

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18454/RULB.2020.21.1.12>**БАШКИРСКИЕ ГИДРОНИМЫ, СВЯЗАННЫЕ С ИНДОИРАНСКОЙ ТЕОНИМИЕЙ**

Научная статья

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**Аннотация**

Реконструкция культуры отдельного этноса по данным топонимии, исследование корреляции культуры и языка в диахроническом аспекте и в связи с репрезентацией картины мира топонимией определенного региона является одной из актуальных задач этнолингвистики. Исследование автора подтверждает ранее установленные топонимистами хронологические пласты в башкирской топонимии, согласно которым самый древний пласт составляют географические названия индоиранского происхождения. Как известно из истории, во II–I тыс. до н. э. существовала индоиранская общность – арийцы, предки современных индийских и иранских народов. Существуют различные гипотезы об их прародине. Как показывают исследования автора, протоиндоиранцы оставили заметный след и на Южном Урале. Ею выявлен довольно большой пласт индоиранских субстратных географических терминов, сохранившихся в составе топонимов, а также в нарицательной диалектной лексике башкирского языка.

Индоиранский субстрат в башкирской топонимии свидетельствует не только о языковых связях, но и об этнических. На это указывают башкирские этнонимы индоиранского происхождения и связанные с ними топонимы. В данной статье индоиранский пласт связывается с мифологией иранских и индийских народов, с образами индийской и иранской теонимии, с географической терминологией, характеризующей особенности водной сети.

**Ключевые слова:** башкирский язык, Башкортостан, топонимия, этнолингвистика, этимология, индоиранский субстрат, этнические контакты, этнотопоним.

**BASHKIR HYDRONYMS ASSOCIATED WITH INDO-IRANIAN THEONYMY**

Research article

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**Abstract**

The reconstruction of the culture of an individual ethnos based on the data of toponymy, the study of the correlation of culture and language in the diachronic aspect and in connection with the representation of the world view by the toponymy of a particular region is one of the most relevant tasks of ethnolinguistics. The author's study confirms the presence of chronological strata previously established by toponymists in Bashkir toponymy, according to which the most ancient stratum is made up of geographical names of Indo-Iranian origin. As is known from history, in the II – I millennium BC there was an Indo-Iranian community – Aryans, the ancestors of modern Indian and Iranian peoples. There are various hypotheses about their ancestral home. As the author's research shows, Proto-Indo-Iranians left a noticeable mark in the Southern Urals. She revealed a rather large stratum of Indo-Iranian substrate geographical terms, preserved in toponyms, as well as in the dialect vocabulary of the Bashkir language.

According to the author, the phenomenon of the substrate is not only a linguistic, but also an ethnic phenomenon, as evidenced by the Bashkir ethnonyms of Indo-Iranian origin and the toponyms associated with them. In this article, the Indo-Iranian stratum is associated with the mythology of Iranian and Indian peoples, with images of Indian and Iranian theonymy, with geographical terminology that characterizes the features of the water network.

**Keywords:** Bashkir language, Bashkortostan, toponymics, ethnolinguistics, etymology, Indo-Iranian substratum, ethnic contacts, ethnotoponym.

**I. Introduction**

The toponymy of any region is the custodian of cultural values of past and modern generations, which is transmitted to the next generations through tradition and the “collective unconscious”. In the Bashkir toponymy, the Indo-Iranian layer is considered the most ancient.

This paper aims to study the Bashkir toponyms associated with Indo-Iranian theonymy.

In toponymy, it is generally accepted that the names of rivers – hydronyms – are the most ancient. This is also evidenced from the names of the rivers we have analyzed. The hydronyms of Bashkortostan are called by the names of deities. Moreover, the oldest layer of them is associated with the names of the deities of Indo-Iranian mythology. Their study is important to restore the picture of ethnic contacts of the Bashkirs, to clarify the origin of toponyms that are incomprehensible from the point of view of the modern Bashkir language.

It is known that some large rivers are named after deities. For example, the Nile River (Greek *Nilos*, Egyptian *Hapi*) is named after the god Nile; Ganges – the sacred river of India is named after the goddess Ganges; Mokosh the goddess of the eastern Slavs and the Mokosh river, etc. According to E. Murzaeva, A. Frolov, the author of the book on toponymy, left a small manuscript “Rivers – the gods of the ancients”, which indicates that a very large number of the most famous gods are named after rivers. He considers that the names of rivers – hydronyms – appeared first, and then, in connection with the deification of these rivers, the names of deities – theonyms – appeared. Such a sequence is established on the basis of the list of

the pantheon of Asia Minor, Hindustan, and Europe. Among those rivers are the Tiber, which was worshiped and sacrificed by captive slaves, Sekvann (Sena), Rodan (Rona), Danube, Bug, Laba (Elba) and others [1].

#### **A brief insight into the history of the study of the Indo-Iranian stratum in the Bashkir toponymy**

For the first time, the presence of toponyms of Iranian origin in the toponymy of the South Urals and Central Asia was pointed out by A. Matveev. For example, the name of the river *Rəz* – the left tributary of the Belaya River in the Beloretsky district of Bashkortostan. A. Matveev explains from Iranian *rez* “to flow, to pour” [2], the river *Sim* – the right tributary of the Belaya River in the Chelyabinsky district of Bashkortostan region and the river *Esem* in Bashkortostan – from the Persian *sim* “silver” [3].

Later, his idea of the presence of an Iranian layer in the toponymy of the South Urals on the material of the toponyms of Bashkortostan was confirmed in the studies of N. D. Garipova, T. M. Garipov and J. G. Kiekbayev. For example, the name of the Avdon River flowing in the Ufimsky district of Bashkortostan, as suggested by N. Garipova and T. Garipova, was formed from Iranian *ab* “water” and Ossetian *don* “river” [4].

As part of the Indo-Iranian names in the toponymy of Bashkortostan, J. Kiekbayev considers the names of the rivers *Hələyek*, *Ashkazar* and *Zirgən*. For example, *Ergən* – river, the left tributary of the Belaya River in Meleuzovsky district, a mountain and a village in the same district, a village in the Khaibullinsky district, according to J. Kiekbayev goes back to Iranian. *Zergun* “golden, gold-bearing”. (Compare: in the Bashkir language the words *zər* “gold”, *zərgər* “jeweler” are preserved). The name of the river *Ashkazar* J. Kiekbayev explains on the material of the Persian language: *ashka* “white, pure”; *darja* “river”, and the name of the river *Hələyek* the scientist explains as formed from the Persian *sejl* “stream” and the affix -yk and adds that *Hələyek* is a mountain river flowing into *Zirgən* (*Egən*) from the mountain side [5].

According to T. Garipov, “Proto-Iranians left a lot of onyms (proper names) in Bashkortostan, Tatarstan and the Orenburg region. This is evidenced, in his opinion, by hydronyms and toponyms with the borrowed basis *ab/av* “water” in Ablai/Ablaev (the names of several Bashkir and Tatar auls, from the Iranian *abe lai* “silt water, moisture of mud”); *Abrai/Abraev* (komonim in Bashkortostan – compare with Scythian *abra* “cloud”); *Avdon* (a village near Ufa – from *av* “water” and *don* “river” in the meaning of “full-flowing river”).

To their number T.M. Garipov also adds *Sermen* (the name of the river, village), which is interpreted by Kazan anthroponymist Gumer Sattarov as the Persian phrase “high-ranking man” [6]. The authors of the Dictionary of Toponyms of the Republic of Bashkortostan A. Kamalov, R. Shakurov, Z. Uraksin and M. Khismatova following J. Kiekbayev also include toponyms with elements *darja*, *zirgən/ergən* and such topobases as *kuhail*, *labau*, *man/mən*, *mal*, *malysh*, *rəz/jerəz*, *təjryk*, *uzala*, *jatek*, etc. to the names of Proto-Iranian origin. In their opinion, these names can be more or less satisfactorily explained from the standpoint of modern Persian and Ossetian languages [7].

The works of the famous Bashkir scientist J. Kiekbayev play an invaluable role in identification of the language affiliation of the substrate toponyms of Indo-Iranian origin, and the ethnonyms associated with them. He explains the origin of the ethnonyms *Dyuan* and *Tabyn* on the example of the languages of Iranian, Iranian-speaking Alan tribes that lived in the 2nd – 4th centuries AD in the southern Urals. In his opinion, the origin of the ethnonyms *Duvan* (*Duvanej*) and *Tabyn* dates back to the Iranian *divan* “council, gathering”, *tabyn* “circle, council”. J. Kiekbayev believes that the form *Duvan* should be older than the modern Persian form of *divan* and adds: “In Chinese historical maps dating back to the 3rd century BC, we are dealing with the form *Davan*’ with the sound *a* in the first syllable instead of *y* or *u*. The ancient Iranian-speaking state of *Davan*’ was adjacent to the Kangju (Khwarazm) state, to the south of the latter, approximately on the territory of modern Uzbekistan [Kiekbayev, 2002, p. 154-155].

Our studies have confirmed the existence of the chronological layer previously established by the Bashkir toponymists. We have identified a fairly large layer of Indo-Iranian geographical terms, preserved a spars of toponyms, ethnonyms, ethnotoponyms, as well as in the common dialect vocabulary of the Bashkir language. In them, the Indo-Iranian stratum is associated with Indo-Iranian mythology, with images of Indian and Iranian theonyms and demononyms, with geographical terminology that characterizes the features of the relief, landscape, and water network of modern Bashkortostan. This is reflected in the following works of the author:

Bashkir place names derived from the substrate geographical terms of the Indo-Iranian origin// Liberal Arts in Russia. 2016. Vol 5. No. 5, 517-529 p. This paper is a continuation and some kind of addition to the author’s work on the study of Bashkir toponymy.

#### **II. Material and Methods**

The object of research is Bashkir onomastics, and the subject of analysis is the geographical names of the Republic of Bashkortostan of Indo-Iranian origin, associated with Indo-Iranian theonymy.

The research objective is to disclose an ethnocultural information code embedded in geographical names, to explain their origin and functioning in the language for further implementation of the research results in the practice of teaching the Bashkir language at the faculty of Bashkir philology – in the courses “Onomastic space of the Republic of Bashkortostan”, “Toponymy”, etc.

The methodological basis of the study is the work of famous Russian linguists, ethnolinguists, onomasts, toponyms, such as A. Matveev, E. Murzaev, J. Kiekbayev and others.

The main factual material for the research was the data from the Dictionary of Toponyms of the Bashkir Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic [Ufa, 1980].

The research was carried out using the comparative historical method and methods of ethnolinguistic reconstruction and linguocultural interpretation.

#### **III. Research results and discussion**

In the toponymic system of Bashkortostan, names with the component *əbei* – „old woman“ and *babai* – „old man“ are widely represented. The appearance of such names, according to A. Matveyev, is associated with the idea that rocks and mountains are petrified ancient people – old men and old women [2].

Toponyms with the words *əbei* – “old woman” are also widely represented in the river names of Bashkortostan: many hydronyms of Bashkortostan are associated with the image of *Əbei*: *Əbei* – lakes in the Aurgazinsky, Kugarchinsky, Chishminsky districts of Bashkortostan, *Əbei* is a river in the Abzelilovsky district of Bashkortostan.

In our opinion, the geographical names of Bashkortostan with the components *əbei* – „old woman“ and *babai* – „old man“ refer to the names of Scythian deities *Api* and *Papai*. In the vicinity of the village of Staro-Sibaev (Içke Sibai) on the Babai Mountain there is *Əbeitash//Oləsəytash*, a stone sculpture resembling a female figure. The Mountain *Babai* was a pilgrimage place for the neighboring residents of *At Əbejtash//Oləsəjtash*, people, worshiping her, made sacrifices, prayed, fed a stone woman.

As is known, the Scythian pantheon, according to Herodotus, included seven deities. At the highest level of the hierarchy is *Tabiti*, at the middle – *Papay* and *Api*, at the lowest – *Oitosir* (Goitosir), *Argimpasa* (Artimpasa) and two deities whose Scythian names are not named by Herodotus [8].

The deities *Papai* and *Api* – deities of the middle world – personify the marriage of heaven with earth, the union of the male and the female principles. *Əbei* and *Babai* in the works of the Bashkir oral poetry go back to the idea of two principles. The narrative that *Əbei* and *Babai* lived long ago has been the main motive of the Bashkir folk tales. Almost every fairy tale begins: “*Once upon a time there were Əbei and Babai...*” The images of *Əbei* and *Babai* are associated with the ancient beliefs of the Bashkirs: they personified the mythical ancestors, the originators of the genesis, because the tales always indicate that they had a son. He acts as a successor of the clan.

The origin of theonyms *Əbei* and *Babai* can be explained on the basis of Iranian languages. D.S. Raevsky writes: “... the name *Papay* is interpreted by most researchers as „father”, i.e. corresponds to the role of the ancestor that this character plays in the mythical genealogy ... *Api*, *Papay*’s wife, ... is connected with water (her name goes back to the Iranian root with the meaning “water”) and land” [9]. The Scythian goddess *Api* was portrayed as a serpent. As is known from the mythologies of the peoples of the world, female deities are associated with water and fertility. In ancient art, river gods were depicted as a snake or a bull with a human head.

In Bashkir mythology, the snake is also a symbol of the female principle and fertility. In Bashkir legends the bull finds springs or opens them, is also the master of the river and a symbol of fertility.

The internal meaning of the word *Api* is associated with water – in Indo-Iranian languages, the word *ap* and its phonetic variants mean water: *av/aw* „water, moisture, liquid, tears“; Proto-Iranian \**ap*; Avestian \**ap-*, Old Persian *Api-*, Proto-Indio-Aryan *apa*, Middle Persian *ap*, Persian *ab*, Zangana *aw*, Gurāni *aw*, Baluchi *ap*, Talysh *ov*, Gilaki *ov*, Mazandarani *ow*, Afghan *obe*, Yaghnobi *ap*, Kashmiri *ow*, Nayini *oj*, Sivandi *av (aj)*, Natanzi *aj* „water“, Vonishuni, Kohrudi, Keshei, Zefrei – *ow*, Semnani – *ow*, Sorkhei – *aw* „water“ [10].

Thus, the data on the toponymy of Bashkortostan make it possible to assert that the Scythian-Sarmatian deities *Api* and *Papai* find a parallel in the Bashkir language in the form of the divine pair *Babai* and *Əbei*. (Compare: in Chuvash language, the phrase “*papay god*” was preserved, the Bashkirs call Allah „*Alla Babai*“. Consequently, *Babai* was associated with a deity in the consciousness of Bashkirs).

The Indo-Iranian root *ar / av / aw* „water, moisture, liquid, tears“ is widely represented in the Bashkir toponymy. The Bashkir hydronyms *Avdon*, *Avzyan*, *Avryuz*, *Avyaz*, *Avyalash*, *Avyanash*, *Avashla*, *Avrez* are formed from this geographical appellative, and they are explained on the basis of Indo-Iranian languages.

*Avdon* is a river in the Ufa region. The hydronym is formed from the Indo-Iranian roots *av* „water“ and *danu* „stream“. In Indo-Iranian languages *danu*: compare with Proto-Indo-Aryan *danu* – „dripping, drops, dew“, is interpreted as „dripping“ or as a „gift of heaven“. It goes back to Indo-European \**danu-*, according to Y. Pokorny and is built from the verb root \**da-* „flow; flowing“. Proto-Iranian contamination with a similar formation from \**dan-* <Aryan \**dhan-* is not excluded (compare with Proto-Indo-Aryan *dhan-* „run, flow“, Scythian \**don-*, \**dan-* „river, water“) [11]. Compare: *danu* (Sanskrit – „oozing fluid“).

Bashkir hydronyms *Tere Tanyp* (fast *Tanyp*) – river, right tributary of the Belaya River, and *Tanyp* – river, left tributary of the Bolshoi Nugush River in the Burzyansky district of Bashkortostan, may have been formed from the Indo-Iranian roots \**dan* and *av/aw /ap* „water, moisture“, the archetypal form of this hydronym, may have been \**danap*. There is a Bashkir ethnonym *tanyp*. The main part of the people of *Tanyp* lives in the villages of Askinsky, Tatyshlinsky, Baltachevsky and Karaidel districts of Bashkortostan. People living on the banks of this river may have got the river ethnonym *tanyp*. They are divided into tribal units *Su-Tanyp*, lit. „water *Tanyp* people“, and *Kyr-Tanyp*, lit. „field, steppe or mountain *Tanyp* people“.

The topoformant *av/aw* „water“ is widely represented in the Bashkir toponymy. So, for example, the hydronyms *Əҗәһән*, *Əҗәһ*, *Əҗәһ* are formed from the geographic term *əҗ* „water“. The origin of some of them will be explained below.

*Əҗәһән* (*Avzyan*) – river, right tributary of the Belaya River in Beloretsky, Burzyansky districts of Bashkortostan. In our opinion, *Əҗәһән* consists of two foundations that go back to the Indo-Iranian *av* „water“ and *zayin* „to be born“, i.e. the place of seepage of subsoil water, the place where the spring made its way. In Kurdish, *avzem* „water seepage“, „spring well“, „swamp, swampy place“.

*Əҗәһ* (*Avruz*) is the left tributary of the River Dema in the Alsheevsky district of Bashkortostan; the right tributary of Belaya in the Kugarchinsky district. Perhaps formed from *av/aw* „water“ and *rez* „to flow, pour“. The name of the river *Pəз* – the left tributary of the Belaya in the Beloretsky district – A.K. Matveev explains as emerging from the Iranian *rez* „to flow, pour“ [1]. Indeed, this word can be compared with the Proto-Iranian *raz-*, Avestian *raz-* „to set“, Proto-Indio-Aryan *raj-* „to set“, Latin *rego*, German *richten* „to set“, etc. [12]. Compare: *Eueraz* (*Avruz*) – a small river in the Baltachevsky district, the village of Yalangach; *Avryuz kajahy* – a rock in the Kugarchinsky district, the village of Upper Bikkuzha; *Avryuz Tau* – a mountain in the Miyakinsky district, the village of Urshak-Bashkararamaly. *Əҗәһтамак* (*Avryuztamak*) – a village in the Alsheevsky district. The oikonym *Əҗәһтамак* is formed from the hydronym *Əҗәһ* and the word *tamak* “mouth”.

The topoformant *av/aw* „water“ is also represented in the names: *Əҗәһ* (*Avyaz*) – a tributary of the River Sik-Elga in the Ishimbay district, the village of Kulgan, *Əҗәһләш* (*Avyalash*) – a river in the Yanaul district, the village of Novy Arthaul,

*Əğənəsh* (*Avjanash*) – a spring in the Gafuri district, the village of Mrakovo, *Əyəshle* (*Avashla*) – the left tributary of the River Belaya in the Zilair district.

The modern name of the capital of Bashkortostan „Ufa“, in our opinion, is derived from the name of the River Ufa, which dates back to the Indo-European \**upa* „water, river“. On the map of Russia of N. Sanson dated 1688, the name of the River Ufa is indicated in the form of *Uppa*. The tribe that occupied the lands along the River *Ufa* (*Uppa*) received the tribal name *Өнәү* (*upey*). The tribal name *Upey* (*Өнәү*) is formed from \**upa* „water, river“ and affix *-əy*. The origin of this ethnonym can be interpreted as „water inhabitants“. The Bashkirs of the *Upei* tribe, the *Upeians* still inhabit the right bank of the River Ufa. Compare: *Upay* – the right tributary of the River Rauzyak in the Ishimbaevsky district, *Upay Yalany* – a glade in the Burzyansky district, *Uppa* – a river in Sevastopol.

Thus, the Indo-Iranian topoformant *ar/av/aw* „water, moisture, liquid“ is widely represented in the Bashkir toponymy. This root means „water“, is a part of toponyms, and also can be found in the tribal nomenclature – as part of Bashkir ethnonyms. The waters of the rivers were deified, as evidenced by the image of the Scythian-Sarmatian goddess *Api*. In the Bashkir linguoculture, it corresponds to the image of the Bashkir *Əbei*, personifying the female principle and fertility.

It should be added that the Ganges (Sanskrit), the main sacred river in India, is named after the goddess Ganges, who, according to the myth, turning into a river, flows from the big toe of Vishnu. People believed that her waters had the power of cleansing from sins. It is interesting to note that the internal form of the hydronym *Ganges* means “water”. As A. Voronkov writes, in the language of the Munda tribes, *ganges* means “water” [13].

The limnonym *Ərgөн* – a lake in Uchalinsky district of Bashkortostan and the hydronym *Yrgen* – the left tributary of the River Ika in Kugarchinsky and Zianchurinsky districts of Bashkortostan, by their origin, are possibly associated with Indo-Iranian theonymy and Iranian languages.

According to folk etymology, the lake was named after the south-west wind, which the locals call *ərgөн*. In the dictionaries of the Bashkir language, the word *əpçə* in this meaning is not fixed. (Compare: Karakalpakisch *urgun* „blizzard, snow storm“, Uzbek dialect *urgun* „heap of snow“, possibly from *ir-* „to blow“). But in the names of winds sometimes the names of rivers are reflected. For example, the north-east wind, which blows from the River Barguzin is called *barguzin*; the north-east wind that blows from the valley of the Upper Angara River is called *angara*.

Thus, when naming the wind, inhabitants could focus on a specific geographical object. The name of the wind may contain an indication of the area where it originates. Therefore, the question arises: has the lake *Ərgөн* been named after the wind *ərgөн*, or has the wind blowing from the lake *Ərgөн* been called *ərgөн*? The authors of the BASSR Toponyms Dictionary explain the name of the lake *Ərgөн* by to Mongolian word *ərgөн* in the meaning „broad“ and compares with the Bashkir *irken* in the same meaning. The hydronym *Yrgen* is associated with the Bashkir dialect word *yrgen* „small shoots, small thin willow“ [7]. In our opinion, they can be variants of the same word, because in the Bashkir language and its dialects there is an alternation of sounds *ə ~ ɣ* at the beginning of the word: *əйрәк // ɣрзәк, өйрә // ɣрә*, etc.

A.A. Kamalov indicates the variation of sounds *ə* and *ɣ* in all languages of the Altai family: Tungus-Manchurian *өлән* „gorge“ and Bashkir *үлән* „valley“, Mongolian *tөв* „bottom, center“ and Kirghiz *тыр*, gives examples of the reflection of the correspondence *ə ~ ɣ* in the Bashkir toponymy: *Imәнlegөл/Imәнnegөл, Jökөлөкөвәк/Jyкөлөкөвәк, Sөгөнтау/Sygentau, Tastəbә/Tastybә, Ərkөntө/Yrgende*, etc. [14].

According to the phonetic appearance, *Ərgөн* and *Yrgen* are consonant with Sogdian *ugrani*, with the Ossetian *arkhi* in the meaning of “copper”. These words also find lexical parallels in the Finno-Ugric languages: Komi *yrgon* “copper”, Udmurke *yrgon* “yellow copper”, Mari *vurgene*, Mansi *argen* “copper”. “Copper” <general. \**vergen'e* // Komi-Zyryan *yrgon* (>Mansi *argen*) // Udmurt *yrgon* <general perm. \**urgen* <doperm. *urgene*. F. Gordeev reconstructed the foreform of the Volga-Permian time in the form \**vargene*. Based on Mari language under the influence of vowel harmony *a > e*: *vargene > vergene*. In the Permian languages, according to F. Gordeev, the initial consonant *v* fell out and goes back to the Baltic source (carriers of the Balanian culture that penetrated at the beginning of the 2nd millennium BC from the southern part of the Upper Dnieper): Prussian *vargien*, Lettish *vars*, Latvian *varias* “copper”, with Sogdian *ugrani*, Ossetian *arkhi* [15].

As can be seen from the above reconstruction of the preform of the word “copper”, the word alone reflects the mutual influence of peoples and their languages. As is known from history, the Baltic peoples, the Balts were in contact with the Iranian-speaking peoples in the 3rd-2nd millennium BC. Contacts of Iranian-speaking peoples with Finno-Ugric peoples are also known. According to V. Nikonov, the contact of Iranians and Finno-Ugrians on the Middle Volga ended only in the first centuries of our era [16]. The word *Ərgөн // Yrgen* in the meaning of “copper” in the Bashkir language is preserved only in the geographical names *Ərgөн // Yrgen, Ərkөntө // Yrgende*. In the modern Bashkir language, the word “*бәкүр*” is used in the meaning of “copper”, and the word “*ең*” in the meaning of “yellow copper”.

The explanation of the hydronyms *Ərgөн* and *Yrgen* on the basis of Iranian and Finno-Ugric languages is justified by the fact that the South Urals in the Bronze Age in the 3rd-2nd millennium BC was a zone of active contact of various tribes and nationalities, and this could be reflected in the toponymy of the region.

According to archaeologists, in the Middle Urals there were large metallurgical centers (Turbinsky, Tashkazgansky, Bakruzysky), which mined silver copper (an alloy of copper and silver) and yellow copper. And they managed to prove that there were close cultural ties between the South Ural and Middle Ural centers, and their products were widely distributed outside the Ural region: from the Middle and Lower Volga, up to Moldova [17].

As known, metals were the object of worship of almost all peoples. This is evidenced by the data of comparative mythology and archaeological excavations. So, for example, archaeologists N. Mazhitov and A. Sultanova discovered copper slags in the graves of the Srubnaya culture and waste from copper smelting (Imangulovo, Orenburg Region). In their opinion, such burials may belong to the ancient metallurgists, and a symbolic piece of copper could serve as their kind of guarantee that in the afterlife they will do their work [17].

Metals, as an element of the mythopoetic system, form a special “metallic” code. Alchemists believed that seven metals are associated with seven major planets and seven divine characters: copper with the Venus, gold with the Sun, mercury with

Mercury, silver with the Moon, tin with the Jupiter [18]. According to the teachings of the Mysteries, the rays of celestial bodies, having a crystallizing effect on the lower world, become various elements [19].

In the legends and tales of the Bashkirs, metals are associated with the underworld. Such a view of the Bashkirs on nature can explain the reason for the presence of a piece of copper in the burials of the ancients. Perhaps the copper alloy was dedicated to the god of metal.

In the Vedic pantheon (2nd-1st millennium BC) there was a deity Arjuna, from *Arjuna* “silver” – a deity of silver. This suggests that metals were considered sacred, and each metal had a deity. Sometimes the name of the metal can simply mean color: in Proto-Indo-Aryan the word *arjuna* means “white, light”. Here, the color of silver received an additional rethinking. In Russian, the white color is called “silver-white”, “silver”.

The comparison of materials shows that the name *Ørgøn // Yrgen* can be based, firstly, on the name of a metal of silver or copper, because an ancient person could name different metals with the same word; secondly, these toponyms can bear the names of deities of copper or silver. The third hypothesis of the origin of the hydronyms *Ørgøn // Yrgen* can also be put forward, according to which hydronyms can be named by color, yellow (copper color) or white “silver, silver-white” (silver color), but all the names of the toponym go back to Iranian languages.

It can be added that many hydronyms of Bashkortostan are explainable on the material of Iranian languages, and they are named by words denoting metal. For example, *Ergøn* – a river, right tributary of the Belaya River in Meleuzovsky district, a mountain and a village in the same district, a village in Khaibullinsky district. The variant of the names *Zirgøn* dates back to Iranian *zergun* “golden, gold-bearing” [5]. (Compare: in the Bashkir language the word *zər* “gold”, *zərgər* “jeweller” is preserved). Sim is the right tributary of the Belaya River in Chelyabinsk Oblast. The river Esem in Bashkortostan is explained by the Persian *sim* “silver” [3].

Another name associated, in our opinion, with Iranian and Indian languages and Indo-Iranian mythology, is the name of the River *Øshə* – the right tributary of the River Sim in Chelyabinsk Oblast. There are several versions about the origin of hydronym. It is compared with the Turkic *asha* – “through”. This name was given to the river because it flows among the mountains, breaking through between them. According to another opinion it originates from the Turkic *ashyu* – “to pass, to cross”, that is, *Asha* – “a transition, a pass”. Asha Valley is located between the ranges of Karatau and the Vorob'nye Gory and could be used in antiquity as the shortest way from the villages along the Yuryuzan River to the Sim basin. As A. Matveev writes, the Bashkir form of the hydronym *Øshə* refutes both of these versions [3].

The studies of F. Khisamitdinova contain historical information of 1740 about the Asha mountain, which is located in Beloretsky district of Bashkortostan: “Near the mountains of Yamantav and Osh...”. In her opinion, the toponym is formed from the Turkic verb *ashyu* “to pass, a pass, a valley, a lowland” or from the Turkic *asha* “through” [20].

Indeed, there is reason to compare the name of the mountain with the Turkic *ashyu* “to pass”. I. Kuchumov writes that “...the mountain was the boundary of two worlds – “the own” and “alien”, the other world. Having risen to the top of the mountain, the epic hero sees as his own and another's world, the universe: “Dispersing the bulk cloud, Ural climbed to the top, they say he looked at the world from above... To get into an alien world, mostly hostile, the hero must cross the mountain” [21].

Toponyms with the basis *Azhu*: *Azhi*, *Azhi*, *Azu*, *Anzhu*, *Ashu*, *Aja*, *Azhy* – ridge, pass, valley, cape – are noted in the toponymy of Gorny Altai in the meaning “a pas”.

Taking into account the remark of A. Matveev that the Bashkir form of the hydronym *Øshə* does not correspond to *asha* “a transition, a pass”, we put forward our version, according to which *Asha*, the Bashkir form of which is *Øshə*, can be associated with Indo-Iranian mythology, where *Ashi* is female deity. In Iranian mythology, it symbolizes luck, abundance, wealth, endows the earth with gold and silver, beautiful wives and daughters. Her father is Ahuramazda, her mother is Spenta-Armaiti (Armatay) [22].

Ashi is the goddess of the Indian peoples. As known, in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC there was an Indo-Iranian community – *Aryans*.

Another name, bearing the name of the Indo-Iranian goddess *Armatay*, *Armaiti*, is the Armet River, the Bashkir form of *Ørmet*, which flows in the Gafuriysky and Ishimbaysky districts of Bashkortostan. This word may have a parallel in Sanskrit: *amr'ta* – “immortal”, “world of the gods”, “immortality”, “drink of immortality”, “nectar”, “healing drink”, “water”, “milk” [23].

In Vedic mythology, Aramati is an abstract deity that symbolizes piety. In Central Iranian mythology, this deity is called *Spandarmat*. It dates back to the Dozoroastrian mother earth, the wife of the sky god (later Spenta Armaiti, Armatay – one of the deities of Amesh Spent). In Scythian mythology this deity corresponds with Api [22]. Lelekov, 1992, p. 466]. As is known, the feminine in the mythologies of the peoples of the world is associated with the river, water. As already mentioned, the internal meaning of the word *Api* is also associated with water: in Indo-Iranian languages, the root *ap* and its phonetic variations mean water: *av / aw/ap* “water”, “moisture”, “liquid”, “tears”. In Iranian mythology, Armaiti (in the *Avesta*) is one of the deities of Amesha Spenta, a good spirit (*ahura*). It is the patron spirit of the earth and the personification of devotion (piety). It is called the wife of Ahuramazda and the mother of the goddess Asha [24].

As a rule, mythotoponyms dating back to the Indian and Iranian languages bear the names of female deities: *Api*, *Armaiti* and *Ashi*. There are names associated with kinship ties.

It is known that “...Proto-Indo-Iranians deified the waters of rivers and reservoirs as goddesses, prayed and made libations for them” [25].

#### IV. Conclusion

In the Bashkir toponymy, an archaic substrate vocabulary of Indo-Iranian origin, dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-1<sup>st</sup> half of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC – to the time of the existence of the Indo-Iranian community. This is evidenced by the Bashkir hydronyms associated with theonymy of the Indian and Iranian peoples. We are analyzing,

The role of substrate toponymy in studying the problems of ethnogenesis and ethnic history is invaluable, because it records not only linguistic, but also ethnocultural phenomena associated with beliefs and mythology, testifying to previously existing or disappeared peoples, their contacts with the local population, or ethnogenetic relationships. The identification, systematic description and comprehensive analysis of the substratum toponymy will contribute to the solution of many not only linguistic problems, but also to the clarification of questions of history, ethnogenesis, contacts between peoples, the influence of languages and cultures, etc.

**Конфликт интересов**

Не указан.

**Conflict of Interest**

None declared.

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