

The traditional etymology of Lat. *tranquillus* ‘calm’ assumes a compound of *trāns* in the meaning ‘very’ (cf. *trāns* > Fr. *très*) plus a pre-Lat. *\*k̥̥ilo-* (< *\*k̥̥ih<sub>1</sub>-lo-*), from PIE *\*k̥̥<sub>1</sub>eh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘ausruhen’ (Lat. *quiēscō* etc.), cf. substantivized *\*k̥̥ih<sub>1</sub>-lo-* in Gmc. *\*hwīla-* (Go. *heila* ‘Weile’ etc.). Although this theory (or one of its variants) is presented in many handbooks as if certain, it is in fact very problematic (cf. Ernout-Meillet: “composé expressif de formation obscure”), and should be abandoned. The principal difficulty concerns *trāns*: the meaning ‘very’ is not attested until late Vulgar Latin (even adverbial *trāns* ‘beyond’ does not occur before Vitruvius): it is not credible for *trāns* to have had such a sense in a prehistoric formation, as required by *tranquillus*. There is, however, no phonological difficulty: *-ns+k̥̥-* > *-nqu-* as in *inquit*; *-ilo-* > *-illo-* by expressive gemination or as authorized by alternations like *vārus/Varrō*.

An archaic compound with first member *trāns* is best conceived in terms of the standard formation based on hypostasized prepositional phrases: *prō fānō* → *profānus*, *ā/dē viā* → *āvius/dēvius*, *per fidem* → *perfidus*, etc. One must therefore assume that the second member of this “*profānus* formation” derives from a noun (e.g. *\*k̥̥ilom*, *\*k̥̥ilim*, *\*k̥̥ilām*, etc., or *\*k̥̥illom*, etc.) that was part of an original prepositional phrase with a meaning appropriate to Lat. *tranquillus* ‘calm’. This calmness, moreover, refers first and foremost to *calm weather conditions, especially at sea* — cf. substantivized *tranquillum* ‘a calm (at sea)’ [Plt.+], and divinized *Tranquillitas* (inscr.: *ara Tranquillitatis*) = good weather at sea, among much other evidence of this sort. Given the background of *trāns* as a frozen participle to PIE *\*terh<sub>2</sub>-* ‘cross over, overcome’, the original prepositional phrase should involve ‘getting through’ or ‘overcoming’ *a storm, high winds* (vel sim.) so as to arrive at a state of ‘calm’ (with reference to weather and the sea — thus perhaps originally a fragment of nautical jargon, notoriously conservative).

Among sources of *\*-iV-* to be considered is *\*-ēli-* > *\*-īli-*, where the best-attested cases involve original *\*-esli-* (cf. *vīlis*, *subtilis*). I suggest that the noun governed by *trāns* was a pre-Lat. form *\*k̥̥ūlim* (acc.) < *\*k̥̥ūlim* < *\*k̥̥ezlim* < (preliminary Transponat) *\*k̥̥ēs-li-m* ‘gale, wind-storm’, to PIE *\*k̥̥ues-* ‘blow, pant’ (Ved. *śvasiti*, Lat. *queror*, Eng. *wheeze* etc.) — i.e., *\*trāns k̥̥ūlim* ‘having passed through a gale’ → *\*trankūilo-/tranquillo-* ‘calm’ (esp. at sea). External evidence favoring a “meteorological” sense of PIE *\*k̥̥ues-* ‘blow’ is found in Vedic, cf. *śvas-* collocated with *stan-* ‘to thunder’ (RV 1.140.5d *abhīśvasān stanáyann éti*, similarly 6.47.29a/30b *úpa śvāsaya pṛthivīm utá dyām ... ní ṣṭanihi*), and the derivative *śúśma-* ‘onrush, power’ in the meaning ‘(stormy) violence’, ‘storm (of rage, etc.)’, with similar collocations (7.3.6c *divó ná te tanyatúr eti śúśmas*, 4.10.4d *prá te divó ná stanayanti śúśmāḥ*, 6.3.8b *vidyún ná ... śúśmaiḥ*). Most remarkably, some evidence may point to an old collocation of PIE *\*terh<sub>2</sub>-* (as in *trāns*) and *\*k̥̥ues-* (as in the proposed *\*k̥̥ūlim*), cf. 8.99.6a *ánu te śúśmaṃ turáyantam ...*, 9.19.7b *ní śúśmaṃ ní váyas tīra*. In terms of morphology, the possibility that pre-Lat. *\*k̥̥ezli-* continues an athematic *l*-stem (cf. perhaps Lat. *querēla* ‘complaint’) raises interesting perspectives, given the fact that the only word for ‘wind-storm’ reconstructable for PIE is also an *l*-stem: *\*h<sub>2</sub>ueh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘blow’ → *\*h<sub>2</sub>euh<sub>1</sub>-el-ih<sub>2</sub>* > *ἄελλα* ‘wind-storm’, cf. *\*h<sub>2</sub>euh<sub>1</sub>-el-eh<sub>2</sub>* > W. *awel* ‘wind, breath’ (note also *ἄελλα* → *θύελλα* ‘id.’, and *l*-forms to *\*h<sub>2</sub>enh<sub>1</sub>-* ‘blow, breathe’: Ved. *ánila-*, TB *onolme*). Finally, while the participial status of Lat. *trāns* is widely acknowledged, the semantics of the prepositional phrase underlying Lat. *tranquillus* may provide the first clear evidence favoring the view that this is an aorist and not a present participle.