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 toponomy as well as in vocabulary. Reverting to Ar-deal, it should be also observed that the Medieval Latin form Trans-silvania and German Oberwald (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 dell“ “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-“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 substratum\(^1\). 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 děl “hill“ and Bieloruss. діл “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 děl are grouped together, as long as they are different words with different etyma.

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*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.

REFERENCES


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 *dhe(ī)/*dhol- “vault, cavity“ (Eng. *dale*), or (3) *dhe(ī)“ 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“

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illyrian</th>
<th>Thracian</th>
<th>Romanian (via Thracian)</th>
<th>Greek</th>
<th>Etrusco-Latin</th>
<th>Provence</th>
<th>Georgian</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NPp Dalmatae,</td>
<td>NL Dalatarba</td>
<td>deal “hill, forest“:</td>
<td>NI Delos (Cyclades)</td>
<td>Etr. tel</td>
<td>NL Tallard</td>
<td>talaki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dalmatia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NM Delos(1) (Boeotia)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Subdeal, La deal, Peste deal, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(? tular “boundary“</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Delea</td>
<td>NL Tylissos</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NL</td>
<td></td>
<td>Talma</td>
<td>(Crete)</td>
<td>Lat. tellus “earth“(3)</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NM Talarus</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NL Lepa-talea (Caria)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 δείλειος (δείλιος) “evident“, which reflects IE “*dei-/deiw- “to shine“.
2 By hazard similar to γαστρός “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 novejše 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.