even convey to us the connexion that Romans made for the root of the word in their own native linguistic sense of things. But the actual technical etymology remains wanting, and surely, on the basis of the semantics of the activity that characterizes an *ārea*, there can be no connexion with *āridus*. It seems to me, however when we consider the possibilities of Latin historical phonology, that a fairly obvious relation has been overlooked.

The Greek verb αἴνω aor. ἦναι 'remove chaff' has not been well explained. Frisk *GEW* 41 speaks of a „Notbehelf“ and calls it „dunkel“. Pokorny *IEW* 82 does little to explain it, and simply lists it under *αῦ(e)-/ῦē-, itself a badly formulated root from the point of view of Indo-European theory. Furthermore we cannot properly consider this verb without taking into account the other attested forms: ᾿ᾱνέω (whose smooth breathing requires correction in some of the handbooks), ἀφ᾿ᾱνέω (which must get its implied rough breathing in the φ by conflation — with αἴνω), and Ἔᾱναι περιπτίσαι Hes. (γ-). The only way to unify these forms into a correct and motivated paradigm is, contrary to Pokorny's inadequate reconstructions, αἴνω < αἜεσ-ν-ιω, ᾿ᾱνέω < αἜεσ-νε-ιω, ἦναι/Ἔᾱναι < (α)Ἔησ-ν-,

We see then that we must have a relation in vocalic alternation between the present and the aorist of the form *e* ~ zero (present) and zero ~ vowel/zero (aorist) exactly as we find reflected in

πελάζω : πλῆτο
 σκέλλω : ἀπ-έσκλην
 κεράννυμι: Ion. ἔκρησα

The smooth breathing seen in ᾿ᾱνέω must therefore originate in the vocalised laryngeal (so-called prothetic vowel) which developed in the zero-grade of the aorist. Our most general reconstruction must then be

*αἜεσ-ν- < *H_auH_e-s-n-

The root is seen to be properly *H_aeuH_e-s- ~ H_aueH_e-s-.

On this basis a solution to *ārea* is not difficult. A normal nominalization would be *αῦας-εῖᾱ < *H_aeuH_e-s-(e)ῖᾱ. The internal laryngeal, of course, syllabified regularly as schwa.