

Albanian ***dash*** m. ‘ram’*

1. (Old) Albanian attestations (selection)

1.1. (Old) Gheg

1.1.1. Gjon Buzuku, *Missale* (1555) (Çabej 1968: 83, 233; Qendro 2014: 57)

- 61r 70–72 *e pā një dash* *qi ish èngatërruom pér brienësh endér zhdo driza* “he [Abraham] saw a ram that is tangled with [his] horns in a [lit. some] thorn-bush”
⇒ Cf. Gen. 22.13 *yiditque post tergum arietem inter vepres herentem cornibus.*

1.1.2. Pjetër Budi, *Dottrina christiana* (1618) (Demiraj et al. 2022: 490–491)

- 190v 11–12 *e mer dashnë pér tē çpejtë / xgiedhunë grigjet së tii* “he [Cain] takes quickly the select ram from his herd”

1.1.3. Pjetër Bogdani, *Cuneus prophetarum* (1685) (Omari 2005 I: 27, 111, II: 20; 2016: 151)

- II.20.7 *tue i bam tē mëdha kurbane dashash e sjepsh* “making for him big sacrifices with rams and billy-goats”
⇒ Note the association of the abl.pl. *dashash* with the abl.pl. *sjepsh* ‘billy-goats’.
- I.111.5 *njiqind desh* (It. *cento castrati*) “one hundred wethers”

1.1.4. Franciscus Blanchus, *Dictionarium Latino-Epiroticum* (1635) (Demiraj 2008: 460–461)

- 182 *das: vex, castrone /dash/ ‘wether’*

1.1.5. Gheg or Gheg-oriented dictionaries

- Jungg (1895: 21): sg. *dash* (<dasc>) ~ pl. *desh* (<desc>) ‘castrato (i.e., wether)’
- Kristoforidhi (*FShG*: 76) (1904): sg. *dash* ~ pl. *deshë* ‘κριός, κριάρι (i.e., ram)’

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1.2. (Old) Tosk

1.2.1. Hasan Zyko Kamberi, *Poezi* (18th–19th cent.) (Abazi-Egro 2016: 168, 207)

- 18.153–154 *dy bajramë për të falë / edhe një dash të bësh kurban* “two Bajrams [a Muslim holiday] so that you pray and one ram [so] that you sacrifice [lit. you make a sacrifice]”

1.2.2. Jan Vellara, *Stoicheia hellêno-albanikês grammatikês kai hellêno-albanikoi dialogoi* (1801) (Jochalas 1985: 161, 247, 270)

- 187 (nr. 539) *Kriápi* ['ram']. [nom.sg.undet.] *Dash*, [gen.sg.det.] *dashit*. [nom.pl.undet.] *Deshë*, [gen.pl.det.] *deshet*

1.2.3. Daniil Moschopolitis (or Voskopojari), *Lexikon Tetraglosson* (1802) (Demiraj 2022: 40, 92)

- 3.10 *Tà κριάρια* ['the rams']. [nom.pl.det.] *deshtë*

1.3. (Old) Arbëresh

1.3.1. Nicolò Chetta, *Leksiko liti, kthiellë arbërisht* (1763) (Cerniglia 2008: 58, 167)

- *Ariete* ['ram']: sg. *dashi* ~ pl. *deshtë*
- *Montone* ['ram']: *dashi*

1.3.2. Giordano (*FAI*: 66): sg. *dash* ~ pl. *desh* ‘montone (i.e., ram)’

1.4. Standard Albanian

- *FGjSSh* s.v.: ‘ram’, with mention of further metaphorical meanings (e.g., ‘(battering-)ram’ in military context).

2. Inner-Albanian analysis

2.1. Semantics

2.1.1. ‘wether’: this meaning is limited to Gheg (Bogdani; Blanchus; da Lecce; Jungg).

2.1.2. ‘ram’: this meaning is (i) chronologically older (Buzuku; Budi) and (ii) geographically more widespread (Gheg; Tosk; Standard Albanian).

2.1.3. Hence, the meaning ‘ram’ is likely to be primary, and ‘wether (i.e., castrated ram)’ developed secondarily from ‘ram’.

⇒ Note that a meaning ‘ram’ is also presupposed by most derivatives of Alb. *dash*, e.g.:

- Alb. *dash deti* ‘pelican’ (lit. ‘sea ram’), cf. also Alb. *lara-dash* m. ‘id.’ (*FGjSSh* s.v.).

- Gheg *desh-ár* m. ‘guest who brings a ram as a gift at a wedding’ (*SE* III: 172).

2.1.4. There are parallels for a semantic development ‘ram’ ⇒ ‘wether’ (Buck 1949: 158), e.g.:

- PDE *wether* ‘castrated male sheep’ < OE *weber* m. ‘wether; ram’ ~ NHG *Widder* m. ‘ram’ (*ASD* s.v. *weber*; *OED* s.v. *wether*).
- Fr. *mouton* m. ‘wether; sheep’ < OFr. *multun* m. ‘ram’ (*FEW* VI/3: 205).

2.2. Morphology

2.2.1. The paradigm sg. *dash* ~ pl. *desh* is not isolated within Albanian – cf. Alb. sg. *plak* ~ pl. *pleq* ‘old man’ (*DPEWA* s.v.).

2.2.2. Alb. sg. *dash* < PAlb. **daš(ś)V-* or **dž̥as(ś)V-*.

- Anlaut: (i) PAlb. *#*d*° < PIE *#*d*⁽ʰ⁾° or (ii) PAlb. *#*dž̥h*° < PIE *#*g̥h*° (cf. Alb. *dorē* ‘hand’ < **g̥esr-*, *DPEWA* s.v.).
- Inlaut: PAlb. *-*a*- < PIE *-*o*-, **H / C_C*, *-*Vy*- or *-*η*-.
- Auslaut: (i) PAlb. *^o*śV-* < PIE *^o*si-* or (ii) PAlb. *^o*ssV-* < PIE *^o*NsV-* (cf. Alb. *mish* ‘meat’ < **memso-*, *VAA*: 264).

2.2.3. Alb. pl. *desh* < PAlb. **Deš-i* < (*i*-umlaut) **Daš-i*.

2.2.3.1. Pl.-ending PAlb. *-*i* < PIE (i) *-*oij* (*o*-stem) or (ii) unstressed *-*ejes* (*i*-stem), cf.:

- Alb. pl. *pleq* ‘old men’ < PAlb. **plaki* < Pre-PAlb. **plakai* < PIE **płh₁-i-koi* ‘the gray ones’.
- Alb. 2.sg. *vesh* ‘you dress’ < PAlb. **uaši* < Pre-PAlb. **uásiyah* < PIE **uos-éje-si*.

3. Proposed etymologies of Alb. *dash* ‘ram’ (selection)

3.1. Connection to other Albanian lexemes denoting breeding animals.

3.1.1. Barić (1919: 6): derivative in *-sh* to Alb. *dele* f. ‘sheep’.

- ⇒ But against the assumption of a development Alb. *^o*Vl-sh* > ^o*V-sh* see Alb. *gërbul-sh* ‘dirty’ ← *gërbulë* f. ‘leprosy’ (*FEGjSh*: 538; Xhuvani & Çabej 1976: 271).

3.1.2. Demiraj (*AE*: 124): derivative in *-sh* to Alb. *dem* m. ‘young bull’ (see *DPEWA* s.v.).

- ⇒ Semantic development?

3.2. Çabej (SE III: 172–173), Topalli (FEGjSh: 360):

- Connection to Skt. *daśā-* f. ‘border, margin of a cloth’, Goth. *tagl* n. ‘hair’, MIr. *dúal* m. ‘lock (of hair)’, etc. (EWAia I: 710; EDPG: 504) ← PIE root **dék-*.
- Assumption of (i) a pre-form PIE **dok-o/eh₂-* > Alb. **dath(ē)* ‘wool’ and (ii) a derivational suffix Alb. *-sh* (Xhuvani & Çabej 1976: 271–272).

3.2.1. But no independent evidence for a form Alb. **dath(ē)* with the meaning ‘wool’.

3.3. Jokl (1923: 240–241), Mann (1950: 387; 1977: 29, 57), Orel (AED: 57; 2000: 14):

- Connection to the PIE root (in modern notation) **dʰ̥ues-* ‘breath’ (LIV²: 160).
- Pre-form PAlb. **daśi-* < PIE **dʰ̥ous-i-*¹ ‘the breathing one’ (AED: 57).

3.3.1. As for the secondary full grade I, cf. PGerm. **deuz-a-* n. ‘animal’ > Goth *dius* n. ‘id.’, etc.

3.3.2. Formally, Alb. *dash* could belong to PIE **dʰ̥ues-* (with full-grade II) or **dʰ̥eus-* (with full-grade I), as PIE *#*dʰ̥y-* > Alb. *d-* – cf. Alb. *derē* f. ‘door’ < PIE **dʰ̥yor-* (DPEWA s.v.).

3.3.3. But then how to explain the specific meaning ‘male sheep, ram’ of Alb. *dash*?

- ⇒ One should assume a three-steps development (i) ‘the breathing one’ ⇒ ‘animal’ (cf. Lat. *animal* n.), (ii) ‘animal’ ⇒ ‘sheep’ (cf. Engad. *beša*, REW: 92), and (iii) ‘sheep’ ⇒ ‘ram’.
- ⇒ Even if parallels for the single steps can be found, this hypothesis requires the assumption of a complex semantic trajectory (‘the breathing one’ ⇒ ‘ram’) – not very appealing.

3.4. La Piana (1939: 91):

- “I.e. **d̥y-s-:* [...] (‘irsuto’ quindi:) montone, lat. *densus*”.
- Thus with assumption of an original meaning ‘(the) shaggy (one)’.

3.4.1. Semantic discussion.

3.4.1.1. Lat. *densus* ‘thick, dense; frequent’ usually denotes referents like earth (*terra*), woods (*silva, lucus*), groups of people (*agmen, vulgus*) *vel sim.*, rarely though also the fleece of sheep.

- ⇒ Columella *rust.* 7.3.3 *cauda longissima densique velleris* “with a very long tail and a thick fleece” (said of a ram).

3.4.1.2. The meaning ‘hairy, shaggy (of persons and animals); thick with leaves, bushy’ is instead proper to the Gk. cognate δασύς (Lamberterie 1990: 683–696), cf. esp. *Od.* 9.425:

- ⇒ #ἀρσενεῖς ὄϊες [...] δασύ-μαλλοι# “thick-fleeced male sheep [i.e., rams]”.

3.4.1.3. Cf. further Lat. *vervex, -ēcis* m. ‘wether’ (Varro *ling.* 5.98) ~ (later) ‘sheep’ (> Fr. *brebis* f. ‘ewe’), most likely related to Gk. εἴρως n. ‘wool’ < **uérwos-* (EDLIL: 668–669).

¹ With adapted notation.

3.4.2. Morphological discussion.

3.4.2.1. The plural Alb. *desh* (not ^x*desh-e*) rules out a closer connection with the *u*-stems (i) Gk. δασύς ‘hairy; bushy’ (<< *d_{ns}-ú-, cf. Nikolaev 2010: 238–239) and (ii) Hitt. *daššu-* ‘massive, mighty’ (< *d_en_s-u-, cf. Melchert 1994: 93, 135, 163).

3.4.2.2. Instead, Alb. *dash* m. ‘ram’ could continue a substantivization of the *o*-stem adjective *d(e)n_s-ó- that underlies Lat. *dēnsus* ‘thick’ (EDLIL: 167).

⇒ Cf. Pre-PAlb. *d_{ns}-o/i- or *d_{óns}-o/i- ‘the thick[-fleeced] one’.

3.4.3. La Piana’s etymology thus represents the most convincing explanation of Alb. *dash* so far.

4. An alternative proposal

4.1. One of the most common *Benennungsmotive* of the ram is ‘the running, quick-moving one’ *vel sim.* (cf. Buck 1949: 157–158).

4.1.1. Some examples.

- Lith. *tēkis* m. (2) ‘ram; breeding animal’ (~ Latv. *tekis* m. ‘ram’, *tekulis* m. ‘one who runs around; ram’) ← Lith. *tekéti* ‘run (of liquids or not)’ ← PIE *tekʷ- ‘id.’ (ALEW: 1256).
- Ir. *reithe* ‘ram’ ← *rith* ‘run’ < OIr. *reithid* ‘id.’ ← PIE *ret- ‘id.’ (Lane 1931: 281–282).
- Fr. dial. (Poitiers) *mouton courant* ‘ram’, lit. ‘running ram’ (Schossig 1959: 36).
- Lith. *skērýs* m. (4) ‘ram’ (~ ‘locust; dragonfly’), Latv. *škēris* m. ‘ram’ ← PIE *(s)ker- ‘jump, move quickly’ (Gk. σκαίρω ‘jump, dance’, OCS *skorū* ‘fast, swift’, etc.) – originally ‘jumping / quick-moving creature’ (LED: 1192).

⇒ Cf. also NHG *be-springen* ‘mount, cover’.

4.1.2. Such a denomination may refer to the sexual activity of the rams (breeding animals).

⇒ Columella *rust.* 7.3.4 *frequenter in pugnam procurrit, et fit in feminas quoque procacior* “it often runs into the fray and also becomes more wanton towards the females” (said of a horned ram).

⇒ NHG *läuf-ig* ‘in heat (esp. of dogs)’ ← *laufen* ‘run’.

4.2. Does a formally fitting PIE root with the meaning ‘run, move (quickly)’ *vel sim.* exist?

4.2.1. PIE *d^henh₂- ‘run, flow’ →

- *u*-present in Ved. *dhán(u)va-* ‘run, flow’ (RV) ~ *pra-dhanva-* ‘pass away’ (YV), whence the neo-root *dhanu-* → Ved. *dhánu-tar-* m. ‘runner’, etc. (Gotō 1987: 178–180; García Ramón 2018: 150; Jasanoff 2022/23: 65);
- causative Ved. *dhanáya-* ‘put in motion, make run’ (Jamison 1983: 84);

- OPers. *danu[vatiy]*[?] ‘flows’[?];
- Gk. θνήσκω ‘die’ (Méndez Dosuna 2008), etc.

4.2.2. Further refs. on PIE **d^henh₂*- and its derivatives: Hollifield (1978: 180–182); Klingenschmitt (1982: 231–232 fn. 4); *EWAia* I: 772–773; Vine (1998: 66–69), on Gk. θάνατος m. ‘death’; Kümmel 2000: 255–257; *LIV*²: 144–145, with gloss “sich in Lauf setzen, sich davon machen”; Ginevra 2024 (esp. 112–124, 140–141), on the root semantics.

4.3. Alb. *dash* m. ‘ram’ could be derived from a pre-form **d^hon(h₂)*-*s-o/i-*.

4.3.1. The latter pre-form – esp. if specified as **d^hón(h₂)*-*s-o-* – is most easily analyzed as an *o*-substantivization derived from an adjective PIE **d^h(e)nh₂*-*s-ó*- ‘running, flowing’.

- ⇒ Cf. PIE **k^w(e)lh₁*-*s-ó*- ‘turning’ → **k^wól(h₁)*-*s-o-* ‘the turning one’ > Lat. *collus* m. ‘neck’, NHG *Hals* m. ‘id.’ (Neri 2013: 198).
- ⇒ On *o*-substantivization, see generally Nussbaum (1997: 194).

4.3.2. The adjective PIE **d^h(e)nh₂*-*s-ó*- ‘running, flowing’ points to an otherwise unattested *s*-stem PIE **d^hénh₂*-*o/es-* ‘(act of) running, flowing’.

4.4. Ved. *dhāsi-* m./f. (17x in the RV): an Indo-Aryan *comparandum* of Alb. *dash*?

4.4.1. Janert (1956) convincingly proposed a translation ‘Quelle, Flüssigkeitsstrahl [wellspring, gush]’ – thus also Jamison (*RVTC* ad 1.62.3, 1.140.1), more cautious *EWAia* I: 790–791.

4.4.2. This is plausible – cf., e.g.:

- RV 1.62.3 (to Indra; Vala myth)

*indrasyāngirasāṁ ceṣṭāu vidát sarámā tánayāya dhāsim
bṛhaspátir bhinád ádrīm vidád gāḥ sám usriyābhír vāvaśanta nárah*

“At the desire of Indra and the Aṅgirases, Saramā [a female dog belonging to Indra] found the wellspring for posterity. Bṛhaspati split the rock; he found the cows. The men bellowed together with the ruddy [cows]” (after *RVT*: 182).
- RV 4.3.9 (to Agni)

*ṛténa ṛtám niyatam īla ā góṛ āmá sácā mádhumat pakvám agne
kṛṣṇá satí rúśatā dhāsínaiṣá jámaryena páyasā pīpāya*

“With truth I reverently invoke the [mystical] truth set down [=acquired] from the cow: the raw one [=cow] and the cooked, honeyed one [=milk] [belong] together, Agni. Though she [the cow] is black, she [is] swollen with the gleaming gush, with milk for nourishing offspring” (after *RVT*: 562).

- RV 10.31.1 (to the Waters or Apām Napāt; cf. also RV 4.55.7c)

prá devatrā bráhmaṇe gātúr etv apó áchā mánaso ná práyukti mahím mitrásyā várunasya dhāsím pṛthujrásyase rīradhā suvṛktím

“Let the course for our sacred formulation go forth to the waters [that are] among the gods, as if by the impulse of mind, to the great wellspring of Mitra and Varuna. I will make the well-twisted [=hymn] subject to that which possesses broad expanse [=waters?]” (after *RVT*:1422).

4.4.3. Janert (1965, esp. 3, 7) (i) relates Ved. *dhāsí-* m./f. ‘wellspring’ to Ved. *dhán_(u)va-* ‘run, flow’ and (ii) traces it back to a pre-form “*dhῆsi” (p. 3, cf. “*d^hῆH-sí-” in *EWAia* I: 790).

4.4.4. The prehistory of the latter pre-form can be specified as follows:

- PIE adj. *d^hῆh₂-s-ó- ‘running, flowing’ (§ 4.5 below);
 → subst. *d^hῆh₂-s-i- ‘the flowing one’ > Ved. *dhāsí-* m. ‘wellspring’.
- ⇒ As for the oxytone stress of the *i*-substantivization Ved. *dhāsí-*, cf. Ved. *jīrā-* ‘swift’ → *jīrī-* m. or f. ‘quick water, rapids’ (Nussbaum 1999: 399).
- ⇒ As for the semantics of Ved. *dhāsí-*, cf. PIE *d^hῆh₂-tó- ‘running, flowing’ → subst. *d^hón(h₂)-ti- ‘the flowing one’ > Lat. *fōns, fontis* m. ‘wellspring’ (*EDLIL*: 230–231) – type PIE *mῆ-tó- ‘protruding’ → subst. *món-ti- ‘the protruding one’ > Lat. *mōns, -ontis* m. ‘mountain’ (Vine 2004: 374–376).
- ⇒ The coexisting feminine gender of Ved. *dhāsí-* may be analogical to that of the synonym – and cognate – Ved. *dhárā-* f. ‘stream, current’ < *d^hῆh₂-reh₂- (Janert 1956: 7 fn. 26).

4.5. Ved. *dhāsí-* m.(/f.) ‘wellspring’ (< *d^hῆh₂-s-i-) thus enables to specify the underlying adjective PIE *d^h(e)nh₂-s-ó- ‘running, flowing’ (§ 4.3.1) as *d^hῆh₂-s-ó-.

4.5.1. The latter belongs to the adjectival type PIE *luk-s-ó- ‘bright’, cf.:

- PIE *léuk-o/es- ‘brightness’ (> Av. *raocah-* n. ‘light’) → *luk-s-ó- ‘bright’ > Ved. *rukṣá-* ‘id.’ (Stüber 2002: 124–125).
- PIE *mél-o/es- n. ‘evilness’ (→ Gk. βλασφημέω ‘speak impiously’) → *mł-s-ó- ‘evil’ > W. *mall* ‘evil, putrid; m./f. wickedness, plague’ (Höfler 2017: 63–65, 491).
- PIE *dléuk-o/es- ‘sweetness’ (> Myc. *de-re-u-ko* ‘grape must’) → *dluk-s-ó- ‘sweet’ → *dlúk-s-i- ‘sweetness’ > Gk. γλύξις f. ‘sweet insipid wine’ and, possibly, *dlúk-s-u- ‘the sweet / pleasant (life)’ > Lat. *luxus, -ūs* m. ‘luxury’ (Höfler 2017: 148, 230–234).
- PIE *(s)pérh_x-o/es- ‘(act of) flying’ (> Slow. *perō*, gen.sg. *perēsa* n. ‘feather, leaf’) → *(s)přh_x-s-ó- ‘flying’ or ‘feathered’ → *(s)přh_x-s-eh₂- ‘the flying one’ or ‘the feathered one’ > Lat. *parra* f. (a certain bird), Umb. **parfa-** f. (a ritual bird) (Höfler 2017a: 17–18).

- PIE **pélh₂-s-* ‘(act of) covering’ (→ Gk. -πελας ‘skin’ in ἐρυσί-πελας [a skin disease], lit. ‘red-skin’) → **płh₂-s-ó-* ‘covering’ → **płh₂-s-eh₂-* ‘the covering one’ > Lat. *palla* f. ‘mantle’, Hitt. *palahsa-* c. (name of a garment) (Höfler 2017a: 19–20).
- PIE **gʰéldʰ-o/es-* ‘(act of) desiring’ (→ **gʰeldʰ-s-o-* > Arm. *geլj* ‘desire’) → **gʰldʰ-s-ó-* ‘desiring’ > Ved. *gr̄tsa-* ‘clever, dexterous’, Pāli *gijha-* ‘greedy’ (Nikolaev in prep.) – with stress retraction in analogy to (i) the present stem Ved. *gr̄dhyā-* ‘be desirous’ and (ii) the substantivization **gr̄tsa-* > Pāli *gijha-* m. ‘vulture’ (Brent Vine *apud* Nikolaev in prep.).
- PIE **péuk-**o/es-* ‘point(edness)’ (→ Gk. ἐχε-πευκής ‘pointed, sharp’) → **puk-s-ó-* ‘pointed, sharp’ → **puk-s-o-* ‘the sharp one’ > OHG *fuhs* m. ‘fox’ (differently *EWAhd* III: 611–613).

5. Summary and conclusions

5.1. Building on La Piana (1939: 91), Alb. *dash* m. ‘ram (⇒ wether)’ could

- i. be etymologically connected with Gk. δασύς ‘hairy; bushy’ (<< **dns-i-*), Lat. *densus* ‘thick’ (< **d(e)ns-ó-*), etc. and
- ii. be plausibly traced back to Pre-PAlb. **dns-o/i-* or **dóns-o/i-* ‘the thick[-fleeced] one’, cf.:
 - *Od.* 9.425 #ἄρσενες ὄιες [...] δασύ-μαλλοι# “thick-fleeced male sheep [i.e., rams]”;
 - Columella *rust.* 7.3.3 *densique velleris* “with a thick fleece” (said of a ram).

5.2. Alternatively, I proposed the following derivation:

PIE root **dʰenh₂-* ‘run, flow’ (→ Ved. *dhán(u)va-* ‘id.’, Gk. θνήσκω ‘die’, etc.);
 → s-stem **dʰénh₂-o/es-* ‘(act of) running, flowing’;
 → adj. **dʰnh₂-s-ó-* ‘running, flowing’;
 → subst. **dʰnh₂-s-i-* m. ‘the flowing one’ > Ved. *dhāsi-* m.(f.) ‘wellspring, gush’;
 → subst. **dʰón(h₂)-s-o-* m. ‘the running one’ > Alb. *dash* m. ‘ram (⇒ wether)’.

5.2.1. Alb. *dash* m. ‘ram’ would then exhibit the same *Benennungsmotiv* as the synonyms (i) Lith. *tēkis* m. (2) and (ii) Ir. *reithe* – namely, ‘the running (animal)’.

Shumë faleminderit për vëmendjen tuaj!

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