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ETYMA ALANICA

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SUMMARY

The objective of this paper is to test the hypothesis about Alanian language affinity of some hydronyms in the area of Slavonic toponymy. With high probability they are explained by appealing to Ossetian lexis, which is the result of historical evolution of Alanian vocabulary. The important morphological feature of the hydronyms under consideration for their Alanian attribution is the sum of formatives, exact genetic analogue of which are detected in Ossetian vocabulary.

*The etymological analysis enables to single out the six Alanisms, the form and likely semantics of which are confidently restored like *ana-tak[ā] or *ana-tax[ā] ‘stagnant water’, *arši-l- or *arš-il- ‘small stream’, *māl-arš-ā ‘stream from pool, swamp, marsh’, *māli weni ‘stream from pool’, *mār-ud ‘stream/river with weir’, *mez-ur ‘jet (stream)’ or *mez-ur ‘running (flow, stream)’.*

Key words: *etymology, Alanian, reconstruction, prototype, derivative, suffix, hydronym.*

Introduction. The Alanian language belongs to the relict Iranian languages, reconstructed from the onomastic data (toponymy, anthroponymy) and to a lesser extent due to few in number written monuments of Alano-Ossetian attribution. The toponymic material has some value for judging about the composition of Alanian vocabulary, phonetics and morphology of Alanian word, and also about the relations of the Alanian language to other Iranian languages. It is about the sum of the geographical names, which arose in the speech

of Alanian population of the Danube, Sava, Don, Dnieper, Bug, Dniester rivers regions, and Crimea. These toponyms save the lexemes which enhance our knowledge of Alanian topographic nomenclature, therefore singling out the Alanian heritage in the toponymy of the mentioned territories is always **relevant** for Iranian etymology and reconstruction.

The main phono-morphological criteria for identifying reconstructed lexemes as the units of Alanian vocabulary are set out in (Iliadi 2025: 5), therefore here we are specially not discussing these criteria. The **aim** of the proposed study is testing the hypothesis about Alanian origin of some geographical names in the area of Slavonic hydronymy. The achievement of the goal involves addressing two **tasks**: 1) to conduct the etymological analysis of the lexical material; 2) to reconstruct Alanian words based on data of Slavonic toponymy.

Material of the study is a number of hydronyms, taken from the dictionaries of the onomastic lexis, investigations on the toponymy, and the geographical works.

Specificity of research has caused the choice of its **methods**, namely – *the etymological method* and *the method of linguistic reconstruction*.

ETYMOLOGIES

1. Alan. **ana-tak[ā]* or **ana-tax[ā]*

Netaka – the name of a tributary (creek) of the Sava River in the upper course (region of Kostajnica). As regards the orthography E. Dickenmann notes: “It is written that way (!) and not *Nèteka* – the name of a creek (Serb., Croat. ‘slowly flowing water’)” (Dickenmann 1966, 2: 52).

Indeed, Slavonic compounds with **ne-* from the stem of **tekri* ‘to flow’ consistently demonstrate only *e*-vocalism of the root, cf. **neteča*/**netečь*, **neteka*, **netekъ*, of which see: (Etymological Dictionary 1999, 25: 37, 38). In view of this fact we can hardly speak about the lengthened grade of *o*-apophonia (**ō > *a*) **Ne-taka*.

We consider the written form to be Slavonic adaptation of the Alanian lexeme **ana-tak[ā]* or **ana-tax[ā]* ‘stagnant water’, that is a cognate of Proto-Slav. **tekt’i* : **tokъ*, cf. Osset. *ær-tæx* ‘dew’, *ær-tax* ‘drop’, when *ær-* is the preverb, while *tak-* (*tač-*) – verbal base, present in *tæzyn* ‘flow’ (Abaev 1958, 1: 180). Alan. prefix **ana-* (= Iran. privative particle **ana* > Osset. *ænæ* ‘without’; Abaev 1958, 1: 149–150) was reinterpreted to be Slav. **ne-* in the same way as in the case of the river name (basin of the Sejm) *Неданъ*, 1786 in Chernigov vicegerency, behind which stands Alan. **ana-dān* ‘waterless (river)’ = Osset. *ænæ-дон* ‘the same’ (in more detail this etymology will be set out in the special investigation).

The final *-a* in the hydronym is ambiguous (thence its optionality for the reconstruction), because one may be both primordial element of the morphological composition of Iranian lexeme (the remnant of *ā*-stem marker), as well as Slavonic flection, necessary for the grammatical agreement of the loan word.

2. Alan. **arši-l-* or **arš-il-*

In the description of the Crimean areas by P. S. Pallas (Journey to the Crimea in 1793 and 1794 years by academician P. S. Pallas (transl. from Germ.; the first part). *Proceedings of the Imperial Odessa Society of the History and Antiquities*. 1883. T. 13. P. 42) the river *Аршилъ* is mentioned. Cf.: “Offsite from the forest, on shore of the Karasu river, the beautiful house of earl Kokhovski is located; one is in his estate, called Azamat, namely in 14 versts from Karasu Bazar. This rich estate has more than 10000 dessiatines of the most fertile land and meadows, not counting the two Tatar villages, in one of which Russians live, and in the other Nogai resettlers live; this last village is called Melek and contains 500 souls of residents. Near this village the road goes through low mountains to the station Burunduk (25 versts from Karasu Bazar); here the river Bulganak runs, flowing into Sivash together with other river, called *Аршилъ*”.

Perhaps, it is about preservation of Alan. **arši-l-* (or **arš-il-*) ‘small stream’. This is the derivative **arši-* (*ī*-stem?) (~ Old Ind. *arṣ* ‘to flow’: Ved. (Rigveda) *ārṣati*, *ārṣat* (Mayrhofer

1992: 123), *ṛṣāti* ‘to flow’, ‘to stream’) with suff. *-l/-il-*, attested in the appellative vocabulary of the Ossetian and some other Iranian languages. The diminutive meaning for **aršil-* is presumed given an analogous derivational semantics of the suffix in Ossetian and Talysh (it is permissible that it has the same function also in the toponymy). More details about the formant and its variants see: (Dzitssoity 2018: 96, 103), and also (Gabaraev 1977: 59).

3. Alan. **māl-arš-ā*

Малороща – the gully, left tributary of the Kuchurgan (in the headwaters) left of the Dniester river (Словник гідронімів 1979: 350). The hydronym already has been under the etymological analysis, and now two its treatments are introduced into scientific circulation. They agree on two items: 1) Iranian genetic attribution of the hydronym; 2) identification of the first part as «Scythian-Ossetian» **māl* (< **mārya-*) ‘pool’. V. E. Orel tends to consider this name to be Iran. dial. **mārya-rauxšna-* ‘light swamp, light pool’ (Orel 1986: 109), while A. K. Shaposhnikov regards it along with the Bosporan toponym *Malorossa* as Sarm. **malə-roš* ‘deep stream’ (in the second part is *rsi* ‘to flow’; Shaposhnikov 2007: 304). However, in other work of 2007 year A. K. Shaposhnikov reconstructs a slightly different Sarmatian prototype **māḷa-r-šā* ‘deep flow’ (~ Osset. *mal* ‘pool’, ‘the deepest place of the lake, swamp, river’, Old Ind. *ṛṣāti* ‘to flow, to stream’, Thrac. *Malua*) (Shaposhnikov 2007a: 105, 462) for both names. The historical-phonetic reasons of the reconstruction of «schwa secundum» for the second part, just like the reconstruction of this component as **-roš*, remain unclear.

Meanwhile, the form of the postpositive component may be restored exactly like **arš-ā* ‘flow’, ‘stream’, which is etymologically oriented towards the Old Indian verb *árṣati*, *ṛṣāti* ‘to flow’, ‘to stream’ as in the case of **arši-l-* (**arš-il-*) (see above). Thus, for Iranian (Alanian) composite, preserved in the hydronym, is probable reconstruction **māl-arš-ā* ‘stream from the pool, swamp’. Its written form is the result of Slavonic adaptation: the sound *a* in the inlaut was interpreted as

the connection vowel and substituted with *o*, which is regular in the compound words, whereas the remaining cluster was likened to the stem of the verb **-rošati* ‘to mist, to water’.

Here we do not view the toponym *Malorossa* given the ambiguity of its orthography.

4. Alan. **māli weni*

Малывень – the name of the left tributary of the Bolva, left tributary of the Desna river. In the research by V. N. Toporov and O. N. Trubachev the hidronym is defined as unclear, at the same time the authors put forward the hypothesis about its Iranian genesis, having proposed the comparison with Old Ind. *mālu-*, *māluvā* ‘climbing plant’ (Toporov, Trubachev 1962: 225). The outcome of the word *-ень* was left without an explanation, which casts doubt on this etymology.

We have the formal grounds to attribute *Малывень* to Iranian heritage in the local hydronymy, considering this name to be the word fusion of **māli weni* ‘stream from pool’ (literally – *stream of pool*). It is formed with Alan. **māli* – genitive of the noun **māl* ‘pool’ (> Osset. *mal* ‘deep stagnant water’, ‘deep place in the lake, swamp, river’, ‘pool’; Abaev 1973: 2: 68–69), and **weni* – the form with the *i*-umlaut to Iran. **wani* ‘stream’, cf. Khotan Saka *vañi* ‘streams’ (< **u-an-* or with root **au-*, where the initial *a-* later was lost) ~ Old Ind. *avāni-* ‘stream’ (Bailey 1979: 373, 383), and also Alan. **un-i-* ‘flow, stream’ < Iran. **aun-i-* as a part of **un[i]-gul* < **un[i]-kul* ‘stream from the hole, gully’ (: modern *Ингул* – the river), of which see: (Iliadi 2025: 17–18).

5. Alan. **mār-ud*

Марым – the creek in the Gnilopiat river basin (the former Kiev governorate; Vasmer 1965, 3: 214). It’s hardly own Slavonic reflex of PIE participle **mār-ont-* > **marqъb*: one is doubtful due to the problematic nature of identifying traces of PIE **mār-* ‘to block, close, impede’ in Proto-Slavonic vocabulary. Furthermore, the designation of the *flowing* water body as “locking”, “blocking” does not get any support in the typology of the nomination (it would be expected the usage of the passive participle with *-en-* for the denomination of a blocked, dammed creek).

May be, we deal with an inaccurate rendering of Sarm.-Alan. **mār-ud* < Iran. **māra-uda-* ‘stream/river with weir’ (rather even it is Alanian nominal composite **mār-ud*, formed by the reflexes of Proto-Iranian stems). The composite of the reflexes of Iran. **māra-* ‘weir’ and the nominal derivative from Iran. **aud-* : **ud-* ‘to make its way like wellspring, leak out’? Cf. Avest. *aōda-* ‘wellspring, source’ (Rastorgueva, Edelman 2000, 1: 257), Khotan Saka *ūtca-* ‘water’ < **usačā-* ~ Avest. *usa-*, Old Ind. *útsa-* ‘source’ (Emmerick, Skjærvø 1982: 27), Osset. *Медзыда* “Flowing water” with *-ыда* < Iran. **auda-* : **uda-* ‘wellspring, source’ (Цхуырбаты, Дзиццойты 2015: 544–545).

For more information on **māra-* in Sarmato-Alanian hydronymy see: (Iliadi 2025: 15).

It is permissible to interpret the hydronym *Марым* as the Slavonic adaptation of Alan. **Марыд* with devoicing of the final dental consonant. The examples of the devoicing the etymological *-d^(c)* > *-m^(c)* in the absolute end of word are attested in the Dnieper River hydronymy, cf. the variants: *Прóсеред* and *Прóсеред*; *Убедь* (*Убедьдю*, 1746) and *Убеть* (Словник гідронімів 1979: 449, 577).

6. Alan. **mez-ur* or **mez-ur*

Mezur — the tributary of the Chernets River (the right tributary of the Sava River). According to E. Dickenmann, “Unclearly, without the parallels” (Dickenmann 1966, 2: 38).

Two etymologies of the hydronym are possible.

1. As Alanian suffixal derivative **mez-ur* ‘jet (stream)’ from the verbal stem **mez-* < Iran. **maiz-* : **miz-* ‘to flow, trickle, ooze’, cf. Osset. *mezun* ‘to flow (like a stream, trickle)’, ‘to leak’ (Abaev 1973, 2: 126–127; Rastorgueva, Edelman 2015, 5: 163–167). It is essential to note an important detail regarding the area of the derivatives with the mentioned formant: we mean that unproductive class of the formations with *-ur* are singled out exactly in Ossetian toponymy (Dzitstsoity 2018: 98, 105), that inherits Sarmato-Alanian language traits in many ways. Cf. *Moz-ur*, *Myz-ur*, *Sam-ur* etc. (Dzitstsoity 2018: 105).

Isn't Osset. *Myz-ur* (< Alan. **miz-ur*) the closest structural and etymological match to **mez-ur*?

The reconstruction of the semantics of Alan. **mez-ur* as 'jet (stream)' is supported by the typological analogue in the form of Russ. hydronym *Струйной* (the Oka River basin; Smolitskaja 1976: 71) ~ *струя*.

2. As Alan. **mez-ur* 'running (flow, stream)' – the derivative with the same formant from **mez-* < Iran. **maiṣ-* 'to move, move around', cf. the reflection of this etymon in Osset. *Медзыда, Медзыдайы дон* (the name of the left tributary of the Kura River) with the reflex of Iran. **auda-* : **uda-* 'wellspring, source' in the postposition (Цхуырбаты, Дзиццойты 2015: 544; Dzitsitsoity 2018: 102). As regards the motivation cf. Slavonic potamonym *Бігуча* (the basins of the Dnieper and Dniester rivers; Словник гідронімів 1979: 52), literally – *бегущая*.

This version implies the loss of the stop in Slavonic speech and turning the whistling affricate *ʒ* into spirant *z*.

The alternative version of Slavonic genesis of the hydronym as Proto-Slav. **mězurь* (the derivative with suff. *-ur-* from **měz-* 'little') is asserted in: (Ліаді 2008: 236; Ліаді 2009: 291).

Conclusions. The etymological essays set out above give grounds to talk with high probability about Alanian genesis of the considered vocabulary, that has very close etymological analogues in the Ossetian language.

The result of the linguistic reconstruction is represented such Alanian lexemes: **ana-tak[ā]* or **ana-tax[ā]* 'stagnant water', **arši-l-* or **arš-il-* 'small stream', **māl-arš-ā* 'stream from pool, swamp, marsh', **māli weni* 'stream from pool', **mār-ud* 'stream/river with weir', **mez-ur* 'jet (stream)' or **mez-ur* 'running (flow, stream)'.

A few lexemes demonstrate the features of the derivational morphology with the closest correspondents in the morphology of Ossetian word, cf.: 1) **māli weni* with the flection of genitive *-i* in **māl-i* (Osset. *mal-i* || *mal-y*); 2) **arši-l-* or **arš-il-* with suff. *-il-/l-* (Osset. *-il-/l-*); 3) **mez-ur* or **mez-ur* with suff. *-ur-* (Osset. *-ur-*). Such examples illustrate genetic continuity of the language traditions of Alanian by Ossetian speech.

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ETYMA ALANICA

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АНОТАЦІЯ

Мета статті — перевірити гіпотезу про аланську мовну атрибуцію кількох гідронімів у слов'янському топонімічному ареалі. Зі значною ймовірністю їх можна пояснювати, апелюючи до осетинської лексики, яка є результатом історичної еволюції аланського вокабуляра. Важливою для аланської атрибуції морфологічною особливістю розглядуваних гідронімів є сума формативів, для яких існують точні генетичні аналоги саме в осетинській лексичі.

*Етимологічний аналіз уможливив виокремлення шести аланізмів, чия форма та ймовірна семантика впевнено реконструюються як *ana-tak[ā] чи *ana-tax[ā] 'стояча вода, нетеча', *arši-l- чи *arš-il- 'потічок', *māl-arš-ā 'потік із чорторії, виру, болота', *māli wenī 'потік із чорторії, виру', *mār-ud 'перегороджений ручай', *tez-ur 'струїстий, струменевий' чи *tez-ur 'який біжить (потік)'.*

Ключові слова: етимологія, аланський, реконструкція, прототип, дериват, суфікс, гідронім.

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