

Scientific Publications on Caucasology at the Circassian Culture Center

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To promote scientific and cultural dialogue, to strengthen and develop Circassian-Georgian relations, the Tbilisi Circassian Culture Center (CCC) has published a number of original monographs by prominent caucasologists and partners both in Georgia and abroad. These scientific publications discuss issues related to lexicology, mythology, folklore, ethnology, ethno-linguistics, culture, political science, history, ethnogenesis, sociolinguistics, and other related branches of the humanities.

Implementing the task of promoting dialogue in the Caucasus region, as well as protecting, studying and preserving the cultural and linguistic heritage of the peoples of the Caucasus, the authors of the monographs raise the etymological study of the common roots of the Iberian-Caucasian language family, semantic features of the Circassian dialects, the Ubykh language, Circassian-Georgian language parallels. These publications also deal with issues of ethnicity, political history and culture of the Circassians, issues of historical mutual relations of the Georgian and Circassian peoples, problems of genetic research, the study of the Caucasian region with respect to its genetic profile, Circassian-Georgian bibliography, issues of generalized transmission and the complex study of myth-creation, faith, ritual practice historically formed among the peoples living in the North and South Caucasus.

In this paper I would like to present and discuss a number of these various publications issued by the Circassian Culture Center.

Genocide of Circassians – history of the problem, chronicle of events, scientific conclusion

On May 20, 2011, Georgia, the first of the independent countries to adopt a resolution recognizing the genocide of the Circassian people during the Caucasus War in the 19th century. The basis of this recognition was the scientific conclusion of Professor Merab Chukhua entitled *Genocide of Circassians – history of the problem, chronicle of events, scientific conclusion* (2012). On February 16, 2012, the Circassian Culture Center was

opened in the capital of Georgia, Tbilisi. The book materials are presented in seven languages: English, German, Georgian, Circassian, Turkish, Arabic and Russian.

Georgian-Circassian-Apkhazian etymological studies

The next unique comprehensive monograph by the linguist and caucasologist, professor at Tbilisi State University, director of the CCC, Merab Chukhua, is *Georgian-Circassian-Apkhazian etymological studies* (2017), dedicated to the etymological study of common roots of Abkhazo-Adyghe languages. The book discusses the core lexical root material of the Georgian, Colchian (Megrelian-Laz), Svan, Apkhazian, Abaza, Ubykh, Adyghean, Kabardian languages, i.e. that core lexical stock of the languages, according to which the genetic kinship of the languages is researched using appropriate methods. The book contains about 1600 lexical entries. It presents parallels from the Dagestanian, Nakh and other Iberian-Caucasian languages, Basque, and also from the languages of the civilization of the ancient world (Hattian, Hurrian-Urartian). In this monograph, Professor Merab Chukhua has created an absolutely new paradigm within which regular and systematic sound correspondences between Sindy and Kartvelian languages are revealed, on the basis of which a common genetic origin is proposed – the kinship of the aforementioned peoples and languages. Of particular relevance is the fact that from this viewpoint, the conclusions obtained in the framework of this scientific work are consistent with the achievements of genetic research, according to which the Apkhazian, Georgian and Circassian peoples revealed one main haplogroup G2A. Professor Merab Chukhua's monograph was presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2018.

Basque-Georgian-Russian dictionary

The *Basque-Georgian-Russian dictionary* (2018) was also presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair. The author of the dictionary is Dr. Revaz Tchantouria of Malmö University and the editor is Professor Merab Chukhua of Tbilisi State University, director of the Circassian Culture Center. The development and publication of this scientific work was carried out in close cooperation with the Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics at Tbilisi State University, the Section for Caucasian Studies at Malmö University and the Circassian Culture Center in Tbilisi.

Myths and rituals of the peoples of the Caucasus

The extensive monograph *Myths and rituals of the peoples of the Caucasus* (2017, in Georgian) by the Georgian ethnologist Professor Nugzar Antelava is the first attempt to comprehensively explore through deep analysis the mythology, folklore, history of religion, folk traditions and customs of the peoples of the Caucasus. This encyclopedia includes materials about mythological characters and themes, popular beliefs and the relationships myth and rituals. The sources of the work were ethnological, folk, cultural, ethno-linguistic, linguistic and semiotic, historical and archaeological valuable works on mythology, beliefs, traditional customs, ritual dishes, objects, dances, songs, languages, ethnogenesis, ethnic history, anthropology of the peoples of the Caucasus. The work represents a reference material – a series of articles on mythology, folk beliefs, customs and traditions of the peoples of the Caucasus. Almost all major issues related to the mythology and rituals of the inhabitants of the region are discussed from a panoramic standpoint. Thanks to this, it is possible to shed light on such theoretical issues as the interrelation of myth and ritual, to identify substrate archetypes and core mythologemes of the Caucasian culture, to distinguish them from external layers.

Circassian culture

Circassian culture (2015, in Georgian) is the next comprehensive monograph by Nugzar Antelava, professor and scientific coordinator of the Circassian Culture Center. The book is written in Georgian, but is currently being translated into Russian and English. For thousands of years the North-Western Caucasus has been a region of uninterrupted confrontation of geopolitical interests. The author writes that the process of the ethnogenesis of the Circassian people took place against the background of these confrontations and its permanent struggle to save and preserve the freedom permeated with the Adyghean culture and militant character. The work is dedicated to the ethnic and political history, social, normative, humanitarian and archaeological culture of the Circassian people as well as the Circassian language.

The book also describes the Circassian diaspora in Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, Israel, Europe, and the USA. The encyclopedia is divided into two parts. The first part gives ethno-demographic characteristics, different types of ethnonyms, and addresses the mass deportation of Circassians to Turkey, and the history of the Circassians

in various periods. Subsequently the author describes the daily structures of the Circassian ethnic culture – agriculture, animal husbandry, hunting, clothing, houses and buildings, etc., as well as military, social and normative, humanitarian culture. The second part of the monograph describes Circassian archaeological cultures, ornaments, art, and the Nart sagas.

Circassians

In 2012 the Circassian Culture Center published the monograph *Circassians* by Doctor of History, Professor of Sokhumi State University Bezhan Khorava. It had already been published in Turkish, English and Russian. The monograph tells about the struggle of the Circassian people for freedom. It begins with a description of the sub-ethnic groups of the Circassian people and other peoples of the Western Caucasus. Historical data on Russia and the Caucasus in the 16th–19th centuries are also given. Most of the monographs by Professor Bezhan Khorava are dedicated to archival data on the Russo-Caucasian war. The monographs describe the military punitive expeditions of Russian generals, the resettlement of Circassians, and the post-war period.

Circassian guidebook

The next book is the *Circassian guidebook* (2014, in Georgian) by the research fellow of the Circassian Culture Center, Mariam Bezhitashvili, who holds an MA in history. This is a guide, designed for those who want to learn about the Circassians. The book, which consists of 16 chapters, describes various components of Circassian culture based on material from Adygea, Karachay-Cherkessia and Kabardino-Balkaria. A separate chapter deals with the Circassian diaspora, which is spread over more than 50 countries of the world.

History of the Adygean people

The Circassian Culture Center also published a Georgian translation (2018) by Mariam Bezhitashvili of the Circassian Enlightener Shora Nogma's *History of the Adygean people* (in Russian). She dedicates the translation to Shora Nogma. It is a chronicle in which for the first time an attempt was made to scientifically systematize information about the Adygeans, as well as to compare and analyze the historical narratives and data from the Adygean oral folk art.

History of mutual relations of the Georgian and Circassian peoples

The monograph *History of mutual relations of the Georgian and Circassian peoples* (2014, in Russian) by the Georgian scholar Nikoloz Javakhishvili is a history of two kindred peoples – Georgians and Circassians, relating centuries-old history. This monograph presents essays of the history of relations and cooperation of the peoples who are kindred from a linguistic and anthropological standpoint. It is indicated that cooperation in the military-political, economic and cultural spheres was rather intensive. In this respect, it is extremely important that N. Javakhishvili uses and introduces into the discussion new documents on the history of the Circassians stored in the Georgian archives. These documents highlight the centuries-old friendship and cooperation of the Circassians and Georgians. The author describes the history of dynastic marriages between the representatives of the Georgian and Circassian royal courts and principalities (16th–18th centuries), the extraordinary history of the Cherkezishvili family, which gave Georgia many outstanding figures, the history of military commonwealth of Circassians and Georgians, the history of Georgian-Circassian scholarship and cultural relations, and Circassian themes in Georgian folklore and literature.

Ubykh language

Issues of the linguistic culturology of the Caucasus are reviewed in Professor Rusudan Janashia's monograph entitled *Ubykh language* (in Georgian), published by the Circassian Culture Center in 2015. This is the first Georgian monograph on Ubykh and it is a breakthrough in providing an opportunity to learn and investigate the Ubykh language at a scholarly level. The work presents a structural analysis of the language system of the Ubykh language (phonetics, morphology, syntax) and the history of the study of the Ubykh language. The book also includes an Ubykh-Georgian dictionary as well as the author's foreword "Ubykhs and the Ubykh Language", which tells about the genealogical classification of the Ubykh language, history and culture of the Ubykhs, one of the sub-ethnic groups of the Circassian people.

Introduction to the study of the North-Western Caucasian languages

The second work of the Georgian scholar, Professor Rusudan Janashia is the 2015 translation from French into Georgian of the 1932 monograph by the French caucasologist Georges Dumézil *Études comparatives sur les Langues Caucasiennes du nord-ouest*

(*morphologie*). Based on the comparative grammar of the Iberian-Caucasian languages, the grammatical structure of the languages of the North-Eastern and North-Western Caucasus are systematically analyzed. Dumézil was the first to discuss the Basque language in the North Caucasus context and presented the first comparative study of the above mentioned language systems.

Semantic dictionary of Circassian dialects

The next monograph is the *Semantic dictionary of Circassian dialects* (2015, in Georgian) by the Georgian scholar Aleko Kvakhadze. This book contains materials on all the core Circassian dialects. Kvakhadze collected material in the numerous Circassian diaspora in Turkey. During his field expedition in the villages of the province of Düzce, 35 audio recordings were made of stories, tales and songs by local narrators. These are unique recordings of Circassian oral folklore preserved only in the Turkish Circassian diaspora. The dictionary contains more than 40,000 dialectal lexical entries of the Western Circassian language.

Circassian-Kartvelian language parallels

The monograph *Circassian-Kartvelian language parallels* (2016, in Georgian) by Prof. Manana Bukia, focuses on entries in the genetically common lexical fund of common Caucasian and common Circassian-Kartvelian material as well as borrowings. The author revealed common Circassian-Kartvelian lexical entries, previously unnoticed. Unanalyzed material is divided into several parts including lexical entries entered into Kartvelian from Circassian and vice versa, borrowed vocabulary that entered into both language systems from foreign sources. In addition, the work includes a part on Circassian-Apkhazian onomastics with a review of the scholarly literature with an analysis of proper names (toponyms, anthroponyms).

Circassian ABC-Book

The publication in 2017 of a new edition of the *Circassian ABC-Book* by the outstanding Circassian enlightener Umar Bersei became possible thanks to close cooperation with the National Library of the Parliament of Georgia. In Circassian scholarly circles, the publication of the *Circassian ABC-Book* by Bersei, that appeared for the first time in Tiflis on March 14, 1853, is considered to be the beginning of the creation of a script for the

Circassians. This ABC-book in Arabic graphics is made in a lithographic way. It presents the learner of the Circassian language with four lessons and twelve fables and short stories. In the presented version, under the editorship of research fellow Larisa Tuptsova at the CCC the authenticity of the text is maintained. However, at the same time, the editorial staff found it necessary to translate certain passages of the text into Georgian. The book is accompanied by a brief biography of the author and an overview of the ABC-book.

The Origin of Circassians

For a long time the CCC worked on the publication of a new Russian translation of the monograph *The Origin of Circassians* by Aytek Namitok, originally published in French. The new Russian translation was published in 2018 under the editorship of Prof. Merab Chukhua, Aslan Beshto and Larisa Tuptsova and became a great event in the study of the history of the Circassian people. The book was published with the support of the Circassian public figure Jina Habuk (Gina Haboukh) (resident in the USA). The monograph by the Circassian historian consists of two parts; a third part is considered to have been lost. In his work he notes the possibility of the origin of the Circassians from common ancestors of the peoples of the Mediterranean Basin and Asia Minor, i.e. of the first inhabitants of Europe. This is the first fundamental work in which a number of central issues concerning the origin of the Circassians are discussed. In the new second edition, issued by the CCC, the first and second parts were collected and edited on the basis of earlier versions of the text (the first part was translated into Russian from the French original in 1957 by P. Morskaya and the second one by K. Malbakhov).

Issues of the Hattian language structure

In the monograph *Issues of the Hattian language structure* (2016, in Georgian) by Dr. Levan Kochlamazashvili, key issues of the structure of one of the ancient Eastern languages, Hattian, are analyzed: the phonemic system and Hattian cuneiform, core issues of the nominal and verbal morphology, sentence and sentence members, and mechanism of the sentence structure. The monograph includes a Hattian-Georgian dictionary. The book is published in Georgian.

Geographical Names of the Tskhinvali region

The monograph *Geographical Names of the Tskhinvali region* (2016, in Georgian) by the Georgian scientist Nikoloz Otinashvili deals with the problematic topic of occupation, which is ongoing not only in Abkhazia, but also in the Tskhinvali region. This is in the very central part of Georgia, from which the name of the Georgian state *Kartli* and *Sakartvelo* originate. The Tskhinvali region borders on Kabarda in the north. Since the author explores Circassian-Georgian relations, the toponymy of the upper part of Georgia (Tskhinvali region) is of particular interest in this context and, based on this, it becomes vital to identify traces of Circassian-Georgian language contacts. Hitherto, Georgia has not had a complete list of all settlements, names of rivers and mountains of the Tskhinvali region. Therefore, there is a growing interest in the study of the onomastics of the region. I would like to note that at present work is also underway by Prof. Igor Kekelia on the monograph *Geographic Names of Abkhazia*.

Circassian-Georgian dictionary

The Circassian Culture Center under the leadership of its director, Professor Merab Chukhua, recently published the first ever *Circassian-Georgian dictionary* (2019) with more than 50,000 word-entries. This bilingual dictionary includes not only the common vocabulary of the literary Western Circassian dialect of the Adyghean language, but it also contains many dialectal units of the Abadzekh, Shapsug, Bzhedug dialects of the Circassian language. The dictionary is similar to the *Explanatory Dictionary of the Circassian language*. It also includes words not found in any dictionary in Russia, words subjected to a kind of “unofficial censorship”, for example, the word *genocide*. In addition to the main part of the *Circassian-Georgian Dictionary*, it includes onomastics (proper Circassian names, surnames and toponyms).

Other publications by the Circassian Culture Center

Circassian military figures (2013) is a monograph in Russian by Dr. Mamuka Gogitidze, historian and police colonel. It contains biographies of the most prominent Circassian military figures. The book is also distinguished by its extensive bibliography, including works by Circassian, Georgian, Russian and historians of other nationalities. Sources from the state archives of Georgia have also been utilized.

The publication *Circassians. Various notes about the Caucasus* (2013; in Russian from the German original) by the German researcher Dr. A. Thümmel contains a great deal of noteworthy information about the Caucasus, descriptions of the region, its inhabitants and their life.

Igor Gorislavsky's story *The Wheel of the Russian Empire* (2013, in Russian) is dedicated to the memory of those who died "under the thorns of the Russian empire 150 years ago, and whose deadly rumble echoes in the mountains" (Gorislavsky, 2013: 3).

Kortanetian stories (2014, in Georgian and Russian) by Mikhail Lokhvitsky (Ajuk Giray) is a collection of short prose works written by the author in the Georgian village Kortaneti.

Poetry (2015) is a collection of poetry by the Adyghean poet and journalist Larisa Tuptsokova. The collection includes the author's works translated into Georgian, as well as a translation from Georgian into Circassian of the poem of the outstanding Georgian poet Vazha Pshavela *The Guest and the Host*.

Collection of Verses (2017) by the Georgian poet Pako (Amiran) Svimonishvili contains more than 50 original verses, translated into the Adyghean language by the Circassian poet Larisa Tuptsokova. The verses of Pako Svimonishvili were published for the first time in the Adyghean language.

The collection *Creativity* (2018) of the Abkhaz poet Nika Badzagua includes the original poems of the poet himself, as well as poetry translations from Abkhaz into Georgian by the author and essays on Georgian literature. Along with translations of Abkhaz authors, the book includes brief biographical information. A special review was written by the linguist and literary critic, Professor Tamar Vashakidze.

The information booklet *Circassian Culture Center – 2012–2014*, was compiled by historian and caucasologist Mariam Bezhitashvili, a research fellow of the Center. The bilingual booklet (in Georgian and English) describes and analyses the outcomes of the Center's activities during the three-year period.

Circassian Calendar was published in 2015. It includes a series of works (paintings) by the famous Circassian artist Abdulakh Bersirov from Adygea. The author of the project is the director of the Center, Prof. Merab Chukhua, and the compilers – fellows of the Center Giorgi Omsarashvili and Oleg Pavlenko.

The book *Monument of Memory* (2012), which contains the outlines of all participants from different countries who participated in the competition to design the monument *Genocide of the Circassian people*. At present the monument of the Kabardian sculptor Husen Kochesokov stands in the Georgian resort-town Anaklia, Zugdidi municipality.

Materials from the International Scientific Symposium *Olympic Games of Sochi-2014 and Georgian-Circassian eco-cultural space* were published in 2012. The symposium, which took place on July 12-13, raised problems that had emerged during the preparation of the Olympic Games in Sochi, as well as issues of environmental culture and the repatriation of Muhajirs.

Materials from the International Archaeological Symposium held on July 28-29, 2013, at Tbilisi State University were published as *Problems of the Maykop Culture in the context of the Caucasian-Anatolian relations* (2013), presented in Georgian, English and Russian. They are dedicated to archaeological aspects of the Maykop culture, the relationship between the spread of the Maykop and other archaeological cultures in the Caucasus and the ethnogenesis of the Maykop culture, including linguistic, genetic and historiographic materials.

Work in progress

Preparatory work is underway for the publication of the *Circassian-Georgian bibliography* in three languages, compiled by Nana Pirtskhalava, bibliographer and fellow of the CCC. The Circassian bibliography contains a complete list of scientific literature and sources about Circassia and Circassians, published in different periods in Georgia.

The monograph *The Ubykhs* is being prepared by PhD candidate Ketevan Khutsishvili, a research fellow of the Circassian Culture Center. The book presents the history of the Ubykhs in the 18th-19th centuries, in particular the period of the Russian-Caucasian war.

Work is also underway on the 13th unpublished volume of the *Acts of the Caucasian archeographic commission* (Tuptsokova and Pirtskhalava, in prep.) including data up to 1864 – correspondence of the Russian military commanders of the Tsarist army, their

reports on military actions in the Caucasus, on the Circassians and other Caucasian peoples, their exile, descriptions of the life of Circassians of that period.

Contributing to the renewal and strengthening of literary ties between the Circassian and Georgian peoples, I am engaged in translating into Circassian works of Georgian poetry, with its rich and unique heritage of poetic and prose literature. Here it is important to consider the peculiarities of the source language in the transfer of texts into the target language of translation, in this case Circassian. The *Anthology of Georgian poetry in the Circassian language* (Tuptsokova, in prep.) will include poetic works of famous Georgian poets of the 18th, 19th, 20th and 21st centuries, representing great value for world culture. In conditions when the Caucasian translation school and the well-established dialogue between contemporary authors are practically absent in the Caucasus region, I think that this sphere is particularly vulnerable and requires special attention. It is important to strengthen strategies to establish and further develop literary ties between the peoples of the Caucasus.

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