About the origin of the Ayrums

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Abstract. In more recent times, political problems faced by all-Turkic toponymy did not leave the toponymic system of Azerbaijan out of the grip of these challenges. In scientific journals, symposiums, and conferences, the opinions of our linguists, historians, and geographers regarding the linguistic and etymological analyses of any toponymic unit, turning from scientific debates into personal conflicts and outpourings of dissatisfaction, diverted attention from the correct and fair steps taken by honest researchers in the direction of solving the problem. Regretfully, it can be noted that sometimes, without any reason, the search for the explanation of our onomastic units in the Persian and Armenian languages has been connected with the fact that our territory borders Iran and Armenia. But we should not forget the fact that throughout history, Azerbaijan has bordered the Iravan Khanate, South Azerbaijan, and Türkiye. We must not forget that the population here consists entirely of Turkic tribes. Armenians who occupied our historical homeland not only tried to adopt our native names in those areas but in general, the representatives of this nation have always taken a biased position with the desire to appropriate toponyms of Turkish origin. Their main goal was to falsify the fact that our people live in our homeland, which they have owned for thousands of years, by changing these names. One of the ancient Oghuz tribes, the Ayrums contributed to the origin of the Azerbaijani people. The lack of substantial research on this tribe has led to the creation of fictional ideas about the origin of the Ayrums that have no scientific basis in certain periods. Surely, all this indicates the negative intentions of the Armenians and their allies, who from time to time steal the names of ancient Turkic tribes from our history and create a so-called history for themselves.

G. Garagashli, a scientist who conducted serious research on the Ayrums for the first time, clarified many points in his work based on quite valid and logical arguments. G. Garagashli advises his colleagues, who do not agree with his views, to prioritize not only archaeological but also paleontological (linguistic) research in the region inhabited by Ayrums when re-investigating this topic. It is possible to draw confident theoretical conclusions based on thorough research. To preserve its national memory, every nation must first of all have its place names. From this point of view, toponyms are of exceptional importance as an invaluable source for the study of the language, history, geography and ethnography of our people. Our old tribal names, beliefs, and language units live probably better live on oeconym. «Ayrums» is one of the ethno-toponyms that keep our ancestry alive.

Keywords: Ayrums, distribution area, Oghuz Turks, ancient Turkic peoples, geographical names.

Про походження Айрумів

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Анотація. Останнім часом політичні проблеми, з якими зіткнулася загальноповірська топоніміка, не залишили топонімічну систему Азербайджану осторонь від цих викликів. У наукових журналах, на симпозіумах, на конференціях думки наших мовознавців, істориків, географів щодо лінгвоетимологічного аналізу будь-якої топонімічної одиниці перетворювалися у наукових суперечках на особистісні конфлікти та вибухи невдоволення, відволікали увагу від правильних і справедливих кроків. Визнані сумлінними дослідниками в напрямі вирішення проблеми. На жаль, можна констатувати, що неполітично пошуки пояснення наших ономастичних одиниць у перській та вірменській мовах пов’язували з тим, що наша територія
Introduction

Correctly recording the names of places and land areas that live in memories means preserving the material and cultural heritage of every nation, measured over thousands of years. Toponyms provide a rich source for studying the ancient history of the Azerbaijani people. Geographical names play a crucial role in the study of ethnic history as well as the ethnogenesis of our people.

Over the centuries, foreign pressures in the study of the historical fate of our people, especially the threat of political stigma during the Soviet era, made the work of our research scientists much more difficult. Despite all these pressures, our scholars have conducted extensive research on the Ayrums («Ayrım» in Aze.) and proved with solid evidence that this tribe is of Turkish origin. Their published articles on this theme have clarified many issues (Garagashli, 1929).

Some researchers who studied the Ayrums had the goal of covering up the historical truth. They desired to confirm with valid evidence that the territories inhabited by the ancient Turkic tribe belonged to Armenians. The purpose of this study is to provide a more accurate and honest basis for the opinions of scientists who research the origin of this ethnotoponym.

Any research that is far from historical facts is certainly not scientifically convincing. The hostile approach of Armenian nationalists towards the historical heritage, toponyms, and research on the ancient past of Muslims, including Turkic peoples, is already known to all the peoples of the world. The task of the research is to confirm the objective opinions and real truths that research scientists have presented about the Ayrums in different years through their investigative writings.

The materials of the research are scientific reports of the Institutes of Geography, History, Literature, Archaeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, fund materials of the National Archive Department of the Republic of Azerbaijan, works of scholars who have conducted research in this field, methodological instructions, references as well as the results of the authors’ scientific-research works.

Analysis and discussion

The article published by Gahraman Garagashli, who conducts more extensive research on the «Ayrums» and proved with solid evidence that this tribe is of Turkish origin according to all its signs, clarifies many issues. However, in those years (1927-1929), the discovery of the truth by the young scholar was not approved by some local specialists who were far from the national spirit and thought that it did not correspond to the plans of the centre (Moscow). As a result, the more experienced ethnographer Alasgar Alakbarov was involved in this work and they tried to achieve what they wanted according to the plan. In other words, the scientist who tried to confirm that the word «Ayrum» is derived from the word «hay» and «horom» was fulfilling the wish of those who trusted him by connecting their origin with the «Greek Armenians» (Alakbarov, 1960). Alakbarov’s erroneous research on this issue in subsequent years was defended by his like-minded researchers. V. Kobychev and G.D. Aghayev (Gena Agayan) justified A. Alakbarov in their articles and put forward ideas that have no scientific basis. They were busy covering up the real truth about this tribe. There was a goal set by some «so-called» patriotic scientists: they wanted to con-
firm with valid evidence that the territories inhabited by the ancient Turkic tribe belonged to the Armenians. G.D. Aghayev missed some important facts in his article on this subject. He tried to achieve his desire by clarifying other issues without putting forward any ideas about the «Eyrimja» ononyms. However, G.D. Aghayev was not unaware that this toponym lives in the names of mountains and summer pastures in the territory of the Gadabay district. The fact that he distorted the name «Eyrimja» and gave it «Ayrimja» also came from his character. What is true is that the names «Ayrancha» or «Agramcha» («Әйрәңчә»/«Әграңчә» in Aze.) are ononyms of Turkish origin. The planned goals of both G.D. Aghayev and V.P. Kobychev were to connect the ethnic origins of the «Ayrums» with Armenians. V.P. Kobychev claimed in his fiction that the «Ayrums» (Ayryms) were Armenized Albanian generations, and they later became Turkic and accepted Islam. He noted that the reason for these Turkified Armenians to take this step was the division of Armenia at the end of the 6th century. According to him, «Ayrums» were a part of the Armenians who settled in the border regions from the Byzantine side at that time, «The name Ayrums, meaning Armenians subject to Byzantium, was used for them».

V.P. Kobychev and his unanimous researchers are very zealous about achieving their desires. Although they resorted to various fake methods, they did not look for at least one Armenian word in the language of the «Ayrums». In fact, they don’t even try. Because they well understood that even if they looked for it, they would not be able to find it.

Even though G.D. Aghayev tried to achieve what he desired with false reasoning in the study of this toponym, he faced difficulties in expressing an independent opinion. Due to the lack of solid evidence, he considered the «Ayrums» to be Albanians or Armenians, and sometimes to be Romanian Armenians. As a result, he associated the «Ayrums» with the Turkified and Muslimized Albanians and considered them to be Armenians who eventually settled in those areas and became Turkified.

Regardless of the circumstances, if we pay attention, we can see that the most objective and consistent writing about this ethnic group belongs to G. Garagashli. The researcher has conducted a detailed study on the ethnography of the Ayrums. Both his presentation in Baku and his lecture in Leningrad have generated significant interest. Later, that research has been published as well. As a result, the writings related to Ayrums have not only attracted attention in Azerbaijan but have also begun to capture the interest of researchers and scholars in other countries. Until G. Garagashli’s article, very few people were knowledgeable about this ethnic group. Indeed, due to this reason, various opinions and theories have emerged regarding the origin of Ayrums. The author states that it is possible to comprehend all of these. No matter how little we know someone, they appear beautiful and mysterious to us in equal measure. In such cases, to create excitement and sensationalism for the sake of «discoveries», numerous «sensationalist hunters» emerge.

Research conducted provides evidence that historically, a group of the Ayrums who primarily lived in mountainous regions had migrated from the lowlands to these areas. Not all of them migrated to these lands solely due to the natural beauty, cool waters, or dense forests. Undoubtedly, at times, Ayrums who were under pressure or facing enemy attacks found refuge in these territories and established settlements there for protection. All geographical names (hydronyms, ononyms, ecoregions) in these territories bestowed upon them by their ancestors are of Turkic origin. The conducted research also confirms that the fabricated writings are baseless and affirms that Ayrums have Turkish origins in all their meanings.

Undoubtedly, conducting extensive research about this ethnic group in the 1920s was not an easy task for researchers. G. Garagashli, who took on this responsible task, spent a long time among them (Ayrums) in their native settlements and based his writings on realities, thus providing the most accurate information. During that time, he respected the opinions of experienced researchers. He, referring to the toponymic term, notes that when writing the name of this tribe according to its grammatical form, «they are either migrants from another region or the place where they originally settled is called «Ayrum»».

To conduct comprehensive and inclusive research, it is indeed essential to prioritize the study of the lifestyle, culture, and history of neighbouring peoples. G. Garagashli, referring to the experienced researcher V. Kriberg, emphasizes that the division of tribes based on language families cannot be the sole basis for ethnographic research. This suggests that studying the Ayrum tribes requires a more comprehensive approach that takes into account various factors beyond linguistic classification.

Indeed, when conducting research related to the origin of any name, it is not sufficient to rely solely on the diversity of language groups. Other factors such as historical context, cultural influences, migration patterns, and natural environment should also be taken into consideration.
Over the years, scholars have confirmed the facts with investigative writings, making objective judgments about the «Ayrums».

We can find information about the «Eymurs» in the work of M. Kashgari «Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk» (11th century), who has made great contributions to the development of Turkology. He states that the «Eymurs» occupy an important place among the 22 Oghuz tribes. M. Kashgari writes about the Oghuz tribes: «Oghuz are a Turkish tribe. The Oghuz are Turkmen. These are twenty-two divisions; each division has a separate symbol and a mark given to its animals. They recognize each other with these marks» (Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur, 1995). «Eymurs» are shown in this source as the eleventh Oghuz.

Rashid al-Din Fadlullah in his work (XIV century) shows that the Oghuz consist of 24 clans, and the Eymurs occupy a special place in this order (Rashiddaddin, 1992., Rashiddaddin, 1987). In this work, the researcher who provides information about Oghuz Khan, mentions his (Oghuz Khan’s) 24 grandchildren who were born from his 6 children and writes that Eymur is the child of the 5th of these sons (Dagh Khan). Rashid al-Din Fadlullah expresses his opinion about the meaning of this name while writing about the etymology of Eymurs. It is written in the work «Oghuzname» that it means «Eymur – that is, the one with a large army and soldiers, tamga: ongon» (Rashiddaddin, 1992).

Researchers in the right position, who conducted more accurate research, once again confirmed that there is no basis for the fictitious evidence of such scientists as A.Alakbarov, V.Kobychev, and G.D.Aghayev. Any study without a scientific basis, far from historical truths, could certainly not be scientifically convincing. Consider G.D.Aghayev’s writings, that he draws a map of land ambitions covering a large area based on his unanimous researchers (A.Alekbarov, V.Kobychev, etc.). This map covered the settlement of Urumbazar (located at the junction of the Shahdagh, Murovdagh, and Zangazur mountains), the Urumbazhchay river, the Urumsus mountain south of Goycha (Sevan) lake, Ayrumcha mountain (Eyramcha), the villages Ayrum, Gulezarayarum (Golezarayarum) and Charvardaarairum; Ayrum settlement (camp) of the northern part of the Karabakh plateau, the village of Choirum on the coast of Kura river, the village of Kheyrim in the Gazakh (in his own words, Khay-Khorom, i.e. for the Armenian Greeks), the areas stretching from the south coast of the Kura river to the places where the Alazani and Lori rivers flow into the Kura as a thin strip, and the areas from the Karabakh mountains to Nakhchivan (Mammadov, 2008).

It should be noted that the toponymy of our Republic is rich in hydronyms of ancient Azerbaijani (Turkish) origin. Throughout history, the Ayrums have lived in the area of Azerbaijan, extending from Lake Goygol to the Aghstafa River. These areas are known for their dense forests, healing springs and other mineral resources. During our investigation into the origin of the studied ethnic group, hydro-toponyms have proven to be of exceptional importance in understanding their settlement, development, formation, and addressing associated issues within the area. The majority of hydro-toponyms that constitute the water sources (such as lakes, rivers, springs, canals, mineral waters, etc.) in the areas where the Ayrums reside are of Turkic (Azerbaijani) origin, reflecting both their historical period of formation and linguistic affiliation. Toponomists are well aware that hydro-toponyms play a fundamental role in the formation of geographical object names. In this regard, we can pay attention to the names of hydro-toponyms in the areas where the Ayrums reside, such as Turshsu Spring, Shahzade Spring, Boyuk Spring, Akhunja River, Inekboghan River, Zeyem River (Gadabay District), Goygol Lake, Maral Lake, Agh Lake, Jeyran Lake, Kurak River, Goshgar River (Goygol District), and so on. Additionally, in those areas, numerous residential areas such as Arisu village, Garabulag village, Goshabulag village, Pirbulag village, Soyugbulag village, Chay Resullu village, Turshsu village (Gadabay district), Aghsu village, Chaykend village, Chayli village, Garabulag village, Sarisu village, Uchbulag village (Goygol district) have derived their names from hydro-toponyms.

It is one of the noteworthy facts that these ancient territories, which have belonged to ancient history, are rich in hydronyms derived from ononyms. These can be cited as examples: Goshgar (right tributary of Shamkir River in the Dashkasan district), Fundullu (left tributary of Bojan River in the Gadabay district), Ziyaret (right tributary of Goshgar River in the Dashkasan district), Aptepe (river in the Dashkasan district), Ilkhide (left tributary of Kurak River in the Goygol district), and so on.

Researchers primarily categorize hydronyms derived from ononyms into two groups: hydronyms derived from simple ononyms and hydronyms derived from compound ononyms. Research indicates that geographical names derived from hydronyms are generally more ancient.

Hydrotoponyms constitute the most interesting part of geographical names. They have played a sig-
significant role, especially in preserving and maintaining the names of macro-objects. One of the main issues that attract the attention of researchers of the «Ayrums» is that all the territories where they exist historically belonged to Azerbaijani Turks. The fact that 10 settlements bearing this name in the areas near Goycha Lake alone is clear proof of this (Review book of Iravan province, 1996).


Historical documents indicate that one of the 6 provinces (Ayrums, Kurakbasan, Shamkhor, Gorsk, Ganjabasan, and Samukh) of Elizavetpol district was «Ayrums» (1801-1813), located in the territory of the Ganja Khanate (Fig. 1). The descriptive documents held in the district (in 1831) also confirm this. The document shows that they (Ayrums) lead a nomadic lifestyle and are dispersed throughout the territory of the district (State Archive of the Russian Federation, fund 1268).

After the invasion of the Iravan Khanate, at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, a census was compiled to determine the number of the population and its ethnicity under the instructions of Count I.F. Paskevich. If we pay attention to the number of Azerbaijani-Turkish tribes living in the area during the census conducted by I. Chopin (in 1829-1832), we will see that after the Garapapags (about 5,000), the largest tribe is the «Ayrums» (about 3,000). In addition, the number of the Boyuk Chobangara, Sadli, Seyidli-Akhsagali (Aghsagali), Mughanli, Shahidilli, Sadarakali, and Jalali tribes of the Qajars was more than a thousand people each. The source mentions that those territories were already occupied by Russia when this census was conducted. In the period before the invasion, the population of the Garapapag, Ayrimli, and other tribes on the list was many times larger. After the Russians captured these lands, most of the tribes were forced to leave the territory of the Khanate. A table has been compiled regarding the numbers of those tribes (Table 1).

In the book «Explanatory Dictionary of Toponyms of Azerbaijani Origin in Armenia» authored by B.A. Budagov and G.A. Geybullayev, the research on the origin of «Ayrums» is interesting (Budagov, Geybullayev, 1998). Referring to A. Bakikhanov, the researchers note that Amir Teymur moved the Turkish families to Iravan, Ganja, as well as Karabakh. This event happened in 1402 after the end of the Battle of Ankara. The researchers (B.A. Budagov and G.A.
Geybullayev) also indicate the number of these families (50 thousand) in the work. Most importantly, the name of the displaced families is mentioned as «Ayrums» (a misrepresentation of the name El-Rum). Based on the opinions of I. Chopin, the researchers also wrote the time and reason for the migration of a part of the Turks to Armaniyya. This event happened with the end of the life of the Ikonum sultanate in Turkey. The Turks who moved to Armaniyya lived in those areas under different names (Ayrumli – 631 families, Table 1.

### Table 1. The main Azerbaijani-Turkish tribes registered in the Irvan Khanate (Irvan Khanate, 2010)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>№</th>
<th>Name of the tribes</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Garapapagli</td>
<td>840</td>
<td>4,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Boyuk Chobangara</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sarashli</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>541</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Damirchili</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Karimbayli</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>357</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Gafarli</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>652</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Sheykhler</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Garabagli</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Jafarli (From Gafarlilar)</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Ali Sharulu</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Godekli (Karimbayli)</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Jamilli</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Chakhirli</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Kurkubashli</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Ayrumlu</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>3,484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Seyidli-Akhsahli</td>
<td>311</td>
<td>1,754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Tashnli</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Saadli</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>565</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Mughanli</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>17,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Shahdilli (Gajar)</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sadarakli (Gajar)</td>
<td>149</td>
<td>940</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Researchers note that the ancestors of the «Eyums» were Asia Minor Turks (Turks of Turkey). G. Garagashli connects their acquiring the name «Ayrum» with the fact that they live in different (separate) areas (Garagashli, 1929).

Researchers Mirali Seyidov has different opinions on this topic. In his work «Thinking about the Ancestry of the Azerbaijani People», he stated his opin-
ion about the first part of the toponym: «The goddess «Ay» is part of the names of many gods and goddesses belonging to Turkic-speaking peoples». M. Seyidov’s remarks about the term «rum» are also interesting: «It is clear that Turkic peoples had ozan, Bakshi (clerk), akin, gam-shaman, witchcraft, and doctor. Most of all these listed qualities are in the meanings of the word «rum». Then it turns out that the «Ayrums» named themselves this way in honor of their leader, the forerunner of future events, the great elder (like Dede Korkut). «Ayrum» means forerunner of the future, creator, first beginning. As you can see, the word «Ayrum» is connected with the tribal associations of the Saks, which are the roots of the Azerbaijani people» (Seyidov, 2018).

The name of an ancient Turkic tribe «Ayrum», over time has mainly consisted of 6 phonemes (Eyumur, Arum, Ayrum,imer,imir,Amirli) as a result of metathesis. As we know, these substitutions are a phenomenon characteristic of Turkic languages.

The distribution area of the toponym is also wide. In the sources, there is information about the existence of settlements called Shinix Ayrum, Polad Ayrum and Ayrum in different areas of the South Caucasus.

Many geographical names in Azerbaijan keep alive the name «Ayrum». Yukhari Ayrum village in the Kalbajar district is located in the foothills. This oeconym is located on the banks of the Ayrum River, a tributary of the Tartar River. It is mentioned in the sources that earlier the name of Yukhari Ayrum village was Yukhari Bina. There was also a period when the village was called Alishagi, according to the saying of the elders. They associate this fact with the construction of the settlement by a person named Gazakh Ali. It is said that the man came here from the Gazakh region (Encyclopedic Dictionary of Azerbaijani Toponyms, 2007).

The oeconym «Imir» carries the name of the Eymur tribe to which it belongs. «Imir» is a local dialect form of the name «Eymur».

Eymur village in the Agdash district; Gushchu Ayrum, Baglanis Ayrum in the Gazakh district; Boyuk Amili, Kichik Amili in the Gabala district; Mollaayrum in the Tovuz district; Ayrum, Ayrum Mets, Ayrum Pokr in Armenia; Imera, Imira, Imirasani (Imir Hasanli) in Georgia; Imreli in Turkmenistan; as well as the existence more than 70 toponyms with this name in Turkey at the moment shows that the social and political activities of the ‘Ayrums’ cover wider areas.

Conclusions

Research shows that toponymic studies conducted with «Ayrums» in different regions reveal the historical ethnic processes, internal and external migration events, language features preserved in toponyms, archaic words, local geographical terms, etc., playing the role of a valuable resource in their identification.

The general scientific conclusion of the study is that the toponymic background in the investigated regions is predominantly Azerbaijani (Turkish), while the presence of toponyms in other languages is relatively small. Occasionally, there are also individual names of Russian origin. When examining the toponym of the areas where the Ayrums live, we witness all this through etiological analysis.

It should be specifically noted that despite the presence of various ethnic groups living in the region that G. Garagashli investigated concerning the origin of this group, the majority of toponyms are of Azerbaijani (Turkish) origin. The main reason for this is the indigenous (autochthonous) presence of Azerbaijanis (Turks) who have been settled in this area for centuries.

The study and preservation of the toponym of each region carry significant political and scientific
importance in terms of transmitting it to future generations. In this regard, toponyms play a valuable role in the exploration of the historical-geographical area, ethnic origin, and formation history of Azerbaijanis, as well as in resolving certain controversial and obscure issues.

The research on Azerbaijani toponymy holds great state significance. It plays a crucial role in preserving the territorial integrity of our homeland, introducing historical borders to the world, and serving as reliable and valuable historical evidence through geographical names that reflect the ancestral ethnic origin of Azerbaijanis.

Historically, Armenians have used their worst deeds to implement their policies. The names of our historical homelands have been changed after our compatriots were forcibly removed from their native places from time to time. The toponym «Ayrim», which is the name of the ancient Oghuz province, is one of those hundreds of names. In fact, when scholars were researching «Ayrums», they had the opportunity to base their opinion on the origin and etymology of this name, based on sufficient historical facts and sources. It is enough to be fair and honest so as not to falsify the truth.

References


Hosudarstvenyi arkhiv Rosyiskoi federatsyy [State Archive of the Russian Federation], fund 1268, list 5, case 266; list 15, case 17. (In Russian).


