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Slavic **tǫrgъ*, Old Church Slavonic *trǫgъ*. Their Origin and Distribution in Postclassical Times

The Basic Data

When analyzing in deeper details the origin, evolution and distribution of Slavic *tǫrgъ*, some basic problems are encountered:

- the origin of the term;
- its later evolution;
- its distribution in vocabulary and place-names.

I shall try to show that, while some related forms are quite clear, there are many others, which would require more attention.

One first point is that, according to most, if not all, investigations, the term **tǫrgъ* seems very old. How old?

Analyses of the topic, due to linguists like Machek, Skok and Rejzek indicate a possible relation with Assyro-Babylonian *tamgaru*, a hypothesis suggested by Bedřich Hrozný. To us, this approximate similarity is due to chance, rather than a result of a loanword or an initial relationship. Nevertheless, the term is indeed old, as Skok suggests, labelling it as ‘Mediterranean’: „Postavlja se

This work was supported by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research.

Competing interests: no competing interests have been declared.

Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies PAS.

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pitanje kako, kojim putem su Praslaveni došli do te mediteranske riječi” (Skok 1950; A question arises: how and by what means did the Proto-Slavs get hold of this Mediterranean word?).

Note that Petar Skok is the author of an outstanding book dedicated to the classification and analysis of the archaic Pre-Slavic place-names of the Adriatic Islands (Skok, 1950), in which he presented his seven principles of toponymical analysis and also the stratification of the Pre-Slavic linguistic heritage, in which the ‘Mediterranean’ (i.e. Pre-Indo-European) is reckoned to be the oldest¹.

In Skok’s terminology, also adopted by many other linguists, ‘Mediterranean’ means, in most cases, ‘Pre-Indo-European’, and refers to a linguistic stratum spread over southern Europe, at least, prior to the arrival of the Indo-Europeans. Machek and Skok were indeed linguists who often referred to this stratum in their studies. In Skok’s analysis of the Adriatic toponymy, and in his classification, the ‘Mediterranean’ stratum plays, therefore, an important role. I analysed Skok’s contribution elsewhere and in repeated contexts, I will not insist here (Paliga, 2006b and the updated version Paliga, 2013, the chapter dedicated to place-names).

According to current data, most linguists have agreed upon the basic hypothesis that *tǫrgъ is an old, ‘technical’ term, probably related to Illyrian place-name *Tergitio* (Russu, 1969, p. 254), and its modern related form *Trieste*, Slovene *Trst*, explained from a Latin form *Tergeste*. Albanian *treg* is considered a loanword from South-Slavic by Orel (see a longer discussion there), even if this may be debatable in a forensic analysis.²

The forms therefore show a certain distribution in antiquity, with attested forms in the Illyrian area, which may reflect chance, rather than indicate that Illyrian was the source of the term.

Nevertheless, as most linguists are inclined to acknowledge, the term is old and, perhaps from prehistoric times, refers to a ‘market place’. This is in full accordance with archaeological data, which indicate southeast Europe as one of the first beneficiaries of the ‘Neolithic Revolution’, which started in the

¹ Our colleague Corinna Leschber presented an interesting paper on the topic of the linguistic stratification of southeast Europe, so this paper may be also read in connection with her presentation, which in fact complements and enriches older data.

² During the discussions in Toruń (2013), our colleague Xhelal Ylli was firm in denying the Slavic origin of Albanian *treg*, which is in accordance with the data presented here. See the case of the Baltic forms below.

Fertile Crescent, and then spread east and west, reaching the Balkans soon after the 8th mill. B.C.E. If the term is to be considered ‘Mediterranean’, as Skok believes, then this hypothesis is supported by archaeological data as well.

If it is old, and there is no doubt it is, Skok’s question may be invoked again: how did the term spread? and by which route?

Before attempting an answer, let us briefly review some other possibly related forms.

Trògir, Italian *Trau*. Ancient spelling *Tragurium*, Gr. *Tragourion*. The origin must again be Illyrian, like *Trieste*, *Trst*. See in Paliga, 2006a, p. 287.

Polish *Toruń*, as far as I know remains unexplained in details, which may be mutually related to Finnish *Turku*, genitive form *Turun* (e.g. *Turun Yliopisto* ‘University of Turku’). The alternative is to explain it in connection with Bulg. *Tǎrnovo*, Czech *Trnava* etc.

Baltic (Lith. and Latvian) form *turgùs* and *tirgus*, respectively, are held to be Slavic loanwords, which may again be debatable (see the case of Albanian form).

Romanian *tîrg*, *târg* is also held to be a Slavic loanword, which may or may not be debatable, depending on the ultimate solution agreed upon regarding the origin of the word. If it is a ‘Mediterranean’, archaic word, as Skok and Machek are inclined to accept, then the term is rather from the substratum language, i.e. a common Illyrian (where it is attested in place-names) and Thracian form, even if there is no clear Thracian form to be assigned to this group. The list in Dečev (1957) does not quote any such form, but further research may be positive in this sense.

In Slavic, the word is well consolidated in many place-names spread over the entire Slavic area (see Šmilauer, 1970, p. 185), e.g. Bulgarian *mǫpъ* – *Тѣрговице*, Slovene *tîrg* – *Tržiščica*, Slovak *trh* – *Trhovište* (which corresponds to Bulgarian), Czech *trh*, *tržiště* – *Tržek*, Polish *targ* – *Targowisko*, Russian *mopъ* – *Торговица* etc.

Romanian *târg*, *tîrg* is the source of PN *Tîrgoviște*, *Târgoviște*, which shows a similarity with the Bulgarian derivation, which is entirely normal.

The Origin

There are several ways of analyzing the origin of the Slavic form *tǫrgъ. The possible scenarios are, in our view, the following:

1. A ‘Mediterranean’, i.e. Pre-Indo-European form. This would fully comply with the analysis of Skok, Rostaing and Paliga regarding the Pre-IE

heritage of Europe. The word may possibly be related to the Sumerian form, but this would be—so far—the only word of this origin analyzable in a European language. Is this analysis acceptable? If the ‘Mediterranean’ substratum of southeast Europe may possibly be related to the Sumerian heritage is an interesting topic of discussion, but this is not directly relevant to our more modest purpose here. Such a relationship may be further analyzed in a larger context, aiming at identifying a more consistent set of such possibly related forms. This is a task for the future.

If this term related to a basic activity of trade and commerce is indeed of an archaic, presumably ‘Mediterranean’ (Pre-Indo-European) origin, then its distribution in southeast Europe, later all over the Slavic area, also in Baltic and Finnish, brings ample problems of interpretation, well noted by Machek and Skok who, by accepting an archaic origin, did not venture to further explain its gradual distribution. I assume that the term spread from south to north, prior to the Slavic expansion, which began some time before 550 C.E. Only an early circulation of the form could explain its Pan-Slavic situation, and its circulation further north to Baltic and even Finnish.

The term seems only attested in Illyrian, but not in Thracian—at least according to available data and their interpretation, which may be mere chance. If Illyrian is assumed to have been the focus of the later distribution of the term, then the hypothesis that it spread to the Thracian speakers first, hence to the Proto-Slavic (or Balto-Slavic) speakers, must be accepted. It is difficult to assume the scenario that the term could circulate directly from Illyrian to Proto-Slavic, as the two groups never met—also noting that Illyrian became extinct in the 2nd century C.E.³

The alternative would be to consider the term spread to the whole Illyrian and Thracian world of Late Antiquity as a ‘technical’, specific term referring to trade. In this perspective, the distribution of this term to Slavic becomes easier to explain. As shown in our previous studies, there was a late Thracian, presumably Carpiian and Costobocian influence on Proto-Slavic. In our view, and starting from Aleksandar Loma’s analysis regarding Proto-Slavic, THREE satem strata concurring with Proto-Slavic (Loma speaks of TWO strata) may be envisaged:

³ The Illyrian heritage in Albanian was discussed elsewhere, therefore I shall not go further into this topic here. See Paliga and Teodor (2009, p. 77 ff.) and Paliga (2012a, p. 389 ff.). The problem is complex and would require an ample discussion.

a. Balto-Slavic; b. Iranian; c. North Thracian, specifically Carpian, i.e. late Thracian still spoken until, perhaps, the 5th century C.E.

If our interpretation, based on Loma's scheme, and extended to THREE, not TWO satem⁴ components of Proto-Slavic is true, then the distribution of *tǫrgъ is interpretable as a 'technical', specific term referring to trade, which began to circulate BEFORE the Slavic expansion, i.e. before mid-6th century C.E. I may continue by asserting that the case of *tǫrgъ should be discussed together with other forms, e.g. *sǫto, to which a full analysis was dedicated a long time ago (see also the criticism of Marko Snoj, followed by an answer in a polemical note: Paliga, 2012b);

2. An old Pre-Slavic origin, but following another route. If an Oriental (Assyro-Babylonian? Sumerian?) ultimate origin is to be accepted, I have no explanation, my competence stops here. However I would add that this would be the only word of this origin identifiable in Slavic or in a European language in general.

3. An Indo-European origin. The problem is that the different forms are all isolated, not allowing a deeper analysis in the field of IE comparative linguistics. Slavic *tǫrgъ is isolated in relation to other IE languages for which no direct borrowing via the suggested route can be supposed. As a consequence, a PIE origin may be dismissed as no other form outside the quoted areas could possibly be invoked.

Interim Conclusions

Our interpretation is that *tǫrgъ is indeed an archaic, 'Mediterranean' (i.e. Pre-Indo-European) term specific to southeast Europe, and corresponding to the spread of the 'Neolithic Revolution'. If a relationship with Ass.-Bab. *tamgaru* is ever to be accepted, then it may be interpreted in the light of such archaic cultural and linguistic developments. As the Neolithic revolution emerged in, and then spread from, the Fertile Crescent both west and east, then the relationship of such terms is not enigmatic. Nevertheless this is another direction of research, which cannot be developed here. If a Sumerian origin of Slavic *tǫrgъ might be accepted, then this should be analyzed in a larger context of other similar forms

⁴ Some linguists try to put down the importance of the dichotomy satem ~ centum, involving arguments such as the 'satem' character of French. To be clear: the dichotomy only applies to languages directly derived from Indo-European, not to secondary or tertiary subsequent derivation as is the case with French.

spread in the European languages. This indeed seems a difficult task. To date, it is indeed difficult to accept a unique, isolated borrowing from Sumerian into a European language. A larger context of analysis is required.

I am rather inclined to see here a common Illyrian and Thracian heritage, with a possible Adriatic-Illyrian origin as a term specific to trade, initially perhaps related to markets on the shore, then spreading to the Thracian world as well. The term must have spread before the fall of the Roman Empire, as only such an old distribution may explain how it reached the Slavic homeland before the 6th century C.E. just like other forms analyzed elsewhere (for other cases referring e.g. to **sǫto* and *Perunǫ* (on **sǫto* see Paliga, 1988 and the recent polemical paper Paliga, 2012b; on *Perunǫ* see Paliga, 2009).

The case of **tǫrgъ* is NOT, therefore, an isolated case, but an example, relevant indeed, among other examples of the north Thracian component (stratum C) of Proto-Slavic. Further research will either support or not support our interpretation. For a recent analysis of the early Slavic and East Romance relations, see Paliga and Teodor (2009), so far the only interdisciplinary approach published in Romania on this topic; very recently, Paliga, 2012a.

Sl. **tǫrgъ* may be ultimately assigned to the group of words derived from Pre-IE **T-R-*, analyzed in a larger context in an older paper, Paliga, 1989, with an earlier approach to the specific terms related to ‘township’ and ‘fortress’ in Thracian (Paliga, 1987), without analyzing the possible forms derived from **T-R-*, which may be added in the wake of more recent investigation.

Addendum

The data analyzed above may be better understood in the light of other archaic (‘Mediterranean’) terms referring to urban settlements. The problem is complex, therefore I will briefly refer to some previous data published by the author, updating some information and making new connections.

The case of Sl. **tǫrgъ* might be easier understood if placed in a larger context of terms originating in the ‘Mediterranean’ (i.e. Pre-Indo-European) stratum. I note that a series of archaic terms are already attested for:

- Greek *asty*, of ‘Mediterranean’ origin and *polis* of presumed IE origin.
- Latin *urbs*, *urbis* related to *orbis*, of Etruscan origin, which means another possibly Mediterranean origin, or in any case non-IE archaic origin.

Latin developed during the expansion of the Empire a series of ‘technical’ terms like *oppidum*, *civitas*, *urbs*, *orbis* and others.

At least an interesting case, which supports our interpretation, may refer to the forms derived from Pre-IE *OR-, *UR- ‘big, huge’, specifically in some place- and mythological names of antiquity, some preserved to modern and contemporary times. I once made a new interpretation of these forms in the context of analyzing Rom. *oraș*, dial. *uraș* ‘town, city’, showing that the currently accepted hypothesis, a Hungarian origin, is erroneous, it does not comply with either phonetic evolution or extralinguistic context: the Magyars could not have a term referring to an urban settlement prior to the 10th century C.E. (see, among others, the situation in Finnish, where *kaupunki* and *kauppala*, the two terms referring to the urban settlements, are of Germanic origin—the Finnish groups settles approximately 8 centuries earlier than the Magyars).

In reality, the Romanian forms must be explained in close connection with the Thracian place-names ending in *-ora*, *-oros*, *-oron*, well attested and correctly analyzed in Dečev’s *Thrakische Sprachreste*.

Other forms compete with being accepted in this group, I would mention at least two:

- *Varna*, in our analysis derived from a substratum, Thracian root *war-, *or-, and not derived from a root ‘black’ as in *vrana*, which is—in our hypothesis—an erroneous explanation. *Varna* witnesses in fact the same phonetic evolution as in *Vrbas*, which does not reflect Slavic *vrba* ‘willow’, but relates to the ancient city of *Urganus*.

- *Warszawa*, unexplained etymologically. It is, in our analysis, from the same Pre-Slavic root *war- ‘big, huge’ with direct reference to the urban settlements of the time. I am inclined to analyze the place-name *Warszawa* in connection with river-name *Warta* and with the Bulgarian place-name *Varna*.

In Slavic, the initial *v* < *w* is a normal phonetic phenomenon, with later evolutions specific to the Slavic languages. Liquid *r* in *Vrbas* is specific to the Serbian-Croatian area, but not to Bulgarian and Polish. If *Warszawa* may be indeed assigned to the Pre-Indo-European linguistic stratum, then future research may well be able to probe some interesting details. The place-name *Toruń* may be also understood in this context.

Further research in the field of archaic Pre-Slavic place-names may clarify the origin of *Varna* and *Warszawa* as well.

See a brief list of Pre-Indo-European forms in the addendum to Paliga, 2006a, p. 339 ff.

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Słowiański **trǫgъ*, staro-cerkiewno-słowiański *trǫgъ*. Pochodzenie i dystrybucja w epoce nowożytniej

Słowiański **trǫgъ*, scs. *trǫgъ* to nazwa zachowana także we współczesnych językach słowiańskich. Ma wiele derywatów zarówno wśród nazw apelatywnych, jak i nazw własnych, by wymienić choćby bułg. *Tărgoviște* (także ważne stanowisko archeologiczne), rum. *Târgoviște*, zapisywane także jako *Tîrgoviște* (przez pewien czas polityczne centrum Muntenii, ok. 80 km na północny zachód od Bukaresztu) czy fin. *Turku* (gen. *Turun*), czy też dyskusje na temat pochodzenia polskiej nazwy *Toruń*.

Pochodzenie *targu* było wielokrotnie przedmiotem dyskusji, jednak nazwy nie można analizować niezależnie od starożytnej nazwy iliryjskiego miasta *Tergitio*, późniejsze *Tergeste*, poprzednik współczesnego słoweńskiego *Trst* i włoskiego *Trieste*. Václav Machek rozpatrywał nawet tak archaiczne pochodzenie jak sumeryjskie, przywołując asyryjsko-babilońskie *tamgaru* ‘handlowiec’, idąc za sugestią orientalisty Bedřicha Hrozného, który odczytał pismo hetyckie (1915). Autor ten stwierdza, że pochodzenie rozpatrywanego słowa trzeba uznać za

bałkańskie lub raczej wspólne ilirysko-trackie jako termin techniczny związany z handlem. Jego rozpowszechnienie z południa na północ jest całkowicie zrozumiałe, jeśli wziąć pod uwagę północny zasięg stosunków ekonomicznych Imperium Rzymskiego, a później Bizancjum, w czasach trudnych do sprecyzowania, jednak zdecydowanie wcześniejszych od słowiańskiej ekspansji, tj. sprzed VI w. n. e. Pochodzenie orientalne jest mało prawdopodobne. Jeżeli jednak brać je pod uwagę, to należy przyjąć, że wcześniej słowo to pojawiło się w klasycznej grece, a następnie, w dość wczesnym okresie, z niej rozpowszechniło się w kierunku północnym. Bardziej prawdopodobne wydaje się pochodzenie śródziemnomorskie, a być może nawet przedindoeuropejskie, według Macheka *praeuropejský původ*.

Słowa kluczowe: język iliryski; język tracki; *tǫrgǫ*; język indoeuropejski; język preindoeuropejski; „język śródziemnomorski”; język sumeryjski

Slavic **tǫrgǫ*, Old Church Slavonic *trǫgǫ*. Their Origin and Distribution in Postclassical Times

Slavic **tǫrgǫ*, Old Church Slavonic *trǫgǫ*, preserved in the modern Slavic languages as well, has had an impressive distribution in both vocabulary and place-names, to note just Bulg. *Tǎrgovište* (also an important archaeological site), Rom. *Târgoviște*, also spelled *Tîrgoviște* (the political centre of Wallachia for some time, approx. 80 kms north-west from Bucharest) and as far as Finnish *Turku* (gen. *Turun*). See below the discussion regarding the Polish place-name *Toruń*. The origin has been debated, but it cannot be analysed independently from ancient Illyrian town of *Tergitio*, later *Tergeste*, the precursors of modern Slovene *Trst*, Italian *Trieste*. The ultimate origin has been looked for even in remote areas like Sumer, e.g. Václav Machek, who quotes Assyro-Babylonian *tamgaru* ‘trader’, in fact following a suggestion of the orientalist Bedřich Hrozný, the decipherer of Hittite (he published the study in August 1915).

The author assumes that the origin of the word must be accepted as ‘Balkanic’ or, in a perhaps better phrasing, as a common Illyrian and Thracian ‘technical term’ referring to trade and commerce. Its spread from south to north is entirely normal, following the spread of economic relations from the Roman, then the Byzantine world northwards at a date difficult to determine, but definitely prior to the Slavic expansion, i.e. before the 6th century C.E. It is unlikely that we have to do here an Oriental term. If indeed that were so, the term should have spread first to Classical Greek, then should have migrated northwards at an earlier date. It is rather likely that we have here a ‘Mediterranean’, perhaps even a Pre-Indo-European term, in Machek’s terminology, ‘*praeuropejský původ*’ (of Old European origin).

Keywords: Illyrian language; Thracian language; *tǫrgǫ*; Indo-European language; Pre-Indo-European language; ‘Mediterranean language’; Sumerian language

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