A PRE-INDO-EUROPEAN PLACE-NAME: DALMATIA

Two years ago I ventured to suggest another etymon of the place name (hereafter PN) *Ardeal*, the Romanian form for Transylvania and, connected to this, I also explained the PN *Dalmatia* (Paliga 1986). I shall not rediscuss the whole topic, yet it is useful to briefly point the essentials of my hypothesis for a larger discussion. I started from the observation that the largely accepted hypothesis which sees Rom. PN *Ardeal* as a reflection of Hung. *Erdély* is not at all feasible, mainly from reasons of phonetic evolution, as long as the expected form should have been **Erdei* or **Ardei*. We can better understand the situation of this PN if placing it in a reasonable linguistic-comparative context. As a matter of fact the situation is simple enough: *Ardeal* is a compound of the type *Ar-deal*, *ar-* (a particle lost in vocabulary, probably akin to *a arunca*, *a aruca* "to cast away, throw") with the reconstructable meaning "over, far away", and *deal* "hill", also "forest", very frequent in Romanian place-names. The fact that *Ar-deal* is a compound is also supported by obviously similar forms like *Subdeal* (also spelled *Sub Deal*) "at the foothill", *Pe deal* "on the hill", *La deal* "uphill". All these forms are frequent in the so-called minor toponymy as well as in vocabulary. Reverting to *Ar-deal*, it should be also observed that the Medieval Latin form *Trans-silvania* and German *Überwald* (now replaced by *Siebenbürgen*) are loan-translations (calques) after *Ar-deal*. Hung. *Erdély* is also a calque but following the rules of derivation in Hungarian: noun + particle, i.e. *Erdő* "forest" and *-elu/ -elv* > *-ely* (cf. *előre* "straightforward", *előtt* "in front of"), as shown and accepted by all Hungarian linguists (cf. Kiss 1980 with further references). What is particularly interesting in this case is that the calque was doubled by a fortuitous similarity between *Ar-deal* and *Erdély*, which created a confusion of etymological analysis.

Another important point I tried to solve was to observe that what the linguistic investigation had to clarify was the situation of Rom. *deal* "hill", also "forest" as compared to the rare Slavic form *děľ* "hill". My hypothesis, proved by other parallels (see Table 1 below) is that this Slavic form has nothing to do with other two homophone roots: *děl^a* „to make, create“ (*dělo* "work", artifact", etc.) and *děl^b* "to divide, to part" (*dělití*, etc.). Thus *děl^c* "hill" is, unlike the other two roots, non-Slavic, probably borrowed from the Balcanic substratum¹. In this case, we must identify, obviously enough, a pre-INDO-EUROPEAN root **D-L/ *T-L-* (**DaL-*,

¹ There can be little doubt now that Old Serbian *děľ* "hill" and Bielorruss. *dít* "id.", already analyzed a century ago (Miklosich 1886: 45) do not reflect a proto-Slavic form but are borrowings. It is of course regrettable that e.g. in Šmilauer 1970: 54 the meanings "part" and "hill" of *děľ* are grouped together, as long as they are different words with different etyma.

**DeL-*, **TaL-*, **TeL-*, etc.)² well analyzed by various linguists (e.g. Trombetti 1925, Rostaing 1950, Faure 1977, Paliga n.d.). PN *Dalmatia* is also analyzable from this perspective³, being a compound of the type **DaL-MaT-ia*. The second part of the PN is also of pre-IE origin, namely the root **MaT(T)-* “confused, labyrinthine”, from which several meanings are derived, in this case the most probable being “bush, tree, forest” (see a detailed analysis of this root in Paliga 1989, in preparation). The general meaning of the compound *Dal-mat-ia* is therefore “forested highland”. The spread of the pre-IE root **DaL-/*DeL-* is briefly sketched in Table 1. The pre-IE origin of the PN *Dalmatia* is in full agreement with archaeological finds a very early Neolithic civilization being well documented along the Adriatic. The PN should be considered pre-Illyrian.

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² The parallel variant **D-R-/*T-R-* (**DaR-*, **DeR-*, **TaR-*, etc.) is also well documented (further examples in Paliga n.d.).

³ To my knowledge the accepted explanations for *Dalmatia* are three: (1) the first part of the PN would be connected to Alb. *dele, delme* “sheep” (Kiss 1980: 172), or (2) to IE **dhel-/*dhol-* “vault, cavity” (Eng. *dale*), or (3) **dhel-* “to shine” (Russu 1969: 191). The second part of the compound is unexplained. The purpose of this paper is to correct these inconsistent hypotheses.

Table 1

Survey of the forms derived from the pre-IE root *D-L/*T-L- “prominence, hill, mountain“

Illyrian	Thracian	Romanian (via Thracian)	Greek	Etrusco- Latin	Provence	Georgian
NPp Dalmatae,	NL <i>Dalátarba</i>	<i>deal</i> “hill, forest“:	NI <i>Delos</i> (Cyclades)	Etr. <i>tel</i>	NL <i>Tallard</i>	<i>talaki</i>
<i>Delmatae</i> ,	NSt <i>Delkos</i>	NR <i>Ar-deal</i>	NM <i>Delos</i> (1) (Boeotia)	“hill“	(* <i>Tal-arn-u</i> -)	“fertile“
Delmateis		NL <i>Subdeal</i> , <i>La deal</i> ,	NL <i>Delphoi</i> (2)	(? <i>tular</i>	NL <i>Toulon</i>	soil“
NR Dalmatia		<i>Peste deal</i> , etc.	NL <i>Tylissos</i>	“boundary“		
NL Dalmatas		NL <i>Delea</i>	(Crete)	Lat. <i>tellus</i>		
		NL <i>Talma</i>	NM <i>Talarus</i>	“earth“(3)		
			NL <i>Lepa-talea</i> (Caria)			

Abbreviations: NI = nomen insulae, NL = n. loci, NM = n. montis, NPp = n. pupuli (ethnonym), NR = n. regionis, NSt = n. stabuli

Notes to Table 1

1 No connection with δῆλος (δέελας) “evident“, which reflects IE “*dei-/*deiw- “to shine“.

2 By hazard similar to δελφός “uterus, matrix“.

3 Lat. *terra* is derived from the parallel pre-IE root *T-R-/ *D-R- not analyzed here.

Povzetek

DALMATIA: PREDINDOEVROPSKI TOPONIM

Avtor se naslanja na novejšje raziskave predindoevropskega jezikovnega fonda in je mnenja, da je toponim *Dalmatia* zloženka tipa *DAL-MAT-ia*, pri čemer sta prvi dve prvini predindoevropski, skupni pomen pa „gozdnata gorska dežela“. Toponim šteje za predilirski.