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**Language, law and loanwords in early medieval Gaul:  
language contact and studies in Gallo-Romance phonology**  
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## 9 Troubles with the Taifali ethnonym and its occurrence in Gallo-Romance toponyms

### Introduction

In Late Antiquity, vast barbarian confederations roamed the Central-European lands north of the Roman border. Many of these late antique confederations are well-known and well-studied. This is the case for the Vandals, the Franks, the Alans, the Visigoths, the Ostrogoths, and the Burgundians. Other barbarian peoples, due to the scarcity of our historical sources, remain in the shadows. This is the case for the Rugians, the Gepids, the Rhozalans, and the Taifali. In this chapter, I am concerned with the Taifali, a barbarian people that historians often group with the Alans and the Sarmatians (see Jiménez Garnica 1999: 125).

Although the Taifali are one of the lesser-studied barbarian peoples, in recent decades multiple small contributions on the Taifali have been published (e.g. Cameron 1992; Jimenez 1999; Green 2011). Romanists have been interested since the late nineteenth century, in the toponyms that could be connected to the Taifali ethnonym (Richard 1886: 435; Longnon 1929; Vincent 1937). Later linguistic research, from the second half of that century (Lebel 1964; Chambon 1996), commented on many of the phonological problems that affect these place-names. This raises the question whether there is anything left to investigate.

Surprisingly, although the majority of the problems of the Taifali toponyms have been discussed before, many of them remain unsolved. In this investigation, several of these remaining puzzles will be tackled. Furthermore, an in-depth diachronic analysis of the Taifali toponyms might shed light on how Gallo-Romance adapted non-Frankish settlement names.<sup>236</sup>

This chapter consists of two parts. In the first part, earlier research on the Taifali ethnonym is reviewed and the etymologies that have been proposed for the ethnonym are evaluated. In the second part, the phonological problems concerning the Taifali toponyms are submitted to a new investigation. This way, this chapter strives to give a synthesis of the available research, both germanicist and romanist, while critically assessing and emending the proposed linguistic theories.

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<sup>236</sup> We may note that many Romanist contributions on the Taifali have not reached scholars outside of francophone academia. An English overview of this Romanist scholarship may remedy this.

## Historical context

The Taifali enter recorded history in a late third century panegyric by Mamertinus (*Panegyrici Latini* 3, 17,1; ca. 291 CE *taifalorum*). According to Ammianus Marcellinus, one of our main sources on fourth-century Roman history, the Taifali roamed the Rumanian lands to the west of the Gothic Terwingi confederation (*Res Gestae* XXXI, 3).

Zosimus recounts that in 332 CE, Taifali horsemen are part of the Gothic armies, when the Taifali and the Goths fight together against the Roman emperor Constantine the Great (Wolfram 1979: 104). Furthermore, in the *Notitia Dignitatum*, a fifth-century administrative document recording the military units of the Roman Empire, we find the Taifali listed in the mounted regiments of the *equites honoriani* (Not.Dign. Oc. VI). Their equestrian prowess might be taken as evidence for a possible nomadic origin (Wolfram 1979: 104). Much (1926: 24) has argued that the Taifali belonged to the same group as the Lacringi, another barbarian people of the Rumanian plains. After all, the Lacringi and the Taifali are often mentioned together in Late Roman historiography. This argument is accepted by Steinhauser (1950: 8) and repeated by Wolfram (1979: 104), but cannot be substantiated in any meaningful way.

In the year 377 CE, the Taifali were involved in a Gothic raid that was intercepted and crushed by the Roman military. The surviving Taifali and Goths were resettled by the Roman authorities within the borders of the Roman Empire (see Much 1919: 305-06). Their presence in Gaul is corroborated by the *Notitia Dignitatum*, where we find the “*praefectus Sarmatarum Gentilium et Taifalorum Gentilium*” (Not.Dign. Oc. XLII 65) stationed in *Pictavis* (Poitou). Despite their close affiliation to the Goths, neither an Iranian<sup>237</sup> nor a Germanic etymology for the ethnonym has been accepted (see Sitzmann 2005: 271). Still, their close association with the Goths makes it plausible that the Taifali group was at least partly Germanic-speaking.

## Attestations

The different attested spellings of the ethnonym are listed below according to Schönfeld’s *Wörterbuch der altgermanischen Personen-und Völkernamen* (Schönfeld 1911: 219) and Reichert’s *Lexikon der altgermanischen Namen* (Kraml & Reichert 1987: 647). In this list, I will separate the forms that Schönfeld deems reliable from the likely corruptions and scribal errors.

- Reliable
  - Taifali
  - Thaifali

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<sup>237</sup> Agustí Alemany (2000) in his book on the Alans in recorded history evidently does not consider the Taifali as an Iranian people. He therefore also does not give an Iranian etymology for the ethnonym. The presence of the phonem /l/ in the word also complicates an Iranian etymology, since in Alanic/Sarmatian only Pir. \*ri/\*ry yields an l-phoneme, i.e. Pir. \*ri/\*ry > \*li/ly.

- θάϊφαλοι
- Corruptions
  - Thaufali
  - Taifruli
  - Tuifali

The reliable spellings in Latin transcription come from writers such as Ammianus Marcellinus, Mamertinus, Eutropius, Jordanes and Paeanius, who give the ethnonym as *taifali/thaifali*. The Greek transcription from Zosimus as θάϊφαλοι also seems trustworthy. Schönfeld therefore takes an underlying ethnonym *taifali* as starting point. He assumes that the name had a voiceless initial /t/ and that the Latin spellings with initial <th> and the Greek spellings with initial <θ> are reflections of this voiceless /t/. This spelling variation is not uncommon, since Roman authors often show hesitance in rendering the Germanic voiceless stops, e.g. *thervingi* for Gm. \**terwing* (see also Schönfeld 1911: XXII).<sup>238</sup>

We may start our review of the etymological suggestions with Schönfeld (1911), who deems the etymology of the Taifali ethnonym to be obscure and is unwilling to take a shot in the dark. He refers to Zeuss (1837: 433) for an earlier attempt. Zeuss connected the ethnonym to a Germanic root \**þaif-* which would be reflected in an alleged Old English form \*\**þāfian* ‘to allow, suffer, approve, consent to.’ The Old English word \*\**þāfian*, however, does not exist and the actual Old English etymon is *þafian* ‘to consent to, to agree with’ with a short vowel (Bosworth & Toller 1898: 1034). Since the Old English short vowel /a/ cannot go back to PGm. /ai/, Zeuss’ proposal must be rejected. Also Diculescu (1932: 13) thinks that we are dealing with a root \**þaif-* on the basis of the suffix alternation \*-al/\*-ul. However, as this suffix variation is only found in three spelling variants and one of these is conjectural, I think we can safely say that the numerous *taifal*-spellings that give a suffix \*-al- are the more reliable ones.<sup>239</sup>

### Steinhauser’s proposal

One etymological explanation for the tribal name Taifali deserves special attention, since it is accepted in the often quoted monograph on the Gothic peoples by the historian Herwig

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<sup>238</sup> The vacillation of classical writers in writing Germanic \*t with either <t> or <th> spellings might reflect the inability of Romance speakers to write the aspirated nature of the Germanic voiceless stop, i.e. PGm. /t/ = [tʰ]. This was already suggested by Schönfeld (1911: XXII).

<sup>239</sup> In the Verona List (ca. 385) edited by Riese (1878: 129) under the name *Nomina provinciarum omnium* (seventh century CE) the form *tafruli* is given as the reading of Muellenhof. This list is only preserved in one Verona manuscript and many ethnonyms are read incorrectly by Muellenhof, e.g. *crinsiani* for *frisiavi* (Riese l.c.). In the manuscripts of the *Res Gestae* of Ammianus Marcellinus we find once a spelling *taifolorum* which could easily be a scribal error provoked by the following *o* of *-orum*. In the ‘*Panegyrici Latini*’ (Baehrens 1874: 147) speech by Mamertinus we also find *taifolorum* in only one manuscript for which the same explanation of a scribal error might be invoked.

Wolfram (1979: 104). This explanation was first proposed in an article by Steinhauser titled ‘*Kultische Stammesnamen in Ostgermanien*’ (Steinhauser 1950). In this article, he suggests that several East Germanic tribal names are in need of a Celtic etymology. A case in point, in this regard, would be the tribal name of the Victovali, another nomadic people that roamed the steppes of Central-Europe in Late Antiquity (Steinhauser 1950: 13). The ethnonym Victovali seems to have a clear cognate in the Welsh personal name *Gueithgual* < PCelt. \**wixtowalos* ‘battle-ruler’, as first pointed out by Much (1919).

The survival of Celtic ethnonyms in Central Europe of the Migration Age is not surprising, since there is also some lexical evidence that supports the proximity of Celtic and Germanic-speaking peoples in the first centuries CE. This evidence comes from Gothic and consists of the following Gaulish loanwords (cf. Green 1998: 156-158; Pronk-Tiethoff 2013: 56):

- Goth. *siponeis* ‘disciple’ < Gaul. \**sek<sup>w</sup>on-*
- Goth. *kelikn* ‘tower’ < Gaul. *keliknon*
- Goth. *alew* ‘oil’ < Gaul. \**olewo-*
- Goth. *dulgs\** ‘debt’ < Gaul. \**dligo-*

Unfortunately, the additional Celtic etymologies that Steinhauser proposes are less convincing.<sup>240</sup> In the case of the Taifali, Steinhauser argues that we are dealing with a first Celtic element \**dai-* < \**daqi-* which would be cognate to Latin *daps* ‘sacrificial meal’, Greek δάπτω ‘to devour, to consume’ and Old Icelandic *tafn* ‘sacrificial animal’ < PIE \**dh<sub>2</sub>p-*/\**dh<sub>2</sub>pno-* (cf. De Vaan 2008: 161; Matasović 2009: 92). The second element /*fali*/ would then be identical to the second element in the ethnonym Victovali, i.e. PCelt. \**walo-* ‘ruler’ (cf. OIr. *fal* ‘rule’, see Matasović 2009: 402). The Celtic ethnonym \**daiwali* would then have undergone the effects of Grimm’s Law to Germanic, i.e. \**daiwali* > \**taiwali* > *taifali*. This explanation is unattractive for the following reasons:

1. Unknown to Steinhauser, the PIE root \**dh<sub>2</sub>p-* is preserved in Celtic and in the same formation type \**dh<sub>2</sub>pno-* as in Germanic, i.e. PIE \**dh<sub>2</sub>pno-* > PCelt. \**daqno-* > \**dauno-* > OIr. *dúan* ‘offering of a poem’ (Watkins 1970; Matasović 2009: 92). A formation PIE \**dh<sub>2</sub>pi-* is not found in any other Indo-European daughter language. It is therefore unlikely that this form occurred in Celtic alongside PIE \**dh<sub>2</sub>pno-* > OIr. *dúan*.
2. Whereas the Celtic element \**walos* in the ethnonym Victovali, and possibly in the ethnonym Vacharnavali is secured by its consistent spelling with <u>, the ethnonym Taifali is only found with an <f>. This is especially significant because the Victovali and the Taifali are mentioned alongside each other in the works of Ammianus Marcellinus.

<sup>240</sup> His theory that the name of the Naharnavali is connected to an unattested Proto-Celtic heteroclitic \**naswar*, \**naswan-* (cf. Gk. ναός ‘temple’, see Beekes 2009: 995) is unconvincing.

It seems to me that a Celtic etymology for the tribal name Taifali cannot be right and its acceptance in the monumental work of Wolfram is therefore unfortunate. Nevertheless, Steinhauser's insistence that the ethnonym should be parsed as *\*tai-fali* is in itself an interesting deviation from the analysis by Zeuss (1837: 433) and Diculescu (1932: 13).

### Grimm's proposal

A similar parsing of *\*tai-fali* was made by Jacob Grimm in 1866. Grimm argued that the first element of the ethnonym represents the Germanic form of the name Dacia, the classical regionym for the Transdanubian province, i.e. EGM. *\*tahja* (Grimm 1866: 223). Since we know that Germanic-speaking peoples had also adopted other geographical names in Central Europe before the first Germanic sound shift, the most notable one being *\*harfada-* for the Carpathians (cf. ON *harvaðafföll*<sup>241</sup>), this suggestion should not be rejected outright.

We may note that the Germanic word *harvaða* for the Carpathians is also a chance survival in a single line of the archaic Old Norse *Hunnenslachtlied* (Battle of the Goths and the Huns), and without it, we would not have known that Germanic peoples had adopted geographical names in Central Europe so early as for them to undergo the effects of the first Germanic sound shift (see Green 1999: 11-12). Therefore, it is possible that in Antiquity more geographic names were adopted by the Germanic peoples roaming the stretch of forests, steppes and marshes between the Baltic and the Black Sea. We might think, for example, of the Bastarni and the Sciri, who could have adopted the name *\*dakja* somewhere in the third or second century BCE. This name *\*dakja* would have yielded PGm. *\*táhja-* after the Germanic sound shift. Grimm then assumed PGm. *\*tahja* would have become *\*tahi-* in the composition (Grimm 1886: 223<sup>242</sup>). According to Grimm, the ethnonym 'Taifali' could then be analyzed as East Germanic *\*tahi-fali* meaning "the *fali* of Dacia."

In the end, however, this theory is also unsatisfactory, and for the main reason that we would expect the Germanic fricative /h/ [χ] to be reflected as <ch> or <h> in at least one of the numerous attestations of the ethnonym.

In other words; if the first element of the ethnonym was really Germanic *\*tahja-*, why do we not have a single spelling <tachifali> or <tacifali> preserved in the sources? After all, Germanic /h/ is usually well preserved in other Latin renditions of Germanic onomastic

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<sup>241</sup> The Battle of the Goths and the Huns sequence (*Hunnenslachtlied*) is quoted in the *Saga Heidreks konungs ins Vitra*, chapter 10 (Tolkien 1960: 45).

<sup>242</sup> This is possible if the PGm. *\*tahja-* was interpreted as a neuter *ja*-stem but not if it was interpreted as a feminine *jō*-stem. After all, in compounds with a *jō*-stem noun as the first element, the *ja*-suffix was preserved in Gothic, e.g. Goth. *wiljahalþei* "respect of persons" (Casaretto 2004: 289). If, however, PGm. *\*tahja-* was interpreted as a Germanic neuter *ja*-stem, it would have developed into East Germanic *\*tahi-* (cf. Goth. *kuni* < Gm. *\*kunja-* "relationship").

material (Schönfeld 1911: XXII; Gysseling 1992: 15). It is therefore clear that also Grimm's etymology should be rejected.<sup>243</sup>

## Taifali and Westfali

With the etymology of the second element, we find ourselves on more solid ground. Schutte (1933: 46) interpreted the second element of the Taifali ethnonym, i.e. Gm. *\*fal-*, as etymologically cognate with the names *ostfali* 'Eastfalians' and *westfali* 'Westfalians', ethnonyms that are mentioned in the *Capitulare Saxonicum* (797 CE) and the Frankish Royal Annals (775 CE). The second element in the tribal names *ostfali* and *westfali* is commonly assumed to go back to OHG *\*falah* < WGM. *\*falh* "fallow land" (cf. OE *fealh*), which would make the *\*falhiz* the inhabitants of fallow land (see Neumann 1994: 171-172).

Another possibility would be that the element *\*fal-* is connected to Gm. *\*falōn* "field, steppe" (cf. OSw. *fala* 'plain', Swedish place-names *Falan*, *Falun*, Hellquist 1922: 127; Kroonen 2013: 126). This would fit well with the geographical position of the Taifali on the plains west of the Terwingi (Visigoths). Furthermore, an ethnonym building on a root meaning "plain" is also found in the Old Russian people of the *Poljane* (*Nestor Chronicle*, chapter III), which continues the same Proto-Indo-European root *\*polH-* 'field'.<sup>244</sup> This would allow for an explanation of the ethnonymic element *-fali* < (PGm. *\*faliz*) in *Taifali* as 'the plain dwellers'.

In my opinion, the connection to Gm. *\*falōn* 'plain' is less problematic than the connection to PGm. *\*falha-* 'fallow land'. In the case of the Westfali, the connection to PGm. *\*falha-* is supported by the Latin spelling *falai*, which provides evidence for an underlying Old Saxon *\*falah*, with epenthetic /a/ in the sequence /lh/. If the element *fali* in Taifali really continues Gm. *\*falhiz* we would like to find at least one spelling that confirms the former presence of a Germanic /h/, e.g. <taifalci> or <taifalchi>.

Still, also the connection to the Germanic word *\*falōn* remains speculative. After all, it seems premature to explain the second element, as long as the first element has not been given a satisfying etymology. Unfortunately, this still leaves us with Sitzmann's (2005: 272) correct assessment that etymological connections for the Taifali ethnonym are still wanting.

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<sup>243</sup> A possible solution to the absence of <h> in the attestations would be to assume that the <h> was lost in a Romance intermediary stage but this seems *ad hoc* and unattractive.

<sup>244</sup> The Gothic ethnonym *Greutingi* may have contained the same naming motive, if we interpret the name as 'plain dwellers' (cf. OE *groot*, OHG *grioz* 'grit, sand, earth' > 'plain'). In Gothic, as in Old Russian, the natural counterpart to the 'plain dwellers' where the 'forest dwellers', i.e. the Gothic *terwingi* (cf. ON *tyrvi* "coniferous wood") and the Old Russian *drevljane* (cf. OCS *drěvo* "wood") < PIE *\*deru-* "tree" (See also Specht 1939: 226-228).

## Taifali toponyms

We can now turn to the vestiges of the Taifali ethnonym in the western provinces of the Roman empire. It has been argued that several toponyms in the western Roman Empire reflect the name of the Taifali. These toponyms would be the traces of the Taifali groups that were relocated to communities in the western Romania following their defeat in 377 CE (see Richard 1896: 419-42).

I remind the reader that the presence of the Taifali in the Western Romania is corroborated by the *Notitia Dignitatum* where it is stated that equestrian regiments of Taifali were part of the western Roman field army (Not.Dign. Oc.VII). These regiments are situated in Gaul, Italy and ‘*intra Britannias*’. It is possible that Taifali settlements may also be reflected in the following Italian and Spanish place-names.

- Tivoli, Italy < *Taifalum*<sup>245</sup> (8<sup>th</sup> c. CE)
- Tafalla, Spain < *\*Taifalja*<sup>246</sup>

Kenneth Cameron (1992) has argued the ethnonym Taifali is also to be found in English toponyms such as Tealby (Late Old English *Tavelesbi*), Tablehurst and Tellisford. In the entry for Tealby, Cameron quotes his collaborating author John Insley, who rejects a connection to OE *tæfl* (f. *ō*-stem) ‘playing board’ and Old Danish *tafl* ‘square piece of land’ (ODan. *taflhøgh*). One of his main objections to this etymology is that the Old Danish and Old English words cannot account for the suffixal /s/ (see also Ekwall 1960). Rather, according to Insley, the first element of *Tavelesbi* would go back to the ethnonym *\*Tæflas/\*Tāflas*, in the same way as the place-name Wales in South-Yorkshire goes back to OE *Walas* ‘foreigners, britons’ (Green 2011: 5). The second element of Tealby, which is undeniably Scandinavian in origin, was then added during the Norse settlement of northern England, in the tenth and eleventh century CE.

This etymology is repeated by Hough (1994) and more recently by Green (2011), who connected the Taifali-etymology for Tealby with the continued sixth and seventh-century resistance of the Britto-Roman settlements in Yorkshire against the Anglo-Saxon invaders. According to Green, it is possible that the inhabitants of these settlements still identified themselves as *\*Tæflas/\*Tāflas*, i.e. the descendants of the fourth-century Roman Taifali regiments. In this regard, Green points to the *Notitia Dignitatum* where Taifali regiments are ascribed to the Roman field army ‘*intra Britannias*’ (Not.Dign. Oc. VII).

Although it is inadvisable to connect the transmission of a place-name with any sort of statement about identity or population continuity, it is not totally unthinkable that the

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<sup>245</sup> For the phonetic evolution, see Gamillscheg (1935: 34). See Corti (2004: 51) for a discussion of the oldest attestation of the Italian place-name.

<sup>246</sup> See Rouche (1977: fn 18) for a discussion of the Spanish place-name.

Taifali name may have survived in English toponyms. Green notes that also another continental Germanic ethnonym might survive in an English place-name.<sup>247</sup>

- ModE. *Swaffham* ← OE *Swāfas* + OE *hām* ‘homestead of the Suebians’

In my opinion, however, the connection of the English toponyms to the Taifali ethnonym seems far-fetched, especially when better connections in Old English and Old Danish are at hand.

Although it is possible that some Taifali regiments were settled in Britain, the toponymic evidence for such a settlement is meagre. Furthermore, it seems reasonable to assume that most Taifali regiments were settled in Gaul; the theory that the Taifali ethnonym can be found in modern French place-names is therefore far less controversial.

### Taifali in Gaul

The *Notitia Dignitatum* informs us that a regiment of Sarmatians and Taifali was stationed in the *Pictavis* region (Poitou) of Gaul (Not.Dign. Oc. XLII). These Taifali are suspected to have raised the mysterious non-Gallo-Roman standing stones in the Poitou region, which must date from the late fourth to early fifth century CE (Curtet 1958). More than a hundred fifty years later, the Poitou region is still known as *Theiphalia*, as recounted by Gregory of Tours (6th c. CE).

*“Igitur, beatus Senoch, gente Teiphalus, Pictavi Pagi quem Theiphaliam vocant oriundus fuit.”* (Vitae Patrum XV)

“Thus, the blessed Senoch, of the Theiphal people, sprang forth from the Poitou shire which they call Theiphalia”

It is very likely that this name *Theiphalia* continues the same Taifali name of the groups who were settled in the Poitou region in the fourth century. Gregory of Tours also recounts that a sixth-century Aquitanian bishop called Austrapius, was attacked by Taifali rebels in 561 CE (Hist.Franc. IV 18). This suggests that the Taifali name retained some significance as a community or district name.

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<sup>247</sup> It is possible that also the place-name *Swavesey* should be connected to the continental Germanic ethnonym *\*Swābi* (cf. Fellows-Jensen 1995: 65). We should note, however, that for both the place-name *Swaffham* and *Swavesey*, a connection to the Old English personal name *Swæf* is also possible.

## French toponyms

Already in the nineteenth century, the French toponymist Richard (1896: 435) argued that the Taifali ethnonym is present in several French place-names, a theory that is still widely-held today (Longnon 1929: 129; Vincent 1937: 132; and most recently Nègre 1991: 12441). The French toponyms listed below, are generally agreed to contain the ethnonym. This list is mainly based on the overview of Rouche (1977: 137<sup>248</sup>), but missing Taifali toponyms were added from other publications (Gamillscheg 1934: 134; De Beaurepair 1982: 136; Lebedynsky 2011: 182).

- Poitou
  - Tifaille (1x)
  - Tiffauges (2x)
  - Tiffaille (4x)
  - Tiffanelier (1x)
- Languedoc
  - Toufailles
- Central France
  - Taphalescas (1340 CE)
- Eastern France
  - Tivauches
  - Chauffailles

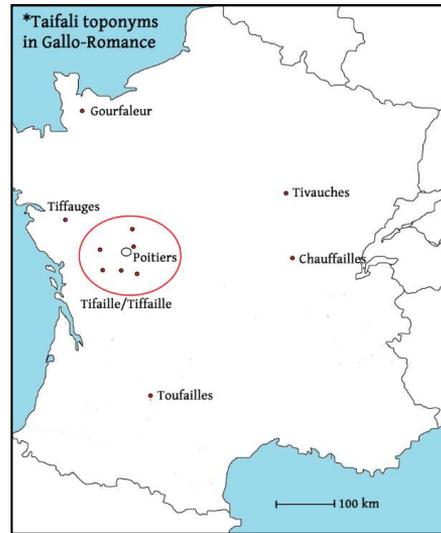


figure 10 Taifali toponyms in Roman Gaul

The question now is whether the French place-names can be connected to the sixth-century form *Teiphalia* from Gregory of Tours and by extension to the Taifali ethnonym. Since this question involves the Gallo-Romance adaptation of Germanic /ai/, we may turn to Wartburg (FEW XVI: 2) and Gamillscheg (1970: 359) for an overview of the relevant

<sup>248</sup> Rouche discussed the place-names in the context of Late Antique barbarian settlements in Aquitaine (cf. Rouche 1977: 137, 10/1-2 footnote 19, see also Lebedynsky 2007: 182). Two place-names that have been connected to the Taifali are left out of consideration: 1) Gourfaleur in Normandy which has been explained from *\*curte tefalorum* with haplogy of the second /te/. This etymology is possible but the formation type does not correspond with all the other presumed Taifali place-names. 2) Chauffaille in Cossac-Bonneval which is left out because no pre-modern attestations are found which makes a derivation from dialectal *chaufaille* 'brushwood' or *chaufaud* 'scaffold' just as likely.

developments; they showed that the adaptation of Germanic /ai/ in Early Gallo-Romance reflects two layers of loanwords.<sup>249</sup>

- Layer of West Germanic loanwords
  - Germanic /ai/ = Gallo-Rom. /a/
    - WGM. \**haist-* → Gallo-Rom. \**hasta* > OFr. *hâte* ‘haste’
- Layer of Merovingian Frankish loanwords
  - Germanic /ai/ = Frankish /ei/ > /ē/ = Gallo-Rom. /ɛ/
    - OFrnk. \**gabēti* → Gallo-Rom. \**gabēt-* > OFr. *gabiez* ‘falcon hunt’
    - OFrnk. \**haistra* → Gallo-Rom. \**hestra* > OFr. *hêtre* ‘shrubbery’

For the Merovingian layer, Wartburg and Gamillscheg assumed that Germanic /ai/, through an intermediary stage /ei/, became the Frankish monophthong /ē/. This /ē/ was substituted in Gallo-Romance with /ɛ/, which diphthongized to /iɛ/ in tonic and countertonic position.<sup>250</sup> The Gallo-Romance diphthong /iɛ/ was in Old French simplified to /i/ in initial syllables.

- OFrnk. \**gērfaik* → Gallo-Rom. \**gerfalk-* > OFr. *girfauc* ‘gyrfalcon’

If this scenario is correct, we can sketch the Gallo-Romance adaptation of the Germanic name Taifali as follows:

- Gm. \**taifalīz* > \**teifali* > OFrnk. \**tēfali* → Gallo-Rom. \**tefalja* > Pre-French \**tiēfalja*
  - Pre-French \**tiēfalja* > OFr. *tifaill*

This would mean that the form *Teiphalia* that Gregory of Tours wrote down, reflects the early Frankish form with the diphthong /ei/, and not the later Frankish monophthong /ē/ or the Gallo-Romance adaption /ɛ/. The possibility that the French place-names may have been adopted from Frankish is interesting, since it suggests that the name entered Gallo-Romance a lot later than the fourth-century settlement of the Taifali. The only example of a place-name, that does not represent the Frankish pre-form, would be the medieval attestation <*taphalescas*>, which could, in theory, reflect the older layer of Germanic loanwords (see Lebedynsky 2011: 182).

<sup>249</sup> A third layer of loanwords may be present in the cases where Germanic /ai/ is equated with Gallo-Rom. /a/ in /a'Cj/ as seems to be the case with Gm. \**haitan* > OFr. *souhaidier* ‘to wish’, Gm. \**wainōn* > Pic. *waignier* ‘to cry’. We may note that this reflex is limited to cases where French would allow palatal infection (Gamillscheg 1970: 359).

<sup>250</sup> We may note that diphthongization in countertonic position is only assumed for Germanic material (1970: 359).

## Different types

When we assume that the above listed place-names are all related to the same form /tɛfalja/, we must conclude that the material exhibits a remarkable degree of heterogeneity. We can divide the material into the following three categories:

- Toponyms that begin with /tif/ or /tiv/
  - Tifaille, Tiffaille, Tiffauges, Tivauches Tiffanelier,
- Toponyms that begin with /tuf/
  - Toufailles
- Toponyms that begin with /ʃof/
  - Chaufailles

An additional complication is that for all these categories, we find Medieval spellings with <eo> or <eu> in the first syllable of the historical attestations:

- Tiffauges <teofalgia>
- Toufailles <theufales>
- Chaufailles <teotfallensis>

This heterogeneity and the peculiar medieval spellings have thus far not been explained and raise the question whether we are really dealing with one underlying name type. In the remainder of this article, I want to address this question and provide some answers to how these place-names could or could not reflect the Taifali ethnonym.

## Medieval spelling

A problem that affects all three categories of presumed Taifali place-names are the medieval attestations that write <eo> or <eu> for a vowel that later turns up in Old French as /i/. This spelling in <eo> is first encountered in the ninth century in the Poitou shire name *pagus theophalgicus* (royal charter 839 CE, Charles the Bald). It is very likely that this is the same Poitou shire as the *pagus teiphalia* that was mentioned by Gregory of Tours in the sixth century. We therefore need an explanation that can account for a spelling <eo> for a Gallo-Romance /ɛ/, which goes back to a Germanic /ai/. Guinet in his discussion of the Taifali place-names did not find an answer to this problem and concluded that ‘*l’évolution de ai initiale reste obscure*’ (Guinet 1982: 157).

Here I want to offer a solution, which would enable us to reconcile the attestations with <eo> or <eu> to the historical development of a Gallo-Romance form /tɛfalja/. I remind the reader that the Gallo-Romance form /tɛfálja/ developed via /tiɛfalja/ into Old French

*tifaille*. Therefore, in my opinion, we might be dealing with a non-etymological spelling for the pre-French diphthong /iɛ/, the continuation of Gallo-Romance /ɛ/. Because in the Early and High Middle Ages, place-names in Latin contexts were latinized and not yet written in a French orthography, scribes were confronted with the problem of how to write the Old French diphthong /iɛ/, in words that had no established Latin spelling.

The main source of Old French /iɛ/ was of course Romance stressed /ɛ/, which was diphthongized to /iɛ/ in open syllables (see section 3.6). Another source of Old French /iɛ/ came from Frankish words in /io/, a sound that was consistently written <eu> or <eo> in Latinate spelling. Guinet (1982: 78) argued that Frankish /io/, in the lexical transfer between the two languages, was substituted with Gallo-Romance /iɛ/.<sup>251</sup>

- Gm. \**steura* > OFrnk. \**stiora* → OFr. *estiere* ‘rudder’ (FEW XVII: 272)
- Gm. \**streup* > OFrnk. \**striop* → OFr. *estrief* ‘stirrup’ (FEW XVII: 252-54)
- Gm. \**speut* > OFrnk. \**spiot* → OFr. *espieth* ‘pike’ (FEW XVII: 178-79)

This would give a French scribe two ways of writing Early Old French /iɛ/:

- Gallo-Rom. /iɛ/ = Latinate <e> = Romance /ɛ/
- Gallo-Rom. /iɛ/ = Latinate <eu> from Frankish /io/

Although the first spelling option is also found for Germanic lexis in Old French (cf. OFr. *lethgia* for the Walloon place-name Liège), it seems likely that in the case of the Taifali toponyms we are dealing with the second option. In conclusion: because both Germanic /ai/ and Germanic /eu/ yield Old French /iɛ/, a non-etymological spelling <eu> for Old French /iɛ/ was possible.<sup>252</sup> This way, a French scribe could write <teofalia> for an Early Old French form /tiɛfalja/.

<sup>251</sup> Lunderstedt had a different opinion and assumed that Gm. /eu/ yielded Gallo-Rom. /iɛ/ only in pre-tonic syllables (Lunderstedt 1928: 306). He points to several Old French words where Gm. /eu/ in stressed syllables is reflected as a disyllabic sequence OFr. /ieʊ/, e.g. OFr. *espieu* ‘javelin’ < OFr. \**speut* ‘id.’, which runs parallel to the development of OFr. *dieüs* ‘god’ < Rom. \**deus*. In my opinion, his case is made significantly weaker by the fact that the words that have attestations with a triphthong are outnumbered by the more often encountered reflex /iɛ/.

<sup>252</sup> If this solution is correct, we can take the spelling <leotos> for <letos> ‘freedmen’ of manuscript A2 of the Salic Law (ONW s.v. *laat*) as a reflection of a Gallo-Romance pronunciation /liɛdos/, where the spelling <eo> was used to render Gallo-Romance /iɛ/. The same word is continued in OFr. *liege* [adj.] < Rom. \**letikō* ← Gm. \**lǣt-* (see FEW XVI: 463).

## Tiffaille, Tiffauges and Tivauches

The place-names that begin with /tif/ are all found in the Poitou region. The single form, that begins with /tiv/, is found in eastern France (Corsaint, Côte-d'Or). The variation between these forms raises the following two questions:

- How can we account for the difference between medial /f/ and /v/?
- How can we account for the different suffixes, i.e. *-aille*, *-auges* and *-auches*?

The first question comes down to whether the presumed underlying form /tefalja/ joined the development of Latin /f/ to Old French /v/. The operation of this voicing rule seems to be conditioned by the surrounding vowels: Latin /f/ was first voiced to Gallo-Romance /v/ in all positions, but before reaching the Old French and Old Provençal stage, the /v/ was lost when it was in contact with back vowels (cf. Lebel 1951: 185; Pierret 1994: 172).

- voicing
  - Lat. \*malifatius > OFr. *mauvais* 'evil'
  - Lat. *raphanus* > OFr. *ravene* 'radish'
- Loss
  - Lat. *sarcophagus* > \**sarkovayu* > OFr. *sarcou* 'coffin'
  - Lat. *profunda* > \**prevonda* > OFr. *preon* 'valley'

At first glance, it seems like the /tif/ names have withstood the voicing, whereas the /tiv/ form shows the expected voiced reflex. A possible explanation could be that the /tiv/ place-name is older and predates the Gallo-Romance voicing and the /tif/ place-names are younger and postdate the voicing. This however seems unlikely since the resettlement of the Taifali people in Gaul, and therefore the introduction of the /tefalja/ form is dated to the same time period. Another explanation would be that the difference between the /tif/ and /tiv/ forms goes back to different Gallo-Romance adaptations of a Germanic phoneme. If we assume that Gallo-Romance /f/ between vowels was already in the fifth century phonetically voiced to /v/, in some areas, speakers of Gallo-Romance might have rendered Germanic /f/ with Gallo-Romance /v/, and in other areas, they might have reintroduced a new /f/ as a loan phoneme from Germanic. For now we will leave the problem of the /f/ instead of expected/v/ here, and we will come back to it at a later point in this chapter.

The second question concerns the difference between the suffix *-aille*, *-auges* and *-auches* that occur in the /tif/ and /tiv/ forms. This problem has already been addressed by Guinet in his 1982 monograph on the Germanic loanwords in French. He assumed that next to a primary form /tefalja/, also the adjectives /tefalika/ and /tefalikv/ existed. Because adjectives in \*-ikv underwent syncope at a later moment than adjectives in \*-ika

(Neumann’s Law), the result would be two different adjectival formations (see Mazzola 2013: 156; see section 3.41):

- Gallo-Rom. \*tɛfalja > \*tiɛfalja
- Gallo-Rom. \*tɛfalikʊ > \*tɛfaligo > \*tɛfaljo > \*tiɛfaldʒo
- Gallo-Rom. \*tɛvalika > \*tɛvalka > \*tiɛvalʃa

This way, the /tif/ and /tiv/ forms, with their different suffixes, can all be traced back to one underlying form /tɛfalja/.

### Chaufailles and Toufaille

The place-names that begin with /tuf/ and /ʃof/ are located well outside of the Poitou region, and one might argue that these forms do not need to reflected the same underlying form /tɛfalja/. We should, however, realize that the /tif/ and /tiv/ place-names are closely connected to the /tuf/ and /ʃof/ names through their medieval spelling with <eu> and <eo>.

The problem is therefore that we find the medieval spellings <theufales> and <teotfallensis> for the place-names Toufailles and Chaufailles.<sup>253</sup> In these cases, we cannot be dealing with an non-etymological spelling <eu> for Old French /iɛ/, since the modern place-names cannot continue an Old French /iɛ/. We therefore need to explain how these medieval attestations with <eu> and <eo> can be linked to the modern place-names and subsequently, whether this would still allow a connection to the Taifali ethnonym (cf. Dauzat & Rostaing 1963: 182; Rossi 2009: 279).

In order to explain the connection between the medieval spellings and the modern place-names Toufailles and Chaufailles, we may consider the possibility that in these words the <eo> spelling reflects a Gallo-Romance sequence /e<sup>s</sup>o/. This sequence represents the continuation of Latin disyllabic /e<sup>s</sup>u/, but is also found in cases of Greek loanwords, where it continues Greek /eo/ and /eu/. Evidence from the fourth-century *Appendix Probi* shows that this sequence was simplified to /o/ at an early date already. This simplification from /e<sup>s</sup>o/ to /o/ is also clear from the Old French and Old Provençal reflexes.

- Latin *ermeneumata* > Late Lat. *erminomata* (App.Prob. 190)
- Latin *meum* [ACC.SG] > OFr. *mom/mon*
- Latin *theofania* > OProv. *tofania*

<sup>253</sup> This diploma that contains the attestation, a charter issued in 882 CE by king Carloman, can be consulted online at the site of the “chartes originales antérieures à 1121 conservées en France” project of the University of Lorraine: URL: <http://www.cn-telma.fr/chartae-galliae/charte255165/>

The modern place-name Toufaïles is therefore consistent with the phonological evolution of a Gallo-Romance sequence /e<sup>s</sup>o/ to Old French /o/, which in the Toufaïles dialect area was raised to /u/ after the Middle Ages (Jochowitz 1973: 84).

- Gallo-Rom. \*te<sup>s</sup>ofalja > \*tofalja > \*tufaɫa > Toufaïles

The same development would apply for the place-name Chaufaïles in the Mâconnais dialect area where the oldest attestation Chofalli from the fourteenth century gives us the expected /o/ vowel (Rossi 2009: 278). We then have to assume that this /o/ vowel withstood raising to /u/ because of contamination with the Franco-Provençal appellative *chaufaille* ‘brush wood’ (l.c.).

Furthermore, in the place-name Chaufaïles, the deformation of the initial consonant from /t/ to /ʃ/ could be explained by assuming that the sequence /e<sup>s</sup>o/ was re-syllabified to /jo/, which allowed a palatalization of Gallo-Romance /tj/ to Old French /tʃ/. This Old French /tʃ/ may have been reinforced by formal association with Franco-Provençal *chaufaille* ‘brush wood’.

- Gallo-Rom. \*te<sup>s</sup>ofalja > \*tjofalje >> Chofali > Chaufaïlle

The proposed evolution from /tj/ to /tʃ/ is supported by the parallel development of the saint’s name *sanctus Teotfredus* into *Saint-Chaffrey* and *Saint-Choffrey* (cf. Chambon 1996: 96). The same development can also be found in a series of French personal names, whose first element is thought to contain Germanic \**þeuda-* ‘people’ (l.c.):

- Chabbert < Gm. \**þiodaberht*
- Chabbaut < Gm. \**þiodabald*
- Chatard < Gm. \**þiodahard*

It seems therefore likely that, in the cases of these personal names, the Frankish diphthong /io/ was not substituted with Gallo-Romance /iɛ/, but rather with Gallo-Romance /e<sup>s</sup>o/, which developed into /o/ and was later weakened to /a/.<sup>254</sup> This scenario is supported by a Merovingian coin legend, where we read <thudegisilo> for the Germanic personal name *theodegisil* (Lunderstedt 1928: 324<sup>255</sup>) and the medieval attestation *Leomania* (< Gm. \**leudaman-*) for the Gascon place name *Lomagne* (Broëns 1963: 60).

Another simplification of the Gallo-Romance sequence /e<sup>s</sup>o/ is suggested by the Old Provençal name *Teiric*, from older Gallo-Romance \**tedriko*, where we find Provençal /e/ for

<sup>254</sup> We might also be dealing with influence from the name type Jaubert, Gauffrey from Germanic \**gaut-berht* (cf. Guinet 1982: 44-45)

<sup>255</sup> It is unfortunate that Lunderstedt does not provide the provenance of the Merovingian coin.

Gallo-Romance /e<sup>s</sup>o/ (Voretzsch 1900: 629). This form is supported by the Latinate spelling *Tedericus*, that is encountered in Latin texts from the Carolingian period. We can assume that what separates the two developments was a difference in accentuation. This would allow us to sketch the following possible developments of Gallo-Romance /e<sup>s</sup>o/ (see also Haubrichs 2014: 212-13):

- Gallo-Rom. /é<sup>s</sup>o/ > /e/
  - Gm. \**þeudarīk* → Gallo-Rom. \**Te<sup>s</sup>odriko-* > OProv. *Teiric*
- Gallo-Rom. /e<sup>s</sup>ó/ > /o/
  - Gallo-Rom. \**te<sup>s</sup>ofañā* > OProv. *tofania* ‘epiphany’
  - Gm. \**breuwan* → Gallo-Rom. \**bre<sup>s</sup>ovare* > OProv. *brouar* ‘to scorch’
  - Gm. \**þeudafridu-* → Gallo-Rom. \**Te<sup>s</sup>ofredo-* > OProv. *Choffrey*

To conclude, the modern place-names in /tuf/ and /ʃof/ as found in Toufailles and Chaufailles can be derived from a Gallo-Romance form /te<sup>s</sup>ofalja/, which closely resembles the Gallo-Romance type /tefalja/ but is not identical with it.

## Folk etymology

After the identification of these two Gallo-Romance prototypes, /tefalja/ and /te<sup>s</sup>ofalja/, a final important question remains; is it possible that not only the first Gallo-Romance prototype, but also the second one contains the Taifali ethnonym?

The easiest solution would be to separate the two types and argue that the toponyms in /tif/ and /tiv/ do contain the Taifali ethnonym, and the other toponyms in /tuf/ and /ʃof/ do not. If we still want to reconcile the two types, we might consider a different scenario: as we have seen, there are two possible ways in which Germanic /eu/ can be reflected in Gallo-Romance: one way involved the substitution of the Frankish diphthong /io/ by a Gallo-Romance diphthong /iɛ/, and the other way involved the equation of Germanic /eu/ with the Gallo-Romance disyllabic sequence /e<sup>s</sup>o /.

- Gm. /eu/ > OFrnk. /io/ → Gallo-Rom. /iɛ/ > /iɛ/ or /i/
- Gm. /eu/ → Gallo-Rom. /e<sup>s</sup>o/ > /o/

We might argue that, at some point in the Early Middle Ages, the place-name /tiɛfalja/ was associated with the Gallo-Romance element /tiɛd/ [tjɛð], a form which continues the Frankish noun \**þioda-* ‘people’.

- ModFr. *Thiebaud* < OFrnk. \**þiodabald*
- ModFr. *Thieffroy* < OFrnk. \**þiodafridu*

- ModFr. *Thierry* < OFrnk. \**þiodarīk*
- OFr. *Tiedeis* < OFrnk. \**þiodiska-* ‘Germanic vernacular’

Such a scenario involving folk etymology and lexical recasting is not unusual for place-names, whose meaning had become obscure and which were continued in a foreign language (Laansalu & Alas 2013).

If we assume that Gallo-Romance /tiefalja/ was deformed into /tiɛdfalja/, the form /te<sup>s</sup>odfalja/ might have been created as a non-etymological re-archaization. This would give us the following scenario:

1. A Germanic ethnonym Taifali enters Gallo-Romance as /tɛfalja/, which diphthongized to /tiefalja/.
2. Gallo-Romance /tiefalja/ is associated with the lexeme /tiɛd/ from Germanic origin, which leads to a contaminated form /tiɛdfalja/. This form /tiɛdfalja/ could be written with a non-etymological <eo> spelling.
3. Later, the form /tiɛdfalja/ provoked an archaization as /te<sup>s</sup>odfalja/. In this case, the Gallo-Romance disyllabic sequence /e<sup>s</sup>o/ developed into Pre-French /o/.

The assumption that such a folk etymology occurred, could account for several additional facts:

- The consonant cluster /df/, in a presumed Gallo-Romance form /tiɛdfalja/ and /te<sup>s</sup>odfalja/, might be responsible for the /f/ consonant in the majority of the place-names, cf. ModFr. *Thieffroy* < Gm. \**þiodafridu* (see Lebel 1951: 181).
- The consonant cluster /df/, in a presumed Gallo-Romance form /tiɛdfalja/ and /te<sup>s</sup>odfalja/, might be responsible for the <teotf> spellings in the medieval attestations.

It may be clear that this solution is not straight forward. Still, in my opinion, it is the only way in which the connection between Tiffailles, Toufailles and Chauffailles can be maintained. We may note that a similar solution was hinted at by Lebel (1964: 181), who stated that “*le nom de Teifali paraît avoir été refait en Teotfali d’après les nombreux noms germaniques par Teot-*”. In the end, however, it seems prudent to give up the connection between the two types, and resign ourselves to the position that only the /tɛfalja/ type continues the Taifali ethnonym.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I have first reviewed the scholarship on the Taifali ethnonym and evaluated the etymologies that have been proposed in earlier research. I have shown that neither the Celtic etymology by Steinhauser, nor the Germanic etymology by Grimm is convincing. Only the second element of the ethnonym can be provided with a satisfying etymology, i.e. Gm. \**falōn* “plain” (cf. OSw. *fala*). We should however realize that any etymology for the second element remains weak, as long the first element has not been explained. For now, the etymology of the Taifali ethnonym remains unsolved.

The second part of this chapter was concerned with the traces of the ethnonym in place-names in Britain and Gaul. The hypothesis that English place-names such as Tealby and Tablehurst reflect the tribal name Taifali seems unlikely and the evidence supporting it is meagre. For Late Roman Gaul, the situation is much clearer; in the case of Roman Gaul, we have a contemporary fifth-century source, the *Notitia Dignitatum*, which recounts that Taifali military regiments were settled in the Potiou region. The settlement of Taifali groups in Gaul might be reflected in various French place-names, which can be reduced to two Gallo-Romance prototypes, i.e. /*tɛfalja*/ and /*tɛ<sup>s</sup>ofalja*/.

In the Poitou region, we find place-names representing the /*tɛfalja*/ type, which can plausibly be linked to the military settlements of the *Notitia Dignitatum*. We have seen that Gallo-Romance /*tɛfalja*/ presupposes a Frankish intermediary stage /*tēfalja*/, and not an older Germanic form /*taifalja*/. This is an interesting outcome, as it adds to the concept of a multilingual Merovingian realm, where, at some point, Germanic was spoken as far south as the Poitou region. The second type, /*tɛ<sup>s</sup>ofalja*/, can only be connected to the Taifali ethnonym, if we assume that the place-names were affected by folk etymology and lexical deformation. Ultimately, this solution might create more problems than that it solves.