

Language and Society in the Caucasus

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Understanding the Past,
Navigating the Present

Christofer Berglund, Katrine Gotfredsen,
Jean Hudson & Bo Petersson (eds.)

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Festschrift
for
Karina Vamling



Photo: Kristofer Vamling

CHRISTOFER BERGLUND, KATRINE GOTFREDSEN,
JEAN HUDSON & BO PETERSSON

Preface

It is a great pleasure to present this volume to Professor Karina Vamling in celebration of her 65th birthday and in recognition of her many achievements in the field of Caucasology. A true humanist, Karina reaches beyond her own specialization in linguistics to the interests and concerns of the people who speak the languages of the Caucasus, their culture, history, societies, and politics. She crosses borders both geographical and scientific, and has always encouraged her younger colleagues and students to do the same. Highly respected among colleagues in Georgia, Karina has received much acclaim in the region, most notably as early as in 1998 when she was awarded the *Arnold Chikobava Prize* from the Georgian Academy of Sciences “for her contribution to the development of Ibero-Caucasian Linguistics”. Also in 1998 she was elected member of the *International Circassian Academy of Sciences*. Her latest visit to Georgia, only weeks before the 2020 pandemic, was in December 2019 to receive the *Georgian Brand Award* “for her contributions to Caucasology and to the advancement of the Georgian language abroad”. We congratulate you, Karina, albeit belatedly, and look forward to working with you for many years to come.

Into the Caucasus

Karina’s first sight of the Caucasus was in her student years travelling with a friend and her family by car from Sweden to Leningrad, Moscow, Kharkov, Rostov, along the Caucasian Black Sea coast, then to Tbilisi and back via the Georgian Military Highway. She later returned as a tour guide, bringing Swedish visitors to the Caucasus – in Soviet times, this was a popular and somewhat exotic tourist destination. It comes as no surprise, then, that she chose the Georgian language as the focus of

her doctoral dissertation in General Linguistics at Lund University.¹ In 1987–1988, a scholarship from the *Swedish Institute* allowed her to do field research for the dissertation in Georgia, where she became affiliated to the Department of Modern Georgian at Tbilisi State University, with Professor Nani Chanishvili as her co-supervisor. Nani remembers fondly:

Karina came to Tbilisi State University in the late 80s. She wanted to write her doctoral dissertation in linguistics on Georgian language material. She had read my book on case and verb categories in Georgian² and asked me to be her supervisor from the Georgian side. I liked her very much. She was so dear, beautiful, very smart, very educated, and made a very interesting investigation. Georgia liked her. Karina became a very close friend and one of the best scientists for the Georgians.

After completing her PhD dissertation in 1989, Karina spent over a decade at her *alma mater*, Lund University, moving on to Malmö University in 2002, where the story continues...

Caucasus Studies

Courses with a major focus on the Caucasus are not found at many universities outside the Caucasus. Karina has been the main driver of developing Caucasus Studies as a discipline at Malmö University, but its roots go all the way back to when Karina was a visiting doctoral student at Tbilisi State University.

Together with Nani Chanishvili and other colleagues, Karina had organised a joint Georgian-Swedish seminar to take place in Tbilisi, April 1989. In order for the Swedish visitors to prepare for the event, Karina, together with her husband, Revaz Tchantouria, had created a short introductory course in the Georgian language. The group of Swedish linguists set off for Georgia in early April 1989, but they were stopped in Moscow and not allowed to travel on to Tbilisi. There had been a build-up of anti-Soviet protest in Tbilisi, which culminated in the tragic events of April 9, when the Soviet Army crushed the demonstrations, killing 21 unarmed protestors and injuring many more. The seminar had to be cancelled due to events that became catalysts in the de-legitimization of

1 Vamling, K. 1989. *Complementation in Georgian*. Lund: Lund University Press.

2 Chanishvili, N. 1981. *Paděž i glagol'nye kategorii v gruzińskom predloženíi* [Case and verbal categories in the Georgian sentence]. Moskva: Nauka.

Soviet rule and public support for national independence in Georgia.

A similar experience awaited Karina, her research colleagues, and her family in August 2008, when they witnessed rapidly escalating Russian–Georgian hostilities while on site in Tbilisi. The research activities that the group had scheduled for the field trip were cancelled and the whole group abruptly evacuated. An all-out, albeit brief, war followed between Russia and Georgia, with devastating consequences for the latter. It is in many ways significant that Karina was an eyewitness to the two events that have perhaps defined the country’s development as a sovereign post-Soviet nation the most.

For several years, the course material developed for the 1989 seminar lay dormant, but towards the end of the 1990s an opportunity presented itself. In close collaboration with, then, guest researcher Manana Kobaidze, Karina developed an online Georgian language course at Lund University. In 2002, Karina was appointed at Malmö University and within a short period Revaz and Manana followed, as did the Georgian online course.

On June 17–19, 2005, the first Caucasus Studies conference was held at Malmö University on the topic of *Language, History and Cultural Identities in the Caucasus*. The organisers were Karina Vamling, Märta-Lisa Magnusson, Jean Hudson and Revaz Tchantouria. Later in 2005, the Center for Caucasus Studies at Øresund University was established on the initiative of Karina and her colleague, Märta-Lisa Magnusson, from Copenhagen University. The center was a joint platform for Danish and Swedish researchers on both sides of the Øresund strait with an interest in the region.

Offering an online course with tuition in English had proved quite successful and in 2006, with the support of Øresund University, Karina and Märta-Lisa created the online course in Conflict and Conflict Resolution in the Caucasus, which included a general introduction to the Caucasus region. Øresund University closed in 2012, but Caucasus Studies continued to develop at Malmö University. In 2010, the first components of a Caucasus Studies programme were complemented by additional course modules on the history, peoples and languages of the Caucasus, state and nation building, migration and other topics. The module Caucasus Field and Case Studies was added in 2015.

Throughout the years, Karina has been tirelessly dedicated to developing the courses in Caucasus studies and bringing together researchers in the field, but by the mid-2000s it was time to go further afield.

Russia and the Caucasus Regional Research

In September 2016, the research platform Russia and the Caucasus Regional Research (RUCARR) was established at Malmö University with the financial support of the Faculty of Culture and Society. The founding directors were Karina Vamling and Bo Petersson. They had previously worked together in setting up research networks of joint interest, both at Lund and Malmö, so RUCARR was a logical continuation. Karina is a linguist with internationally recognized expertise on the Caucasus and Bo a political scientist and renowned expert on Russian politics. Their research profiles thus complemented each other nicely and they invited younger colleagues to join them to form a critical mass in RUCARR.

Within its area of activities RUCARR produces and disseminates knowledge which helps to understand and explain the dynamics of societies in Russia and the Caucasus region. Its focus on the Caucasus is unique and has few if any counterparts in Northern Europe. The aim of RUCARR is to produce original scholarship of significance within and between Russia and the Caucasus, on the one hand, and with neighboring states, on the other. The first research project, which in many ways brought the researchers of the platform together, was on the implications and possible consequences of the organization of the Olympic Winter Games in Sochi in southern Russia in 2014. In this vein, the platform provides a rare multi-disciplinary meeting place for scholars within the humanities and social sciences and provides fertile soil for innovative and boundary-crossing research.

In a relatively short time, RUCARR has become an established trademark for Malmö University and has become recognized both in Sweden and abroad, as manifested not least through the international presence at its annual conferences. RUCARR originally received funding from the Faculty of Culture and Society for a period of three years. It is indicative for the success of and need for the platform that the Faculty, based on positive evaluations by distinguished experts, chose to fund the platform for another three-year period, starting in the fall of 2019.

About this volume

This book brings together linguists, historians, and political scientists renowned for their expertise on the Caucasus. Their contributions paint a compelling picture of the region's contested past and highlight some of the enduring challenges still confronting it.

Oliver Reisner sets the scene in *Chapter 1* with historiographical reflections on the construction of Caucasian Studies in Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union. At present, scholars from the region often reject or neglect research conducted about the area under the Kremlin's domination, since it is seen as part and parcel of the colonization process. Reisner nuances this picture. Although Tsarist officers and German scholars began the task of mapping the imperial borderlands, academics from the region took part in the production of knowledge on the Caucasus. In St. Petersburg, "Caucasians managed to integrate themselves into the imperial science system far from their homes" and participated in research debates "on par with their Russian colleagues". In Tiflis (now Tbilisi), Caucasian scholars rose to prominence and made their views heard under Tsarist and later under Soviet rule. Reisner concludes that local intellectuals challenged and shaped the public understanding of the Caucasus, even during long centuries of foreign rule.

In *Chapter 2*, Gerd Carling delves into the literature on comparative linguistics in order to examine what is known and knowable about Indo-European and Caucasian language contacts. The two differ in numerous respects although traces of interaction are there too. Carling reviews different theories purporting to account for the relationship between these language families, including the proposed existence of a prehistoric Indo-European homeland located to the south of the Caucasus mountain range, thus placing proto-speakers of different language families in immediate contact with one another. She finds this explanation unconvincing and concludes that more research on Caucasian languages is needed in order to appraise the extent of lexical, and perhaps also grammatical, borrowing across this historical ethno-linguistic frontier zone.

Manana Kobaidze (*Chapter 3*) turns her attention to a linguistic puzzle of more modern character. How are English verbs accommodated in Georgian? Language contact impacts smaller languages in particular, as its speakers are more prone to take up foreign expressions into their repertoire. Some borrowings are integrated into the language apparatus – others are frowned upon as alien slang. During Soviet rule, Russian loanwords of Latin origin were accepted into the Georgian language apparatus, but those of Russian origin remained "barbarisms". In the last decades, English borrowings have stormed into Georgian. Anglicisms encounter less resistance than the Russianisms of the past. Kobaidze argues that English verbs are integrated as these take affixes and build clauses as transitive verbs, either according to the "vowel prefix-ROOT-eb" model

(e.g. a-laik-eb-s, s/he likes it) or the “ROOT-av” model (e.g. trol-av-s, s/he trolls it) depending on whether the verb is polysyllabic or monosyllabic. Her findings add to our knowledge of the evolution of the Georgian language against the backdrop of its remarkable 1500-year lineage.

In *Chapter 4*, Merab Chukhua explores interrelationships among the Paleo-Caucasian languages indigenous to the region. These consist of well over one hundred languages categorized into several subgroupings (Kartvelian, Abkhaz-Adyghean, Nakh, Dagestanian). Yet, the relationship between these is still disputed among scholars. Chukhua speaks to this debate through the construction of a Paleo-Caucasian lexicon, mapping out differences and similarities between the subgroupings. He compares the Kartvelian lexical isogloss to the stem among Abkhaz-Adyghean, Nakh, and Dagestanian languages in order to gauge the degree of equivalence between the former and the latter subgroupings. The author also discusses other autochthonous languages of the Caucasus and cognates common to the Basque, Khattic, Huro-Urartian and Cassitic languages. Using this architectonic, Chukhua reconstructs the semantic world of the Paleo-Caucasians, stressing their common origin.

In *Chapter 5*, Klas-Göran Karlsson addresses a wound – the Armenian genocide – still poisoning relations among the peoples of the Caucasus. A review of the recent historical scholarship helps him pinpoint a mixture of factors leading up to the genocide. Its target consisted of stigmatized minorities, envied on account of their professional success but distrusted due to their purported links to a hostile power (the Russian Empire) at war with their state of residence (the Ottoman Empire). These conditions primed the Young Turks then running the state to turn against Armenians with a vengeance. Karlsson documents the pogroms presaging the genocide in 1915 and attributes initial neglect of the events among scholars to the denialist stance of the Turkish state. He identifies several traditions in the literature of the last decades, spanning from debates on its causes, to the question of labelling, and its consequences for survivors. Karlsson reminds us that disparate perceptions of the genocide add fuel to the fire still raging between Armenians and (Turkish) Azerbaijanis over the mountainous Karabakh region.

In *Chapter 6*, Stephen Jones takes stock of the legacies of the Democratic Republic of Georgia (DRG). How did it end up so absent from the historical consciousness of Georgian and European citizens? After all, the interwar Georgian republic represents the first modern incarnation of Georgian statehood. It also sported the world’s first social democratic

government. To its supporters at the time, the republic constituted a “civilized alternative to Bolshevism”. Soviet authorities reviled its bourgeois character but, in post-Soviet Georgia, the principal shortcoming of the DRG instead lies in its socialist character. Although archives are open, neither local nor international scholars have conceptualized the interwar republic as an illustration of Georgia’s enduring commitment to a shared European model of government.

Derek Hutcheson and Bo Petersson (*Chapter 7*) bring us up to speed on a political problem facing decision-makers ensconced in the Kremlin. Chechen resistance to its rule has a long pedigree, stretching all the way back to Imam Shamil and the mid-19th century. Another iteration of this confrontation began in 1994, with the First Chechen War that ultimately led to Yeltsin’s political fall from grace, and ended in the 2000s, as President Putin successfully staked his political reputation on the forcible reincorporation of this far-flung corner of the Federation. Opinion polls suggest that Putin’s image as a gatherer of Russian lands and guarantor of public order is central to his political success at home. Hutcheson and Petersson argue that the Chechen republic holds oversized importance in contemporary Russian politics; “the Chechen problem” has proven its continued capacity to make or break the careers of Russia’s political leaders.

In *Chapter 8*, Lars Funch Hansen writes about recent patterns of Russification and resistance in the North Caucasus. Russian efforts to celebrate generals involved in the conquest of the region, through the erection of statues and monuments, have struck a raw nerve in Circassian settlements. From their standpoint, it is the tragic expulsion of natives – not the culprits behind the imperial campaign of ethnic cleansing – that should be honored. Distinct strands of collective remembering thus compete with one another throughout the North Caucasus. In these memorialization contests, the federal Russian authorities often back local Cossack communities, thus placing both at odds with the autochthonous Circassians. Hansen concludes that the latter face serious difficulties in protecting their historical memories.

Lidia Zhigunova and Raymond Taras (*Chapter 9*) shed further light on the mechanisms behind Circassian activism, focusing on campaigns to protect sacred spaces in the environment. Indigenous peoples often utilize environmental issues for obtaining recognition, and the Circassians are no exception. The authors examine activism at a Tulip Tree in Sochi’s Golovinka district, a site of traditional spiritual practice, which Shapsug elders use as a place for annual commemorations dedicated to the victims of Russia’s colonization of Circassia (1763–1864). In 2017, local officials

set out to end the tradition, accusing the Shapsug elder presiding over the gathering – Ruslan Gvashev – of holding an unsanctioned protest. A court battle ensued, prompting Circassians, in Sochi and in the diaspora, to mobilize in Gvashev’s defense. These events, Zhigunova and Taras argue, suggest that Shapsugs feel marginalized due to their lack of recognition in the face of policies celebrating the assertion of Russian rule over the region.

Finally, in *Chapter 10*, Alexandre Kukhianidze takes stock of Georgia’s democratization process. Despite progress over the three decades that have passed since the declaration of independence in 1991, Kukhianidze argues that the wave of criminalization that swept through the nation during the “time of troubles” still has to be overcome. Georgia’s descent into civil war, after the fall of the USSR, enabled professional gangsters to take control of the state apparatus and use it for self-enrichment. State capture characterized Eduard Shevardnadze’s tenure. Not until Mikhail Saakashvili’s rise in the Rose Revolution did the state reassert its power to collect taxes and deliver public goods. But the rule of law never replaced the law of the ruler. When oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili won the 2012 elections, in large part thanks to a suspicious scandal, he thus seized the reins of unchecked power. This turn of events, Kukhianidze argues, represented a comeback for figures aligned with the criminal underworld, often with ties to Russia. Despite pressure from the West and internal protests, Georgia’s democratic fate hangs in the balance.

Taken together, these contributions enhance our understanding of the region’s ancient languages, shed light on historical events of epic proportions, and uncover mechanisms behind political conflict and cooperation in the tinderbox that is the Caucasus. Following in Karina’s footsteps, our aspiration with this volume is to inspire further research on the past and present challenges facing the peoples and states of the North and South Caucasus, and – in so doing – to facilitate harmonization between them.

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OLIVER REISNER

Reflections on the history of Caucasian studies in Tsarist Russia and the early Soviet Union¹

Introduction – Domination and knowledge in imperial and Soviet contexts

In the past few years, following initial overviews, sketches and biographies of scholars, the first systematizing and critically reflective works on area studies in the Tsarist Empire and the Soviet Union appeared.² However, neither Eastern European history concentrating on the Slavic peoples nor philological Oriental studies have so far sufficiently addressed the effects of Tsarist and Soviet systems of scientific research into the Caucasus. In contrast, in the young post-Soviet nation-states, scholars often tend to interpret the share of Soviet research in their own national research traditions as a product of external determination, oppression or colonization, or at least they completely ignore it. With the establishment of 'kavkazovednie' or Caucasiology as area studies, which represents the focus of this contribution, the knowledge gained is not considered as fixed, but

- 1 Parts of this paper rely on archival research conducted at the Academy of Sciences, the Collection of Modern and Contemporary History of the National Archives of Georgia and the Centre of Manuscripts. They were carried out in September 2001 in Tbilisi, Georgia, thanks to a DFG research grant. My thanks go to the participants of colloquia at the Central Asian Seminar at the Humboldt University in Berlin, the Historical Seminar at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena and a workshop at the University of Konstanz for their critical comments.
- 2 Oskanian 2018, 26–52. Human geographers, e.g. Anssi Paasi and his colleagues, take an interest in spatial planning of borderland regions. They catalogue state efforts to make their subjects 'knowable' and 'governable'. Thanks to Christofer Berglund for this suggestion.

seen as part of a culturally negotiated understanding of the Caucasus region (Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2010; Tolz 2011).

We will take a look at the places and groups supporting research in a concrete 'microcosm', here the Faculty for Oriental Languages of St. Petersburg University, the Caucasian Historical Archaeological Institute (1917) or the first national university in Tbilisi (1918). Research was embedded in varying political and social environments of Petersburg/Leningrad, Moscow and other centres of the respective regions, here Tbilisi (Tiflis) for the Caucasus. In this contribution I will attempt to clarify the interdependence of these three 'areas of experience' in the discussion of the role of scholarship in state and society, since scientific achievement has been of particular importance for the self-understanding and representation of an imperial-state as well as a nation. Recent studies into the practice of research in the early Soviet Union address most of all the effectiveness of scientific paradigms of nation building (Hirsch 1997; Grant 1995; Edgar 2002 for Central Asia) and not the scope and approaches of Caucasus Studies as area studies.

Tsarist imperial interests and Caucasian studies in Russian academia

The scientific research of the Caucasus in Russia began in 1726. This year Gottlieb Siegfried Baier (1694–1738), a member of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences, presented his work *De muro Caucaseo* to the Academic Assembly, which he published in Russian translation two years later (Lavrov 1976, 3–10). (On Tsarist orientalism from the first evidence in ancient Rus' up to the 1860s, see Kim and Shastitko 1990). After the Tsarist Empire continued to expand southward in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, the diverse mountainous region of the Caucasus became the focus of vital strategic interest for Tsarist foreign policy towards the Ottoman and Persian empires. In order to consolidate their own power base in this border region, Tsarist officers and German scholars, on behalf of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences, launched geographic explorations to the various parts of Caucasus, obviously for purposes of military reconnaissance. However, their research only gained importance and became systematic after the successful defense of Tsarist claims to rule over the region against Persians and Ottomans (1826–1829), which required a knowledge of South Caucasus to secure their dominant

position.³ Nonetheless, some representatives of Georgian noble families who had fled to Russia in the early 18th century or earlier taught at Moscow and Petersburg universities, worked at the Russian Academy of Arts or in the civil service. In the early 19th century, more Georgians joined Georgian colonies in Russia and supported the first research into Georgia (Kalandadze 1984).

From the 1830s onwards, a growing number of imperial staff collected statistical and ethnographical data for administrative and financial purposes in order to assess “the needs of the population and the means for their satisfaction”, but mainly to strengthen the administrative and economic penetration of the Caucasus. As part of a Tsarist civilizing mission, Russia should lead the Caucasian periphery “out of the darkness” as A.S. Griboedov stated in 1828 in his “Project for the establishment of a Russian Transcaucasian Company” (Ismail-Zade 1991, 22). However, Tsarist representatives sought the necessary sources of income in order to cover the immense costs of maintaining the Tsarist army locally. They discussed the best possible economic use of this “colonial” region at higher administrative levels and in central Russian business circles (Zubov 1834; Shopen’ 1840). Khachapuridze (1950, 188–220, esp. 201ff.) often confuses declarations of intent with real economic policy. The growing hunger for regional knowledge in order to rule also created an increasing demand for competent personnel.

In Petersburg, however, historians and philologists dominated scholarly discussions of Caucasian issues. The French scholar Marie-Félicité Brosset was the first international member of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences appointed for Georgian and Armenian philology. In 1838, in a dispute with the Polish-born Osip I. Senkovskij, a specialist in Arab studies, he challenged the popular opinion that the Georgians, like all Caucasian peoples, lacked an old literary tradition.⁴ The need to clarify the historicity and authenticity of an independent Georgian historical

3 In addition, there was the reception of the Caucasus by Russian poets (Lermontov, Pushkin and others) (Reisner 2007). On explorers see Breuste 1987, 5–15; Polievktov 1935, 1946. However, the genre of travelogues also developed among members of the Georgian elite as Reisner (2004) described.

4 About Senkovskij’s person, his scientific and literary work see Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2010, 160–168. It was unknown at the time that King Vakht’ang VI (1675–1737) had already set up a commission to review and compile historical sources at the beginning of the 18th century. He was therefore considered to be the author. For a critical analysis of medieval Georgian historiography see Rapp 2003; Berdznishvili 1980, Vol. 1, 62.

literary tradition arising from this dispute marks the birth of *kartvelology* or simply Georgian Studies.⁵ From 1839 to 1841 he gave his first lectures on the history of Georgia and Armenia at the Academy and university in Petersburg. Following his first expedition to Georgia (1847–1848), he published three volumes (1849–1851) in Petersburg. Up until 1858 he published for the first time the most important Georgian sources in a seven volume French edition of the Georgian chronicle “The Life of Kartli” (*kartlis cxovreba*), making them internationally accessible.⁶

In Petersburg T’eimuraz Bagrat’ioni, an exiled member of the former Georgian ruling dynasty with a rich library of Georgian books and manuscripts, and the scholar Davit Chubinashvili supported Brosset in his research. The latter had written a Georgian grammar and Russian-Georgian dictionaries for language classes at high and district schools in the Caucasus, commissioned by the Tsar’s viceroy for the Caucasus, Mikhail Vorontsov (P’ap’ava 1963, 51; Gagua 1982, 184). Chubinashvili graduated in Oriental Studies in Petersburg in 1839 and in 1844, at the age of 30, he was employed as a teacher of Georgian language at the University’s Oriental Studies Department. There he became the first extraordinary professor of Georgian language and literature in 1855. For almost 20 years he taught Georgian language and literary history at all of the higher and specialized schools in Petersburg, where Caucasian students were enrolled. Being students in Petersburg, many young Georgians received their first thorough training in Georgian from him (Medzvelia 1959, 156). From 1849 to 1851 more than 160 Caucasians studied with state stipends at higher educational institutions in Petersburg. His pupil and successor Aleksandre Tsagareli remembered in the late 1890s that in the 1850s and 1860s they “grew up in an atmosphere filled with patriotism and became men”. (Kintsurashvili 1989, 19).

With the opening of the Faculty of Oriental Languages at the University of Petersburg on August 27, 1855, the administration simultaneously

5 Church 1997, 4. For Alasania (1997, 19) Marie-Felicité Brosset, Dimitri Bakradze, Ilia Chavchavadze and others had already exposed their “opponents” views that the Georgians had neither ethnic awareness nor knowledge of the past as “groundless”. In doing so, it equates high culture with folk culture. On the other hand, others call for critical and reflective research into their own cultural achievements: Zurabishvili 1994, 12–15. On the beginnings of Kartvelology see Berdznishvili 1980, 62–73.

6 *Kartlis Tskhovreba* 2014. Cf. Gertrud Pätsch’s German translation without critical apparatus: *Das Leben Georgiens* 1985. About Marie-Felicité Brossets’s life (1802–1880) and research see Buachidze 1983; Chantadze 1970; Kintsurashvili 1989, 10–44.

institutionalized and upgraded research of the Caucasian languages as a new direction in philology.⁷ Mirza Kazem-Bek, an Azeri convert to Christianity, gave the opening speech as the first dean of the new faculty. On July 1, 1836, he had already pleaded in front of the college of the Kazan University to use the proximity of continental Russia to the Asian peoples to intensify cultural contacts, to open up “oriental treasures” with the help of Russians and to pave the way for the Asians to education and progress. However, in the second half of the 19th century Muslim scholars had already established a secular historiography on this sub-region in the Eastern Caucasus.⁸

At the same time, with the development of philological and historical research on the Caucasian peoples as part of the Tsarist Empire, there also emerged a need for the explication of abstract forms of community to create a common ground beyond the specific local cultural and linguistic peculiarities. For this purpose, scholars introduced European concepts, such as the romantic view of the ethnic-cultural nation as a fundamental historical unit.⁹ In the introduction to his *Histoire de la Géorgie*, Brosset stated his attempt to combine all the collected materials into a complete and continuous history of the Georgian nation. However, this still followed a pre-modern concept of history, which concentrated primarily on the reconstruction of genealogies and dynasties of rulers and princes.¹⁰

7 Shaginjan 1999; Kintsurashvili 1989, 25. At that time, Georgian was still a compulsory subject for all South Caucasian students. On the history of the Orient Faculty at St. Petersburg University and its leading representatives see Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2010, 171–198 and more recently about the “Rozen school” around Baron Viktor Romanovich Rozen, Tolz 2011, 1–22.

8 Kazem-Bek 1985, 354–360; *Zhurnal Mimisterstva Narodnogo Prosveshchenija* 1836, quoted in Auch 2000, 113. In 1869, Imam Shamil’s brother-in-law and the son of a well-known sheikh in Dagestan, Abd ar-Rakhman Gazikumukhskij, wrote the first historical-ethnographic description of the mountain dwellers in northwestern Daghestan. Bobrovnikov and Babich 2007, 24.

9 About the “Europeism” in the Georgian literature: Lashkaradze 1987, 136–203. Parsons 1987, 203–215. He also refers to statements taken from Georgian romantic poetry written by representatives of the aristocracy. Church (1997, 6–7) demonstrates this on the basis of the founding of the Ibero-Caucasian language family, which prevailed in Georgia in the 1860s. There were links to this from the 18th century under King Vakhtang VI and Vakhushti Bagrationi, who considered language and belief to be essential features of Georgianess. It is important that these were always members of the centralizing royal power who sought to establish a polity. On the importance of the Georgian language in the history of Georgia see Boeder 1997, 191–199; Boeder 1994; Tuite 2008.

10 Church 1997, 4. The influence of Herder’s ideas about cultural nation on this early

Foreign researchers and learned Georgians alike began to discover the country “anew” by collecting old sources in the form of manuscripts and books. At the same time, the latter were filled with a loyalist idea of a “mutually beneficial condominium between imperial Russia and the spiritual heirs of the old kingdom of Georgia”, linked by the idea of impending extinction by Iranians and Ottomans. Consequently, Tsarist Russia saved the Georgians from physical annihilation at the cost of abolishing their own monarchy. At this point, the creation of the Tsarist narrative of the conquest as a selfless help by the powerful brother of faith from the north was combined with the consolidation of a Georgian historical narrative which, according to the newly published *kartlis tskhovreba*, was traced back to King P’arnavaz (299–234 BC) while their future progress was linked to the Tsarist Empire.¹¹

In addition to these formal institutions, research into the Caucasus was also carried out in informal circles. Even though Petersburg was a more active center for Georgian and Caucasian Studies than Tbilisi, since the 1840s P’lat’ on Ioseliani, Nik’oloz Berdznishvili and Dimit’ri Q’ipiani had launched their scholarly and journalistic activities there¹² as editors and employees of the semi-official Russian newspapers *Zakavkazskii vestnik* and *Kavkaz*, the first two published sources and studies on Georgia and the Caucasus. Most of the publications on the history and ethnography of the region were still in Russian (Berdznishvili 1980, 57–59; Dumbadze 1950, 20f.). However, from 1895 only the Armenian bourgeoisie could afford their own ethnographic magazine in Tbilisi written in their own language (Mouradian 1990).

After the successful military conquest and administrative integration of the Caucasus, from the 1880s the Tsarist regional administration initiated several extensive projects to collect application-oriented data. This led to a detailed geography and ethnography of the Caucasus region.

research still needs to be examined more closely.

- 11 Church 1997, 6. The intelligentsia rated this figure of interpretation largely positively (e.g. Medzvelia 1959, 14; Berdzenishvili 1965, 344). However, today it is rejected not only in historiography, but also by the Georgian public, just like the Soviet rule. It is very difficult to discuss the question scientifically, since it is linked to the abolition of “statehood”. The lyrical versions are Nik’oloz Baratashvili’s two poems *The Fate of Georgia (bedi kartlisa, 1839)* and *The Funeral of King Erekle (saplavi mepisa irak’lisa, 1842)*, which indicate a change of perception among a “new generation” during this period. Berdznishvili 1980, 64 f.; Surguladze 1987, 32 f.
- 12 Berdznishvili 1980, 60–62, 183f. Ioseliani supported Brosset with source material. In the 1850s, the young historian Dimitri Bakradze also turned to Brosset. See Kavtaradze 2016.

It was able to build on numerous geographical, geological, botanical, historical, legal, philological and ethnographic studies and descriptions of the Caucasus region for a further administrative integration into the Tsarist Empire.¹³ The *Materials on the economic way of life of the state peasants in Transcaucasia* (1883–1885, 4 vols.) or the *Collection of materials describing the places and peoples of Caucasia* tried to fill the knowledge gap about the region with facts, figures and maps. The latter project involved local schoolteachers in collecting local data for administrative and economic purposes. These large-scale projects attempted to register the local conditions in all administrative regional units. Particularly striking is the demarcation of “non-experts” like village school teachers, who were supposed to collect and process masses of empirical material on site according to precise specifications. The Office of the Caucasian Education District produced special manuals to instruct how to collect these materials. However, scholars in distant St. Petersburg reserved its scientific evaluation for themselves.¹⁴

Vera Tolz investigated the intensive interrelations between autochthonous and non-autochthonous researchers, their concepts and the effects of the changing political climate on their work. She also looked into the relationship between institutionalized research and the small circles of an educated public and traced the scientific and political impact of the scholar Viktor Rozen’s (1849–1908) informal ‘school’ at the Faculty of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University. In many ways they anticipated Edward Said’s later critique of Orientalism in Europe’s perception of Asia, and formulated more integrative approaches for the multi-ethnic Tsarist Empire, but nonetheless they remained marginal (Tolz 2011, 54f.).

In 1886, the Georgian Aleksandre Tsagareli, a graduated linguist, received the chair for Armenian and Georgian Studies at that Faculty. Niko Marr, son of a Mingrelian woman and a Scotsman, followed him

13 These pre-revolutionary achievements of research on the Caucasus have been extensively acknowledged: Bartol’d 1911, German: Barthold (1913) 1995, and in the Soviet Union by Kosven 1955–1962.

14 For questions of geographic, economic and ethnological research of the Caucasus as area studies for the late Tsarist period since the 1880s, available source material includes a lot of documents from Tbilisi as the administrative center of the Caucasus. The introductions to multi-volume, extensive studies and their archival records are particularly worth mentioning here. Their location within the Tsarist administration allows conclusions to be drawn about the interests guiding knowledge production of numerous authorities.

in 1902. As recognized scholars, they began participating in research debates on par with their Russian colleagues. Caucasians managed to integrate themselves into the imperial science system far from their homes. While the Russian Imperial Geographical Society became “russified” in the second half of the 19th century and gradually lost its former (Baltic) German dominance, the opposite was true for Caucasian studies. For example, after 1900 Georgians were appointed as professors in Petersburg and Odessa, headed the Caucasian Statistics Department in Tbilisi and made their own views heard (N. Marr, Iv. Javakhishvili, F. Gogitschayschwili). Caucasian scholars increasingly participated in scholarly and political debates. After the revolution in 1905, philologist Niko Marr and historian Ivane Javakhishvili, both Georgians from the Faculty of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University, were able to challenge their Russian colleagues’ arguments against the historical autocephaly of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Regional research in the late Tsarist Empire was thus largely dependent on specific framework conditions, scholarly intentions and research references.¹⁵

At the beginning of the 20th century, Tsarist research on the Caucasus assumed a systematic and disciplined character. In Petersburg there was a “scientific boost”, which was very strongly shaped by the exchange with European scientific trends and a more critical reflexivity towards previous research practices. In addition, they introduced the collection and editing of historical monuments, interdisciplinary expeditions and archaeological excavations. For the first time, they formulated independent theories and concepts that questioned Western ones. The linguist, philologist and orientalist Niko Ia. Marr (1864–1934) acts here as a theoretician and organizer of science in a prominent position, who rose in 1930 to the position of Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Initially, he studied Georgian and other Kartvelian languages as well as Armenian (1888–1916). However, from 1916 to 1920 he started to develop a theory of their genetic relationship with Semitic languages as two strands of a common ‘Japhetite’ language family (Japhet was a son of Noah), expanding it to the languages of the Caucasian mountain peoples. By 1923, he finally included marginal but non-Caucasian languages such

15 The history of Russian Oriental research, developed with the direct participation of representatives from Central Asia and the Caucasus, differed significantly from Western European oriental studies. Since 1905 it has been an integral part of the teaching program at the Faculty of Oriental Languages as an introductory lecture. Barthold (1913) 1995, VII–XIII, 200–203 on Caucasian Studies and recently also Tolz 2011, 47–68.

as Basque and Etruscan.¹⁶ His theory formed a violent reaction to their neglect by Indo-European linguistics in Europe. In the 1920s, Marr adapted his theory into an internationalist “Japhetology”, which he differentiated from a Georgian-dominated Caucasiology (I. Javakhishvili) and a national “Kartvelology” (Akaki Shanidze) in linguistic and cultural studies (Cherchi and Manning 2002; on ethnology: Tsulaya 1976; Marr 1919; Shanidze 2019).

With the expansion of higher education, a growing number of Caucasians graduated from universities in and outside Tsarist Russia, who wooed the researchers with their concepts. At the turn of the century, however, Caucasian students were less interested in Oriental studies, so they formed numerous regionally and nationally organized student circles (*zemliachesva*) outside the Faculty of Oriental Languages at the University of St. Petersburg. These circles developed their own questions and objectives for Caucasian research. One example is the “Georgian Science Circle” that propagated Georgian as a language of science.¹⁷

The progressing scientification since the turn of the 20th century accompanied a national adaptation of scholarly concepts based on European models among Armenians and Georgians. They positioned themselves in growing opposition to the Tsarist Empire’s regional approach to the study of the Caucasus, but remained influenced by its paradigms, such as the idea of Caucasia as a unified historical and cultural region. However, the “nationalization of regional research” was a continuous process. In Petersburg, within the discipline of Caucasian Studies for example Georgian and Armenian studies were established.¹⁸ In

16 Niko Marr was born in Kutaisi, the son of a Scotsman and a Georgian. He graduated in 1884 from the Classical Gymnasium in Kutaisi and in 1890 from the Faculty of Oriental Studies at the University of St. Petersburg, where he worked as a private lecturer from 1891. From 1894 to 1896 he prepared his dissertation at the University of Strasbourg and the Vatican Library in Rome, followed by an expedition to Athos and in 1902 to Sinai to collect Georgian manuscripts. In 1912 he became a member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and in 1913 dean of the Faculty for Oriental Studies of the University of St. Petersburg. Most recently about Marr’s career and his reception by other Georgian scholars see Tuite 2011, 199–203.

17 Niko Marr complained in a letter to Ivane Javakhishvili, who studied in 1901 for a year at the Wilhelms University in Berlin with the church historian Adolf von Harnack, about the small number of students enrolled. Gersamia 1996, 18; Janelidze 1986; Otchet 1910, 247f.; Otchet 1912, 222; Javakhishvili 1915; Reisner 2015.

18 From a central perspective on the uniform cultural space of the Caucasus see Volkova 1992, 7. After the publication of his new, expanded Georgian edition of

a comparative perspective, the North Caucasian, mainly Islamic peoples remained to a major degree the subject of study by Russian researchers.¹⁹ By decree of the People's Commissariat for Education on September 13, 1919, the Faculty of Oriental Languages became part of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the First Petrograd University. The oriental languages lost their institutional home and were relocated in 1920 to the Petrograd Institute for Living Oriental Languages founded by Niko Marr. However, Caucasian Studies could no longer continue the outstanding performance of the Faculty for Oriental Languages.²⁰

From the Tsarist Empire to the multinational Soviet Union: On the relevance of Caucasus area studies for practical (political) application

A few years before the end of the Tsarist Empire, the orientation towards applicability of academic research for state purposes came to the fore. The dependence of the Tsarist Empire on external raw material supplies during the First World War again demonstrated how little the country knew about its own natural resources and their insufficient exploitation. Several patriotically minded geologists and natural scientists wanted to address this weakness in January 1915 when they established a “Commission for the Study of Natural Productive Forces” at the Academy of Sciences (*Komissiiia po izucheniiyu estestvennykh proizvoditel'nykh sil Rossii pri Akademii nauk*, KEPS for short). The KEPS should use numerous expeditions to locate the country's natural resources in order to better exploit them. At their general assembly in December 1916, Vladimir I. Vernadsky spoke “About

the “History of the Georgian People”, Mikhail Tsereteli wrote in a letter to the author Ivane Javakhishvili on April 3, 1913: “The publication of your monographs and books is a big deal not only for science, but also for our incarnation. This is the best propaganda for the idea of Georgia.” Tsereteli 1990, 310.

- 19 Mainly on common law among the North Caucasian peoples: Leontovich (1882/2010) analysed reports from Tsarist officers. See also Kovalevskii 1886 and 1890. In a critical discussion of common law as a more “primitive” form of social organization: Bobrovnikov 2002, 5–7.
- 20 Shaginyan 1999, 30f. From 1918 Marr's disciples Anatolii Genko, Vladimir Barthold and I. Krachkovskij worked in the “Asian Museum”, where in 1921 an Orientalist college had been established, which in 1930 was transformed into an Institute for Oriental Studies. Marr directed all these institutions. Volkova 1992, 9–12.

a State Network of Research Institutions” that was to extend across the country. Already after the February Revolution in 1917, he postulated the “tasks of science in connection with state politics” in different regions: “For us, Siberia, Caucasia, Turkestan are not lawless colonies. The basis of the Russian people cannot be built on such an idea” (Kol'tsov 1988, 13 [quote], 1999; Bailes 1990, 138–159).

In April 1917 a sister organisation, the “Commission for the Study of the Peoples of Russia and the Neighboring Countries” (*Komissiiia po izucheniiu plemennogo sostava Rossii i sopedel'nykh stran pri Akademii nauk*, or KIPS for short, and in 1930 the *Institut po izucheniiu narodov SSSR*) was established. The orientalist Sergej Ol'denburg, who headed KIPS as permanent secretary, also participated in KEPS.²¹ One of four departments (European Russia, Siberia, Caucasia and Central Asia) or two of the nine sectors of KIPS dealt with the North and South Caucasus under Niko Marr's leadership. As early as 1918, KIPS was to produce ethnographically structured maps on the instructions of the People's Commissariat for Nationality Issues under Stalin, for foreign affairs, for national education and for the military topographical department of the General Staff of the Red Army. In June 1920, even Lenin ordered such a map for Central Asia for the Central Committee. In 1921, a fifteen-member expedition led by KIPS employee N.F. Yakovlev was carried out to explore the population, languages and customs of the Caucasus mountain tribes. From 1923, KIPS was instrumental in preparing the first Soviet census of 1926.²² In the young Soviet Union, these commissions formed the nucleus and framework of a series of new and specific research facilities that should cover the entire country and were to rely on a new network of scholars from the regions for these tasks.

The institutionalization of Caucasian studies in Tbilisi

On June 1, 1917, Niko Marr officially founded the “Caucasian Historical Archaeological Institute” (KIAI) in Tbilisi. It was the first regional institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences. As “completely new to the Caucasus”, it should “fill a large gap in the range of similar institutions in both Russia and Western Europe because its activity is devoted

21 On Sergej Ol'denburg see Schimmelpenninck van der Oye 2010, 189–197.

22 Kol'tsov 1988, 22f.; Volkova 1992, 9f. Famous academics like V.I. Vernadskii, S.F. Ol'denburg, V.V. Bartol'd, M.A. D'iakonov, E.F. Karskii, N.Ia. Marr, A.A. Shakhmatov, L.S. Berg, B.Ia. Vladimirtsov, V.P. Semenov-Tian-Shanskii, G.N. Chubinov (Chubinashvili), L.Ya. Shternberg, L.V. Shcherba were members.

to humanities based Caucasiology in the broadest sense of the word.” According to its statutes, the KIAI was to study the languages, everyday life and antiquities (*drevnosti*) of the Caucasus peoples and those people related to them (*srodnye*) in linguistic and cultural terms, living and extinct peoples of Iran, Mesopotamia and Asia Minor in the full range of their history. They also covered the development of all branches of humanitarian Caucasiology and related scientific disciplines. Their goals were also the collection, registration and preservation of material and intellectual cultural monuments of different cultures adjacent to the Caucasus region. Its staff consisted of one director, who had to be a member of the academy, and two assistants and adjuncts selected by the academy, a secretary and a photographer (Archive AoSG, f. 4, delo 1/1, l. 1a–2a). From the published correspondence between Niko Marr in Petersburg and his colleagues in Tbilisi we can derive very divergent interpretations of these goals and research intentions.²³

On the other hand, the historian Ivane Javakhishvili immediately after the February Revolution in 1917 left the Faculty of Oriental Languages in St. Petersburg and returned to Tbilisi in order to establish a private Georgian university with the former as a role model.²⁴ At the initial meetings of the “Society of the Georgian University” on May 12 and 17, 1917 in Tbilisi and Kutaisi, he compared the medieval monastic academies in Gelati and Ikalto as examples of Georgia’s connection to the spiritual developments of Christian Europe in the Middle Ages. The establishment of a modern European university was for him a symbol signifying the parity of the Georgian nation in the family of modern European nations in science (Javakhishvili 1917, 1948, 2010). The Georgian University was founded on January 26, 1918, four months before the declaration of independence of the “Democratic Republic of Georgia”. Henceforth, it should form the core of a national academic tradition. With the independence of the three

23 The author of this contribution is planning to further investigate the institutionalization of the “Caucasian Institute for Archaeology and History” (KIAI), the composition of its staff, but also the general conditions, as for a long period it was the only regional research institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in the Caucasus. Among the staff Georgians and Armenians dominated before Russians and a few representatives of other ethnic groups. Archive AoSG, f.4, d.6., l. 1. Also: Zhordaniia 1988, 10–11.

24 In the minutes of a preparatory meeting for the foundation of the “Georgian University” the organisers state that the humanities should be organised like the History-Philological and the Oriental Languages Faculties at St. Petersburg University. Liluashvili and Gaiparashvili 2006, 82.

South Caucasian republics, the first research on territorial borders of the young nation-state was carried out there.²⁵

From the start, both institutions, the KIAI and the Georgian University, pursued opposite research agendas. In a controversial correspondence the historian Ivane Javakhishvili as co-founder and university rector criticized Niko Marr's internationalist theories that would limit the role of academic disciplines (Cherchi and Manning 2002, 12–19). As long as he presided as university rector over the Professors' Council, a university self-governing body until 1926 with headquarters in Leningrad and Moscow, the scientific manager Marr had only limited influence on the development of research in Georgia.²⁶ After independence and annexation by the 11th Red Army in February 1921, young academics were also concentrated at the university and only gradually put back "on track". In addition, in the early 1920s, the Academic Council of the Georgian university continued the tradition of mandatory stays abroad for future professors and they sent numerous Georgians to Germany.²⁷

Soviet research policy and the Caucasus: Categorizing Soviet nationalities at the center and the peripheries

The young Soviet power as the first communist state had not only to distinguish itself from the outside capitalist Europe and the US, but also to redefine itself internally after a bloody civil war. In doing so, the Bolsheviks had to deal with the Tsarist cultural legacy, above all with the ethno-cultural heterogeneity and diversity of its state structure and the potential of its economic development. They tried to develop the country "scientifically", especially the parts considered "Asian" and therefore backward. The principles and practices applied served to structure

25 Javakhishvili 1919; Ishkhanian 1919. The Bolsheviks also commissioned research (Lebedev 1919). From 1918 to 1921 the Georgian University was the first among ten newly founded universities to double the number within three years. After the Bolsheviks seized power, the People's Commissariat for Education tried to control all universities. In Belarus, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Armenia and Azerbaijan there were no higher education institutions, therefore the Georgian University established in 1918 in independent Georgia continued to exist and preserved at least its internal autonomy until 1926.

26 On the establishment of a Chair of Comparative Japhetic Linguistics with Niko Marr as professor at the Faculty of Philosophy see the minutes from session No. 27, April 15, 1921. Liluashvili and Gaiparashvili 2006, 269.

27 The unpublished correspondence with Georgians studying in Germany can be found in the Archive for Contemporary History of the National State Archive of Georgia, Fond 471, University Tbilisi. Reisner 2019.

Soviet territoriality, but also to control internal and external relationships. The Bolsheviks declared science a “productive force” to be “mobilized” as quickly as possible and should bring practical benefits. Science policy therefore played a special role at an early stage, even if the opportunities to implement the ambitious goals were often lacking.²⁸

During the transformation from the Tsarist Empire to the Soviet Union, the authorities carried out a “territorialization of ethnicity” towards nationalities. Its aim was therefore not to create a “Soviet empire”, but rather to “combine” new party officials and specialists from the old regime, such as the ethnographers and orientalist from Petrograd. Together with statisticians and administrative experts, the latter decided which peoples had to be included in the official lists of nationalities and which to “eliminate” for the census. In order to “rationalize” state administration these experts revised and systematized ethnic categories in these lists several times during the 1920s and 1930s. This process involved party and government officials, academics who could professionally classify individuals or redefine their affiliation, and eventually the local population, who received – within certain limits – new identities. So it was not just about the political control of the peoples of the former Tsarist Empire, but their subjects – based on the idea of self-determination of peoples – should be transformed into members of a new socialist society, into modern Soviet citizens. Francine Hirsch divided this transformation of a multi-ethnic empire into a multinational socialist federation between 1917 and 1939 into three stages of Soviet state formation: 1. Physical conquest (1917–1924), 2. Conceptual reorganization (1924–1928) and 3. Consolidation of the new nationalities (1927–1939). Under the aspect of “constructive social and political superstructure”, it formed an independent development model that responded to colonial civilization missions (Carr 1950; Hirsch 1997, 253; Barth and Osterhammel 2005, 10).

During the New Economic Policy (NEP, 1923–1929), old scientific organizations continued to exist alongside new ones. Until the Cultural Revolution and the “Academy Crisis” in 1929, the Academy of Sciences in the pre-revolutionary tradition was able to maintain a certain degree

28 Akuljants 1931; Kamarauli (1929, 4) sees his study as “a powerful battle cry to support the cultural revolution in the mountain region of Khevsureti”. Viktor Shklovski reviewed it in *Zarja Vostoka* (no. 183/2151, 13.08.1929). Konstantin Paustovski’s novellas *Kara-Bugaz* (1932) and *Kolkhida* (1934) present socialist construction in backward areas such as the Western coast of the Caspian Sea (Turkmenistan) and on the Eastern Black Sea coast (Georgia).

of autonomy despite its “siege” (Beyrau 1993), in competition with the Bolshevik Communist Academy. It was not until 1929 that the Bolsheviks restructured the “bourgeois” academy into a hegemonic center of science and scholarship. The aim was to create a “Bolshevization” from within and no longer through separate party academies from the outside (Mick 1998; David and Fox 1997, 1998; Beyrau 1993, 39–53).

On January 31, 1924, a group of leading ethnographers from the Academy of Sciences in Petrograd met to determine a new directive of the Nationality Soviet to use nationality according to “rational criteria” to classify the population in a first Union-wide census. They should transmit their results to the Central Statistics Administration as soon as possible. However, the completed legal justification of the USSR did not apply to the state-building process. Since the Bolsheviks did not want to return to a centralized state as the Tsarist Empire, they had to develop a new framework for the newly founded state, which they designed as a socialist federation of nationalities. The classification of Soviet citizens according to nationalities in the 1926, the aborted 1937 and politically corrected 1939 census formed a “fundamental component in the creation of a multinational state” (Hirsch 1997, 251). Of course, local administrators now had to know more about the people under their rule in order to effectively maintain their own power. Even in the People’s Commissariat for Nationalities, there was no comprehensive categorization of the Soviet Union, as became clear from the disputes surrounding the establishment of Soviet republics and *oblasti* (provinces). Only after repeated consultations with geographers, ethnographers and linguists government officials decided to draw boundaries based on national or ethnic characteristics that seemed more permanent to them than natural geographic or economic principles (Hirsch 1997, 251–278; Hirsch 2005; Martin 2001; on the census of 1926 in the South Caucasus see Müller 2008, 77–120).

From 1924 to 1928 it was a matter of attributing importance to nationality. However, Stalin’s classic definition of nations from 1913 was hardly practical for the implementation of the 1926 census. Here KIPS played an essential role as a scientific “small space”. From 1924 to 1926, the scientists gathered at KIPS were to develop a new concept of nationality adapted to the Soviet context. In the crisis of a linguistic concept of nationality after the de-legitimation of religion and linguistic Russification, the experts should now develop new definitions and collect detailed information about different regions and nationalities. They elaborated curricula and teaching material about the peoples of the

USSR, trained administrators for their work in non-Russian regions and mediated between authorities and local people.

At the same time, the Soviet of Nationalities asked the Central Statistics Administration to add census data to “larger nationalities” (*glavnye narodnosti*) and to compile separate lists. Smaller peoples should consolidate into larger conceptual units (later also territorially). The greatest displeasure was caused by the preparations for the census in Ukraine and in the South Caucasus about the lists of nationalities to be counted (*natsional’nost’* vs *narodnost’*) prepared by KIPS. The KIPS ethnographers complained that they would not be able to create accurate ethnographic maps without analyzing all available data sets, e.g. to regulate border conflicts. By 1927, the experts assigned an official status to 172 nationalities.²⁹

The third stage in the consolidation of nationalities based on the data from the 1927 census was the introduction of the first five-year plan in 1929 (Hirsch 1997, 264: Phase I, 1927–1932). Now the fight against resistance of supposedly traditional cultures and religions among the “less developed” peoples had been intensified. The government increasingly took into account the wishes of dominant titular nationalities (e.g. Georgians in the South Caucasus) that Soviet republics and *oblasti*, like nation states, wanted to organize with a uniform language and culture.

Between 1928 and 1939 the ethnographic map was oriented towards the consolidation of the peoples into larger linguistic, ethnic or cultural units, which were to be associated with territory and “economic viability” (Hirsch 1997, 266f.: Phase II, 1932–1937). Leading concepts were *narod* (people), *natsiia* (nation), *narodnost’*, *natsional’nost’* (nationality), *natsmen’shinstvo* (national minority) and *rasa* (race). By the census of 1937 and 1939, hundreds of ethnic elements were reduced – at least on paper – to just 57 major nationalities or had been “consolidated” in national territories. Peoples who did not receive such a form of statehood had to fear for their existence.

Between 1937 and 1939, the consolidation of nationalities and thus the transformation of the peoples and territories of the former Tsarist Empire into a Soviet federation of nation states was to be completed. “Nationality” had become a key feature of Soviet identity and its registration had become a political issue (Hirsch 1997, 272: Phase III, 1937–1939).

29 Hirsch 1997, 257: “Making Sense of Nationality”. For the specifics of the territorialization policy in South Caucasus, which in the 1920s and not only in the 1930s, as in other regions of the USSR, resulted in a homogenization of the titular nations of the three Soviet republics, see Müller 2008, 163–189.

In preparation for the 1939 census, three separate lists were created with 59 *glavnye natsional'nosti* (nations, national groups and *narodnosti*), another with 39 ethnographic groups and 28 national minorities. One year after the census, 31 major nationalities without their own territorial unit had disappeared and were combined with groups of similar cultural, ethnic or linguistic origin. Officially, the Soviet Union had now become a supranational state with a collection of territorial nationalities that united under the banner of socialism. However, how administrators and experts used ethnographic knowledge to justify the “creation” of some nationalities or the “elimination” of others is still a desideratum of research into the history of scientific practice in the early Soviet Union.

New forms of research in a regional approach

In addition to the KEPS and the KIPS, new research institutions were also established on the new Soviet periphery, which influenced area studies and created their own national scientific communities. The People's Commissariat for Education envisioned the movement of regional and local history (*kraevedenie*) as playing a central role in the creation of new research fields and the integration of new layers as part of area studies, which in the non-Russian regions complemented the Soviet nationalization policy (*korenizaciija*). It should relatively quickly involve local staff for the scientific development of peripheral regions such as Central Asia and the Caucasus. The *kraevedenie* has not yet been investigated for the Caucasus region, but as an intersection of political guidelines and scientific research, it was of central importance for the scientific practice of regional research or whatever interests in knowledge production the Bolsheviks articulated on site.³⁰

Despite frequent restructuring during the period of the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic in the 1920s and 1930s, Caucasus studies experienced a continuous institutional upgrading by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. The budget alone, which the Academy of Sciences (AoS) of the USSR allotted for the region, grew from 3 million rubles in 1928 to 25 million rubles in 1934.³¹ The number of employees tripled

30 Apart from a few publications and documents in the Archive for Contemporary History of Georgia, there is little evidence. Initial research in the former archives of the Central Committee of the CP of Georgia was not successful. Marr 1925; by local historians' (*kraevedy*) Lajster and Chursin 1924. For Central Asia see Baldauf 1992.

31 In the late 1920s and early 1930s, Russia was shaken by the controversial processes of collectivization and industrialization. However, it requires a separate discussion of the real value of these budget figures in this period.

in the same period. The already mentioned *Kavkazskii institut archeologii i istorii* (KIAI) advanced from 1930–1931 to a Caucasiological Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (*Institut kavkazovedenija AN SSSR*) and was expanded to include a natural science department. In 1932 the Institute was raised to the “Transcaucasian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR” (*Zakavkazskij filial AN SSSR*), but remained dependent on the instructions from its headquarters in Moscow. Thus, for example, the Department of Social Sciences of the AoS of the USSR criticized in 1932 the research plan of the “Transcaucasian Institute”, which did not correspond to the need for applied research on current problems or the creation of textbooks. Niko Marr’s Japhetid theory probably also remained dominant during this period.³²

On September 22, 1933, at a meeting of the Transcaucasian branch of the AoS of the USSR at the State University of Tbilisi, it was decided to establish a “Georgian department” (*Gruzinskoe otdelenie filiala*). Just three weeks later, on November 5th, it was implemented. Niko Marr was the “science manager” and simultaneously headed both the Transcaucasian branch of the AoS of the USSR and its Georgian department. Already on January 1, 1934, a Georgian (Tbilisi) and an Azerbaijani department (Baku) and an institute for Caucasus research were established in Tbilisi.

The nationalization of Caucasian regional studies since 1935

On March 15, 1935, the Transcaucasian Committee of the VKP (b) finally decided to split the Transcaucasian branch of the AoS of the USSR into three national branches. It anticipated the reorganization of the “Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Soviet Republic” into three separate Union republics. Already on March 23, 1935, the Georgian branch of the AoS of the USSR started its work. A first topic was that scientific studies to differentiate national and subject-specific research should also be carried out in the languages of the titular nations. This “nationalization” apparently only administratively followed the real situation in Tbilisi. The Presidium of the AoS of the USSR, however, held on to a separate regional research institute for Caucasus studies. They also intended to affiliate the research institute of Abkhazia with it, which party and government bodies in Abkhazia completely rejected after the demotion from a Union to an autonomous republic. On June 25, 1936, finally Soviet, Georgian and Abkhaz authorities agreed to set up an “Institute for Abkhazian Culture

³² On the institutional history see Zhordaniia 1988, 20ff.; Miliband 1975.

of the AoS of the USSR” in its Georgian branch, as was the Institute for Caucasus Research. With this, the nationalized territorial-administrative structure also preordained Soviet research on Caucasia.³³

In this increasingly “nationalized” environment and without the late Niko Marr’s patronage (he died in 1934), the “Niko Marr Institute for History, Material Culture, Language and Literature of the Transcaucasian Peoples” continued its regional-oriented research in the humanities. On April 17, 1935, the Transcaucasian Executive Committee decreed that the institute had the following goals: 1. Academic editing of written sources, folklore, ethno-cultural relics, cultural monuments and language creation processes of the Caucasus peoples; 2. “Fight against bourgeois-nationalistic pseudo-scientific concepts in the area of research into social processes in the life of the peoples of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia”.³⁴ With this kind of “nationalization”, the Soviet authorities strengthened their scientific and ideological control. The Transcaucasian Executive Committee, later the Ministries of Education in the Soviet republics, and no longer the AoS had to approve its academic work plan. The institute also increasingly focused on the South Caucasus in favor of nationally oriented research with each restructuring of its “sectors”. Regional projects like on the “Feudal Formation in the Caucasus from the 16th to the 18th Century (Pre-Capitalist Era)” (planned since 1932) or a multi-volume “History of Transcaucasia from the 18th to 19th Century” were discontinued. On June 25, 1936, they finally incorporated the institute into the Georgian branch of the AoS of the USSR. Since then it obviously ceased to exist as a regional research institute. Caucasus studies now lacked its own institutional framework in the Soviet Union. Research projects became more and more focused on Georgia (Zhordaniia 1988, 41–46).

On February 10, 1941 – after the Russian Federation, Ukraine and Belarus – as the fourth Soviet republic the Council of People’s Commissars

33 With the establishment of independent branches, national publication series (*Trudy*) were launched. In 1936, the branches were divided into a social and natural science branch. Zhordaniia 1988, 28–41.

34 Zhordaniia 1988, 40; Topuridze 1980, 306. The Georgian acronym was “ENIMKI”. In July 1936, the addition of “Transcaucasian peoples” was dropped. The ENIMKI consisted of four sectors (1. Preliterate cultures and peoples with young written culture in Transcaucasia, 2. History and material culture of the peoples of Transcaucasia, 3. Comparative ethnography and folklore of the peoples of Caucasus, 4. Geography and toponymy) and the Niko Marr cabinet. It was allowed to publish its own publications such as the series *Problemy sovetskogo kavkazovedeniia*, popular scientific monographs, and conduct scientific events.

of the Georgian SSR decided to set up its own Academy of Sciences. They finally integrated the Marr Institute into the academic research structure of Soviet Georgia and thus practically subordinated Caucasian Studies to Georgian Studies. The leading representatives of Georgian national historiography Ivane Javakhishvili, Simon Janashia and Niko Berdzenishvili founded a new book series (*Materialy po istorii Gruzii i Kavkaza*) and published the first systematic textbook on the *History of Georgia from earliest times to the 19th century* in 1943. This concluded the development of a national science system in the framework of a supranational Soviet state and deeply entrenched Caucasian Studies into national research agendas (Zhordaniia 1988, 54–63).

Academic milieu and Soviet repression

In the cognitive process, researchers not only have to self-critically review their relationship to and in the structures of academic research, but also towards (state) power, which socializes them and impacts on their production of knowledge. At the beginning of the 1920s, the mainly liberal to conservative-minded scholars remained hostile towards the new Soviet power. For the Bolsheviks they did not represent an independent social group, but were part of the “bourgeois intelligentsia”. Party ideologues and party leaders, on the other hand, had to collaborate with willing scientists in the center and on the peripheries in order to be able to translate new scientific theories into the language of ideology. The party leadership’s claim to control the academia was only limited by their own technical incompetence. The primacy of practical relevance also led to conflicts between scientists and practitioners in regional research (especially poorly trained “red cadres”), which can be described as conflicting goals or objectives. Dependent on the cooperation with some outsiders, these could partially gain decisive influence on the formation of science as for example, the Marxist historian and deputy commissar for peoples’ education M.N. Pokrovskii in the 1920s or the biologist Lysenko in the 1950s (Mick 1998).

As a linguist and archaeologist in the early Soviet Union, Niko Marr gained a decisive influence on the humanities in general and on Caucasian Studies in particular. His numerous foundations of institutes and his increasingly comprehensive “Japhetite theory” correlated with his rise to one of the central figures in the scientific organization of the young Soviet

Union.³⁵ Niko Marr himself largely determined the role of Caucasian studies as area studies in Stalinism. His opponents came under increasing pressure.

However, there was still resistance on the Caucasian periphery. Around Ivane Javakhishvili, the rector of the Georgian University in Tbilisi, they formed a Georgian national research group with qualified personnel. They resisted several of Marr's attempts from the center in Petrograd to impose his institutional and theoretical agenda for some time. Numerous letters provide insight into the interrelation between scientific reasoning and nation building beyond the actual research debates. According to Javakhishvili, he broke with his teacher in the spring of 1917, when he and several other of Marr's students returned from Petrograd to Tbilisi (Dondua 1969, 137; Gersamia 1996; K'ek'elidze and Mamatsashvili 1991; Tuite 2011, 201–203). Just two months after the Bolshevik seizure of power in Georgia on April 15, 1921 a chair for comparative Japhetic linguistics was established at the University of Tbilisi directed by Niko Marr. However, as long as Ivane Javakhishvili was the rector, the impact remained limited. Only in June 1926 was Ivane Javakhishvili “voted out” as rector on the initiative of leading Georgian Bolsheviks. He had to fear for his academic and physical existence after campaigns against him in 1930 and 1935 (Vachnadze and Guruli 2004; Liluashvili and Gaiparashvili 2006, 66–75, 269). After his removal, the new leadership enforced a greater political conformity at Tbilisi State University.

Another way to bring the academia into line was to replace the old academics by young and party loyal scholars. With the introduction of the position of *aspirantura* (PhD studies) in the 1930s, the authorities introduced an improved preparation and training of academic cadres for the Union republics. Even for the regional Caucasus Institute, established in 1932, the doctoral students initially had to defend their thesis at the AoS of the USSR in Leningrad. Only from November 7, 1939, did the authorities allow the defense of a dissertation at the Institute once an academic examination committee was established. Since then a direct cooperation with the university or other institutes was no longer necessary. This further separated research from teaching and led to the formation of a “closed society” of academics (Zhordaniia 1988, 48).

35 Niko Marr founded the “Russian Academy for the History of Material Culture” in Petrograd (from 1936: State Academy for the History of Material Culture, GAIMK) to conduct archaeological excavations in the Caucasus in 1919 and in 1921 the “Institute for Japhetidological Studies of the Russian AoS” (from 1922 “Japhetid Institute” and then “Niko Marr Institute for Language and Thinking of the AoS of the USSR”). Volkova 1992, 6–22.

From the mid-1930s onwards, the repression increased to open terror, not only against “bourgeois specialists” but also against the intelligentsia as a whole. Otar Jordania, as the only scholar so far to have researched the history of the institute, does not discuss the repressions and losses among the staff of the Caucasus Institute during the Great Terror 1937–38 (Zhordaniia 1988, 60). The same applies to the question of continuity and change among academic staff in regional research. It has not yet been clarified for the peripheries like the Caucasus how the predominantly young successors (many were often only 30 to 35 years old at the beginning of World War II) managed to keep their positions in regional research. We have no idea how the deployment of specialists trapped in labor camps (GULags) by the People’s Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD) influenced scientific practice. The party authorities had to approve each member of the newly formed Soviet intelligentsia, whose first generation was socialized under Stalin and the second one under Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization. Besides the political interference, the Soviet national academic system influenced their work.

In addition to disciplinary methods, it was also possible to reference the founders of Marxism-Leninism in their own disciplinary publications in order to secure some ideological protection in scholarly, but in fact political, debates. However, this was not guaranteed, i.e. the academic canonization was mainly based on ideological and not on scientific criteria. At the same time, other opinions were devalued and both the livelihood and the possibility of critical questioning were removed. From the 1920s to 1951 references in research on the history of material culture (especially archeology) and linguistics had to be made to Niko Marr, who achieved extensive institutional control.³⁶

In the Stalin era, however, various approaches to Marr’s “New Theory of Language” coexisted. However, these could no longer enter into an independent, open scientific debate with one another. Alexander Ghlon’t’i (1998, 36–37) recalls that in Georgia in the early 1930s Marr regularly gave lectures at Tbilisi State University in a student circle of ‘Japhetologists’ and corresponded with them. The opposition to Marr was formed in the Georgian establishment around the linguists Arnold Chikobava and Akaki Shanidze. In the summer of 1933, party leader K.

36 His “State Academy for the History of Material Culture” (GAIMK) was not only supposed to promote archaeological excavations, but also to protect cultural monuments. The GAIMK was a center of Marr’s teachings and received official praise from the RANION. Kabanov 2002, 89.

Oragvelidze, a former rector of TSU (shot in 1937), invited Marr to an official meeting at the headquarters of the Georgian Communist Party. When Marr learned that his critics were also invited, he awaited public charges and left Georgia the same night. Until his death in 1934, he did not return to Georgia. This shows that fear of terror did not stop even at the doyen of Caucasian studies either. However, only Stalin in his article in *Pravda* on June 27, 1950 dethroned Marr publicly and personally encouraged a “clash of opinions” and “freedom of criticism” in academia. Arnold Chikobava, a moderate Ibero-Caucasiologist, opened the debate on Marr’s “New Theory of Language” in Soviet linguistics. At the same time, this debate also initiated a paradigm shift from classes to geopolitical categories.³⁷

In response to this difficult environment, scientists certainly developed their own survival strategies. However, since the individuals were so afraid of being arrested that they were scared to take any written notes (e.g. the literary critic Geronti Kikodze dared to secretly write his memoirs only one year after Stalin’s death. They were published only in 2003).³⁸ So we do not have many sources from that period at our disposal hinting on these coping strategies. This can only be traced indirectly by a careful re-reading of the academic works produced in that period and memoirs of the younger generation of scholars. For the history of Caucasian Studies in that period this means that we will have to live with certain “blind spots”.

Conclusion

If the Tsarist Empire can be seen as a geographic project, it has also produced its internal critics. In all three periods, Tsarist, independent and Soviet, local, non-Russian scholars have shaped the concept of Caucasian studies as area studies in various ways and thus participated in the social

37 In Georgia, the opposition also included Janashia, Akhvlediani, Topuria and D. K’arbelashvili. Several of Marr’s former students, such as Akaki Shanidze and Akhvlediani in linguistics, the ethnologist Chit’ania, and his very last student, Mikheil Chikovani, who explicitly legitimized Marr’s “New Theory” in his 1946 textbook on folklore, were also among them. Arnold Chikobava opened the debate in *Pravda* and headed the Ibero-Caucasian Linguistics Department at TSU and the N. Marr Institute of Language at the time. Tuite 2011, 203. For the debate on linguistics of 1950 see Pollock 2006, 104–135.

38 Kikodze 2003. This book was published without any special introduction about how the manuscript that Kikodze finished in Tbilisi on March 12, 1954, found its way to the publisher only after almost 50 years.

construction of this geographical area. Geographical models were less important than the historically legitimized claims about a certain territory with an ethnically mixed population. This “territorialization of ethnicity” became Soviet state politics in the previously independent Caucasus republics after Sovietization. When “theory tries to explain practice, politics tries to control practice”.³⁹

The perception of geographical space in and outside of the Caucasus was largely configured through scientific debates that became more and more public and political. While in Central Asia Russian scholars declared regional research on the Eurasian steppe to be Russia’s peculiarity as a continental power, especially in the South Caucasus, scholars from the Caucasus challenged the Tsarist monopoly of interpretation since the beginning of the 20th century, in part together with Russian colleagues at the Faculty of Oriental Languages at the University of Petersburg. That is why it is not so easy to speak of a “colonial situation”⁴⁰ in the perception of the Caucasus as a peripheral region of the Tsarist Empire or the Soviet Union. During the early Soviet Union, under Niko Marr’s dominance from Petersburg / Petrograd / Leningrad, a new scientific paradigm was imposed for over 30 years, which initially united the Caucasus region internally on a linguistic and cultural level and differentiated it from the dominant Indo-European language groups. The establishment of the Caucasian Historical Archaeological Institute (KIAI) also broke institutionally new ground in the research of the Caucasus region, which unintentionally became the direct forerunner of the Soviet academic system. With the expansion of territorial-national research facilities, which were finally concluded in the early 1940s with the establishment of national academies of science, the regional focus was more and more abandoned in favor of national research approaches. The interdisciplinary analysis of research problems and a detailed investigation of the scientific forms of communication between the center in Moscow and the Caucasian periphery still represent a desideratum of research. With the establishment of a Union-wide framework of a centralized academy system in the 1940s, regional research or Caucasian studies were limited to the national

39 Lewis 1992, 7: “Theory attempts to explain practice, and policy attempts to control practice”.

40 Kuper 1964, 149, Fn. 2: “There is a colonial situation whenever one and the same territory is inhabited by ethnic groups of different civilizations, the political power being usually exercised entirely by one group under the sign of superiority, and of the restraining influence of its own particular civilization.” (Quoted from Moreira 1957, 496).

Union republics. Being “nationalized” marked the end of any regional approaches.⁴¹ We cannot yet tell how Stalin’s death in 1953 affected these “national” academic systems. Whether Timothy Blauvelt’s argument that up until Khrushchev launching de-Stalinization in 1956 Georgia was integrated into the USSR as a “most-favored lord” (a concept taken from Laitin’s 1998 “Identity in Formation”, Blauvelt 2009) could be extended from the sphere of politics to the sphere of academic research needs to be seen. Given the politicization of the Soviet academy it seems highly probable, but requires special investigation. The same applies to the political attempts by Moscow to revive an explicit regional research agenda in the Caucasus in the early 1980s, which disintegrated together with the Soviet Union.

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41 Examples for a nationalised reception of Marr’s works: Dzidziguri 1985; Ja’p’aridze 1996; Marr 1996, 9–14.

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Caucasian typology and Indo-European reconstruction

Theories of the Indo-European typological system and the role of Caucasian languages

The discipline of historical comparative linguistics originates in the discovery of the genetic relationship of languages in the 18th century. The theory was first outlined by William Jones, a British judge in India, and one of the first Western scholars to learn Sanskrit (Franklin 2011, 239). The awareness of the relationship between Sanskrit and ancient Classical languages of the West, such as Classical Greek, Latin and Gothic, gave Sanskrit a central position in the exploration of the comparative-historical method and the Indo-European family during the 19th century.

The foundation of the comparative-historical model lies in family-internal historical reconstruction, where earlier, unattested language states can be outlined by the comparative method. The model implies a systematic matching of sound correspondences between languages, which are based on lexical and morphological cognates (Weiss 2014). This means, to put it simply, that all aspects of language that are immediately bound by linguistic matter (lexemes, morphemes, phonemes), can be reconstructed with relatively great certainty from attested languages to a proto-language. However, when it comes to syntax and typological structure in general, the situation is more complex. Features such as word order cannot be reconstructed with great certainty, mainly due to the problem of reconstructing syntactic and typological meaning and to establish directionality in syntax (Barðdal 2014).

In the early days of comparative linguistics, syntactic reconstruction was relatively straightforward. The reconstruction by the Neogrammarians (Brugmann et al. 1893, 1897; Delbrück 1900, 45; Wackernagel 1920),

which dealt with core issues in Indo-European grammar, such as case, word order, alignment, agreement, position of the verb, and clitics for Indo-European, based the reconstruction almost entirely on the structure of Old Indo-Aryan. This led Hermann Hirt, a scholar of a later, critical generation (b. 1865), to state: “Delbrücks Ausgangspunkt ist das Sanskrit. Was nicht im Sanskrit vorliegt, war nicht indogermanisch” (“Delbrück’s point of departure is Sanskrit. If something is not present in Sanskrit, it does not belong to Indo-European”) (Hirt 1934, 5).

The reconstruction of the Indo-European syntactic system by the late 19th century Neogrammarians followed the role model of Sanskrit and Classical Greek: Proto-Indo-European was a synthetic, mainly head-final language, with nominative-accusative alignment, case marking on nouns, no definite article, three genders (masculine, feminine, neuter), a non-agglutinating case system with a nominative, accusative, dative, genitive, and vocative, also in pronouns.

However, scholars of the early 20th century, which is reflected in Hirt’s sceptical view, began to question this rigid interpretation of the Proto-Indo-European typological system. Two important topics, indirectly related to the reconstruction of the typological system, emerged in the scholarly debate: discussions on the macro-family relationship between Indo-European and other families, such as Uralic, and the position of the Indo-European proto-homeland. An important name in this discussion is C.C. Uhlenbeck (cf. Kortlandt 2009). Already during the late 19th century, he rejected the current idea of a homeland in Lithuania, as suggested by, e.g., Hermann Hirt (Hirt 1892, 1905) and supported a theory of a homeland in southern Russia, suggested by, e.g., Otto Schrader (Schrader 1883). The discussion at this time was basically supported by so-called archaeolinguistic argument, i.e., the reconstruction to the proto-language of specific species (flora and fauna), which could be connected to a specific region, or the reconstruction of words for artefacts (‘wheel’, ‘yoke’), which could be connected to archaeological cultures. An important source of debate was whether the Proto-Indo-European speakers were pastoralists or farmers, an issue that is still lively discussed among scholars (Bouckaert et al. 2012; Heggarty 2014; Mallory and Adams 1997; Mallory 2013; Pereltsvaig and Lewis 2015).

However, C.C. Uhlenbeck went even further, suggesting that Indo-European vocabulary and grammar should be split apart, like in a mixed language (even though the term did not exist at the time). The vocabulary could be reconstructed by the comparative method, but the typological

system had similarities with non-Indo-European families, such as Eskimo, Basque, and Caucasian (Kortlandt 2009). Most importantly, he suggested that Proto-Indo-European was an ergative language, based on the internal paradigmatic marking distribution of Proto-Indo-European, with the reconstruction of a case marking of *-s* for transitive subject of animates (ergative), *-m* for transitive objects of animates (absolutive), and \emptyset for inanimates (absolutive) (Pooth et al. 2019, 246–248; Uhlenbeck 1901).

C.C. Uhlenbeck was ahead of his time, and with the decipherment of Hittite in 1915 (Hrozný 1915) and the discovery of the Anatolian branch of Indo-European, alternative theories to the Neogrammarian model came into existence. A fundamental problem of Anatolian was that it lacked most of the morphosyntactic categories present in Sanskrit and Classical Greek. The structure of Anatolian was more similar to languages such as Gothic or Old Norse, e.g., with two genders (animate and neuter), few verb categories (aorist, perfect, subjunctive, optative, or active participle), and a synchronically unmotivated distinction between two active inflection types (the so-called *mi-* and *hi-*conjugations) (Jasanoff 2017). Very soon, the Indo-European scholarly discipline had two competing models of Proto-Indo-European typological structure, a traditional model, where Anatolian languages had lost the complexity of the Indo-European proto-language, or a model, labelled “Indo-Hittite” (Sturtevant 1962), where Anatolian reflected the original typological state of the proto-language, and where all Non-Anatolian languages had jointly developed the morphological complexity found in the ancient Indo-European languages, such as Classical Greek, Latin, or Sanskrit. Even today, “Graeco-Aryan” and “Anatolian” models serve as complementary in Indo-European grammar, e.g., for the reconstruction of the verbal system (e.g., Clackson 2007, 114–142).

An important structure of Anatolian, which was suggested for Proto-Indo-European by C.C. Uhlenbeck already in his 1901 paper (Uhlenbeck 1901), was the distinction between an animate nominative singular in *-s* and accusative in *-n*. In addition, Hittite turned out to be a split ergative language, but with a specific morpheme for the ergativity (*-anza*) (Garrett 1996). Hence, the Anatolian scenario matched the reconstruction of a case marking of *-s* for transitive subject of animates (ergative), *-m* for transitive objects of animates (absolutive), and \emptyset for inanimates (absolutive) (Pooth et al. 2019, 246–248). The theory of C.C. Uhlenbeck was taken up by Vaillant (Vaillant 1936) and in particular by Soviet scholars of the 1970s, such as Georgij Klimov, Vjačeslav Ivanov, and Thomas Gamkrelidze,

who were familiar with the typological structure of Caucasian language families.

In their publication *Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans* (originally published in Russian and later translated into English), Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1984; Gamkrelidze et al. 1995) took the theory of an Indo-European – Caucasian close contact even further. They placed the homeland of Proto-Indo-European in the fifth to fourth millennia BCE in Eastern Anatolia and Southern Caucasus, and suggested a close contact between speakers of Proto-Indo-European and both Proto-Kartvelian, Proto-Semitic, and Proto-Sumerian, as a result of shared territory. This intense contact over a longer period had several aspects, not just lexical borrowing between the proto-languages, but also shared structures in the phonological system and in grammatical structure (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 768ff.). The early convergence between these families forms the basis for their two most important theories of Proto-Indo-European, which deviate substantially from the Proto-Indo-European reconstruction by the neogrammarians: the glottalic theory and the active-stative theory. The glottalic theory, which offers a complete reinterpretation of the Proto-Indo-European four-stop system, has been revised and continued by some Western scholars, in particular of the Leiden school (cf. Beekes and Vaan 2011, 128–129; Clackson 2007, 40–53). The glottalic theory will not be further discussed in this paper, which deals with grammatical typology.

The active-stative theory and its implications

The original active-stative theory by Klimov, Gamkrelidze and Ivanov was continued by western scholars, such as Lehmann (Lehmann 1989), and recur in reviewed forms, where only some of the arguments of the original theory are kept, (Barðdal and Eythórsson 2009; Barðdal and Eythórsson 2012; Bauer 2000; Drinka 1999; Matasović 2013; Pooth et al. 2018; Schmidt 1979). The core of the theory is an assumption that the verb has no inherent transitivity (as in nominative-accusative and ergative systems) and the alignment marking is based entirely on the semantics of the verbal core (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 233–276). Other typological properties are then supposed to follow the active-stative structure, and the arguments of these models can be divided into three main types. First, a typological comparison with active-stative languages, most preferably of the Kartvelian family (e.g., Lezgian, Laz, Georgian), but also languages of

other, remote families (e.g., Melanesian, Dobu) (e.g., Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 244–245). Second, the models consider paradigmatic distinctions, which can be reconstructed for Proto-Indo-European on morphological grounds. The semantic and functional distribution of these paradigmatic distinctions are identified as typologically predominant in languages of active-stative type, which supports an active-stative Proto-Indo-European language. In addition, the models consider typological properties in ancient Indo-European languages, in particular in Hittite, but also in, e.g., Latin, which are typical for active languages. These are seen as residuals of an active-stative pre-state, which over time developed into ergativity and then into a nominative-accusative structure. The diachrony of the reconstructed active-stative paradigms, i.e., how they develop from active-stative via ergativity into nominative-accusative in a stratified Proto-Indo-European language and into sub-branches, is a vital part of the argument of active-stative theories (Schmalsteig 1981). An important part of the argument is that the transition from active-stative into nominative-accusative was still in progress in the ancient branches, such as Anatolian and Italic (Bauer 2000).

In general, the most important properties of the active-stative theory of Indo-European can be summarized in the list below (Matasović 2011).

1. The absence of a verb for ‘have’ in Proto-Indo-European (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 250; Klimov 1973a, 217; Lehmann 1989, 115f.).
2. A distinction between animate–inanimate in the Proto-Indo-European nominal paradigm, with a **-os/*-om* distinction in nominative/accusative of masculine/feminine (animate), and neuter (ancient inanimate) with an ending in *-Ø/-m* (no distinction nominative and accusative) (Table 1). The distinction corresponds to suppletion in the pronominal paradigm (Table 2), and constitutes a core to both the ergative and active-stative theories (Drinka 1999; Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 245ff.; Kortlandt 1983; Pooth et al. 2019; Uhlenbeck 1901; Vaillant 1936). A lack of gender and distinction between animate and inanimate in Proto-Indo-European, which is preserved in Anatolian (Luraghi 2011; Villar 1984).
3. An unmarked subject case against a marked object, with a marked *s*-nominative (in masculine/feminine), reflecting an active (ergative) case, against an unmarked inactive (absolutive) (Bauer 2000, 44–46; Gamkrelidze et al. 1995; Martinet 1962, 244–246).

4. Oblique subjects, which occur in several Indo-European languages, such as Germanic or Latin (Cennamo 2009; Matasović 2013) and which may be reconstructed to Proto-Indo-European (Barðdal and Eythórsson 2009; Barðdal and Eythórsson 2012). The typological feature of non-canonical verb marking with stative verbs is frequent in active-stative and ergative languages and is therefore seen as an indication of an ergative system and a preceding active-stative system (Barðdal and Eythórsson 2009; Matasović 2013; Pooth et al. 2019).
5. The Proto-Indo-European verbal paradigm with binary paradigms, with double setups of endings (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 254ff.). Most important is the distinction of active vs. middle-passive paradigms, where the middle-passive is related to the perfect by the endings (Lehmann 1989). The Proto-Indo-European **-mi* (active), and **-h₂e* (inactive) conjugations, preserved in Anatolian, represent a semantic alignment system (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 254–276; Jasanoff 1978; Lehmann 1989; Luraghi 2012; Meiser 2009).
6. Alienable/inalienable possession and inclusive/exclusive pronouns. The idea that Proto-Indo-European had a distinction between alienable and inalienable possession, which is reflected in Hittite (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 251–252), as well as inclusive and exclusive pronouns, (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 253–254), reflected among others in the double forms of the plural of the pronoun (**wei-/*mes-*) is seen as an argument in favor of active-stative structure.

Table 1. Markedness in the Proto-Indo-European case paradigm, underlying the ergative and active-stative theories (Bauer 2000, 45; Szemerényi 1989: 169)

	Masculine/Feminine	Neuter
Nominative	-Ø/-s	-Ø/-m
Accusative	-m	-Ø/-m

Table 2. Suppletion in the Proto-Indo-European pronominal paradigm (Bauer 2000, 45; Szemerényi 1989, 169)

	1 person	3 person Masculine/ Feminine	3 person Neuter
Nominative	*ego	*so/*sa	*tod
Accusative	*me	*to	*tod

Why the active-stative theory is problematic

The active-stative (and ergative) theories are widely recognized, but they are not accepted by all scholars (cf. Clackson 2007, 176–180). The active-stative theories have also distanced themselves from the original idea of Uhlenbeck, Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995): that Proto-Indo-European represented some sort of convergence state, which was caused by far-gone mutual linguistic exchange with Proto-Kartvelian, Proto-Semitic, and Proto-Sumerian, where the Proto-Indo-European homeland is situated in Southern Caucasus and Eastern Anatolia. In the light of this, the active-stative theory is problematic in several aspects. Even though the question of the Indo-European homeland is not solved yet, it is not very likely that the homeland was positioned south of the Caucasus, which is an important prerequisite to the theory (Allentoft et al. 2015; Mallory 2013). In addition, the lexical connections between Proto-Kartvelian and Indo-European, suggested by Klimov and Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (Gamkrelidze et al. 1995, 774–776) can be explained as either migration words that occur in many languages (e.g., PIE *woh₁ino, Proto-Kartvelian *γwin, Proto-Semitic *wayn ‘wine’), or are very shaky etymologies. Most importantly, both the active-stative and ergative theories describe systems which are not preserved as such in any of the Indo-European branches. The occurrence of ergativity in Indo-European branches are either certainly innovations, such as in Indo-Aryan or Iranian (Dahl and Stroński 2016) or very likely innovations, such as Hittite (Garrett 1990). The described typological tendencies, which imply ergativity or active-stative typology (such as absence of ‘have’, nominal classification based on animacy, alienable/inalienable possession, inclusive/exclusive pronouns), are not unique to active-stative or ergative systems, but are also found frequently in nominative-accusative systems (Matasović 2011, 2–3). Pure ergative and active-stative systems are rare, and languages with ergative systems, such as Hittite, are rather split-ergative than completely ergative (Goedegebuure 2013). Most of the functional reconstructions of the ergative and active-stative paradigms, based on ancient languages, are weak. For instance, the formal contrast in Hittite between *-mi* and *-hi* conjugation is not reflected by a systematic difference in meaning (Jasanoff 2003, 1–40). It is quite likely that the observed occurrences in ancient languages may be innovations under areal pressure from Non-Indo-European languages, such as the Hittite ergative case (Clackson 2007; Garrett 1990, 178). These arguments lead

some scholars to refute the active-stative and ergative theories on purely typological grounds (Rumsey 1987).

Comparative phylogenetic models give no support to active-stative (or ergative) either. These models base the reconstruction of grammatical features on a probability of presence at the hidden root of a tree (Jäger 2019). They use the typological structure of all available languages in a family as a basis, and reconstruct hidden states (i.e., proto-languages) against a phylogenetic reference tree and a Bayesian model, which infers evolutionary rates that express the probability of changes between different states over spans of time represented by branch-lengths of the phylogeny. Using these models for Indo-European morphosyntax and typology gives no support, anywhere in the grammar, for an active-stative structure (Carling and Cathcart, to appear). This is not surprising: Bayesian reconstruction models, even if they are highly sophisticated and give very detailed information on the probability of presence of features, cannot “invent” anything that is not there in the data.

Concluding summary

However, despite the problems of the active-stative theory, the Proto-Indo-European-Kartvelian-Semitic convergence theory and the relatively meager and uncertain material of lexical exchange between these families, the topic is not without interest. Apparently, the main problem is the little researched Caucasian families, where much more work, both in lexical and grammar reconstruction, needs to be done. We know that cultural innovations during the Chalcolithic spread from the Fertile Crescent and Anatolia via Caucasus to the Russian steppes (Carling 2019, 379–386), and some crucial cultural innovations, such as wine and metallurgy, even originated in the Caucasian area (Estreicher 2017). It is very unlikely that all of this exchange of knowledge and material happened without lexical and grammatical exchange. Lexical borrowing or exchange is likely to have occurred within the cultural areas where we know that there was a specific impact. Grammatical or typological impact may have followed. An interesting area, apart from lexical borrowings, is the possible presence of calque formations, such as for the Indo-European and Caucasian words for ‘wheel’ (Carling 2019, 345–346). However, grammar reconstruction, in particular typological impact at proto-language level, is much more difficult to prove.

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Sprachen: kurzgefasste Darstellung der Geschichte des Altindischen, Altiranischen (Avestischen u. Altpersischen), Altarmenischen, Altgriechischen, Albanesischen, Lateinischen, Oskisch-Umbrischen, Altirischen, Gotischen, Althochdeutschen, Litauischen und Altkirchenslavischen. Bd 5, Vergleichende Syntax der indogermanischen Sprachen, T. 3. Strassburg: Trübner.

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Recently borrowed English verbs and their morphological accommodation in Georgian

This paper is focused on newly created Georgian verbs where verb roots are borrowed from English and the affixation is Georgian. The paper does not deal with loanwords already integrated into the Standard Georgian language (true borrowings), but is focused on so-called barbarisms, foreignisms and slang. Thus, the term 'borrowed words' is used in a wide sense of this term.

The paper demonstrates that the decisive factor for the choice of affixation models of recently created verbs based on English is the phonological structure of the verb roots.

Two productive models are identified: one model (Preradical vowel-ROOT-*eb*) is used for polysyllabic roots (e.g. *a-haid-eb-s* 's/he hides it', *a-laik-eb-s* 's/he likes it', lit. 's/he clicks on the like-button to it', etc.) and the other model (ROOT-*av*) applies to monosyllabic roots (e.g. *t'rol-av-s* 's/he trolls it', *tag-av-s* 's/he tags it', etc.). It turns out that not only recently borrowed verbs, but all transitive (verb class I) and labile transitive (verb class III) polysyllabic verbs avoid the thematic marker *-av*, whereas monosyllabic verbs prefer the thematic marker *-av* in Georgian. Even those monosyllabic verbs that functioned without thematic markers in Old Georgian have taken the thematic marker *-av* in Modern Georgian; e.g. *t'ekb-s* (the older form) > *t'ekb-av-s* (the newer form) 's/he breaks it'. Choice of preverbs in newly created verbs is also discussed.

The paper is descriptive. It does not deal with the issue of language standardisation, although some sociolinguistic aspects of the phenomenon are touched upon. Rather, the paper examines strategies for the morphological integration of borrowed verb roots into Georgian. The

material used is taken from dictionaries of barbarisms and slang, social media and other media. Forms discussed here do not belong to Standard Georgian. They usually make up a layer of words used in informal speech such as slang.

The first section is a brief overview where the main terms are presented. This is followed by a general summary of the history of the Georgian language and its contacts with other languages. The third section presents a short overview of borrowings from English while the fourth gives information regarding Georgian verb morphology. The fifth section focuses on strategies of accommodation of borrowed verbs, where two main topics are touched upon: A) choice of suffixes (thematic markers) and B) choice of prefixes (preverbs). The final section offers conclusions. A list of the abbreviations used in the paper can be found in Table 1.

Table 1. Abbreviations used

PRV	Preradical vowel
PV	Preverb
R	Root
Th	Thematic marker
Subj	Subject person
SG	Singular,
3	3 rd person marker
Geo.	Georgian
Russ.	Russian
Ger.	German

Contact and borrowing

The extension of borrowings is defined by the degree of contact in language communities, while the degree to which the borrowed words are accepted in the target language is a matter of language policy in the state and language attitudes of the recipient community. Lexemes that immigrate to a recipient language do not always acquire a ‘residence permit’ in the standard language. A large portion of borrowed words remain in a target language only during a limited period of time, as a part of either dialectal speech or slang, and is never accepted in the standard language.

“With respect to the intensity of contact, Thomason and Kaufman (1988:74–76) provide a five-point scale: (1) casual contact, (2) slightly more intense contact, (3) more intense contact, (4) strong cultural pressure, (5)

very strong cultural pressure”. Later on, Thomasson suggests four stages: (1) Casual contact, (2) slightly more intense contact, (3) more intense contact and (4) intense contact (Thomasson 2001).

This scale implies that the higher the degree of contact, the more extensively borrowing can occur. Influence from another language can be found in syntax and even in morphology and phonetics, but the primary, most salient and easily observable impact of foreign influence on a language is lexical borrowings. This means that “whenever speakers want to keep their language ‘clean’ of external influence, they will first and foremost target foreign elements of the lexicon” (Hock and Joseph 1996, 274–285).

Borrowings are usually classified according to the degree of integration to a target language. Two basic patterns of borrowing are identified in Poplack, Sankoff & Miller (1988), *nonce* and *true borrowings* “which show similar linguistic characteristics, contrasting thereby with unambiguous code-switches” (Poplack, Sankoff & Miller, 1988, 47). Evidence for true borrowings can be that (a) the lexeme has replaced another lexeme that was used in a target language; (b) a borrowed lexeme has been used in a language during several generations; (c) it can also be a cultural borrowing, a word that “denotes some kind of object or action which was once new to the culture but which has now become an integral part of it” (Wichmann & Wohlgemuth 2005, 3–4).

Borrowing, loanwords, barbarisms, anglicisms, xenisms, slang – there are several terms used to denote the layer of newly immigrated words to a receiver language. The term borrowing is used in the wide sense of this word in this paper and includes both *nonce* (*ad hoc*) and *true* (established) borrowings.

Georgian standard language

Georgian literary language has a long history. The oldest inscriptions and the oldest Georgian literary text are dated from the 5th century A.D., and the oldest manuscript is dated from the 6–7th century (Sarjveladze 1997, 7; Danelia & Sarjveladze 1997). Georgia and its population have always had intensive contact with several states and languages. “Georgian has been not only the medium for the creation of first-rate original works, but major ancient written monuments were also translated into it from Greek, Persian, Arabic, Old Armenian, and other languages. Immediate contacts with the languages of the ancient East and classical Europe left

their imprint on Georgia.” (Jorbenadze 1991, 7). A large layer of borrowed words from Greek, Persian, Arabic, Armenian, Turkish and other languages is found in Georgian. They belong to so-called true borrowings, which means that borrowings have been adapted to the recipient language phonologically and morphologically, and a native speaker perceives these words as a natural part of the language. During its documented history, Georgian has not undergone any drastic changes. Unlike Old Greek and Modern Greek or Old Armenian and Modern Armenian, Old Georgian and Modern Georgian are not like two different languages. Fluency in Modern Georgian is sufficient to read and understand the Old Georgian texts (Vamling 1998). Russian loanwords have appeared in Georgian since the beginning of the 19th century, after the annexation of Georgia by Russia. This tendency continued even after the Sovietization of Georgia. A lot of loanwords entered into and became established in the Georgian literary language through Russian. These words were usually international words of Latin, French, English or German origin, that came into Georgian through translated texts from Russian. Words of Russian origin borrowed from Russian through oral contact have not been adopted into the Standard Georgian language. “These words will never become a part of the standard language and will always be associated to the speech of uneducated, low class speech” (Margalitadze 2017). Borrowings from English are not associated with the same status, but persistence is obvious even against English borrowings (Margalitadze 2017).

Borrowing from English

Nowadays, we witness a next wave of borrowing from a new language to Georgian, from English. During the post-Soviet period, many names of various places and institutions, among them designations of state structures, were changed to become more national, on the one hand, and more European, on the other (Vamling & Kobaidze 2005, 183; Lomidze 2008, 18).

Journalists, as well as the new generation, often use English words instead of Georgian words. Usage of English terms is not considered as a sign of low education or belonging to lower classes of society. On the contrary, the usage of English terms is often seen, at least by users, as a sign of higher education and access to the English language and the English-speaking world, somehow, even as a sign of a certain political orientation. No educated person would dare to mix Russian words

into their public speech to same extent that, nowadays, journalists and politicians mix English loanwords into their speech and even into their written language. The reason for this different attitude is obvious. The Russian language was associated with political pressure and even threat, since the declared language policy in the Soviet Union was to “merge nations and languages”, while the English language is not the language of an oppressor. “The popularity of the English language has been increasing in Georgia and it has been established in all aspects of our life. For example, to hold a position in the prestigious organization without knowledge of English is nearly impossible.” (Goshkheteliani and Kikvadze 2017, 460). All these reasons have led to an increase of English borrowings. However, borrowing from English is also often criticized. The Lexicology Center at Tbilisi State University started a movement “No to Barbarisms” (No to Barbarisms 2016). The Center conducts various projects within “No to Barbarisms” in order to protect the literary language from unnecessary borrowings.

The borrowing of English nouns and reasons for this phenomenon have been studied in various works of Georgian linguists. Extensive work has been carried out by Lomidze (2008) who has described and analysed approximately 1000 Anglicisms (as he labels them) in the Georgian language, though he has not addressed verb borrowing. Verb borrowing has been analyzed by Nino Amiridze (2018). Her research is focused on the choice of prefixes (particularly preverbs) for “Georgianized” English verbs, while this paper is aimed at showing how the native speakers of the Georgian language choose a model for verbs derived from English verbs by using various thematic markers (suffixes attached to verb roots) in order to adapt an English verb to the Georgian paradigm.

English verbs that occurred in Georgian as nonce borrowings are usually verbs connected to the Internet and social media usage. The majority of newly borrowed nouns are still considered Anglicisms (or barbarisms) in Georgian. This means that, according to the norms of Standard Georgian, it is redundant to use these nouns, since the corresponding lexemes already exist in Standard Georgian. The same applies to verbs as well. The online dictionary of barbarisms (<https://barbarisms.ge/>) includes long lists of verbs derived from English roots and attested in Georgian oral and written informal speech.

Before turning to the question of how the Georgian language transforms a foreign verb and adapts it to the Georgian language, I would like to briefly present some features of Georgian verbs.

Georgian verbs

Georgian verbs have a quite complex morphology consisting of prefixes (e.g., preverb, person markers, preradical vowel), a root and suffixes (e.g. causative marker, thematic marker, tense marker, person and number markers, and so on). These markers are not necessarily presented in every verb at the same time. Usually, a verb's structure is much simpler than this model. One difficulty for non-native speakers is that there are several thematic markers (suffixes that appear after the verb root in certain tenses) and one has to memorize not only the verb root, but also a preverb and a thematic marker that are used with a particular verb. In this paper, only verbs belonging to Class I will be addressed (Class I verbs in the sense of Shanidze 1980, 488–493 §538–540). Class I verbs have their characteristic morphological structure and conjugation paradigm. For a short and comprehensive review of Georgian verb morphology and syntax see Vamling 1989 (pp. 17–30).

Verb borrowing

A) Choice of thematic markers

The striking regularity, as shown in this paper, is that the decisive factor for the choice of the model of English verb adaptation to the Georgian language is the syllabic structure of the English verb roots after their phonetic adaptation to Georgian.

An English verb becomes adapted to the Georgian language phonetically and, after that, it takes a thematic marker in order to be transformed to a “Georgianized” verb stem and thus able to take person markers. Which thematic marker will be chosen and which model the verb will follow is determined by the number of syllables in the borrowed root after its phonetical adaptation to Georgian; e.g. the English verb ‘share’ is phonetically transformed to the root *shear* / *shiar* and becomes a root consisting of two syllables. After that, it takes the thematic marker –*eb* and consequently the preradical vowel *a*-. A preradical vowel is usually presented when a Class I verb takes the thematic marker –*eb*: *a-shiar-eb-s* ‘s/he is sharing it on the internet’.

The material I have examined shows that English borrowings strictly adhere to the following pattern: if a root consists of more than one syllable, it produces a verb stem by adding a preradical vowel, usually,

a- (PRV) and the thematic marker *-eb* (Th). If a root is monosyllabic, it produces a verb by adding the thematic marker *-av*. In the latter case, this is usually without a preradical vowel. However, a verb, derived in this way has the ability to take a preradical vowel without changing the tense form or conjugation paradigm. This ability means that the verb belongs to Verb Class I.

It is noteworthy that even Georgian native verbs display the following pattern: Class I verbs, having the model (PRV)-ROOT-*av* have monosyllabic roots, only some of them have non-syllabic roots and not one of them has a polysyllabic root. The slot for the preradical vowel is written in brackets below since it is not often presented, but its place exists in the model. However, unlike borrowed verbs, Georgian Class I verbs having the model PRV-ROOT-*eb* can contain not only disyllabic and polysyllabic, but also non-syllabic and monosyllabic roots. The tendency of marking monosyllabic roots by the thematic marker *-av* is also observable in the history of Georgian. A wide range of monosyllabic verbs that functioned without thematic markers in Old Georgian have taken the marker *-av* in Modern Georgian (e.g. *t'ekh-s* > *t'ekh-av-s* 's/he breaks it', *k'vet-s* > *k'vet-av-s* 's/he cuts it'). The link between monosyllabic roots and the thematic marker *-av* is also exhibited by Class III verbs. All the Class III verbs having the thematic marker *-av* have monosyllabic roots.

The examples below are presented in two groups: *Model 1* shows borrowed verbs formed by the thematic marker *-eb* (combined with a preradical vowel *a-*), and *Model 2* consists of borrowed verbs formed by the thematic marker *-av*. Verbs, when it is possible, are presented with the form of a future tense, since verbs take preverbs (PV) in the future tense, but not in the present tense.

Model 1: [Preverb]-a-[Root is polysyllabic]-eb

A Georgian verb is derived from a polysyllabic English verb after its phonetic adaptation (1).

- (1) *da-a-laik-eb-s* 's/he will like a post on the internet'
PV-PRV-like-Th₃SubjSG

Other examples of the same model:

da-a-haid-eb-s 's/he will hide a post or a person on the internet'; *da-a-seiv-eb-s* 's/he will save it to a computer'; *da-a-porvard-eb-s* 's/he will forward it on the internet'; *da-a-polou-eb-s* 's/he will follow a person or a page on the internet'; *da-a-sabmit-eb-s* 's/he will submit it on the

internet'; *da-a-edit-eb-s* 's/he will edit it'; *da-a-prendzon-eb-s* 's/he will friendzone smb'

The same model is also used for deriving a verb from other wordclasses than verbs, e.g. from a noun (2) and an interjection (3) if the root contains more than one syllable:

- (2) *da-a-sp'oiler-eb-s* 's/he will make smb spoiled'
PV-PRV-spoiler-Th-3SubjSG
- (3) *da-a-habav-eb-s* 's/he will laugh at a post on the internet'
PV-PRV-haha-Th-3SubjSG

Example (1) above can also be analyzed as a denominal verb, because the lexeme 'like' appears in Georgian as a noun: like > phonetic adaptation (laik-) > morphologic adaptation by the nominative case marker *-i*: *laiki*.

The question is: is Pattern 1 shown above (*a-laik-eb-s*, *a-haid-eb-s*, etc.) borrowing of verbs or borrowing of nominals that in turn produces verbs in the recipient language Georgian? In other words, the question is: is this a direct insertion of a borrowed verbal root into the Georgian verb morphology or are English verbs borrowed to Georgian as nouns and, only after that, produce verbs already in Georgian?

It is possible to check this if we look at the item 'to comment'. Georgian uses a word *k'oment'ari* for denoting a noun 'comment'. Georgian produces a verb both from this nominal *k'oment'ari* > *ak'oment'arebs* 's/he comments on it' and from the verb *comment* > *ak'oment'eb's* 's/he comments on it'. This latter form is quite often used in social media. Its form shows that the initial form for this verb is not a noun '*k'oment'ari*'. It is derived from the verb 'comment'. A noun *k'oment'i* does not exist in Georgian. It seems that Georgian can borrow verb roots as verbs and insert them into the Georgian verb model.

The model shown below, used by monosyllabic roots, can also prove that verbs are borrowed directly as verbs, but even nominal monosyllabic words (e.g. participles) follow the same pattern when they are borrowed to Georgian as verb roots in order to produce verbs, e.g. (5).

Model 2: Preverb-[Root is monosyllabic]-av

When a root is monosyllabic, the pattern PV-R-*av* is applied (4). All verbs below refer to internet usage.

- (4) *da-bust'av-s* 'S/he will boost'
PV-boost-Th-3SubjSG

Other examples of Model 2:

da-k'lik'-av-s 's/he will click on it'; *da-link'-av-s* 's/he will link it'; *da-tag-av-s* 's/he will tag something or somebody in a post'; *da-p'ost'-av-s* 's/he will post it on Internet'; *da-t'rol-av-s* 's/he will troll smb.'; *da-sk'rin-av-s* 's/he will print screen'; *da-st'alk'-av-s* 's/he will stalk smb. on social media'; *da-st'rim-av-s* 's/he will stream smth.'; *da-sk'ip'-av-s* 's/he will skip it'.

The same model is used when deriving verbs from monosyllabic nominals, e.g. from a participle (5).

- (5) *da-sin-av-s* 's/he will see a private message on FB without replying to it'
PV-seen-Th-3SubjSG (*seen* – participle)

This model also works when contact-induced borrowing occurs from other languages, e.g. from Russian, German or Swedish (applies both to nominal and verbal roots):

- (6) *da-k'rug-av-s* 's/he will go around sth' (< Russ. *krug* 'circle')
PV-circle-Th-3SubjSG

Examples (7)-(9) are from the speech of Georgians who live in Germany and Sweden (source: FB groups).

- (7) *da-a-shp'aikhereb-s* 's/he will save it to a computer'
(< Ger. *speichern* 'save')
PV-PRV-save-Th-3SubjSG
- (8) *mo-k'okh-av-s* 's/he will cook it' (< Ger. *koch* 'cook')
PV-cook-Th-3SubjSG
- (9) *da-buk'-av-s* 's/he will book it' (< Swedish *boka* 'to book').
PV-book-Th-3SubjSG

This material manifests the same rule: monosyllabic verbal roots, on the one hand, and polysyllabic verbal roots, on the other hand, choose different models for integrating into the Georgian verb conjugation system. The same rule works even for relatively older borrowings from Russian (10). They belong to slang and this part of the material is taken from the Georgian Slang Dictionary (Bregadze 2013):

- (10) *ga-maz-av-s* 's/he will miss an opportunity'
(< Russ. *mazat* 'to miss a target')
PV-miss a target-Th-3SubjSG

Other examples are: *ga-srok'-av-s* 's/he will sentence sb to prison' (< Russ. *srok* 'term of imprisonment'); *ga-trup'-av-s* 's/he will kill sb.' (< Russ. *trup* 'dead body').

The strategy of accommodation by thematic markers makes it possible to conclude that borrowed verbs have chosen a simple way: when a borrowed root forms a Class I verb, monosyllabic roots choose the model (PRV)-ROOT-*av'*, while polysyllabic roots take the model PRV-ROOT-*eb*.

B) Choice of preverbs

The question of why borrowed verbs take other preverbs than corresponding Georgian verbs was aroused by Amiridze (2018). The researcher discusses the question of why borrowed verbs do not take the same preverbs in Georgian as corresponding Georgian lexemes, e.g. why the item with a borrowed root *da-laik-eb-a* 'to like sth. on the internet' takes the preverb *da-* in Georgian (11), while the verb *mo-c'on-eb-a* 'to like sth' takes the preverb *mo-* (12).

(11) *da-a-laik-eb-s* 's/he will like smth on Internet'
(preverb *da-*), but:

(12) *mo-i-c'on-eb-s* 's/he will like it' (preverb *mo-*)
(Amiridze 2018)

N. Amiridze suggests that the reason for such a preference must be a relatively wide and neutral meaning of the preverb *da-* compared to other preverbs in Georgian (Amiridze 2018). I think that this factor is important, but along with this, the reason that determines the choice of the preverb *da-* in the verb *da-a-laik-eb-s* must be the semantic shift that this verb undergoes in Georgian: the form *dalaikeba* 'to like sth on the internet' does not mean exactly the same as *mo'oneba* 'to like in general', not necessarily on the internet. The latter is a general term for liking something or someone, while *dalaikeba* means 'to click on the button like'. It has only this specific meaning. The same applies to the verb *dasinaus* (5). It means 'to click on the message, to open it, to mark it as seen'. The borrowed root *sin-* (< *seen*) does not mean to have seen somebody or something other than a message on the internet. Not only the context of the usage, but also the choice of preverbs confirms that. The preverb *da-* that is used with these words (*da-laik-eb-a* 'to like', *da-sin-v-a* 'to mark as a seen', *da-apdeit-eb-a* 'to update', *da-join-eb-a* 'to join', *da-shatdaun-eb-a*

1 Preradical vowel in this model is optional.

‘to shut down’, etc.) means to like, to mark as seen, to update, to join, to shut down etc. by clicking on a button or on a sign for the action. That is why these verbs take the preverb *da-*. It is the same preverb that expresses the direction of an action downwards to a surface and is used in such Georgian native verbs as *da-c’k’ap’uneba* ‘to click on sth’, *da-c’era* ‘to write on sth’, *da-xat’va* ‘to paint on sth’, *da-xedva* ‘to look on sth’, *da-xazva* ‘to draw’ etc.

Other preverbs are used if a borrowed verb does not express the meaning ‘to click on’, e.g. if it refers to printing a screen, the verb will take the preverb *da-* (*da-ap’rint’skrine* – print a screen [make a screenshot]), but if the semantics of a verb implies an action that goes beyond the confines of a monitor and keyboard, and thus any other direction than downwards on a surface, other preverbs can also occur. In that case, it will be the same preverbs (*da-*, *ga-*, *mo-*, *amo-* or any other preverb) that is used in the corresponding Georgian verb, e.g. the preverb *amo-* in the verb derived from an English root (I3) and in the Georgian verb (I4):

(I3) *amo-a-p’rint’er-eb-s* ‘s/he will print it out’
PRV-PV-printer-Th-3SubjSG

(I4) *amo-bech’d-av-s* ‘s/he will print it out’
PRV-print-Th-3SubjSG

It should be mentioned here that *amop’rint’ereba* ‘to print’ is derived from a noun *p’rint’eri* ‘a printer’. Another similar verb derived from a borrowed noun is *dask’anereba* ‘to scan’. Lomidze mentions some verbs that are derived from nouns borrowed from English, e.g. *da-sk’aner-eba* ‘to scan’ from the noun *sk’aneri* < scanner. He notes: ‘It is obvious that *da-sk’aner-eba* is derived from *sk’aneri*. If it were derived from a verbal root *scan*, the Georgian verb would be *dask’anva*, but not *dask’anereba*’ (Lomidze 2008, 68). Lomidze does not explain why it should take this form (*dask’anva*), but I think this is a very interesting note and it confirms that intuitively he also (as well as all other native speakers) uses this model: if a monosyllabic verbal root (*sk’an*) would produce a verb, it would have taken the thematic marker *av-*: a finite form would be **da-sk’an-av-s* ‘s/he will scan it’ and a non-finite form **da-sk’an-v-a* ‘to scan’.

A new borrowing takes the same preverb *ga-* as a Georgian verb with the same meaning: *ga-t’est-v-a* ‘to test’, cf. Georgian *ga-sinj-v-a* ‘to test’. Its finite form is *ga-t’est-av-s* ‘s/he will test it’.

Some other borrowed verbs inserted into the Georgian verb model without replacing Georgian host preverbs in a receiver verb by other preverbs are:

ga-shear-eb-a (preverb *ga-*), cf. *ga-ziar-eb-a* (Geo.) ‘to share’ (although the parallel form *da-shiar-eb-a* where the host preverb *ga-* is replaced by the preverb *da-* is also attested); *mo-k’okb-v-a* ‘to cook’ < Ger. *koch*. cf. Geo. *mo-mzad-eb-a* – to prepare, to cook); *ga-p’rav-eb-a* ‘to justify sth that is wrong’ < *opravdat’* (Russ.), cf. Georgian *ga-martl-eb-a* ‘to justify’; *ga-gulav-eb-a* ‘to stroll’ (< Russ. *guljat*), cf. *ga-seirn-eb-a* ‘to stroll’ (Geo.)

The reason that there are not many English roots in this list must be that the borrowing of English verb roots usually occurs in the field of internet terms where they are often understood and presented as an action ‘to click on the button for like, boost, link, join, tag’ etc. That is why the preverb *da-* is the most appropriate, the same way as in the Georgian verb for ‘to click on’ (*da-a-c’kap’un-eb-s* ‘s/he will click on’). When a borrowed verb has the same meaning as a corresponding verb in Georgian, the borrowed verb takes the same preverb as the corresponding Georgian verb, e.g. *amo-*, *mo-*, *ga-*.

Conclusion

It seems that the morphological adaptation of borrowed items occurs immediately, as soon as a new lexeme is introduced to the language. In this respect, newly borrowed English verbs in Georgian confirm the conclusion by Poplack: nonce forms generally “do not go on to become established loanwords, they are not integrated gradually; instead they assume recipient-language grammatical structure *abruptly*” (2018). At the same time, the way of adaptation for newly borrowed items comprises a good indication for identifying tendencies in the language development not only in the sociolinguistic aspect, but also in the purely linguistic, more specifically, morphological sense.

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MERAB CHUKHUA

Paleo-Caucasian semantic dictionary

There are about fifty ethnolinguistic groups in the modern Caucasus. Along with numerous autochthonous peoples there reside, side by side, peoples speaking Indo-European (Armenians, Greeks, Ossetians, Talishes, Kurds), Turkish (Azeris, Kazakhas, Balqarians, Qumiks, Nogais) and Mongolian (Qalmukhs) languages in the Caucasus. Some of these peoples (Greeks, Armenians, and Ossetians) settled in the Caucasus three thousand years ago, others settled in the region relatively late, as late as the Middle Ages.

Several scientific and anthropological centers of the world still pay great attention to the problem of the origin of the Caucasian peoples, languages and cultures. Disagreements about the origin (genetic kin) of the Paleo-Caucasians: Georgians, Apkhazians-Circassians, Chechen-Ingushes and Dagestanians, are evident.

From a linguistic standpoint, my research aims to reconstruct the core (basic) archaic lexical stock of these languages and detect Proto-Caucasian archetypes.

Comparison of archetypes reconstructed at the level of parent-languages with the languages of the ancient civilizations of the region (Sumerian, Hattian, Hurrian-Urartian, Etruscan, Kassite, Elamite...), as well as Basque, will contribute to the study of the issue of a probable genetic link between the Paleo-Caucasians and the non-Indo-European ethnoses of Europe-Asia and their ethno-genesis.

The Paleo-Caucasian languages include the aboriginal (autochton) population's languages of the South and North Caucasus. These are Kartvelian (Georgian, Laz-Megrelian, Svan), Nakh (Chechen, Ingush, Tsova-Tushian (Bats), Apkhaz-Adyghean (Adyghe, Kabardian, Ubykh, Apkhazian, Abaza) and Dagestanian (Avar, Andi, Botlikh, Dido, Lak,

Dargwa, Lezgian, Archib, Udi-Old Albanian, etc.). The total number of these languages and dialects exceeds one hundred.

Views of scholars on the interrelationships between the Paleo-Caucasian language groups can be summarized as follows:

1. The Caucasian languages are characterized by a genetic link to each other (Uslar 1888; Erkert 1895; Dirr 1928; Javakhishvili 1937; Dumézil 1933; Chikobava 1942; Vogt 1963; Rogava 1956; Lafon 1948; Lomtadze 1955; Fähnrich 1980; Brawn 1998; Kurdiani 2007; Chukhua 2000-2003)
2. The Caucasian languages are three independent linguistic entities – Kartvelian, Nakh-Dagestanian and Apkhaz-Adyghean (Bokarev 1981; Deeters 1963; Klimov 1998; Greenberg 2000)
3. The Caucasian languages are divided into two independent families – Kartvelian and North Caucasian – (Gamkrelidze 1971; Starostin-Nikolaev 1994; Starostin 1999; Chirikba 1996; Ivanov 1985; Bomhard 2018)

In fact, on the one hand, there are obvious phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical parallels between all the linguistic entities of the Caucasus, but at the same time there is a fundamental difference in the various branches of grammar. Obviously, in this situation, genetic or areal interrelationships between Paleo-Caucasian languages can only be determined using rigorous methods of historical-comparative linguistics.

The material presented in this paper is divided into four main sections. The first focuses on the lexical system of the Proto-Caucasian parent language. The second examines the Nakh and Common Hurrian-Urartian parent languages, while the third looks at the Kassite and Dagestanian languages and the fourth and final section deals with Caucasian and Basque.

Lexical-semantic system of the Proto-Caucasian parent-language

The reconstruction of the lexical-semantic system of the Proto-Caucasian parent-language, based on the reconstruction of the etymologically interrelated lexemes of all four language groups, gives a certain probability of reconstructing the approximate actual picture of the agriculture, material culture and social organization of the owners of linguistic and ethnic unities of the speakers of the Proto-Caucasian language.

The comparison of formally relevant words distributed in dialects of historically confirmed kindred Caucasian languages makes it possible to reconstruct lexical archetypes. Such archetypes may reflect both the Proto-Caucasian linguistic chronological level as well as subsequent chronological levels, which will reveal distinct dialectic associations within the parent-language.

In this article, I will follow the principles of a dictionary compiled by myself. Any Kartvelian-Nakh, Kartvelian-Dagestanian and Kartvelian-Apkhazian-Adyghean lexical isogloss will be given as a word-entry in the dictionary, while isoglosses outside of Kartvelian (i.e. lacking Kartvelian parallel) will not be presented, which is a specific marker of my research.

The word-entry will describe both the reconstructed Common Kartvelian, Common Nakh, Common Dagestanian and Common Apkhazian-Adyghean stem, as well as the material characteristic of each of the languages, dialects and subdialects of these groups at the synchronous level. To illustrate the basic principles of the dictionary, the Dictionary Structure is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: The Dictionary Structure

The World	
1	Earth
2	Fire
3	Water
4	Air
5	Environments
6	Family & kinship, household
7	Marriage
8	Hearth & home
9	Material culture
10	Food & drink
11	Social organization
12	Space & time
13	Number & quantity
14	Mind, emotions, sense perception
15	Speech & sound
16	Activities
17	Religious deities, the sacred
18	Grammatical elements

Of the 18 semantic subgroups presented above, I shall catalogue only two (A and B, below) which illustrate that genetically interrelated lexical material of all four language groups is common:

- A) Family and kinship, household,
- B) World, God
- C) Here I will present and comment on the lexical entries of the Paleo-Caucasian common origin according to Yakhontov's list (Yakhontov 1991).

The advantage of the 35-word list is its brevity, which allows us to determine quickly whether the analyzed languages are related or not. Most importantly, this list includes the most stable vocabulary of any language in the world. In addition, it is possible to use the list in cases where the family ties of certain languages are still controversial. In addition, the most fruitful areas of application of Yakhontov's list are little-studied languages, therefore I am using Yakhontov's list because the genealogical classification of Caucasian languages is still considered to be insufficiently grounded.

Obviously, the semantic-structural similarity of the illustrated samples is based on a regular and sound-correspondence system, which is a subject of special consideration and cannot be discussed in detail here.

The abbreviations that I have employed in the presentation of data are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Abbreviations used

C.-Dagh.	– Common Daghestanian radical language
Pr.-Dagh.	– Proto Daghestanian radical language
C.-Kartv.	– Common Kartvelian radical language
Pr.-Kartv.	– Proto Kartvelian radical language
C.-Nakh.	– Common Nakh radical language
Pr.-Nakh.	– Proto Nakh radical language
C.-Sind.	– Common Sindian/Abkhaz-Adyghean radical language
Pr.-Sind.	– Proto Sindian/Abkhaz-Adyghean radical language

A) Family and kinship, household

Ancestor

C.-Kartv. *apar- ‘forebears, ancestors’ (Geo. apar-i, çin-apor-i ‘the very first’ (Saba)

C.-Sind. *aba ‘father’ (Ab. aba, Apkh. ab, ‘father’, pl. ába-cwa)

C.-Dagh. *abar- ‘father’, (Bezh. abo, Darg. aba, ‘father’, Lezg. ap:aj ‘father-in-law’, Tab. aba, ‘Ud. ap:er ‘father’, Arch. abaj ‘parents’)

Brother

C.-Kartv. *mu-xub-e ‘brother’; (Sv. muxwbe ‘brother (for brother)’, la-xwb-a ‘brothers’, cf. also xwib-i / xwib-d // xub-dä (Lashkh.) ‘brother’)

C.-Sind. *ma-q^w-ə ‘son/brother-in-law’ (Ad. max^w-lä ‘son/brother-inlaw’, Kab. maxw-lä ‘son/brother-in-law’, Ub. məxə ← *məx^wə ‘son/brother-in-law’, Ab. mħ^wə, Apkh. á-maħ^w ‘son/brother-in-law’)

C.-Nakh. *mox- ‘brother’ (Chech. mūox-čə, Ing. mox-čä ‘second cousin’)

C.-Dagh. *muq^w ‘son/brother-in-law’ (Lak. muh-i ‘seeking hand in marriage’, Ud. muqu ‘son/brother-in-law’)

C.-Kartv. *swin-a ‘acquired relative’ (Geo. svina ‘godparent of child’, svinaob-a ‘godfather to child’s parents’, Kartl. svina ‘groom’s best man’)

C.-Sind. *šə - ‘brother’ (Ad. šə ‘brother’, qw:a-š ‘one’s own brother’, Kab. qw:a-š ‘brother’)

Pr.-Nakh. *šen- ‘brother’ (Hur. šen-i ‘brother’)

C.-Dagh. *šwid- ‘brother’ (Bud. šid, Krits šid, Rut. šu ‘brother’)

Daughter

C.-Kartv. *mqew- ‘girl; woman’ (Geo. mqev-al-i ‘girl; servant’, New Geo. mxev-al-i ‘servant; bought, slave woman’, Zan (Megr.) pxe // xe ‘woman’, Laz pxe ‘woman, one’s own child’)

C.-Sind. *mq^wä ‘young girl’ (Ad. px^wə, Kab. tx^wə ‘young girl’, Ub. pxä ‘young girl’, Ab. pħa, Apkh. a-pħá ‘young girl’)

C.-Nakh. *mqin- ‘daughter-in-law’ (Chech. qin ‘wife of brother-in-law’, Ing. qə, Erg. qən-ūo ‘daughter-in-law’)

C.-Dagh. *mqəw- ‘woman’ (Darg. qun-ul ‘woman, wife’, Lak qam-i ‘women’, Lezg. x nub, Tab. xppi-šiw, Krits xənəb ‘woman’, Ag. xaw-ar // sumb-ar, Arch. xom ‘women’)

Child, doll

C.-Kartv. *ninw-el- 'child, baby, young girls' (Geo. Ninvel-i 'child', ninvel-eb-a 'adolescent' (Saba), ninvel-i 'older than baby, younger than young' (Saba), Zan (Megr) Ninu-, Ninu-a 'name and surname in Megrelian', Sv. nänöl → // nänül, nanül (Lashkh.) 'young girl')

C.-Sind. *nənāw- 'child, baby' (Ad. nanəw 'child, baby', Ub. nanāw 'child, baby')

C.-Dagh. *nen- 'doll, child' (Kar. nani-harka 'pupil on the eye', Bezh., Hunz. nani 'doll'., Tab. nini, Ag. nenej, Krits nenaj 'doll')

Mother's sister

C.-Kartv. *dal- 'sister' (Old Geo. da-j, New Geo. da 'sister', mami-da, 'aunt (father's sister)', dei-da 'aunt (mother's sister, and any woman), Zan da 'sister', dal-ep-e // dal-ep-i 'sisters', Sv. dā-j 'husband's sister', da-čur / da-čwir ('sister, used by her brother')

C.-Sind. *daw-a 'wet-nurse' (Ad. (Chemg.) dajä 'wet-nurse')

C.-Dagh. *daw- 'aunt' (Kr. daj 'mother')

B) Religious deities, the sacred

Ghost

C.-Kartv. *nix-er- 'protective/house spirit' (Zan (Laz) nenxar-e 'protective/house spirit') - C.-Sind. *nəx-ä 'icon, place for prayers' (Ab. (Tap.) néxa, Arpkh. a-nəxa 'icon, place for prayers', cf. Ad. nəxa-sä 'council, gathering place (in village)')

C.-Dagh. *neq- 'ghost/false vision, sign' (Did. aⁿq, Ag. eq, Tsakh. aq // aq 'ghot/false vision, sign')

God

C.-Kartv. *dal- 'goddess of hunt' (Geo. dal-i 'goddess of hunt', Zan (Megr.) dou 'Dali, woman's name', Sv. dal // däl 'goddess of hunt')

C.-Sind. *daw- 'one of deities' (cf. Osset. (<- Circ.) daw-äg 'general name of deity')

C.-Nakh. *dal-'God' (Chech. djēla, Ing. dāla, Ts.-Tush. dale 'God')

Grave

C.-Kartv. *qwap- 'hole/pit' (Kart. (Mokh) qop-i 'hole/pit', Tush. qwap-i, Psh. qwamp-i 'deepened place', Zan xop-i // xop-a (top., hydr.), Sv. qāpw 'with wide opening/with plunging neckline')

C.-Dagh. *qwab- 'grave' (Av. xob, Chad. ħub, Botl. (Miar) qum-u, Kar. xob-i // xob-o, Bagv. x^wob, Cham. hub-u // hob, Darg. (Urakh) ħ^wāb 'grave'), Basq. hobi 'grave')

World/God

C.-Kartv. *birc-el- 'extensive; big' (Geo: vrcel-'wide', si-vrc-e 'space', Zan (Laz) pirč-e 'bid', Megr. pi(r)č-al-i 'extensive, big', Sv. pišir ← *pičir 'abundance, manu/much')

C.-Dagh. *bič-e 'god, rich' (Av. bečed 'god', beče-da- 'rich', Akhv. mača-, God. beče- 'richening', Kar. beče-do- 'richman', Bez. b-ičilo 'rich-man')

C.-Nakh. *barč- 'honorable place in the house' (Chech. barč, Ing. barč-je, Bats. bajrč, cf. Bats. barč-ol 'opportunity')

Praying

C.-Kartv. *kab- 'allegory' (Geo. kab-n-a 'word transformation' (Saba), Sv. li-kab-n-iel 'avoiding', m-kb-i 'avoider')

C.-Dagh. *kob- 'praying, word' (And kuba, Cham. koba, God. kuba-dir 'worshipper'), Darg. kub 'word', Lezg. kaḡ ← *kab, Rut kub, Tsakh kub, Khin. kob 'worshipper')

C.-Nakh. *kob- 'praying' (kov 'praying' that is preserved in Ossetian should be Vainakh kov- which is lost in these languages)

Deity

C.-Kartv. *γut-a 'deity; magic jewel; magician/witch' (Geo. γvt-is 'of Lord/God', γvta-eba 'deity', Zan (Megr.) xvito 'magical jewel', na-xut-a 'magician/witch')

C.-Dagh. *qud- 'magician/witch' (Akhv. qati 'magician/witch, protective house spirit', Did. qudi 'giant; fabulous creature', Hin. qudi 'demon', Lak xurta-ma 'magician/witch')

C.-Sind. *γwəd 'magician/witch' (Ad. wəd, Kab. wəd, Ub. wəd ← *γwəd 'magic/witch')

However, to illustrate the genealogical link between genetically related languages Russian comparativistics has lately used the 35-word S.E. Yakhontov's list, which has been in scientific circulation since 1991. The advantage of the 35-word list is its brevity (compare with the Swadesh list – see references). It allows us to quickly determine whether the analyzed languages are related or not. Most importantly, this list includes the most stable vocabulary of any language in the world. In addition, it is possible to use the list in cases where the family ties of certain languages are still controversial. Also, the most fruitful area of application of Yakhontov's list is in researching little-studied languages; therefore use Yakhontov's list because the genealogical classification of Caucasian languages are still thought of as insufficiently grounded.

In section C, I present and comment on the lexical entries of the Paleo-Caucasian common origin according to Yakhontov's list.

C) Lexical entries of Paleo-Caucasian common origin according to Yakhontov's list of 35 words

1. Blood

a) C.-Kartv. *hin- ' (a kind of) vein/blood vessel' (Geo. hin-i 'a kind of vein/blood vessel' (Saba)). The word is attested only in Saba's dictionary. C.-Dagh. *hin- 'blood; flesh' (Av. han 'flesh', And. hin, Akhv. hin-i, dial. hij 'blood', Bezh. he^o, Did. e ← *he^o, Hunz. ha^oj 'blood', Darg. hi, Tsud he 'blood')

b) C.-Kartv. *ab- 'water' (Geo. ab-, ab-i [Bedoshvili 2013: 5], Ab-is-i (top.))

The archaic ab- root with the meaning of 'water' is preserved in Georgian toponyms (Chumburidze 1975, 55–56). But I do not support the standpoint on its borrowing from Oriental languages.

C.-Dagh. *ab- 'blood' (Rut. bir, Tsakh eb 'blood')

2. Bone

C.-Kartv. *ziʒw 'bone' (Sv. žižw 'bone')

The origin of Geo. ʒwal- from the proto-form of the stem *ʒʒwal- (Klimov 1998, 602) cannot be supported. Neither Megrelian o-žičgv-in-an-s 'looks like a big-bone' verb is the correspondence of Sv. žižw (Chikobava 1940, 93–94).

C.-Sind. *zɪzɑ ‘flesh’

Possibly, an Ossetian zɪzɑ/zɪ ‘flesh’ is sourced from Circassian (Abaev 1958, 397), that is considered for a → w [ʒɪzɑ → ʒiʒw] process in Svan.

C.-Dagh. *ʒiʒ- ‘flesh’ (Lak č:ič:i (←*ʒiʒ-i ‘flesh’)

C.-Nakh. ʒiʒ-i ‘flesh’ (Chech. žiži-g/ʒiʒi-g, Ing. žiži/žiži, Ts.-Tush. žiʒ ‘flesh’)

3. Die

C.-Kartv. *kʷed- ‘dying; losing’ (Old Geo. kʷed-, mo-kʷed ‘Die!’, si-kʷud-il-i ‘death’, mo-kʷd-in-eb-a ‘killing’, m-kʷdar-i ‘dead’, Sv. kʷäd-/kʷad- ‘losing, loss’)

Previously, the Georgian kʷed- verb was opposed with the Svan kʷäd- ‘taking away (due to death)’ stem (H. Fähnrich, B. Gigineishvili), which has not been proved in Svan. Expected kʷud-/kʷud-in- allomorphs are not attested in Zan dialects.

C.-Sind. *kʷadə- ‘dying, losing’ (Ad. kʷadə-n ‘dying, losing’)

C.-Dagh. *kʷänd- ‘dying; murdering/killing’ (Bol. k:wand-ir ‘murdering/killing; dying’)

4. Dog

C.-Kartv. *bak-ur- ‘a kind of dog, name for fat dog’ (Geo. bak-ur-a/bak-ur-ia ‘name for fat dog’, Zan (Megr.) bokur-ia ‘name for fat dog’, bokur-bokur-i ‘addressing the fat dog’)

The Svan correspondence is not observed; bakur-/bokur- is the logical correlation; a/-ia are suffixes in Gurian-Megrelian.

C.-Dagh. *bārh- ‘dog species’ (Arch. bārh-i ‘hound/gun-dog’, Khin. pəxr-a ‘dog’)

In the professional literature Khin. pəxr-a is considered as the correspondence of the allomorphs of other Dagestanian roots xwe/xwaj/xwi ‘dog’ (Trubetskoy 1930: 277, Abdokov 1983: 123, Starostin, Nikolayev 1994: 1074), which is not correct, since they are corresponded to by pəxr-a, Arch. bāri p̄har- ‘dog bitch’.

C.-Nakh. *b̄har- ‘dog, bitch’- ‘bitch female dog’ (Chech., Ing., Ts.-Tush. p̄hu/p̄har- ‘dog, bitch’)

5. Ear

C.-Kartv. *ur- ‘ear, sense of hearing; watching’ (Geo. q̄ur-i ‘ear’, m-i-q̄ur-e

‘Look at me!’, u-ǰur-eb-s ‘looks at sb/sth’, e-ǰur-eb-a ‘hears’, mo-ǰur-iad-e ‘spy/eavesdropper, watcher/listener’, mi-ǰur-ad-eb-a ‘listening, eavesdropping’, Zan (Laz) uǰ-i/juǰ-i/uǰ-i, uǰ-i ‘ear’, m-i-ǰuǰ-i ‘Listen to me!’, me-b-u-uǰ-am ‘I am listening’, ko-n-i-ǰuǰ-u ‘learnt, heard’, Megr.ǰuǰ-i ‘ear’, to-ǰuǰ-i ‘attention’, veli-ǰuǰ-ur-o ‘sb didn’t heed/receive’)

The Svan equivalent has not been revealed so far. An attempt to discuss Svan *ōr/ǰor* ‘door, hiuse & its surrounding’ is not convincing.

C.-Sind. *ǰwə- ‘sense of hearing, listening; hearing’ (Ad.ǰwə- ‘sense of hearing, listening’, Kab.ǰwə- ‘sense of hearing, listening’, Ub.ǰwə- ‘sense of hearing, listening’, Ab. a-owa-ra (← *a-owa-ra), Apkh. á-ow-ra ‘sense of hearing, listening’, ʒər-ow-ra ‘listening’)

The root is attested in all sub-systems the auslaut of which took place already in the parent language – r → Ø (Bouda 1950: 294; Lomtadze 1955: 73–82).

C.-Dagh. *raω- ‘sense of hearing, listening’ (Avar ráωi, Akhvakh ráωi ‘heard/listened, spoken/said’)

C.-Nakh. *Iar- ‘ear’ (Chech., Ing., C.-Tush. Iar- ‘ear’)

6. Egg

C.-Kartv. *ǰaǰal- ‘walnut’ (Geo. ǰaǰal-i ‘walnut’, Sv. ǰaǰ-a, gaǰ-a (gen. ǰaǰäš, gaǰäš) ‘walnut’)

Megr.-Laz ǰaǰal-i is borrowed from Georgian; in Svan, as was expected, the w correspondence of l is lost (Klimov 1964: 105).

C.-Sind. *ǰaǰan ‘walnut; egg’ (Ad. yanya, Shpas. ǰ’äǰ’a ‘egg’, Ab. ǰaǰan, Apkh. a-ǰaǰán ‘walnut’)

An initial picture of the Sindy root is well preserved in Apkhazian-Abaza (Charaia 191: 26). The semantic correlation walnut : hazelnut is logical (Klimov 1969: 292). The meaning of ‘egg’ is evident in all Iberian-Caucasian languages.

C.-Dagh. *ǰarǰan ‘egg’ (Av. ǰorǰonu ‘fruit of grapes’, Andi ǰorǰon, Karat ǰarǰan, Botl. ǰarǰamu ‘egg’)

7. Eye

a) C.-Kartv. *bil- ‘eye’ (Zan (Laz) bal-a ‘deaf’ (?), Sv. bəl- ‘eye’, in the word bəl-aj ‘squinting eye; blind’, cf. bəl- j (UB.), bəl-aj (Lashkh.), bəl-ä (LB., Lent.) ‘leucoma/cataract, albugo/wall-eye’)

Likely, the Svan semantemes squinting eye/blind/leucoma/cataract are based on ‘eye’, exactly, on ‘eye defect’ or ‘without eye’; in Georgian ǰud-a

is derived from *ḵudi* that at the same time denotes tailless (*ḵud-a xari* ‘tailless bull’) and with a tail like *tav-a*. I propose a link between a Svan root *bəl-* and Pshavian *bil-an-i* ‘gullible, naïve’. Even the latter is considered to be a further transformation of ‘without eye’.

C.-Sind. **blā-* ‘eye’ (Ub. *bLa* ‘eye’, Ab. *la*, Apkh. *á-bla//á-la* ‘eye’)

C.-Dagh. **bil-* ‘eye’ (Av. *ber*, Krits. *bil*, Lezg. *wil*, Ud. *pul*, Khin. *pil* ‘eye’)

Cf. Krits. *bil-äd* ‘blind’ that repeats the Svan meaning.

b) C.-Kartv. **harḵw-* ‘flair/intuition’ (Sv. *härḵw/harḵw* (LB.) ‘flair/intuition; suspicion/doubt’)

The word is isolated in Svan though it has noteworthy correspondences in kindred Ibero-Caucasian languages. Thus it is considered to be of Common Kartvelian origin.

Pr.-Sind. **huḵur-* ‘vision’ (Hat. *hukur* ‘vision’)

Although the corresponding roots are not attested in Apkhazian-Adyghean languages, I believe that Svan-Hattian isoglosses are of Paleo-Caucasian origin.

C.-Dagh. **harḵu* ‘eye’ (And. *harḵu*, Bagw. *haḵa*, Kar. *harḵa* ‘eye’)

8. Fire

C.-Kartv. **mesḵ-* ‘fire, luminary/heavenly body/light-giving’ (Old Geo. *mask-ul-av-i//maskl-av-i//varsḵ-ul-av-i* ‘star’, New Geo. *varsḵ-vl-av-i* ‘star’, Zan (Megr.) *mask-ur-i//mask-ur-i* ‘star, luminary/heavenly body/light-giving’, Sv. *-mesḵ//mesg*, *le-mesg* (US.), *le-mes* (Lashkh.) *le-mesḵ* (Lent.) ‘fire’)

The prefix *le-* in Svan is considered to be a functional correspondence of Georgian-Zan *-ur/-ul* suffixes; *le-* prefix occurs elsewhere: *le-rten* ‘left’, *le-rsgw-en* ‘right’.

C.-Sind. **maski-* ‘spark’ (Ad. *masčă//maskjă*, Kab. *masčă//maskjă* ‘spark’)

Further segmentation of Adyghean stems is groundless (cf. Kuipers 1960, 84; Shagirov 1977, II: 111). A continuation of C.-Sind. **maski-* ‘spark’ can be Kab. *masyă* ‘coal’. I cannot agree with the theory of the borrowing of Svan *-mesḵ//mesg* allomorphs from Circassian (Janashia 1942, 271) since it is a Paleo-Caucasian root that has correspondence in Nakh languages, as well, cf. C.-Nakh. **sḵiv* ‘spark’ Ts.-Tush. *sḵiv* ‘spark’.

9. Fish

C.-Kartv. *pac- ‘fish’ (Geo. pac-er-i ‘egg/shaped funneled wicker fish trap’, ‘fish trap’ (Saba))

The existence of the pac- root to denote fish (or any of its species) in Georgian is not excluded (A. Kvakhadze). The fact that it has no Svan-Colchian correspondences does not mean that the pac- root did not function in Common Kartvelian language. Its occurrence is proved by Circassian common material.

C.-Sind. *pca- ‘fish’ (Ad. pca, Kab. b3a ‘fish’)

Given roots of affricate nature should be demarcated from Ub. psa, Apkh. a-ps-3 forms since this latter is a logical correspondence of inversive structure of C.-Kartv. *semia ‘beluga’ (Geo. sv-ia/Zan šam-aia) archetype.

Pr.-Nakh. *bac-in ‘fish’

The Hurrian-Urartian bacin ‘fish’ word is considered to be a logical correspondence of Sindy Kartvelian archetypes. The latter is preserved in Armenian in substratum form.

10. Full

C.-Kartv. *wes- ‘filling out’, sa-ws-e ‘filled up/full’ (Geo. vs-eb-a ‘filling out’, sa-vs-e ‘filled up/full’, Zan (Laz) j-opš-u ‘Sb filled out’, o-pš-a ‘full’, Megr. ei-o-pš-u ‘Sb filled out’, e-pša//opš-a//j-opš-a ‘full’, Sv. gweš-i ‘full’, li-gwš-il-e ‘filling out’, o-x-gwäš-il ‘I filled out’)

If the Svan data are given preference then *wes- should be reconstructed as a C.-Kartv. archetype that has *ws- allomorph, as well. Consequently, the *wes-/ws- reconstruction is grounded (Fährnich and Sarjveladze 2000, 201).

C.-Sind. *epš- ‘inflating; blowing out’ (Ad. epš-an ‘inflating; blowing out’)

Of the Sindy languages only Adyghean demonstrates a similar meaning.

C.-Dagh *wuš-i ‘full’ (God. wuši ‘full’)

C.-Nakh. *ops- ‘blowing out’ (Ts.-Tush. d-eps-ar /d-ops-ar ‘blowing out’)

Genetically common Basque oso (=ošo) ‘full’ form should be mentioned, as well.

11. Give

C.-Kartv. *r-tw- ‘offering/bearing’ (Geo. rtw-, mi-a-rtv-a ‘offered’, e-rtv-i-s ‘(e.g. river...) joins sth (e.g. sea)/(e.g. suffix) is added to’, Zan (Megr.)

a-rt-u-n (e.g. river...) joins sth (e.g. sea)/(e.g. suffix) is added to', rtu-ap-a 'postponement/inflecting/flinging sth over/crossing one's leg')

No Svan correspondence has been disclosed so far. Georgian verbal root rtv- logically corresponds to Megrelian rtv- 'join'

C.-Sind. *twə- 'giving' (Ad. tə-n, ja-tə-n, Kab. tə-n 'giving', Ub. tw- 'giving', Ab. a-t-ra, Apkh. a-ta-ra 'giving')

The comparison of Georgian-Apkhazian verbs is well-known (Charaia 1912: 40). It is true that a root vowel /a was lost in Ubykh but root labialization is preserved unchangeably. In Kartvelian initial r- 'is superfluous' which maybe indicates that a root *tw- is complicated by an archaic (function-lost) causative r- prefix. It is also supported by C.-Dagh. *taw- 'giving'; cf. Hin. to-ḡa, Tab. tuw-ub 'giving'.

12. Hand

C.-Kartv. *meqel- 'arm' (Old Geo. meqel-n-i 'arms' (Saba), Sv. meqer, meqāra (UB., Lent.) 'arm')

Earlier, Svan allomorphs (the meqer form is initial) were opposed by Old m qar- / Zan mxuḡ- words (for history see Fährich, Sarjveladze 2000: 347–348) which is unacceptable from both semantical and formal standpoints. I suppose that Old Geo word qar-i 'shoulder' corresponds to phonetically simplified qar/qār (← *mqar-) 'shoulder' in Svan.

C.-Sind. *mäqa 'arm/hand' (Ab. maqa 'hand, arm', Apkh. á-maxa 'thigh/upper leg/haunch')

The correlation of 'hand', with 'thigh/upper leg/haunch' is incompatible contextually since otherwise -maqa/-maxa would have been logical correlations in Apkhazian-Abaza.

C.-Dagh. *mqara- 'arm' (Lak qara-lu 'under one's arm', Khosr. qara-lalu 'armpit')

13. Horn

C.-Kartv. *qer- 'branch/fork/bough, sth stretched out/extended/jutting out' (Geo. qer-i 'branch/fork/bough', švid-qer-i 'seven-branched' (Saba), Sv. qēr/qer 'handle')

Among Kartvelian languages the semantic correlation branch : handle is noteworthy for which the meaning of 'stretched out' is etymonic' (Chukhua 2000–2003, 406).

C.-Sind. *qwǎ- ‘horn’ (Ad. bźva-qw:, Kab. bźva-qw:ǎ ‘horn’, Ub. qja ← *q^wa ‘horn’)

I propose that Ab. ywōwa, Apkh. á-ṭw ōwa ‘horn’ are different roots and cannot be discussed in this case (cf. Starostin and Nikolayev 1994, 903).

C.-Dagh. *qwar- ‘horn; cock’s comb’ (Av. (Chad.) hwar ‘cock’s comb/crest’, Lak qi, Darg. qe ‘horn’)

14. I (Ist pers. demonstr. pron.)

C.-Kartv. *a-s ‘Ist pers. demonstr. pron.’ (Geo. as-re ‘thus/this way’, as-et-i ‘like this’, Zan aši/aš-o ‘like this’, Sv. e-š-i ‘in any case/as things are’)

In the given languages s- certainly is a root but its correlation with Ist person was expressed by the a-s form, cf. Gur. ag-i (opposite of igi//egi). In Swa an expected *a-š-i is not attested, that is a secondary occurrence (Fänrich, Sarjveladze 2000, 415).

C.-Sind. *sa- ‘I/me’ (Circ. sa ‘I/me’, Ub. sə-γwa ‘I/me’, Ab. sa-ra, Apkh. sa-ra ‘I/me’)

Formally C.-Kartv. *a-s – C.-Nakh *as ‘I/me’ follows an opposite order fixed in ergative case (cf. Nakh so/sa ‘I/me’ in non-ergative) that corresponds with Urartian ješə ‘I/me’. Thus, C.-Sind. *sa- ‘I/me’; C.-Kartv. *a-s- is a logical correspondence since in the roots of pers. pronouns the order is not fixed even today, cf. C.-Nakh *so ‘I/me’, as ‘erg.’, Urartian ješə ‘I/me’, Hurr. zho/zhu, C.-Dagh *zo-n ‘I’, Agh. zun, Arch. zon, Ud. zu, Tab. uzu, Lezg. zun, Tsakh. zu ‘I’.

15. Know

C.-Kartv. *çon- ‘remembering/keeping in mind, seeing’ (Zan (Laz) çon-, o-çon-u ‘hallucinating/seeing, mind’, m-a-çon-e-n ‘Sth hallucinates to me’, Megr. gina-çon-u ‘looking through/above; panorama’, miçi-çon-u ‘Sb kept in mind’, cf. Laz o-xo-çon-u ‘understanding’, Sv. li-çwen-e ‘seeng/showing, demonstrating’)

If the Geo. mo-çon-eb-a ‘like’ verb is supposed in this list, it is clear that the çon- → çwen- type umlaut is supposed in Swa.

C.-Sind. *çən- ‘knowledge/knowing’ (Ad. çən, Kab. çən ‘knowledge/knowing’).

There is a lack of Ubykh-Apkhazian-Abaza data. Reconstruction of the Common Sindy archetype is possible based on a $\zeta\text{ə} \rightarrow \xi\text{ə}$ spirantization phonetic process in Adyghean languages.

C.-Dagh. *çin- ‘knowledge/knowing’

Andi çin-nu and Rutul ha-çən ‘knowledge/knowing’ are of similar verbal forms. Corresponding Nakh data is not observed.

16. Louse

C.-Kartv. *çil- ‘louse’s egg’ (Geo. çil-i ‘louse’s egg’, Zan (yil-i)

In the professional literature Geo.çil-i / ← çil-i substitution is supposed to be due to symbolic root structure. My view is different: Geo.çil- stem is not sourced from çil, but çil- as well as çil- types existed in the parent language. From it çil-i is given in Saba’s Cb edition: çiq-i ‘nits/head louse-egg’ ‘louse’ (çil-i Cb) CD’, i.e. çil- is corresponded by çil-i in Zan and Geo. çil- by çkir-i/mçkir-i ‘louse’s egg’ (see Chukhua 2000–2003, 377; cf. Fähnrich and Sarjveladze 2000, 685).

C.-Sind. *çə- ‘louse, louse’s egg’ (Ad. çə, Kab. çə ‘louse’, Ub -ç-, in the word řa-w ‘louse’s egg’, cf. dəma-ç ‘egg’, Ab. çə, Apkh. çə ‘louse’s egg’)

Reconstruction of Ubykh y hissing-hushing sibilant-like archephones for the parent language is groundless. On the contrary, secondary transformation of hushing of w → y is supposed for Ubykh.

C.-Kartv. *çil- (C.-Sind. *çə- (Charaia 1912, 46) correlation is the logical one)

C.-Nakh. *çir- ‘bug’

Likely, correspondence can be observed in Vainakh çimerğ ← *çir-em-g (?) ‘bug’ word.

17. Moon

C.-Kartv. *dust-e ‘moon, month’ (Old Geo. Ttwe ‘month’ → New Geo. tve, Zan (Megr.) tuta ‘moon, month’, tut-er-i ‘one month old’, Laz tuta//mtuta ‘moon, month’, tut-er-i ‘of one month’, Sv. dořd-ul, dořt-ul (Lent.) ‘moon’, dweřd-iř, dořd-iř ‘Monday’)

The Georgian allomorph is attested in the ancient Georgian written sources. In Adishi Four Gospels there is also attested a tute form, which seems to be a variant of the Old Georgian t te form (cf. Fähnrich and Sarjveladze 2000, 178).

C.-Sind. *maʒ-ă ‘moon, month’ (Ad. mază, Kab. mază ‘moon, month’, Ub. maʒá ‘moon, month’, Ab. mza, Apkh. á-mza ‘moon, month’)

Comparison of the given archetypes indicates that initial d-, m- are ancient prefixes, grammatical class markers.

C.-Dagh. *borc: ‘moon, month’ ((Av. moc:), b (Andi languages borc:) and w (Lezg. warz ‘moon, month’))

C.-Nakh. *butt ‘moon, month’

18. Name

C.-Kartv. *ʒax-el- ‘name’, *ʒax- ‘calling’ (Geo. sax-el-i ← *ʒax-el-i ‘name’, cf. m-ʒax-al-i ‘spouses’ parents’, ʒax-il-i ‘calling’, ʒax-eb-a ‘calling’, Zan (Laz) ʒox-o ‘name’, v-u-ʒox-i ‘I called, named’, ʒox-in-i ‘calling’, Megr. ʒox-o ‘name’, ʒox-o-n ‘Sb’s/Sth’s name is’, Sv. ʒaxe ‘name’, x-a-žx-a ‘Sb’s/Sth’s name is’) (Brosset 1849, 76; Charaia 1912, 43; Chikobava 1942, 32; Deeterce 1930, 96; Klimov 1964, 236–34)

C.-Sind. *xʲəʒ- ‘name’ (Ab. (Ashkh.) xʲəʒ, Tap. xʲəʒə, Apkh. a-xʲəʒ ‘name’)

Circassian correspondences are not observed. Likely in Kartvelian a spirantization ʒ → z process is evident in Apkhazian-Abaza, as well (Charaia 1912, 43). Kartvelian equivalents are of inersive structure, which is supported by Nakh material, as well; cf. C.-Nakh *xaʒ- ‘listening, hearing/understanding’. Hushing correspondence of this latter is attested in Hurrian, cf. Hur. xaʒ- ‘hearing’.

19. New

C.-Kartv. *çan-d- ‘pure, clean’ (Geo. (Erts.-Tian.) çnd-, da-çnd-ob-a → / da-çknd-ob-a ‘running clear/freeing of sediment’, da-çnd-eb-a/da-çknd-eb-a ‘run clear/is freed of sediment/is cleaned’, da-çknd-a ‘turned clear/pure’, Zan (Laz) çkond-, do-p-çkond-i ‘I perfected; I cleaned’, Megr. çkond-a ‘pure, clean’, do-çkond-u/do-çkond-in-u ‘cleaned/is free of sediment’)

Arn. Chikobava, who compared Kartvelian roots, detached -d- as affix (Chikobava 1938, 399), which as I suppose should be passive voice -d- marker merged with stem. As the dialect Ertso Tianetian shows çn → çkn took place.

C.-Sind. *a- ‘new/fresh, clean’ (ç Bzip a-çə-s ‘new/fresh’)

Adygeançəkw//çəkwə ‘minor/little, small’ allomorphs are of another etymology. Their further etymology and inclusion in this list is not acceptable (cf. Starostin and Nikolaev 1994: 358).

C.-Nakh. *çin ‘new/fresh’

Noteworthy correspondences are attested in Nakh (Ts.-Tush. çin ‘new/fresh’).

C.-Dagh. *çino//çinu- ‘new/fresh’ (Andi languages çino//çinu- ‘new/fresh’)

In some cases d/n appears simultaneously as in Kartvelian: Rut. çin-də, Tsakh çed-ən ‘new/fresh’.

20. Nose

C.-Kartv. *pinž- ‘nostril’ (Geo. pinč-i ‘nose hole’ (Saba), pinčv-i ‘nostril’)

Likely, in modern Georgian labialization took place via contamination with ničv-. According to my observation, the history of the Kartvelian root is evidenced in Armenian in which a voiced-sibilant pinž ‘nostril’ form is attested.

C.-Sind. *pənz-a ‘nose’ (Ad., Kab. {pinž} ‘nose’, cf. Osset. (← Circ.) fənz ‘nose’, Ab. pənça, Apkh. a-pənç, Bzip a-p ‘nose’)

There is an attempt to link Ubykh-Abaza fa-/pə- segments with the Adyghean pa ‘nose’ root, which is groundless. Adyghean correspondence is preserved in Ossetian in borrowed form; cf. Os. f ənz.

C.-Dagh. *pižw ‘tip/top/point’ cf. Lezg. puz, Ag. p:uz, Rut., Tsakh, Kritis pəz, ‘tip/top/point’, Hur.-Urat. *pinž ‘nostril’)

The stem of the Armenian pinž ‘nostril’ type should have existed in Hurro-Urartian languages as well.

21. One

C.-Kartv. *cal- ‘single/one from pair’ (Geo. cal-i ‘one’, Zan (Laz) cor-i ‘one’)

In the Laz dictionary of the late period (Tandilava 2013) there is given cor-i ‘single/one from pair’, a word that is a logical correspondence of the Georgian cal- noun; cf. sound correspondence Geo. a Zan o; Geo. l : Zan r.

C.-Sind. *cā ‘suffix denoting entity-ness’ (Ab. -cə, Apkh. -cə ‘suffix denoting entity-ness’)

The correspondence of C.-Kartv. *cal- archetype -cā is preserved only in Apkhazian-Abaza as an affix denoting unit/entity, though numerals with

a c- root denoting one/single are attested in the whole Iberian-Caucasian language system: C.-Nakh *caḥ ‘one’, C.-Dagh. *ca ‘one’, Av. co, Lak ca, Darg. ca ‘one’... Their common origin has been undoubted for a long time (Javakhishvili 1937, 386–394).

22. Stone

C.-Kartv. *qir- ‘stone’ (Geo. xir-, in the word xir-aṭ-i ‘rocky ground’ (Saba))

Based on Iberian-Caucasian data, the existence of the qir- archetype is supposed in the parent language, cf. Nakh qer ‘stone; rock’. Unfortunately there is a lack of Svan correspondence. Though it should be said that voiceless pharyngeal affricate q is well preserved in Svan.

C.-Sind. *qər- ‘rock’ (Kab. qər ‘rock’)

A Common Sindy archetype is reconstructed on the basis of Kabardian root data; q →secondary phonetic process in Kabardian is considered, which gives the possibility of obtaining the Sindy correspondence of Nakh qer- ‘stone; rock’ and Kartvelian *qir- ‘stone’ roots and stems.

C.-Nakh. *qer- ‘stone; rock’

C.-Dagh. *qer-u ‘sandstone’ (cf. Godob. qeru ‘sandstone’)

23. Sun

C.-Kartv. *deγ-e ‘day’ (Geo. dγe ‘day’, dγe-n-del-i ‘today’s/present-day’, m-dγe-v-r-i ‘daily’, Zan (Megr.) dγa ‘day’, o-ndγ-e ‘afternoon’, dγa-ur-i ‘diary’, (Laz) dγa//ndγa ‘day’, o-ndγ-er-i ‘afternoon’, ge-ndγa-n-i ‘day after tomorrow’, Sv. la-deγ ‘day’, mə-l-deγ ‘shepherd’)

The Svan data is noteworthy in that it supports the two-syllabic nature of the initial root. In Common Kartvelian the reconstruction of *dγe- archetype is not supported by factual material (cf. Klimov 1964, 75).

C.-Sind. *dəγ- ‘sun’ (Ad. təγa, Kab. dəγa ‘sun’, Ub. ndγa ‘sun’)

There is an attempt to enroll Apkhazian-Abaza a-mra/mara ‘sun’ allomorphs in this group of words (Starostin and Nikolayev 1994, 1052), which is beneath criticism – it simply is another material (Charaia 1912, 29; Klimov 1969, 289). As is obvious in the Sindy languages the *dəγ- archetype denoted ‘day’ as is clearly seen in Ad. təγ-wa-s, Kab. dəγ-wa-sə ‘yesterday’ stems, cf. Laz ge-ndγa-n-i ‘day after tomorrow’. Sindy-Kartvelian roots and stems have parallels in C.-Nakh *day-u ‘rain’.

C.-Dagh. * γ wed-e'day, rain, star' (cf. Did. γ udi, Hin. γ wede, Khvarsh. γ wade, Hunz. wədə ← * γ wəd 'day, rain, star'). The latter is of inversive structure.

24. Tail

C.-Kartv. * çik - 'head, top of an object' (Geo. çik -i 'head of sth.', çik -art-i 'buckle')

C.-Sind. * kvaç -a 'tail' (Ub. kvača 'tail')

C.-Nakh. * çaç -u 'tail' (Ts.-Tush. çauku , Chech. çuonga , Cheb. çagu , Ing. çong 'tail')

C.-Dagh. * kic 'tail (of a sheep)' (Did. çew -mahi, Inkh. kic -mihe, Khvarsh kēc -mehi 'a sheep's tail')

25. This

C.-Kartv. * n - 'this, pronominal root' (Zan (Laz) e-n-t-ep-e 'they', Megr. e-n-ep-i 'they', e-n-a 'this', i-n-ep-i 'they', i-n-a 'he/she/it/that')

The root isn't attested in Georgian and Svan, if Svan naj//näj 'we' Ist pers. pronoun is not considered.

C.-Sind. * n - 'this, pronominal root' (Ub. wa-n-ā 'this', cf. i-n-jā 'that/he/she/it', Apkh. a-n-i 'that/he/she/it' (P. Uslar)

There is a lack of Adyghean data although, based on Ubykh-Apkhazian, the n - pronominal of parent-language origin will be easily detached as in Kartvelian. The genetic unity of named pronouns is rightly noted (Charaia 1912, 21; 26); cf. C.-Kartv. * in - 'he/she/it': C.-Sind. * $jən$ - 'he/she/it' [see above].

C.-Dagh. * n - 'pronominal root' (cf. the Dagestanian: Bezh. (Khash.) ho-n-o and Inkh. ove-n-u / oje-n-u / ore-n-u 'he/she/it; they')

26. Thou

C.-Kartv. * h - '2nd subj. and 3rd obj. personal marker' (Geo. h-/x-, Sv. x- '2nd subj. and 3rd obj. personal marker')

C.-Nakh. * ho 'thou' (Chech. huo , Ing. huo , Tush. ho 'thou')

C.-Dagh. * ho /* hu 'thou' (Darg. hu 'thou', Ud. hu-n, Khin. ox 'thou')

27. Tongue

C.-Kartv. * baz - 'mind, messenger, to inform' (Geo. bz-n-a, bz-n-il-ob-a 'tabu day (when e.g. washing, leave a yard, using axe... are forbidden)'),

Zan (Megr.) bž-ou ‘senseless, silly, witless’, Sv. baž ‘mind; sense; wit(s)/cleverness’, bāž-in ‘messenger’, li-baž-e ‘to inform; information’)

Megrelian-Svan forms were compared with each other by Fähnrich (2007, 45). Having assented to this comparison, I use the derivatives of a Geo. bz- root for which the meaning of ‘inform’ seems to be basic.

C.-Sind. *bza- ‘language (colloquial)’ (Ad. bza, Kab. bza ‘language (colloquial)’, Ub. bza ‘language’, Ab. bzə ‘language’, Apkh. á-bz ‘language’)

Historically in Sindy languages, tongue as a part of the body and tongue/language (of speaking/thinking) should have been differentiated. Speech/moment of cognition seems basic for Georgian forms, as well. On the other hand, a correspondence C.-Kartv. *baz- with C.-Sind. *bza- demonstrates normal (logical) correlation on the archetype level.

C.-Dagh. *mez ‘tongue’ (‘Darg. mez, Lak. maz, Lezg. mez, Tab. melz, Agh. mez, Rut. miz, Kriz. mez, Bud. mez, Ud. muz tongue’)

28. Tooth

C.-Kartv. *xac- ‘tooth’ (Zan (Megr.) xoč-i ‘long front tooth’)

The correspondene of Zan xoč- should have been xac- in Georgian. That is not observed though its existence in the parent language is supposed since it has stable parallels in other Iberian-Caucasian languages.

C.-Sind. *xac- ‘arrow’ (Ab. xri-xəc ‘bow and arrow’, Ashkh. xəc ‘arrow’, Apkh. a-xəc ‘arrow’). The corresponding root is lost in Circassian languages.

C.-Dagh. *qac- ‘toothed wheel/cog, rake’ (Khin. xac-al/qac-ol ‘toothed wheel/cog, rake’)

29. Two

a) C.-Kartv. *t̥qu-b- ‘twin, twos’ (Geo. t̥qub-i/t̥qup-i ‘twin’, t̥qub-n-i ‘twins’, Zan (Laz) t̥qubi, Megr. t̥qub-i/t̥kub-i/ t̥qup-i ‘twin’, t̥ku-t̥kub-ur-o ‘in twos/pairs’, Sv. t̥qub/t̥qub-wib ‘twin’, na-t̥qub-ar ‘twins’)

At parent language level t̥qu- is detached as a root, -b- is an affix, which is easily confirmed by comparison with the t̥qu-č- derivative attested in Georgian - t̥qu-b- ~ t̥qu-č-. Georgian t̥qub-//t̥qub-n-i is attested in old Georgian literary works (Fähnrich and Sarjveladze 2000, 447–448); cf. t̥qu-č-i ‘connected twos’.

C.-Sind. *tǫwə- ‘two’ (Ad (dial.) tǫwə, t̪wə, Kab. tǫwə ← *tǫwə ‘two’, Ub. tǫwa ‘two’)

According to my observation Apkhazian-Abaza ɔw-bá isn’t included in this case (for– ba- cf. Kartv. tǫu-b- (Lomtatidze 1955, 824) [see ǰev-ar-i]. Comparison of C.-Sind. *tǫwə-: C.-Kartv. *tǫu-, archetypes demonstrates that u → wə took place in Sindy and one of the roots denoting ‘two’ is preserved in tǫu-b/tǫu-ǰ- variants in Kartvelian.

C.-Nakh. *tǫo ‘twenty’

Noteworthy parallels of Georgian-Circassian forms are observed in Nakh languages, cf. Chech. tǫa ‘twenty’, Ing. tǫo ‘twenty’, Tush. tǫa ‘twenty’.

b) C.-Kartv. *ǰuy- ‘pair/couple’ (Geo. ǰuy-el-i ‘pair of oxen/buffalo’ (Saba) C.-Dagh. *ǰuy- ‘pair/copule, double’ (Ud. ǰuy ‘pair/couple, double tree-branch’)

Like Georgian the word is preserved only in Udi denoting ‘pair/double tree-branch’. Georgian-Udi parallels preserve the Paleo-Caucasian *ǰuy- root in the meaning of pair/couple.

30. Water

C.-Kartv. *sim- ‘water’ (Geo. sim-ur-i ‘a kind of water’, Svan sgim ‘mineral water’)

C.-Sind. *šwə ‘water’ (Ub. šwa ‘water’, cf. bla-šwa ‘tears’=eye’s water)

Pr.-Nakh. *šin cf. Hur. šijy ‘water, river’

C.-Dagh. *šin-/*šim- ‘water’ (Lak. š:in, Darg. šin/hin, Tab. šid ‘water’)

31. What

C.-Kartv. *sa-da ‘where’ (Geo. sa-da, sa-da-jt ‘from where’, sa-da-j ‘where from (originally)’, sa-me ‘any/somewhere’, sa-n-am-de ‘until where’, Zan (Laz) so-d ‘somewhere/anywhere’, so ‘where’, so-le ‘where to’, so-le-n ‘where from’, Megr. so ‘where’, so-t-i ‘there where’, so-n-i ‘where from (originally)’, so-le ‘where from’, so-iš-a ‘until where’)

I agree with the reconstruction of *sa-da type existing in the professional literature (Klimov 1998, 162).

C.-Sind. *sǎ-d ‘what’ (Ad. sǎd, Kab. sǎt ‘what’, Ub. sa ‘what’)

The dental phonemic opposition Ad. d : Kab. t that is revealed in the affixal position is noteworthy. In Circassian languages sa- is detached as a root. Ubyk leads me to suppose this, cf. Kartv. sa- (Klimov 1964, 161).

C.-Dagh. *ši- ‘what’ (cf. Bud. ši/šə -ma, Krits ši, Rut. ši-v//šə-v ‘what’)

C.-Nakh. *sen ‘what’

32. Who

C.-Kartv. *wi- ‘who, where from’ (Geo. vi-n ‘who’, vi-na-j ‘where from’, vi-na-jt-gan ‘since/from what time’, Zan (Megr.) mi-, mi-n-ep-i ‘who’ (pl. form), Laz mi-//mi-n ‘who’)

In Colchian dialects the phonetic process $v \rightarrow m$ took place as well, as is often observed, cf. Geo. weža : Zan menž-i ‘mineral water’ (cf. Klimov 1964, 135; Fähnrich and Sarjeladze 2000, 125).

C.-Sind. *wə- ‘it/that’ (Ad. (Shaps., Bzhed.) wə ‘it/that’, Ub. wa ‘it/that’, Ab. a-wi, Apkh. wi ‘it/that’)

Kabardian correspondence is not observed. In Abaza a- seems to be deictic. Phonetic processes are presumed thus: *wə- \rightarrow wă \rightarrow wa in Ubykh and *wə \rightarrow wi in Apkhazian Abaza. In Sindy languages the *wə- root functions as the demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ while in Georgian the vin ‘who’ pronoun doubles up the function of time and space.

C.-Dagh. wi- ‘this’ (cf. Lak wa ‘this’, but Khin. wa ‘over there’, Lezg. wi-nel ‘over there, upward/above’, Bezh. wa- ‘deictic article’, Khva. a-w-ed ‘this’).

33. Salt

C.-Kartv. *çağ-a ‘salted, soured, over-salted/too salty’ (Geo. çağ-a, çağ-i ‘over-salted/too salty’, m-çağ-e ‘salted, over-salted/too salty’, Sv. çağ ‘too soured; name if unripe’, çağa-r-aj ‘bitter, sour (fruit)’)

There is a lack of Zan correspondence. The Svan \check{c} a ḡ a r a j word manifests logical corresponding nature with Georgian allomorphs (Fähnrich 2007, 614). The Svan çağ variant can be discussed in this case. This latter originates from the *waḡa archaic type.

C.-Sind. *zǎḡ-a ‘salt’ (Ab. (Tap.) žǎḡa//žǎḡa, Apkh. a-žǎḡa ‘salt’)

A dissimilative $\check{c}v \rightarrow$ $ʒv$ voicing possibility isn’t excluded in Apkhazian-Abaza, but due to the absence of any Circassian correspondence it is difficult to say anything more.

C.-Dagh. *çiḡ- ‘salt’ (cf. Av. ç:ḡa-b, And. ç:iḡu, Akhv. ç:iḡ:u-da, Cham. šiḡu-b ‘sour’, Darg. (Akhv.) çik-si, Kharb. çağ-se ‘sour’, Arch. çeḡw ‘bitterness, bitter’)

34. Wind

C.-Kartv. *psin- ‘cold wind, breeze’ (Geo. psin-, a-psin-v-a ‘water cold frost, blowing’)

The Svan kisin ‘pleasant, cool breeze’ word (Liparteliani 1994) can be mentioned in this case to indicate that natural substitution p/k in Svan is evident in the following samples: Sv. puxw//kuxw ‘pimple’, cf. Geo. (Ajar.) putxo : Sv. purtxw//kətx, i.e. p → k in Svan.

C.-Sind. *pśa- ‘wind/blowing’ (Ad. ja-pša-n, Kab. ja-psva-n ‘blowing’, Ab. pša, Apkh. a-pša ‘wind’)

C.-Sind. *psva- : C.-Kartv. *psin- demonstrates logical correlation. Only there arises a doubt: maybe in the parent language there occurred *pša-hushing allomorph.

C.-Dagh. *bis-a ‘storm’

In fact, real correspondence is preserved in the Cham. bisa ‘storm’ word.

35. Year

C.-Kartv. *çen-year; last year’ (Geo. (Ajar.) çen-i ‘year’, cf. çen-i (Saba), Zan (Laz) çan-a ‘year’, çan-er-i ‘one-year old’, Megr. çan-a ‘year’, çan-as ‘in next year’, çan-er-i ‘one-year-old’, Sv. hn-, le-hn-a (US.), ne-hn-a (LB.) ‘last year’, ‘year before last’)

A comparative analysis of Kartvelian languages shows that ne- -a confix is really detached in Svan as in other derivative nouns: ne-sga/ne-sk-a ‘middle’, ne-šk-a ‘attic’, ne-pxwn-a ‘nose’; the hn root originates from archaic çn- via ç → h spirantization.

C.-Sind. *çă- ‘time passing’ (Ad. šă-n, Kab. šă-n ‘time passing’, cf. Ad. γa-šă ‘life’, Ub. çă- ‘time passing’, Ab. ç-ra, Apkh. a-ç-rá ‘time passing’, çə-px ‘last year’)

Circassian data simplify the reconstruction procedure since no (a/ă/ə) vowel is observed in Apkhazian-Abaza verbs and cannot be reconstructed for the parent language. Final n that is a part of the root in Kartvelian is reconstructed hypothetically in parent Sindy since it is a deverbative suffix, i.e. is irrelevant for reconstruction (see Bgaghba 1948, 40; Lomtadze 1953, 96).

C.-Dagh. *çun- ‘time’

Cf. Lak. *çun-, Lezg. çaw, Tsakh çaw ‘time’

The examples discussed above prove the theory that the Paleo-Caucasian languages comprise a language family with shared origins.

Nakh and common Hurrian-Urartian parent languages

In this section, I shall focus on one problematic issue of the Iberian-Caucasian language family. When starting the genetic studies, I tried not to ground my view (paradigm) on the criticism of previously expressed views, i.e. negative ones. But, since the 1990s, the true picture of the composition of the language families of Paleo Caucasian origin was so overshadowed in the linguistics literature, it is impossible to ignore the issue in the present paper. First, I shall touch on the problem of the Hurrian-Urartian, Basque-Burushaski, Sumerian and Etruscan languages in terms of their genetic origin and linguistic belonging.

As is well known, the problem of the East Caucasian origins of the Hurrian-Urartian languages is interestingly discussed in the works of the Russian linguists I. Diakonoff and S. Starostin (Diakonoff 1971, 1967; Diakonoff and Starostin 1987).

However, in a collective monograph published in 2010 by Arnaud Fournet and Allan R. Bomhard *The Indo-European Elements in the Hurria*, Hurrian (as well as Urartian) languages are considered to be of Indo-European origin. All levels of the language hierarchy (phonology, nominal and verbal morphology, syntax, vocabulary etc.) are discussed in detail on the basis of the material of Hurrian and Indo-European. One noteworthy aspect, however, is that the Urartian language data are neglected, although the conclusion deals with both Hurrian and Urartian languages. The assertion of Hurrian-Indo-European genetic unity dates back to ancient times, as is emphasized in the conclusion (Fournet and Bomhard 2010, 159):

In the course of this book, we have attempted to show, through a careful analysis of the relevant phonological, morphological, and lexical data, that Urarto-Hurrian and Indo-European are, in fact, genetically related at a very deep level... We propose that both are descended from a common ancestor, which may be called 'Proto-Asiatic', to revive an old, but not forgotten, term.

Not to say anything about the term 'Proto-Asiatic' with its unclear genetic content, one might wonder on what grounds Diakonoff and Starostin's

theory on the East Caucasian origin of the Hurrian-Urartian languages, i.e. their genetic link with Nakh-Dagestan languages, was excluded.

My position is different. I do not place the Nakh and Dagestanian languages in one group (Nakh-Dagestan). The Nakh languages belong to an independent group in the Paleo-Caucasian language family, and the Hurrian-Urartian languages reveal genetic kinship with the Nakh languages. More precisely, in my observation, there was a Nakh-Hurrian-Urartian linguistic unity, from which Common Nakh and the Common Hurrian-Urartian parent-languages separated. In subsequent stages of differentiation, Common Nakh gave rise to Tsova-Tushian (Bats), Ingush, and Chechen, whereas Common Hurrian-Urartian developed into the Hurrian and Urartian languages.

My theory is based on isomorphs that are regularly verified in the Hurrian-Urartian and Nakh languages. Fournet and Bomhard (2010) try to prove Hurrian-Indo-European genetic unity, but their analysis is not always precise. For example, the authors discuss the examples *šin-arbu* ‘two-year-old’ and *tumn-arbu* ‘four-year-old’ [Hurrian-Urartian] (Fournet and Bomhard 2010, 31) as rare examples of derivation, which is only true in the case of the *-ar* suffix, since *šin* and *tumn* are the numerals denoting ‘two’ and ‘four’, from which new derivatives are obtained, but *bu* cannot be a part of *arbu*, since *bu* is an auxiliary verb and is divided into *b* + *u* parts, in which *b* is a grammatical class, and *-u* a verbal root, and thus *šin-ar* + *bu* means (sth is) two years old. The same is true of the *tumn-arbu* ‘four-year-old’.

Additionally, the grounds for the etymological linking of the Hurrian plural suffix *-(a)š* with Indo-European, the nominative plural athematic ending **-es* (p. 42), are unclear. The Hurrian-Urartian plural suffix *-(a)š* is attested in the Nakh languages, as well; cf. Nakh *gowr* ‘horse’ - *gowr-aš* ‘horses’.

Furthermore, the Hurrian-Urartian ergative with a final *-š* has nothing in common with the Proto-Indo-European nominative singular athematic ending **-s*, thematic **-os* marker, about which the authors comment: ‘We may note here that, according to Beekes (1985, 192), the nominative singular in **-os* was originally an ergative’ (43). However, the correspondence of Hurrian-Urartian ergative *š* is one of the markers of the ergative case *-s/-as* that still functions in the Nakh language and has a very important distribution area, cf. Niķo - erg. Niķo-s ‘Niko’ and da ‘father’ - erg. da-s ‘father’.

The analysis of the Hurrian vocabulary is wholly in accordance

with the grammatical inventory, i.e. the Hurrian-Nakh unity is evident (see Table 3).

Table 3: Hurrian-Nakh isoglosses

Hurrian	Nakh
*[ás-] ‘to be seated’	(=as-) ‘sitting’
*[buru] ‘strong’	(buruw) ‘fortress’
*[ag-] ‘to bring, to lead’	ag-) ‘carrying’
*[al-] ‘to speak’	(al-) ‘saying’
*[ás-] ‘to be seated’	(=as-) ‘sitting’
*[zizi] ‘breast, nipples’	(zizi) (Bats) ‘woman’s breast’
*[tsurgi] ‘blood’	(c’igi) (Bats) ‘blood’
*[xaš-] ‘to hear’	(xaz-/xaʒ-) ‘sense of hearing’
*[kad-] ‘to say’	(kad-) ‘complaining’
*[nali] ‘deer’	(nal) ‘tusk, boar’
*[niz] ‘nine’	(iss) ‘nine’
*[pal-] ‘to know’	(pal-/poal) ‘fortune-telling’
*[saw-ala] ‘year’	(šo) ‘year’
*[šini] ‘two’, [šiši] ‘twice’	(ši) ‘two’, (šišša) ‘twice’
*[tagi] ‘beautiful’	(dak-in) (Bats) ‘good’
*[arde] ‘town’	(jerdi) ‘place’
*[ašte] ‘woman’	(est-ij) (Ing.) ‘women’
*[Teššub] ‘the god of sky and storm’	(Tuš-oli) (Ing.) ‘goddess’, cf. Rut. Tuš ‘one of gods, deities’, etc.

Kassite and Dagestanian languages

As is well known, the Kassites were a people of the Ancient Near East. There is no continuous attested text written in Kassite. The number of Kassite words is fairly limited: slightly more than 60, referring to specialized semantic fields: (horse) colors, parts of a chariot, irrigation terms, plants and titles. About 200 additional formatives can be retrieved from the numerous anthroponyms, toponyms, theonyms and horse names used by the Kassites.

As recent studies have shown (e.g. Fournet 2011), the Kassite language is also genetically linked to Hurrian-Urartian as a kindred language with more archaic features, which I support. But isoglosses are noteworthy, which is attested only in Svan from the Kartvelian languages and are obviously of the same circle as the Kassite-Hurrian-Urartian words

demonstrate, cf.: Kassitian *[burna] ‘protégé, servant’, also written Bu-na- and Burra – Hurrian burami ‘servant’ – Svan. pamli ‘servant’. Kassitian marhu ‘head’ – Hurrian pahi ‘head’ – Svan. pxwn-/ne-pxwn-a ‘nose’.

From my viewpoint, such coincidences cannot be used as a convincing argument, since what are most likely similar accidental cases are observed in Kartvelian-Elamite lexical parallels, cf. Geo. mepe / nepe, Zan mapa / napa, Sv. nep ‘king’ - Elamite nap ‘god’ - nap-ip ‘gods’. However, in the latter, the identity of the grammatical inventory is also valuable, cf. C.Kartv. -eb - Elam. -ip pl. suff., etc.

As previously stated, I share Schneider’s (2003, 372-381) and Fournet’s (2011) recent commentaries on the kinship of the Hurrian-Kassite languages, but at the same time I consider them to belong to the Dagestanian group of languages in accordance with I. Diakonoff (1967), meaning that Hurro-Urartian languages are closer to the Nakh language group. The territorial distribution of the Kassite language inclines more toward Dagestan, that is to say, it was spread in the south from Dagestan to modern Iran, in the highlands of the Zagros Mountains.

Some isoglosses from Dagestanian-Kassite languages follow:

1. Kas. miriy-aš ‘land’ (-ash is suffix, cf. Kas. and-ash – Hurrit. end-an ‘prince’): Hunz. mar-u ‘pasture’, Rut. myr-i ‘field/meadow’
2. Kas. yaše ‘place, land’: Lak arši, And. onši, Cham. uns:i ‘earth’
3. Kas. yanzi ‘king’: Bagv., Botl. ans, Kvarsh ase ‘doctor, physician’
4. Kas. Gadd-aš ‘king’: Darg. (Gubden) qat-i ‘Sunday; of God, God’s day’, cf. Hattic katte ‘king’
5. Kas. Sah/Šah “Sun”: Ud. xaš “moon”

Despite the scarcity of Kassite lexical samples, the listed language parallels seem quite plausible.

Caucasian and Basque

Finally, while recent Western comparativists ignore the grounded classical theory of the Basque-Kartvelian-Caucasian genetic links (Marr 1927, Lafon 1948, Dumézil 1933, Vogt 1963, Bouda 1950; Braun 1998, etc.), I would like to present a fairly solid number of lexical units reflecting basic vocabulary characterized by common genetic origin, i.e. Paleo-Caucasian etymology. As usual they must be accompanied by phonology (system of sound correspondences) and morphology (grammatical inventory), which I can not discuss here due to lack of space. Also, the most promising

hypothesis on Basque-Burushaskian-Caucasian unity from the time of Marr seems to be taken into account, to which special works have been devoted (Bengtson 2008c, 93–209; Bengtson 2009, 157–175; Bengtson 2017, 1–546).

C.-Kartv. *i-lam- ‘deer; roe-deer’, (Geo. i-lem-i (*top.*), Zan irem-i ‘deer’, Sv. ilw ‘roe-deer’) – C.-Sind. *r^wā- ‘deer’ (Ub. λə ‘deer’) – C.-Nakh. *low ‘roe’ (Chech. lū // luw, Ing. lij-g < - *lūw-ig ‘roe-deer’) – C.-Dagh. *λəm- ‘mountain goat; roe’ (Cham. λam-a ‘mountain goat’, Tab. fuj < - *x^wə-j ‘roe, chamois’) – Basq. orein ‘deer’.

C.-Kartv. *sin- ‘weasel; *Mustela nivalis*’ (Geo. sin-, in the word sin-diopala ‘*Mustela nivalis*’, cf. sin-žap-i ‘squirrel’) – C.-Sind. *ś^wə ‘jackal’ (Ad. -ś, in the word baž^ja-ś ‘jackal’, Ub. -š^w, in the word bag^jā-š^w ‘jackal’, Apkh. (Bzip) á-š^wa-bga ‘jackal’) – C.-Dagh. *s^wəl- ‘fox’ (Av. ser // šer, And. sor // sor-i, Akhv. šar-i, Tind sar-i, Kar. sar-e, Bagw. sar, Botl., God. sar-i, Did. zir-u, Hin. zer-u, Kvar. zar-u, Inkhoq. zor, Bez. sor-a, Agul, Tab. sul, Tsakh səw-a < - *səw-a, Arch. s:ol, Udi šul, Khin pšl-a < - *s^wl-a ‘fox’) – Basq. axer-i [=ašer-i] -> Sp. zorro ‘fox’.

C.-Kartv. *orb- ‘eagle’ (Geo. orb-i ‘eagle’, Zan (Megr.) obr-i ‘eagle; a kind of butterfly’, Sv. werb, worb (Lashkh.) ‘eagle’) – C.-Sind. *arb-a ‘rooster/cock’ (Abaz. arba ‘rooster/cock; male bird’, Apkh. árba ‘rooster/cock’, árba-γⁱ ‘male bird’) – C.-Dagh. *olb- ‘dove/pigeon’ (Hin. olbo, Did. elbo, Khvar. ilba ‘dove/pigeon’), cf. Basq. erbi ‘hare’.

C.-Kartv. *bar- ‘spade, digging with spade’ (Geo. bar-i ‘spade’, bar-v-a ‘digging with spade’) – Pr.-Sind. *bar- ‘digging with spade’ (Hat. mar ‘digging with spade; cutting’, cf. Apkh. pa- {‘shovel’}, in the word a-mħa-p ‘wooden shovel’ (Bzip)) – C.-Dagh. *bar- ‘spade’ (Bud. bar, Lezg. per, Khin. ber ‘spade’) – Basq. pala ‘spade’.

C.-Kartv. *sang- ‘big iron hammer/mallet; sledgehammer’ (Geo. sang-i ‘big iron hammer/mallet’ (Saba), Sv. säng ‘sledgehammer; big hammer’) – C.-Sind. *səgⁱ-ə ‘anvil’ (Ad. (Shaps.) səg^jə, Chemg. səžə, Qab. səž, Basl. səg^j ‘anvil’) – Basq. šeg-a [sega] ‘scythe’.

C.-Kartv. *gor- ‘rolling; wheel’ (Geo. gor-v-a ‘rolling’, Zan o-ngor-u ‘rolling’, Sv. li-gwr-an-e ‘rolling’, cf. Geo. gor-gor-a (*redupl.*) ‘wheel’) – C.-Nakh. *gur- ‘wheel’ (Chech. gur-ma ‘a wheel for hitching the plough’) – C.-Dagh. *gur- ‘to whirl, to roll; wheel’ (Av. gír- to roll, Kar. (Tokit.) gur-i ‘wheel’, gur-i-l ‘to whirl, to roll’, Inkhoqv. gər-ma ‘round’, Lak k:ur ‘to roll’) – Basq. gur- in the word gur-pil ‘wheel’.

C.-Kartv. *ced- 'horse; cow' (Geo. ced-, mo-ced-i 'heifer' (Saba), Zan {čaž-i} 'horse', cf. Sv. (<- Zan.) čaž, čäž (Lashkh.) 'horse') - C.-Sind. *čäd-ä 'donkey' (Ad. (Shaps.) čädə, Chemg. šädə, Bzhed. šäd, Qab. šäd 'donkey', Ub. čädə 'donkey', Apkh. a-čada 'donkey', a-čád-h^wás 'donkey foal') - Basq. ašto [asto] 'donkey'.

C.-Kartv. *xul- '(akind of) sheep' (Geo. (Khevs.) xul-ia 'sheep without horns', *lit.* xul-a 'sheep either with short ears or without ears') - C.-Sind. *x^wə- 'sheep' (Ad. x^wə-, in the word x^wə-pəś^o, Qab. x^wə- in the word x^wə-rəfa 'sheep laether', cf. Qab. x^wə-reṭ 'yelling to drive out sheep') - C.-Nakh. *ax^war- (Chech. hāxar, Ing. hāxār, Ts.-Tush. axr-ob 'lamb') - C.-Dagh. *ənx^wa 'sheep' (And. ixo, Akhv., Cham. i^oxa 'sheep, ewe') - Basq. ahari [ahari] 'ram'.

C.-Kartv. *γery-il- 'kibbled maize' (Geo. γery-il-i 'grains of broad beans and others ground in a crop-sprayer into middle-sized pieces', Zan γary-il-i 'kibbled maize') - C.-Sind. *qāry-ə 'kibbled maize' (Apkh. (Bzip)) a-ḷəry, Abzh. a-xəry 'kibbled maize') - C.-Nakh. *γary- 'large grounded/milled' (Chech. (Cheb.) γāry-i, Ing. γory-ä 'large grounded/milled') - C.-Dagh. *LerL-ar 'oats' (Avar. roļ: <- *w^oek: 'wheat', Lezg. gerg, Tab. γaryar, Ag. jerg <- *gerg, Rut. γaryal, Tsakh. γaryar, Khin. gərgar 'oats') - Basq. garagar 'barley'.

C.-Kartv. *skal- 'beehive; bee' (Geo. ska 'bee house' (Saba) Zan (Megr.) ska // pska 'bee', Laz mska // mcka 'bee', o-skal-e // o-pskal-e 'apiary/for bees', Megr. ma-pskal-ia 'wasp; queen bee', Sv. šker- 'bees swarming', šker-ob // šger-ob 'bees swarming', nä-šger-w, na-šger (Lashkh.), na-škar (Lent.) 'new brood of bees') - C.-Sind. *šak^w-a 'wax residue' (Ad. šak^wā, Qab. šak^wä 'wax residue') - Basq. esko [ezko] 'beewax'.

C.-Kartv. *nuš-a 'curds/cottage cheese; cheese' (Old Geo. nuš-i / nuš-a 'curds/cottage cheese; cheese') - C.-Sind. *naš^w-ə 'cheese' (Ab. aš^wə, Apkh. aš^w 'cheese') - C.-Dagh. *nisu 'curds/cottage cheese' (Av. nisu // nišu, And. iso, Akhv. i^osa 'curds/cottage cheese'..., Did. izu, Hin. ižu, Khvar. i^ozu 'cheese', Lak nis, Darg. nisu, Lezg. nasu, Tab., Agul nis, Rut. nisä, Shakh nis:e, Krits nisi, Bud. nusu 'cheese') - C.-Nakh. *šon- 'rennet' (Chech. šuō, Ing. šoa <- *šōn, cf. Chech. pl. šōn-aš 'rennet') - Basq. ešne [esne] 'milk'.

C.-Kartv. *gwal- 'cow-shed/cattle stalls' (Sv. gwal- 'cow-shed/cattle stalls') - C.-Dagh. *gal- 'house' (And. gall-ar-qi, Darg. (*dial.*) gal-i 'house, room') - Basq. gel-a 'dwelling/ residential place; room'.

C.-Kartv. *zako- ‘yard’ (Old Geo. zako-j ‘yard’) ~ C.-Sind. *śag^w ‘yard’ (Ad. śag^w ‘yard’, Qab. źag^w ‘hearth’) ~ C.-Dagh. *gaz^w ‘room; house’ (Av. (Kus.) goz ‘room; house’) ~ Basq. asoka [azoka] ‘open shopping area, bazaar/fair’.

C.-Kartv. *ar- ‘variety of iron’ (Old Geo. ar-ona ‘a kind of ploughshare’ (Saba), Zan (Megr.) or-əna ‘a kind of ploughshare, variety of hook’) ~ C.-Dagh. *hər- ‘iron, copper’ (And. hir ‘copper’, Khin. ur-a // or-a ‘iron’) ~ Basq. urre ‘gold’.

C.-Kartv. *qir- ‘stone’ (Geo. xir-aṭ-i ‘rocky-ground to be ploughed’ (Saba), cf. -aṭ ‘derivative suffix’) ~ C.-Sind. *qər- ‘rock’ (Qab. qər ‘rock’) ~ C.-Nakh. *qer- ‘stone’ (Chech. qjer-a, Ing. qjer-ǎ, Ts.-Tush. qer ‘stone’) ~ C.-Dagh. *qer- ‘sandstone’ (God. qer-u ‘sandstone’) ~ Basq. harri ‘stone’.

C.-Kartv. *stw-el- ‘autumn’ (Old Geo. stwel-i ‘October’, stuel-i ‘autumn’ (Saba), New Geo. rtvel-i ‘vintage’, Psh. stvel-i ‘autumn’, Mokh. stvel-ob-a ‘autumn, vintage’) ~ C.-Sind. *š^w- ‘vintage’ (Aphk. a-š^w-ra ‘vintage’) ~ C.-Nakh. *stab-o ‘autumn’ (Ts.-Tussh. sṭab-o ‘autumn’, cf. Chech. bōäst-je, Ing. bōäst-ij ‘spring’) ~ C.-Dagh. *sət^w- ‘autumn’ (Lak s:tu, Arch. sot:əq ‘autumn’) ~ Basq. usta ‘harvest’.

C.-Kartv. *qwap- ‘hole/pir’ (Geo. (Mokh.) qop-i ‘hole/pir’, Tush. qvap-i, Pshav. qvamp-i ‘deepened place’, Zan Xop-i // Xop-a (*top.*, *hypr.*), Sv. qāpw ‘sth with wide opening’) ~ C.-Dagh. *qwab- ‘grave’ (Av. xob, Chad. ḥub, Botl. (Miar.) qum-u, Kar. xob-i // xob-o, Bagw. x^wob, Cham. hub-u // hob, Darg. (Urakh) ḥ^wəb ‘grave’) ~ Basq. hobi ‘grave’.

C.-Kartv. *her- ‘people, army’ (Geo. er-i ‘people, army’, Her-i (*ethmon.*) Her-et-i, Zan (Megr.) er-eb-i ‘large family’; ‘unity; nation’, Sv. her, jer (Lashkh.) ‘nation’) ~ C.-Sind. *rə ‘army’ (Ub. La ‘army’, Ab. rə, Aphk. a-r ‘army’) ~ C.-Nakh. *war- ‘clan’ (Ing. wär ‘clan’) ~ C.-Dagh. *war- ‘army’ (Lak ər-al ‘pluralia tantum’, Arch. ər-i ‘army’) ~ Basq. erri ‘people’.

C.-Kartv. *mal- ‘hiding’ (Geo. mal, mal-v-a ‘hiding’, sa-mal-av-i ‘hiding place’, mal-ul-i ‘hidden/secret’, i-mal-v-i-s / i-mal-eb-a ‘sb/sth hides’, e-mal-eb-a ‘sb/sth hides from sb/sth’) ~ C.-Sind. *bālə- ‘hiding, covering, burying’ (Ad. bələ-, in the word ǃă-bələ-n ‘hiding, covering, burying’) ~ C.-Dagh. *e-bal- ‘covering, hiding’ (Kar. ebal-e-du ‘hiding, covering’) ~ Basq. barau ‘fasting’, for semantics cf. Geo. marxva ‘fasting; burying’.

Concluding remarks

The main conclusion of this paper is that the two branches of the Caucasian languages, the North and South Caucasian languages, together with the Basque and Burushaski languages, form a single family of languages with which the languages of the ancient world, such as Khattic, Sumerian, Hurro-Urartian, Kassite, Etruscan are genetically related. Hence, Khattic is closer to the Abkhazian-Adyghean (Sindy) languages (Ivanov, Brawn), Sumerian is considered as a close relative of the Kartvelian languages, Hurrian-Urartian is already related to the Nakh languages by specialists, and Kassite should be considered as an archaic language of the Dagestanian group of the Caucasian language family. Clearly, in order to prove this proposition, the lexical cognates cited above must be accompanied by the formulas of regular phonemic correspondences found between the Ibero-Caucasian languages, which we have already properly studied, but this is beyond the scope of the present paper.

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KLAS-GÖRAN KARLSSON

The Armenian genocide

Recent scholarly interpretations

According to the Genocide Convention, approved by the United Nations on 9 December 1948 and entering into force for all member states just over two years later, genocide is an act with special characteristics. It is committed with intent to destroy a national, ethnic, racial or religious group, by either killing its members, causing them serious bodily or mental harm, deliberately inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction, imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group, or forcibly transferring children of the group to another group (UN Convention 1948). However, following sociological theory, it might be more fruitful to define a genocide as the murder of a category of people. While a group of people is characterized by agency, by a capacity for identifying itself and attaining certain goals, a category of people does not act, but is rather identified from outside and designated as the target for various deeds and misdeeds. Among the latter, no doubt, genocide is the worst kind of crime against humanity. Thus, in a genocide, the victims constitute a category exposed to the mass violence of the perpetrator group, not for what they do or have done, but for who they are and for what they might do in an imagined future.

Genocidal categories and societies

Not just any human collective becomes the victim of genocide. A stigmatization and demonization that often triggers a genocidal process is directed against minorities that stand out as beneficiaries of a modernization process, allegedly or in reality reaping the fruits of economic and political development, at the expense of an envious and critical majority that feels deprived and endangered. In scholarly discourse, minorities that gain this

kind of precarious prosperity are often denominated as middle-man minorities, indicating their prominent intermediate positions in society in certain professions, in trade and commerce. If these minorities have their roots in a country other than their state of residence, they have been called mobilized diasporas (Blalock 1967, 79–84; Bonacich 1973, 583–8594; Armstrong 176, 393–408; Karlsson 2012, 72–76). In the latter case, they have or are ascribed with connections to other countries or co-nationals living abroad, contacts that the majority is devoid of. In a situation of conflict, the collective runs the risk of being associated with these external enemies, simultaneously betraying their own state of residence.

Neither is every society prone to be exposed to genocide. Generally, a genocidal society is characterized by rapid change, malignant political and ideological tensions, trying economic problems and large social and ethnic divisions. Imperial states, with different ethnic and religious groups living together more or less peacefully, have been recurrent arenas of genocide. Furthermore, both revolutions and great wars are interrelated with genocide, adding to the lack of and a search for stability and a certain inclination for conspiracies. However, the most important factor in provoking and carrying through terrifying deeds such as genocides is an ideology, needed to legitimate measures taken against other humans that go beyond what has been called the universe of obligation, that is traditional behavior and time-honored attitudes against fellow-beings (Fein 1979, 4). For the majority population in general, the same ideology serves the purpose to reassure that these measures are and must be taken not against “us”, but against another collective that deserves it. Since these “others” obstruct “our” contemporary prosperity and future happiness, the end justifies even the most brutal of means, is the main point of narratives constructed from postulates of a genocidal ideology. It is, in other words, about sacrificing the few to the proposed benefit of the many.

The Armenian genocide

Such a general analytical framework can well be applied to the specific history of the late Ottoman Empire. In the course of the First World War, the Christian Ottomans, Armenians, Assyrians, Syriacs, Chaldeans and Greeks, were exposed to genocide by the Ottoman government and its helpers: the army, the gendarmerie, party and state functionaries on local, regional and central levels, a “Special Organization” of criminals and adventurers composed for the genocidal purpose, and Kurdish rob-

ber bands. In this text, the focus is on the Armenian genocide, without belittling the suffering of the other Christian categories. At the time, it was a crime without a name, since the concept of genocide did not exist. However, history is not only a reconstruction of contemporary events and discourse; it is also a construction based on our present-day questions and concepts.

The genocidal activities started in the spring of 1915 after a period of serious Ottoman defeats in the war against the Russian entente enemy and concomitant frictions in the Ottoman state and society. Armenians serving in the Ottoman army had already beforehand been segregated and unarmed, obviously in order to not offer resistance. When the massacres decreased in 1916, more than a million victims had died from immediate killings and large-scale forced deportations into the Syrian and Iraqi deserts, where thirst, hunger, epidemics and bands of killer battalions took a heavy death toll. Even Armenian churches and cultural monuments were violently desecrated, and Armenian properties and other belongings were taken over by Turks and Muslims, many refugees who had been forced to leave the Balkan during the wars.

Indeed, this aggression, aimed at establishing unrestricted Turkish sovereignty and a Turkish nation state, has been described as the archetype of modern genocide (Gerner and Karlsson 2005, 39; Karlsson 2015, 11–26). At that time, the aim of creating a national home was shared by many ethno-national groups who fought the First World War, and the means were certainly also violent in a situation of world war, but the Young Turks' destruction of selected categories in order to create a Turkey without Christians was without precedent even in the First World War years. No other warring government openly discarded the obligation to defend its citizenry, turning its state power against segments of its population.

Since the early 19th century, the Ottoman Empire had been denominated as the sick man of Europe, suffering from societal retrogression, administrative corruption, imperial decline and international exploitation. The situation of the Armenians was paradoxical. On the one hand, as a middleman minority, they were regarded as an important group to favor Ottoman economic modernization. The Armenians certainly represented a small group in Ottoman society, but together with the Greeks they nevertheless played a crucial role in the Ottoman economy, due to their relatively high level of education, linguistic skills, international contacts and banking, trade, and crafts activities. In the period known as *Tanzimat*

or restructuring, from 1839 to 1876, ending with the promulgation of an Ottoman constitution, a policy of equality and democratization invited Armenians to participate in societal life more than ever. It must, however, be added that most Ottoman Armenians did not belong to this prosperous urban elite but were poor peasants whose conditions were similar to many ordinary Turks' life situations. On the other hand, the same middleman minority, through its alleged political treason and economic exploitation, was recurrently identified as dangerous for the stability of the empire. In situations of weakness and decay the Armenians, organized in communities or *millets* that gave them a certain cultural and religious freedom but also rendered them politically and militarily powerless, had often been designated to be scapegoats. In the years 1894–1896, Sultan Abdul Hamid II had ordered massacres of the largest Christian minority in the empire, the Armenians. Large groups of ordinary Turks and Muslims took part in the killings and the looting of Armenian property, which indicates a deep-felt resentment against the Christian minority from the majority population.

The duality of Young Turk politics

In 1908, a group of young militaries inspired by Western, constitutional political ideas, the Young Turks, gained power by forcing the authoritarian Sultan to resign his powers. For them, the Sultan had personified the sick man of Europe. Their political party, the Committee for Unity and Progress, started as a political advocate for progress, that is democracy, minority rights and a general modernization drive. Their politics was strongly supported both by international powers, worried by and recurrently objecting to how the Ottomans handled the Armenian “question”, and by internal minority groups that increased their participation in cultural and political activities. Often attached to international networks, Armenian schools and newspapers grew, and Armenian political parties successfully called for parliamentary seats allotted to Armenians. The most influential of them, the Dashnaktsutun, was even fraternally linked to the Young Turks in an alliance.

However, the “progress” period did not last long. After a few years of an attempted counter coup by conservative elements, continuous defeats in wars, and imperial shrinkage, the new rulers left the progressive agenda to turn their main attention to bringing forward unity, understood as national-religious homogeneity and Turkish supremacy in their state. A

Turkish historian explains the change in a prosaic way, noting that the Ottoman empire essentially had been driven out of Europe: “Since the Turks had now become the numerically most important element in the Empire more emphasis had to be given to nationalism” (Ahmad 2010, 143). Another Turkish scholar has underlined the importance of the Ottoman defeats in the two Balkan wars 1911–1913. The total collapse threatened the empire and stirred up demands for measures in favor of the well-being of all those displaced Turks who were forced to leave the Balkans, and against those non-Turks who were made responsible for the defeats (Akçam 2006, 84–92, 2012, 29–39). As early as in 1909, 20,000 Armenians in the city of Adana, located in Mediterranean Cilicia, were massacred, at the same time as the dethroned Sultan’s supporters staged an unsuccessful countercoup in Constantinople. In early 1913, a Young Turkish triumvirate with dictatorial power and an obsession for empire and nation, the Minister of Internal Affairs Talaat Pasha, the Minister of War Enver Pasha and the Minister of the Marine Jemal Pasha, seized control and took over the Sublime Porte, the central Ottoman government in Constantinople. Their organic or integral nationalist ideas rejected both democracy, minority rights and individual liberties. Armenians, allegedly ready to stab the Turks in their backs, were special targets for the nationalist hate. Two years later, when the empire was the arena of the Russo–Ottoman branch of the raging world war, with Armenians on both sides of the frontier, these Young Turkish leaders became the architects of a genocide directed at the “disloyal” and “rebellious” Armenians. The Armenian Question needed to be settled once and for all, they argued, simultaneously designing a new demographic-political order in a Turkish state for the Turks. On the night of April 24, 1915, hundreds of Armenian political, religious and intellectual leaders in Constantinople were arrested, deported and killed as a starting signal of the genocide. One month later, the Young Turk government was accused of responsibility for “crime against humanity and civilization” by the entente governments of France, Great Britain and Russia. The accusation, however, neither stopped nor reduced the genocidal killings.

Armenian genocide studies

It seems natural that events of this magnitude should give birth to many posterior questions, scholarly as well as non-scholarly. This is, however, not as self-evident as it seems, but rather a reaction based on today’s assess-

ment, when crimes against humanity seem to catch wide attention round the world. In fact, the Armenian genocide was quickly sorted into the category of “forgotten” genocides, and it took historians many decades to begin analyzing the events in a scholarly, empirical and systematic way. Several causes of this silence can be found. In the Ottoman Empire’s successor state of Turkey – a state that after the First World War was rapidly integrated into the international community – the attitude to the genocide was a building silence that rapidly developed into persistent denial, which impelled and still impels many western states that are interested in good relations with Turkey and attracted by both the state’s strategic position and the oil in the Middle East, to avoid genocide as a topic of debate. Armenia, transformed into a Transcaucasian Soviet republic after the First World War, was heavily dependent on the voice of Moscow, a voice that did not want to spoil its international relations to Ankara. Agencies connected to Turkey, such as scholarly historical institutes and embassies, have consistently counteracted activities connected to the acknowledgement and even discussion of the genocide, and sources necessary for the historical investigation of the genocide have been made inaccessible for international scholars. Besides, a new genocide, perpetrated during the next world war, with the Jews as the victim category, tended to obscure the Armenian counterpart. Jews and the State of Israel, for a variety of reasons armed with much more powerful voices than Armenians and Armenia, appropriated the important genocide narrative when Holocaust history was disseminated across the world. It should, however, be noted that it took two generations for those who were or felt themselves affected by the Holocaust to start disseminating its experiences, memories and lessons. While the survivors were effectively silenced by the enormity of the horrors, the next generation had to set aside the traumatic history in order to reconstruct the world that was lost in the genocide. Only through a third generation, with no genocide experiences of its own, was the traumatic history reborn. In the Armenian case, the delay between event and remembrance was even longer.

Thus, serious scholarship on the Armenian genocide has only been in progress for a few decades. In richness and maturity, it cannot be compared to the extremely nuanced and diverse scholarly work on the Holocaust. Nevertheless, since the 1980s, several scholarly works by outstanding scholars such as the historian Richard Hovannisian (1986, 1992) and the sociologist Vahakn Dadrian (1995, 2007) have been published that have formulated crucial problems related to the history of the Ar-

menian genocide. They have contributed to more solid knowledge of the genocidal events and their long and short-term contexts and prerequisites. The basic question, partly based on the UN definition of genocide, has been whether the Armenian genocide can be characterized as intentional, as the consequence of a deliberate, purposeful, premeditated Turkish idea to murder the Armenians for who they were or what they may do. There are several indications, both from statements made by the leading Young Turks, and from the well-coordinated and methodical realization of the atrocities, that intentionalism is an applicable explanatory model. There is no question that the killings and deportations of the Armenians were planned and initiated from the highest political authorities, and there is surely proof of an intention to create conditions where killing was preferable and sometimes inevitable. The competing explanatory model, functionalism, indicates that the genocide was not planned beforehand but rather a consequence of new, and for the perpetrators, threatening circumstances. In particular, a turbulent and chaotic world war situation activated latent anti-Armenian attitudes and triggered the massacres against an allegedly treacherous and dangerous category. This is not to say that Armenians died simply because they were victims of a war, because they did not. Yet, a functional conclusion with some plausibility tells us that without the radicalizing world war, there might have been no genocide. It has also been argued that intentionalist and functionalist explanatory models do not exclude each other (Karlsson 1996, 127–158; Hovannisian 2007, 3–17). Another basic question concerns the number of the victims. Strongly differing census figures from the Ottoman authorities and the Armenian church for the period before the genocide, with the Armenian Patriarchate's numbers palpably higher, still gives priority to even less precise figures, often one or one and a half million Armenian victims.

Several other crucial aspects of the Armenian genocide have additionally been covered by scholars over the years. Important books have been written about the international situation prompting the Armenian genocide, about the rapid development of the leading Young Turks from progressive internationalists to integral nationalists, and on the ideological positions between nationalism and socialism among mobilized Ottoman Armenians (Bloxham 2005; Zürcher 1984; Ter Minassian 1984). A few books have emphasized how the Armenian genocide was apprehended and interpreted in other countries (Balakian 2003; Winter 2004; Gunner 2012). Works focusing on the structural elements of a genocidal

society have also involved the Armenian genocide, primarily including comparisons between the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust (Melson 1992; Reid 1992, 21–52; Shaw 2003). Accounts by eyewitnesses looking at the atrocities from different perspectives, from American ambassadors to German photographers to Armenian survivors, have been assiduously published (Morgenthau 2008; Wegner 2015; Balakian 2010). Even scholarly literature aiming at repudiating or denying that the Armenians were exposed to genocide have been incorporated into the scholarly literature, albeit obviously with strong reservations (Lewis 1961; Shaw and Shaw 1977; McCarthy 1995).

Three recent perspectives

In recent years, there has been an increased intensity in the publication of scholarly works on the Armenian genocide, at the same time as a growing interest in political, intellectual and cultural circles. Some of these works relate to the contemporary genocidal process and its events, some to structural and comparative aspects, and the third group to the aftermath of the Armenian genocide. Broader historical perspectives, for example fitting the 1915 genocide into a “thirty-year Turkish genocide” of Christian minorities, have been established (Morris and Ze’evi 2019). In this article, three crucial topics that have been recently addressed will be analyzed. The first is the religious component of the genocide in question. The perpetrators were Muslims, the victims Christians. The Young Turk rulers described the Ottoman participation in the First World War, and the attacks on *dhimmis*, traditionally Christians and other people whose status was “tolerated” as long as they accepted Muslim rule, as a *jihad*, a holy war. A second topic that has triggered intensified scholarly debate concerns German involvement in the preparations and execution of the genocide. The Ottoman Empire fought on Germany’s side as a Central power in the First World War, and the large and long-standing German presence in Ottoman society – in economic life, in the army, in diplomatic and political circles and among missionaries – has pushed questions of what Wilhelm II’s Germany did, learned and taught in the Ottoman Empire to the scholarly forefront. Could Germany, as an ally, have prevented the genocide, or at least lessened the burdens of the suffering Armenians? In this analysis, not only the Holocaust, but also the colonial genocide perpetrated by Germans against the Herero and Nama peoples in German South-West Africa in the early 20th century, are integrated parts. The

third topic that is handled by many present-day scholars and therefore will be dealt with here is the aftermath of the Armenian Genocide. What happens with a genocidal society once the genocidal killings subside? In one sense the problem is particularly complicated, since the Ottoman state and society formally ceased to exist in 1923, to be succeeded by a new Turkish republic. In another sense it is less complicated, since it also forms a linear history of a prolonged Turkish state-sponsored resistance to recognizing or even discussing an Ottoman genocide against Armenians. Shifting the focus from the perpetrator state and its successor, however, it is also possible to discern a more twisted road of international recognition and remembrance. It is a road where decades of disinterest, and a concomitant frustration among Armenians all over the world over the relative silence regarding their tragedy, has gradually turned into interest. Questions of memory and commemoration, of culture and the politics of history, of denial and denialism, are often scholarly instruments used to address this topic.

To be sure, these three chosen aspects are not the result of an arbitrary scholarly interest or of chance. The first, the jihad, relates to a “clash of civilizations” perspective, with Christian and Islamic states and actors confronting each other, brought to the fore by Samuel Huntington’s well-known book (1996) on the topic. The second aspect, the German involvement, relates to the wide present-day discussion on transitional justice, guilt and responsibility for historical crimes, not only valid for perpetrators, but also for those who today are called bystanders. The third topic, the aftermath of genocide, connects the Armenian trauma to perspectives of experience, memory, narrative and uses of history, salient in scholarly discourse after its “cultural turn”.

Jihad

The British consul and eyewitness Henry Barnham described the Armenian genocide in the following way:

The butchers and the tanners, with sleeves tucked up to the shoulders, armed with clubs and cleavers, cut down the Christians, with cries of ‘Allahu Akbar!’ broke down the doors of the houses with pickaxes and levers, or scaled the walls with ladders. Then by mid-day they knelt down and said their prayers, and then jumped up and resumed the dreadful work, carrying it on far into the night (Balakian 2003, 112).

On 31 October 1914, the Ottoman Empire entered the world war. Less than two weeks after, on 13 November, the Ottoman leaders declared it a jihad, a holy war, against the infidels. All Christians were to be exterminated, except those who belonged to their allies Germany and Austria-Hungary, it was announced. In his 1918 book on the Armenian genocide, the American Constantinople Ambassador Henry Morgenthau, who later was assured that neither were the Americans in danger, noted (2008, 118) that the jihad “started passions aflame that afterward spent themselves in the massacres of the Armenians and other subject peoples”. The jihad appeal is difficult to interpret. On the one hand, the measure is hard to bring into line with the traditional description of the Young Turks as a Westernized group, educated in Europe and representing a positivistic, anti-religious worldview. From this perspective, the jihad appeal appears as a pragmatic and instrumental act to mobilize broad Turkish, Arabic and other Muslim groups through their faith, for the war in the Ottoman Empire and in other belligerent countries with Muslim minorities. The long series of Ottoman defeats may have discouraged many Ottomans from going to war. At this early phase, Armenians were still part of the Ottoman army, and the appeal probably put them in an awkward situation to fight Western states that they felt some affinity to (Suny 2015, 238). There are genocide scholars who directly brush aside the Young Turks’ religious interests by drawing a more clear-cut dividing line between them and nationalist interests, stressing the latter in the Turkish case (Suny 2001, 50–52).

On the other hand, the Turkish nationalism that rapidly grasped a hold on the Young Turks has been described as an ideology of blood and race that not only disqualified and excluded the Armenians from Ottoman life. It also awarded “divine qualities” to the Turkish nation (Heyd 1950, 57). Generally, it has been argued that race and religion have played reciprocally reinforcing roles as mobilizing devices in times of conflict, when there is a need for both a brotherhood and clear, unambiguous images of enemies (Kiernan 2003, 30). It may be particularly relevant when crisis set in in a multiethnic empire such as the Ottoman Empire, where Turks and Muslims had the political and military power and Christians were ascribed a lesser value (Rubenstein 2011, 43–49). In the 1894–1896 massacres of Armenians, religion was obviously present as a motivating factor. The Ottoman entry into the First World War, nationalist chief ideologue Ziya Gökalp maintained, was “a means of realizing Pan-Turkish dreams” for the Young Turks, that is to remove the Armenians that he described as a foreign body in the

national Turkish state, thereby redeeming and delivering the Ottoman empire (Astourian 1999, 34). In such a context, jihad becomes more consistent with the Young Turks' ideological preferences. It has been argued that the apocalyptic First World War generally meant that the Enlightenment idea stating that religion and politics were distinct spheres in modern life was called into question (Burleigh 2008, 22; Karlsson 2014, 162–172). Furthermore, the interpretation harmonizes with a scholarly analysis of what is described as civil, secular or political religion. Politics is sacralized, Emilio Gentile (2006, 138–139) maintains, when a modern political regime with a monopoly of power, an ideological hegemony and a political program of absolute subordination “[c]onsecrates the primacy of a *secular collective entity* by placing it at the center of a set of beliefs and myths that define the meaning and the ultimate purpose of the social existence and prescribe the principles for discriminating between good and evil”.

Germany

In his memoirs the aforementioned Ambassador Morgenthau gives many examples of how the Ottoman jihad call was supposed to mobilize, and succeeded in mobilizing, the Muslims against their Christian exploiters and oppressors. However, his main message is that the Young Turks are less to be blamed for the distribution of the religious hate propaganda than their allied Germany, that in his eyes realized that the idea could divide enemy states with Muslim populations at home or in their colonies: “In all parts of this incentive to murder and assassination there are indications that a German hand has exercised an editorial supervision” (Morgenthau 2008, 115).

The question of German involvement in the Armenian genocide is certainly not new but has regained its relevance in recent years (Lepsius 1919; Trumpener 1989; Walker 1990, 231–236). The Ottoman Empire belonged to the Central powers, as did its senior power Germany. Imperial Germany had for a long time regarded the Ottoman Empire as a prime area in its aspirations to dominance in Europe and beyond. Relations between Germany and the leading Ottoman politicians had not been without problems and tensions but the alliance worked well, founded as it was on a long-term German military engagement to reform the Ottoman army, technical and economic support to Ottoman society from Deutsche Bank and companies such as Siemens and AEG, and a certain

political proximity between two semi-authoritarian states (Weitz 2011, 175–198). Rhetorically asking why the Young Turks entered the war, Talaat Pasha answered: “We had to reestablish our independence, and we were sure that we would achieve this best at Germany’s side” (Kieser 2018, 7).

It goes without saying that German representatives of state authority, such as Baron von Wangenheim, German ambassador to Constantinople until his death in October 1915, but also his successors, had a position that could have influenced the Ottoman allies to moderate their genocidal activities. No doubt, they had up-to-date information of the genocidal events, since it did not take place in secrecy, and German consuls, militaries and missionaries reported regularly on the slaughter of the Armenians. No other government, except for the Ottoman leadership itself, was as well informed about the atrocities as the German government, it has been convincingly argued (Ihrig 2018, 157). Reasonably, the genocide hampered the war effort and weakened the Ottoman army by disarming and killing its own soldiers. Furthermore, it provided the enemy powers with material for their war propaganda, a possibility that they also made frequent and effective use of. At the same time, it was urgent for German politicians, military personnel and officials in Berlin as well as in Constantinople not to offend their allies by intervening in their “internal affairs”. For them, Ottoman stability was a primary goal. In German newspapers, Armenians represented the opposite: turbulence, revolt and revolution, and Ottoman propaganda on the treacherous Armenians was uncritically mediated by German newspapers (Ihrig 2018, 162–170). The German foreign office in Berlin denied both German involvement and the reality and truth of the massacres (Trumpener 1989, 204–205). There are indications that the German non-intervention policy changed into a more critical attitude to the Ottoman outrage as it accelerated. The Ottoman leaders reacted with irritation and rage, but little action seems to have been taken as a result of the criticism. In earlier scholarship, there seems to be a relative consensus that Germany cannot be accused of complicity in the genocide. Germans played the role of bystanders.

In more recent scholarship, however, the interpretations have changed to stress a more active German participation. It seems that the Young Turks were more dependent on the superior Central power than was previously presumed. In particular, German military officers have been pointed out as active in the forced deportations of Armenians (Dinkel 1991, 77–133). During the Berlin-Baghdad railway project, carried out during the first part of the First World War, Armenian construction wor-

kers were deported to be systematically killed, with the active participation of German military and civil authorities, although the completion of the railway through the Ottoman Empire was of crucial importance to the war effort. “[T]he German Foreign Office made greater efforts to deny the extermination than to intervene with its Ottoman ally to stop the carnage”, is one conclusion (Kaiser 1999, 76). Another one is that the history of the railway construction gives evidence of both active resistance and complicity from the German side.

Finally, there is another, wider and more profound perspective on the German participation in the Armenian genocide. In a Salzburg villa in August 1939, just a few days before the German attack on Poland that would trigger the Second World War, Adolf Hitler gave a brutal speech in front of his Nazi generals, obviously to provide them with a sense of impunity before they started their destruction campaign in Poland. “Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?”, he asked them rhetorically (Lochner 1942, 1–4). This often quoted appeal, reproduced by an American Associated Press correspondent a few years later, leads to a question that has been recurrently asked, but with increasing frequency in recent years: Is there a connection between the Nazi genocide of the Jews in the Second World War and German participation in the genocide of the Armenians during the First World War? If yes, what characterizes this relationship? Were the connections merely individual, with prospective Nazis being present in the Armenian killings, or is it reasonable to argue for a more profound learning process? And can this genocidal line be extended more, to include imperial Germany’s genocide of the Herero and Nama peoples in the colonial years 1904–1907 as well? It is outside the bounds of this article to analyze this possible German genocidal line, in terms of structural similarities or cultural-ideological influences (cf. Gerner and Karlsson 2005, 74–85). Here, it must suffice to observe that comparisons between the Armenian genocide and the Holocaust, and between Armenian and Jewish victims, are constantly in fashion among genocide scholars (Karlsson 2012, 164–181).

The aftermath

Analytically, the effects of a genocide can be understood in two ways. One kind of effect is immediately related to the genocide and must be analyzed as a chronological and causal extension of the events of 1915. In this kind of aftermath, streams of refugees, trials against the perpetrators,

negotiations of guilt and compensation, international verdicts and acts of vengeance can be included. This kind of study of historical effects and consequences are often chronologically close to the events that triggered them. Scholarly studies have charted many of these phenomena. Among them can be mentioned the legal processes against the Young Turk perpetrators. A general observation is that very few of them were convicted. The threat issued by the entente powers in the beginning of the genocide process lead to few results. The main responsible Young Turks, Enver, Talaat and Jemal, had already fled the country when the war ended, all of them eventually to be killed by Armenian avengers. However, after the armistice agreement between the militarily defeated Ottoman Empire and the victorious Entente powers on 30 October 1918, several military tribunals were organized in different cities in the moribund empire between 1919 and 1922 to expose and punish the perpetrators. In these court-martial proceedings 18 individuals were condemned to death for crimes against the Armenians, 15 in absentia (Dadrian and Akçam 2011, 195). A British High Commissioner present at the proceedings, Richard Webb, noted: "It is interesting to see how skillfully the Turkish Penal Code has been manipulated to cover the acts attributed to the accused, and the manner in which the sentences have been apportioned among the absent and the present so as to effect a minimum of real bloodshed" (Höss 1992, 210).

Another often debated aspect concerns the peace treaties after the First World War. As a matter of fact, there were two of them. In the last Paris peace treaty, signed in Sèvres in August 1920 in a situation of an ongoing Turkish independence war against Armenians and other Christians, and a new-born Turkish nationalism under Mustafa Kemal (Atatürk), the Armenians were distinguished objects. Most importantly, Armenia was awarded a significant piece of territory, an Armenian national homeland in territories chiseled out from ancient Armenian land, including both Ottoman and Russian areas. Besides, it was established that lost or seized property should be returned to Armenians. However, in a new power position, the Turks managed to change the roles of perpetrators and victims, which means that Armenians were accused of being guilty of collaboration and the killings of Turks and Muslims, and their demands were rejected. Kemal's new, self-confident Turkey refused to acknowledge the Sèvres treaty. In a new peace treaty following the Greco-Turkish war, signed at a conference in Lausanne in 1923, the Turks refused to attend the meetings in which the Armenian question should be decided. It was a successful policy. The word "Armenia" did not even exist in the new

treaty text. The great powers had yielded, probably realizing that good relations with Turkey might be an asset for the future, even if there were voices complaining that the Armenians had been sold out. Against this background, from a Turkish standpoint, it is not completely wrong to designate the mass murders of 1915–1916 as a successful genocide.

In the other kind of history of effects, in German called *Wirkungsgeschichte*, posterity looks back on the Armenian genocide, not from the position of the original genocide process, but from the needs and interests of the posterior situation. If one wants to understand why the Swedish parliament decided to officially recognize the Armenian genocide in March 2010, after 95 years, there is little analytical value in going back to the events of 1915. A much more valuable context relates the decision to the politics of memory and history culture of the 21st century. Of special interest here is the importance ascribed to genocide in general and the Holocaust in particular, as literally crimes against humanity, in Europe and all over the world. A few recent scholarly works have dealt with this return of the Armenian genocide (Avedian 2019. See also Bobelian 2009; Karlsson 2012; Robertson 2015). It has been demonstrated that the process of recovery started on 24 April 1965, exactly 50 years after the beginning of the genocide, in Yerevan in the Armenian Soviet republic, where commemoration ceremonies turned into large-scale demonstrations against on the one hand the drawing-up of frontiers after the First World War and the Armenian independence that did not occur, and on the other hand Turkish genocide denial and Soviet suppression of the issue of the Armenian genocide. Since then the genocide has attracted increased attention both among Armenians and in international political discourse. 1987 was another turning-point, when the genocide was recognized by the European parliament, and armed Armenian acts of vengeance against Turkish officials came to an end. Furthermore, in the Soviet Union, in 1987, Mikhail Gorbachev's reform work – *perestroika*, *glasnost'* and *demokratizatsiya* – changed the prerequisites for an open debate and for activism. This did not only open an intellectual and political arena for discussing the Armenian genocide and its consequences. It also triggered a violent conflict between Armenia and Turkish Azerbaijan on the Nagorno-Karabakh region, with connections to the aftermath of the genocide. The South Caucasian conflict became a powerful and motivating force in the process that led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.

One of the most conspicuous and distinct features of the repercussion of the Armenian genocide is the Turkish state's rationalization and

denial of the history of events, carried out for many decades with the full assistance of the state's political, diplomatic, administrative and educational apparatus. After the war and the genesis of a Turkish nation state, an alternative history of the late Ottoman crimes gradually took shape. It was founded on ideas of Ottoman Armenian collaboration with the world war enemies, of Ottoman Armenian's war with the authorities from within, of aggressive Armenian nationalist aspirations, of Armenians killing Turks, of deportations carried out as an attempt by the Ottoman authorities to protect the Armenian minority from the destruction of war, and of massacres not ordered from the top but carried out from below. In the final analysis, the conclusion that wars are deadly, for Armenians and for Turks, for Christians as well as Muslims, is another frequently used rationalization. Thus, the Armenian genocide history has never been accepted or tolerated in Turkey. What is more, the Turkish attitude has for several decades been filled with aggression in its use of various threats to those states that bring the genocide onto the agenda, of everything from geo-strategic restrictions in the use of Turkish military airfields to temporary withdrawals of Turkish ambassadors.

The mere continuity line testifies to the importance of the denial for Turkish identity and ideology. Whether the denial strategy is connected to the need to nurse a valuable traditional Ottoman or even modernist Kemalist heritage, to stand out as the democratic, peaceful alternative in the troublesome Middle East, to avoid comparisons with a likewise problematic and still ongoing Kurdish-Turkish history, or to avoid claims of compensation, is hard to say. In recent years, the international pressure on Turkey to recognize the painful history, not least from the European Union, has increased. So has the scholarly interest in analyzing the process, structure and function of Armenian genocide silence and denial, often in a comparative perspective (Karlsson 2015; Göçek 2015; Akçam 2010, 173–180; Dadrian 1999; Hovannisian 1999).

Conclusion

In modern history scholarship, what has been denoted as borderline events have attracted increased attention (Rüsen 2001, 252–270). Events of this kind have a threefold importance when answering to three analytically different perspectives. First, from a linear, traditionally historical perspective, it stands clear that their appearance once and for all changed the world. Secondly, seen from a structural perspective of the social sci-

ences, they have a special relevance when they are compared or in other ways related to events of the same or similar kind, in efforts to chisel out regularities, patterns and lessons of history considered valuable in our posterior orientation in society. Thirdly, applying what modern historical theory calls a genealogical, retrospective perspective, borderline events tend to come back again and again as a kind of “repetition structures” in our debate and discourse, never settling down and going to rest (Koselleck 2018, 158–174).

It goes without saying that genocides are salient examples of borderline events, together with great wars and political revolutions. Genocide studies, as an expanding scholarly field in recent decades, have obviously profited on this multi-perspective approach. Traditional historical accounts on the causes, manifestations and effects of a genocide, often carried through by historians and intellectuals belonging to the victim category, have given way to studies in which the borderline event has been integrated into both wider societal and more profound cultural perspectives, and carried out by scholars of all disciplines and affiliations. In this chapter, the ambition has been to demonstrate new ways of analyzing crucial aspects of the Armenian genocide. The basic conclusion is that the scholarly work on the Young Turk mass murder of Armenians and other Christian categories of people during the First World War nowadays represents state of the art scholarship in the humanities and social sciences. If silence and denial are still tangible political aspects of the genocide, so too is the openness and manifoldness of modern scholarship. In the best of worlds, the latter can thwart the former.

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STEPHEN F. JONES

The Democratic Republic of Georgia, 1918–21

When thinking about Georgian social democracy and the Democratic Republic of Georgia (DRG 1918–21), three questions come to mind. First, why is the history of the First Republic not better known in Georgia and in Europe?¹ It has been over a quarter of a century since the Soviet collapse, archives are open, censorship has gone, history can be revisited, a vitally important chapter in the Georgian past can be celebrated. But the DRG remains absent in the historical consciousness of Georgian citizens. Traveling in Italy, you cannot avoid encountering monuments dedicated to Giuseppe Mazzini or Giuseppe Garibaldi, the champions of Italian unity and independence. In France, despite the bloody consequences of the French Revolution, President Trump was there on Bastille Day in 2017, celebrating the most important holiday in the French calendar and the founding of the first French Republic. But in Tbilisi, Georgia's capital, there is not a single statue to Noe Jordania, Akaki Chkhenkeli, Evgeni Gegechkori or Noe Ramishvili, the founding fathers of Georgia's first democratic republic.² The founders were a remarkable group of brothers-in-arms. In May 1918, they created what Camille Huysmans, secretary of the Second International, called in October 1921 "the only socialist state in the

1 The Democratic Republic of Georgia is often referred to as the First Republic in Georgian historiography.

2 There is a boulevard along the river Mtkvari named after Noe Jordania, and a school named after him in his hometown of Lanchkhuti, in Guria. There is a small bust of Jordania in a park in Lanchkhuti. The Georgian parliament has a chamber dedicated to the Democratic Republic of Georgia, with portraits of its leaders, and there are a few plaques around the city commemorating events during the period of 1918–21. In 2016, the gardens behind the Viceroy's old palace, where the Georgian parliament and Constituent Assembly functioned, were renamed "The Gardens of the First Republic". On the 100th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence in 1918, the Democratic Republic of Georgia and its leaders were celebrated by the government.

entire world” (Georgia and the Socialist International 1921, 78). Georgia had the world’s first social democratic government. The cabinet in 1919 was drawn exclusively from the Georgian Social Democratic Labor party.

The Democratic Republic of Georgia represents a lost past, despite its centrality to Georgia’s 20th century history. In its time, the DRG was a *cause célèbre* in Europe, a beacon of liberty – to coin a phrase – for Europe’s social democrats (CNN 2005).³ European socialists such as Huysmans, Emile Vandervelde, Pierre Renaudel, and Ramsay MacDonald, considered the Georgian republic a civilized alternative to Bolshevism. For them, it was the real face of socialism despite its location in the Caucasus, a region which in the early twentieth century was traditionally considered to be in Asia. The Georgians proved that democratic socialism was possible, even in a peasant society in the undeveloped periphery of the Russian empire. This was a revelation to European socialists, and a challenge to orthodox socialist ideas. A rural and “oriental” country was producing (however imperfectly) a practical model of socialism which combined individual liberties with collective goals, the market with state regulation, and modernization with cultural consolidation.

Georgia was not only of interest in socialist circles, but an illustration of the dilemmas and contradictions engendered by President Wilson’s proposals for self-determination. What was the role of small nations in the new post-war world? Would Georgia qualify for *de jure* recognition despite its small size, internal weaknesses and insecure borders? Georgia’s fate was tied to the solution of the Near Eastern question (the future of the Ottoman empire and Armenia), as the British called it, and to the Russian question. Would Russia survive in some reconstituted form, or would it break up into smaller states?

Georgia, along with its Transcaucasian⁴ neighbors, Armenia and

3 President George Bush, in a speech during his visit to Georgia in 2005, declared “Georgia is today both sovereign and free and a beacon of liberty for this region and the world.” See CNN.com (World) “Bush: Georgia a Beacon of Liberty.” Accessed 29 March, 2020. <http://www.cnn.com/2005/WORLD/europe/05/10/bush.tuesday/>.

4 Transcaucasia (Zakavkaz’e, as distinct from the larger Kavkaz region, or Caucasia, which included southern Russia) was the Tsarist administrative unit for what today we consider the South Caucasus and parts of the North Caucasus. Its shape and content changed over the two centuries of Russian rule but at the beginning of the twentieth century, it comprised the *guberniias* (provinces) of Kutaisi, Tiflis, Erevan, Elizavetopol, and Baku, the *oblasts* (regions) of Batumi, Kars, and Daghestan, and the Zakatali *okrug* (district).

Azerbaijan, was situated in an extremely sensitive geopolitical region, between the Black and Caspian Seas. Western powers like Germany and Great Britain, which had ambitions for hegemony in the East, envisaged Georgia (and Transcaucasia more generally) as a trampoline into the Orient where trade and resources (like oil in Persia) would sustain imperial needs. The capital of Georgia was a commercial entrepôt for the Transcaucasian region. It had in the past served traders and merchants on the Silk Roads, and in the nineteenth century, it became the hub for a vital railway link built in the 1860–1880s by British engineers, which carried oil and other freight from Baku to the Black Sea (and Georgian) port of Batumi. Georgia's position on the border between the Russian and Ottoman empires placed it at an international crossroads which made stability and independence all the more difficult.

The next question is why should we be celebrating the DRG? What was its historical significance? President Saakashvili (2003–2013) saw the first republic as a historical footnote, a period that was simply not national enough by dint of its socialist leadership. It was hardly worth incorporating into the national narrative. On the other hand, contemporaries in Europe were stunned by its achievements given the conditions Georgia faced between 1918–21, and in a region that was almost permanently at war (for a short summary of European socialist views of Georgia see Lee 2017, *Georgia and the Socialist International* 1921). So what did the republic represent? Why was it such an important topic of discussion in European socialist circles? How did it propose to combine socialism, nationalism, and democracy? Georgian social democracy was wildly different from the Soviet version of socialism. It was dedicated to the European model propagated by the German and Austrian social democratic parties.

The final question concerns continuities. Are there any legacies or lessons this first Georgian republic has for contemporary Georgia, or for Europe today? The newly independent Baltic republics, for example, drew significantly on the institutional and legal traditions of pre-WWII independence in their post 1991 state building. Political science calls this “path dependency.” Does the DRG have a usable legacy, did contemporary Georgia incorporate any features or political values of the First Republic? Does the experience of the DRG, in terms of its foreign relations (particularly with Russia and Western states) provide any lessons for Georgian leaders today? Do Western states have a stake in protecting contemporary Georgian democracy, or is it peripheral to EU and US interests?

Why is the First Republic a blank page?

Bernard Lewis in his book, *History Remembered, Recovered, Invented*, tells us that one of the main purposes of remembering the past, “is to explain and perhaps to justify the present.” (Lewis 1975, 55). In Georgia today, most forms of socialism are seen as dated, unworkable, and ultimately detrimental to human liberty. Few Georgians take socialist ideas seriously. They have placed socialism, social democracy and leftist liberalism, into one large pot of outdated and harmful ideologies. The Republican and Free Democratic parties, the most liberal on Georgia’s political spectrum, lost parliamentary representation in the 2016 elections in Georgia, in part because of their unpopular support for liberal ideas like religious tolerance and the defense of the rights of sexual minorities (see IRI 2016). The disaster of Soviet communism and the triumph of neo-liberalism in the international aid strategies of the 1990s in post-Soviet states, had a traumatic impact on the lives of Georgians, but it also contributed to the distortion of Georgian history. If under the USSR, the DRG was reviled because of its bourgeois character – characterized by Soviet historians as a counter-revolutionary and bourgeois republic – after 1991, it was reviled because of its socialist character. Georgian politicians, riding a nationalist wave in the post-1991 period, were particularly guilty of disparaging the DRG as anti-national, or ignoring it altogether. The media followed suit – Georgia’s historic struggles against the Ottomans, Persians and Russians were glorified, but the most difficult task of all – building a democratic state in a developing country with few resources, no international aid, and amidst war and revolution – was barely considered. In the USSR before 1991, research into the DRG was too dangerous for any Georgian scholar.⁵ The republic was erased by a process the Romans called *damnatio memoriae*, or the “condemnation of memory.” After, 1991, it happened again, but this time the republic was condemned because of its unpopular socialist ideology. If a post-Soviet historian made the poor choice of focusing on the DRG, his or her research was confined to a very narrow circle of readers. As a result, the scholarly output on one of the more consequential periods in modern Georgian history has been

5 Georgian historian Ushang Sidamonidze was a case in point. After publishing his book *Demokratiuli modzraobisa da sotsialisturi revolutsiis gamarjebis istoriografia, 1917–21 tsels* (*Historiography of the Bourgeois-Democratic Movement and the Victory of the Socialist Revolution in Georgia, 1917–21*). 1970. Tbilisi: metsniereba, he was fired from his position at the Georgian Institute of History.

minimal.⁶ Even though the archives were open, they were barely used by local scholars, and one of the most innovative and challenging periods in Georgian history was forgotten.⁷

Why doesn't Europe know more?

What explains the absence of interest in the DRG in Europe? It was, after all, the first social democratic government, which made it as much an international as a domestic event. It was central to the debate among European socialists about social democracy's relationship to nationalism and democracy, and seemed to vindicate the idea of a parliamentary evolution to socialism. Georgia was also – along with the Armenian genocide and Baku's oil – central to the role of international mandates at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. Representatives from Europe's major armies were present in the DRG (Germany had 19,000 troops stationed there between March–November 1918, and the British, 20,000 between December 1918 and September 1919). The Italians were planning to take on the international mandate for Georgia after the British left, before a change of government scotched the idea. In the British and French cabinets, Georgia was the subject of intense policy debates on intervention in Russia and Transcaucasia. Otto-Gunther Wesendonk, a German expert on Russian affairs and a member of Germany's diplomatic corps, had this to say about the Caucasus's importance to Germany in a memorandum to his Foreign Minister on May 31, 1918:

6 Among the rare writings on the DRG in Georgia before the 2010s, the best known are: Alexander Bendianishvili. 2001. *Sakartvelos pirveli respublika (1918–21 ts.ts.)*, (*The First Georgian Republic, 1918–21*). Tbilisi: Institute of History, Georgian Academy of Sciences; Shota Vadachkoria. 2001. *Kartuli sotsial-demokratia 1917–1921 tslebi* (Georgian Social Democracy, 1917–21), Tbilisi: Metsniereba; Vakhtang Guruli and Merab Vachnadze. 1999. *Kartuli sotsial-demokratiis istoria (1892–1918)* (The History of Georgian Social Democracy, 1892–1918), Tbilisi: Meridiani. Malkhaz Matsaberidze wrote prolifically on the 1921 constitution. See: 1996. *Sakartvelos 1921 tslis konstitutsiis politikuri kontsepsia (The Political Conception of the Georgian 1921 Constitution)*, Tbilisi: tsodna.

7 The slow pace of publications has changed in recent years with the rise of a new generation of young Georgian historians such as Beka Kobakhidze, Irakli Khvadagiani, Irakli Iremadze, Dimitri Silakadze, and Grigol Gegelia, who have produced a whole series of publications based on newly available materials in the Georgian National Archives.

The Caucasus is for us a trampoline for political activity in Persia, Central Asia and in the Russian lands between Ukraine and the Urals. The control of the Caucasus would be a cornerstone in Germany's Eastern policy (Ostpolitik) and would guarantee our influence in the Black Sea. Economically, we would obtain [...] the second largest oil region in the world, rich manganese production, (and) well-developed cotton production[.] (Freiherr Kress Von Kressenstein 2002, 30).⁸

Lord Curzon (of Kedleston), who in 1919 became Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in Prime Minister Lloyd George's cabinet, was equally adamant: the Caucasus, he declared, was the "key to the whole of the vast territory which stretches from the Black Sea to the borders of the Indian Empire." (Fisher 1997, 63). Curzon was convinced that Georgia could serve as a buffer against Russian expansion south into British imperial domains. This was the so-called "barrier theory," an idea that collapsed with the Soviet annexation of Azerbaijan in April 1920. Curzon's advocacy for independent Georgia was resisted by Winston Churchill, Secretary of State for War (War Office). After the withdrawal of British troops from Batumi in June 1920, Lloyd George and even Lord Curzon himself, lost interest in the Caucasus. Neither the Europeans, nor the British had a coherent policy on what to do with the three newly independent Transcaucasian states. The British officer corps on the ground in Georgia was generally hostile to the socialist Georgian leadership, often confusing them with Bolsheviks. General George Milne, Commander of the British Forces at Constantinople, wrote regarding Georgia and Transcaucasia more generally in January 1919:

I cannot see that the world would lose much if the whole of the inhabitants of the country cut each other's throats. They are certainly not worth the life of one British soldier. [...] I think it wants to be clearly understood at home that if we accept responsibility to help these countries we will have to retain troops here not only for one or two years but possibly for 10 years, while the education of the people to manage their own affairs will be the work of several generations[.] (Fisher 1997, 54).

With the defeat of the Volunteer Army under General Denikin at the end

8 Friedrich Freiherr Kress Von Kressenstein. 2002. *Meine Mission im Kaukasus*, (*My Mission in the Caucasus*) translated by Nodar Mushkudiani into Georgian under the title *chemi misia kavkasiashi*, published by Mozameta publishing house in Kutaisi. I have used the Georgian version. For the citation, see *chemi misia*.

of 1919, and the rise of Soviet power, Europe no longer had any control over the “Russian question.” European states had their own social and economic problems to deal with. Curzon lost the debate against Churchill, who derided the idea of British military aid for Georgia against the Red Army. However, Georgia was finally recognized *de jure* by the Allied Supreme Council in January 1921.⁹ One month later the 11th Red Army under the direction of Sergo Orjonikidze, himself a Georgian and chairman of the Military Revolutionary Council of the Caucasian Front (*voinrevsovet*), invaded the DRG. By mid-March 1921, Transcaucasia’s sovietization was formally complete, and all three states later became part of the Soviet Union. The Georgian government went into exile. The archives in the USSR were locked up, or gathered mold in Paris where the Georgian social democratic government in exile was established. Borders were closed, and socialist experiments in the 1930s and 40s lost their sheen. The republic was quickly forgotten. The French government recognized the Georgian Government in Exile as the legitimate government of Georgia until 1935, when the French government signed the Franco–Soviet Pact of Mutual Assistance. This conceded to the USSR its claim for sovereignty in Georgia. During WWII, Georgia regained some attention when the Wehrmacht created a Georgian Legion, which it planned to use in its campaign to capture Transcaucasia and Baku’s oil (Mamoulia 2009).¹⁰

The Georgian language, spoken by between two and three million people, was difficult to learn. The Georgian Diaspora was miniscule and concentrated in Paris, and to a lesser degree in Munich. The national question in the USSR, so relevant to Russia’s future in 1917–21, lost its scholarly allure, in part because of the damage done by nationalism in WWII. Georgia, like its fellow republics, such as Ukraine, Armenia and Kazakhstan, was isolated, a closed society behind the walls erected by the Cold War. US funded scholarship on the USSR, until the arrival of Mikhail Gorbachev, focused for the most part on the Soviet leadership, the economy, foreign policy and arms control. There was some research on the national question in the USSR, but it mostly focused on the Islamic challenge (Kalinovsky 2015).¹¹

9 The Supreme Council consisted of France, Italy, Great Britain and the USA (on certain matters, the four leaders were joined by Japan to make it a Council of Five). The USA no longer attended the Council after December 1919, and never recognized Georgia’s independence, *de facto* or *de jure*.

10 A Georgian Legion was created from among Georgian prisoners of war by the German Army in December 1941. On this period, see Georges Mamoulia 2009.

11 Artemy Kalinovsky (2015, 211–231) notes that in the late 1950s a *Nationalities*

Why was the DRG historically important?

The founding fathers of the DRG were social democrats¹². Incredibly, in the three short years of the republic's existence, they institutionalized democratic elections and political parties; they promoted economic pluralism and local self-government; private property was protected by the constitution. The Georgian social democrats were pioneers of the strategy of managing capitalism rather than destroying it. This was the model – a mixed economy with a strong emphasis on public welfare – that along with the US Marshall Plan (officially the European Recovery Program, or ERP), helped defeat communism in Western Europe after WWII. It became one of the most successful ideologies in Europe in the second half of the 20th century, particularly after the inauguration of the European Community in 1957, and the development of the European project.

For much of the twentieth century, disagreements among European socialists centered on four issues: reform or revolution; the challenge of nationalism; the changing nature of class and class-interrelationships; and the character of the new socialist state. Georgia's social democrats attempted to establish a social democratic system in a non-industrial context; they successfully appealed to all classes and sustained both collective *and* individual freedoms. But the most serious challenge was national security and the Georgian government's ultimate failure to accommodate the demands of its own national minorities, such as the Abkhazians and Ossetians. Yet, Ramsay MacDonald (the first labour

Working Group was set up by the US government under the leadership of Paul Henze, to look into the nationality question in the USSR. The group of scholars connected to this group included Alexandre Benningsen, S. Enders Wimbush, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Richard Pipes. Given the context of the Cold War, much of the group's focus was on the potential challenge to Soviet power from non-Russian populations, and in particular from Soviet Muslims. However, the "nationality problem" as it later became known in the 1980s, remained marginal in most Western scholarly studies of the USSR. The publication of H el ene Carri ere d'Encausse's book *L'empire  clat : La r evolte des nations en URSS*, in 1978, along with the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev in 1985, led to growing interest in the question by the late 1980s.

- 12 The phrase "social democrat" covers a host of socialist movements. The Bolsheviks described themselves as social democrats before 1918, and so did moderate socialists like Eduard Bernstein and Ramsay MacDonald. After World War II, it became a descriptor for pragmatic European socialist parties pursuing a more liberal model of democratic socialism, which supported intervention in the market, but not its overthrow. This is the model that Georgia's social democrats pioneered in 1918–21.

prime minister of Great Britain in 1924), after his visit to Georgia in the fall of 1920, was right to differentiate the Georgian model from the centralized and authoritarian socialism championed by the Bolsheviks. He wrote that in social democratic Georgia “there was no ‘dictatorship of the proletariat,’ no armed struggle between classes, no suppression of liberty, or of the press and association” (MacDonald 1921, 3–9).

The Georgian social democratic model was both liberal and democratic. It had its roots in the ideas of the Georgian intelligentsia of the 1860–1880s, which lauded European liberalism, promoted industrial progress at home in Georgia, and applauded the movements for national liberation abroad in Greece, Italy and Bulgaria. There was a direct link between Georgian writer and publicist, Giorgi Tsereteli (1842–1900), a leader of Georgia’s Europeanized intellectuals known as the *meore dasi* (Second Group) and Georgian social democracy. A self-described socialist (but not Marxist), Tsereteli handed over his newspaper, *Kvali* (*Furrow*), to the young Georgian social democrats known as the *mesame dasi* (Third Group), and encouraged their political activism. *Kvali* was the first legal Marxist newspaper in the Russian empire. The Georgian social democrats were heavily influenced by Jean Jaurès’ idea of a peaceful evolution into socialism, by the organizational pragmatism of Karl Kautsky and the German social democratic party, and by the proposals of the Austrian Marxists, Karl Renner and Otto Bauer, for political structures which combined socialism with a multi-national state (see Braunthal 1967).¹³

Despite its Marxist language, Georgian social democracy was by 1917 a national movement, which united all of Georgia’s social groups. For Georgia’s young social democrats, socialism was above all else a program for modernization and self-realization. Akaki Ckhenkeli, the DRG’s first Foreign Minister, declared in 1917 that “the struggle for socialism is at the same time a struggle for national liberation” (The Congress of Workers and Peasants Delegates 1917, 3). Georgian social democracy was also a movement for Europeanization and democratization, which meant the same thing to Georgia’s leaders. Noe Jordania, addressing the Georgian Constituent Assembly, elected in February 1919 with fifteen parties and groups participating, declared “our life today and our life in the future is ... indissolubly tied to the West, and no force can break this bond.” (Archives of the French Ministry of Defense 1920). Georgia’s social democrats continued to believe Marx’s maxim that socialism can only develop after capitalism, which barely existed in Georgia. Georgia

13 On these different trends within European socialism, see Julius Braunthal 1967.

had to promote capitalist structures and bourgeois institutions before socialism could be realized. Georgian leaders rejected Bolshevik ideas of revolution – centralized, directed from above, and singularly proletarian. They transformed the proletarian party in Georgia into a “people’s party,” which included peasants, small traders, and professionals, and argued social democracy could succeed in the poor peripheries of the world. For Georgian leaders, globalization stimulated national consolidation and social integration rather than a withering of national distinctions, and the growth of civil conflict at home. This was outside mainstream Marxism of the time and closer to the ideas of “hegemony” and the “historic bloc” that Antonio Gramsci developed in the 1930s (see De Orellana 2015).¹⁴ Noe Jordania, chairman of the Georgian government for most of its existence, wrote in 1915: “The present basic development in society is the renaissance of the nation, its strengthening, and the establishment of its own state” (War and Peace 1915, 2–3). He went on: “Contemporary society must take on a national face [...] Everything which aids and hastens this process is acceptable and desirable, and [...] everything which hinders and prevents it, is negative and undesirable” (ibid.).

By 1918, the Georgian social democrats had gone further in their transgressions against conventional Marxist theory, and were arguing for small nations’ right to independence. Georgians needed a state, Jordania declared, “to guarantee [...] its national existence” (The Georgian National Congress 1917, 2). Internationalism, for Georgia’s social democrats, was built upon the idea of each nation’s free existence. When Georgia declared its independence on May 26, 1918, its social democratic leaders were no longer the conventional Marxists they had aspired to be in 1905. They were not even Mensheviks. Mensheviks made up the more moderate wing of the Russian Social Democratic Labor Party (RSDLP), with whom Georgian social democrats had closely collaborated against Bolshevik radicalism. By November 1918, when the Georgian social democrats separated from the RSDLP, they had become *Georgian* Social Democrats. Small states like Georgia, they asserted, were aligned with history. The Georgian party’s goal was a state of citizens rather than classes – though it continued to promote privileges for the workers. Georgian

14 Antonio Gramsci, an Italian communist, believed that socialist power was achieved by cultural and political hegemony, as well as by economic forces. Revolutionaries and the working class needed to develop a form of cultural hegemony in the intellectual sphere to achieve political power. The means was the “historic bloc,” or an alliance of progressive forces against the state that went beyond the alliance of the proletariat and peasantry.

social democrats advanced a successful national framework for political and social transformation, one that combined social integration and modernization with democratic expansion and cultural consolidation. Each nation was free to develop its own form of socialism, a special way rather than a universal way. West European polities in the second half of the 20th century, fused these features into a model of social democracy. The Georgian social democrats accepted the state as a manager of public goods – as did most West European governments – but rejected the concentration of power in the executive. The 1921 Georgian constitution spurned a presidential system for this reason.

The Georgian state model

The Georgian social democratic republic disavowed class dictatorship. Jordania argued Georgia had experienced a brief period of proletarian dictatorship in 1917 under the Workers' and Peasants' soviets, but dictatorship is “unacceptable when we set about creating a new order, as building a new order requires incorporation of the wishes and the participation of all the people.” (Jordania 2018, 67). The Georgian model drew on the ideas of European socialists like Eduard Bernstein, who advocated evolutionary parliamentarianism, and anticipated a democratic coalition led by the social democratic left based on principles of political pluralism, self-government, and an inclusive popular party (see Berman 2006).¹⁵ For Jordania and other Georgian leaders, socialism was as much about promoting national-cultural growth as it was about promoting class interests. Like other European social democrats in France and Germany, the Georgians were nationalizing socialism. A socialist system meant a diverse and more equal society in which free elections (and by implication political liberties) were practiced within the confines of a national state.

The Georgian shift from revolution as a radical class-based struggle to a national parliamentary system was shaped by debates among European socialists, but also by the Georgian state's own beginnings. The new state was dependent on the protection and patronage of Great Powers, first from Imperial Germany, and subsequently from Great Britain. Georgia had neither the financial nor military resources to defend itself from

15 See Berman 2006, for a discussion of the challenge to orthodox Marxism in the European socialist movement at the end of the 19th century from theorists such as Eduard Bernstein, Jean Jaurès, Otto Bauer, Karl Renner, all of whom argued a peaceful transition to socialism was possible.

Soviet Russia or Ottoman Turkey. Georgia's geography – a small nation surrounded by avaricious imperial powers – demanded diplomatic barter and political compromise. Radical ideas of internationalism and revolutionary transformation were replaced by pragmatic cooperation with domestic constituencies at home, such as local employers, and imperial powers abroad. Surrounded by existential threats, Georgia shifted to a system of national solidarity, a social pact between employers, labour, and peasants. Socialism in the form of its maximum program, became a distant goal. The rhetoric after 1918 changed from the defense of revolution to the consolidation of a Georgian state. The tension between the principles of socialism and the tasks of nation building was acknowledged by *akhali skhivi*, an oppositionist social democratic newspaper. It put it this way:

[A]s the ruling party, social democracy sits at the center of government, and is obliged to move the whole nation forward, find a path that is acceptable to the majority of the population. But as the leader of the proletariat, social democracy is obligated to pursue a policy that will not expose the class struggle, but promote it. In these conditions, it is difficult to find the right balance[.] (Party Unity 1920, 1).

The Georgian social democrats – despite some internal resistance to independence and recriminations from the Russian Mensheviks, who saw cooperation with Imperial Germany as a betrayal – prioritized nation and state building (see Matsaberidze 2016).¹⁶ In principle, this meant modifying the movement's more radical internationalist ambitions, but in practice it brought the Georgian social democrats back to their roots, and to the ideas of national-cultural liberation (see Jones 2005, 49–66).¹⁷ Noe Jordania's plan for the new Georgian state, entitled *Social*

16 In June 1918, the Georgian social democrats, on behalf of the Regional Committee of the Transcaucasian social democratic organization, wrote to the Central Committee of the RSDLP. They explained their decision to declare independence by the necessity of survival. The (Menshevik) Central Committee's reply was published in *ertoba* on 15 August, 1918. The letter accepted the Georgian decision as one necessitated by external threats, but at the same time blamed the Transcaucasian organization for tactical mistakes. For the correspondence and its context, see Malkhaz Matsaberidze 2016.

17 *Mesame dasi* (Third Group) was the name given by Giorgi Tsereteli to the group of young Marxists who began to promote socialist ideas in the 1890s. It was in contrast to the First and Second groups (*pirveli dasi*, *meore dasi*) of Georgian nationalist intellectuals (the *tergdaleulebi*) who were active from the 1860s–1890s. *Mesame dasi*'s most prominent theoretician was Noe Jordania, who in his early writings,

Democracy and the Organization of the Georgian State (1918), was an affirmation of the German and Austrian model of an incremental path to social democratic hegemony. Jordania proposed a democratic republic in which parliament would share power with popularly elected institutions. “A parliamentary republic is fundamentally different from a democratic republic,” Jordania declared. “A bourgeois parliamentary republic retains all power – legislative, executive and judicial power – in parliament’s hands [...] Not one of these functions is given to the people or some other organ independent of parliament”. A democratic republic, by contrast, “establishes as its basic principle, the people’s political self-government. In this case, power is not just gathered by the center, but is divided between the center and the periphery. The people elects not only parliamentary deputies, but the executive, administrators, judges and so on” (Jordania 2018, 124–125). Jordania believed local bodies alongside parliamentary institutions – sharing their power – would create a qualitatively new type of democracy. Skipping from feudalism to socialism, which Soviet power had tried to do, without a democratic interlude was an attempt to deceive history. He wrote:

There is no doubt, that all government operating within the limits of bourgeois society will inevitably serve the interests of the bourgeoisie. [...] But it is not a utopia, but a real possibility to make it our goal to construct a state, which acts maximally in the interests of those classes with less property or none at all (Jordania 1918, 1921, 47).

Jordania saw his theory as a radical and popularly based alternative to both parliamentarianism and Bolshevik-style collectivism. It combined Marx’s aspirations for popular control and liberalism’s ideas of civil rights, with a peaceful and evolutionary transition to socialism. Jordania drew upon his study of the Swiss cantonal system, and argued that Georgia could develop into a state, where the central government would not need its own civil servants.

Popular institutions of self-government reflected the democratic impulses of socialism, and would keep the central parliament accountable. There would be referenda on major constitutional issues, budgetary matters, schooling, and on issues of war and peace. The people would have legislative initiative. In this way, parliament would share law making

such as “Economic Development and Nationality” (1894) and “The Paper *Iveria* and Nationality” (1897), fused the ideas of socialism with national growth and consolidation. For a discussion of these early works, see Stephen Jones 2005.

with “the people”. Ministries would have limited jurisdiction, and, rather than representing executive power, would serve as “servants and representatives, obliged to fulfill the people’s instructions, even if they did not agree with them. The people are in charge, and they don’t have to ask the ministers whether they agree or not” (Jordania 1918, 1921, 68). Power would be shared in other ways: executive officers such as local government officials and judges at the municipal and regional level would be elected. Criminal courts would have juries, and the Supreme Court would be elected by parliament. In this way, the “people and the government – are a complete unit, with a common will, and united action”. (Jordania 1918, 1921, 60).

The practical challenges to such a program were enormous – it resembled what contemporary political scientists like John Barber have called “strong democracy”(see Barber 2004), with its emphasis on deliberation, participation, and a de-concentration of power. Central to Jordania’s design was a legislature that represented the “people” rather than any particular class. It would be the nation’s only sovereign body; there could be no dual power. The Workers’ and Peasants’ soviets, which had brought the Georgian social democrats to power, were reduced to the role of institutional “checks” on the national government. Jordania’s plan acknowledged a parliament in which power would be contested by competing parties, such as the National Democrats and Socialist-Federalists (see Shvelidze 1993, Janelidze 1999). The hope was that under social democratic tutelage, national sovereignty, democracy, and modernization would lead to an egalitarian, pluralist and rule-of-law state.

The ambitious plans of Georgia’s leaders quickly collided with the necessities of power and survival in 1917–18. The Georgian economy in 1918 had collapsed after years of war and revolution. Russian civil servants had fled their posts, factories were at a standstill, and inflation was spinning out of control. Trade with Europe was stymied by blockades enacted by either Denikin (from the north) or by the Allies, who blocked freight through the Bosphorus until Georgia’s *de facto* recognition in January 1920. How could such a crisis-ridden state, almost permanently on a war-footing, with an empty treasury, weak traditions of self-government and accountability, and unqualified or inexperienced personnel, support a program of democratic state-building?

External and internal threats led to national security priorities which at times overrode democratic practice, particularly in relation to national

minorities such as the Abkhazians, Ossetians, and Armenians.¹⁸ The Georgian social democrats rejected federalism in favor of a decentralized unitary state. They believed some form of regional self-government, or autonomy in certain cases, would ensure national minority protections. This was inadequate for national minorities like the Ossetians and Abkhazians, resentful at the Georgianization of the state, and seized by the same fervor for national self-determination as Georgians. Their resistance was reinforced by social and economic grievances. The local Bolsheviks, aided by Moscow, took advantage of internal dissent and backed revolts in national minority areas, often with arms. The repeated revolts in Ossetian inhabited districts and in Abkhazia, both regions on Georgia's borders, presented security threats which the state dealt with by force, using militia units known as the People's Guard. The Georgian government insisted there was no choice when confronting communist inspired rebellions; the Bolsheviks did not hide their intent to overthrow the DRG. But opportunities to integrate non-Georgians into the state were missed by the government, which was fearful of granting too much power to non-Georgians in the state's periphery. The autonomy officially granted to Abkhazia was frequently ignored by Tiflis government officials. The national minority question became one of the most painful and threatening issues for the Georgian state between 1918–21. It was, in the end, a Red Army backed revolt among non-Georgians in Lori, bordering Armenia, that led to the Soviet occupation of Georgia (see Welt 2014, 205–231).¹⁹

The newly formed government faced the task of nation and state building without financial resources, experience, or support from abroad. Georgia was faced with national security crises on a daily basis. The country's undersupplied and poorly trained armed forces faced internal revolts in Georgian regions such as Dusheti and Samegrelo. Dissatisfaction was generated by factors which in many cases were beyond the government's immediate control – such as poor harvests, the lack of sufficient land (even after a government program of land reform), economic collapse, and hyperinflation.

There were external threats from General Denikin and the Volunteer

18 A brief Armeno-Georgian war in December 1918 led to the persecution of Armenian civilians, including the confiscation of their property and expulsion from their homes. The Georgian government later partially redeemed itself and returned some of the unjustly expropriated properties.

19 See Welt 2014, for an excellent summary of the national minority question in the First Republic.

Army (VA), from the Bolsheviks and an emerging Turkish National Movement in the dying Ottoman empire. The VA under General Denikin was an instrument for reestablishing the Russian empire. The Bolsheviks wanted to create a new and universal revolutionary state, which meant the incorporation of Georgia into a Russian dominated entity. The old Ottoman Empire had by 1920 began to reconstitute itself as a national Turkish state under Mustafa Kemal (later known as Kemal Ataturk) and was reclaiming its territories in Eastern Anatolia, such as Ardahan, Artvin and Batumi, all regions claimed by Georgian leaders as part of the Georgian state. Defending the state against such external threats required massive resources and manpower, as well as the requisitioning of food from the villages (crops were “bought” at state set prices). All this had a disruptive effect on the economy and undermined support for the government. In addition, there were military clashes on Georgia’s borders with Armenia and Azerbaijan. Armenia and Georgia went to war in December 1918, and Soviet Azerbaijan blocked the export of oil to Georgia in 1920.

Georgia took the lead in trying to create regional cooperation, calling the states’ leaders to three separate conferences in Tbilisi between 1918–20. Cooperation, in the Georgian view, was essential to resisting threats from large and aggressive powers like the VA and Soviet Russia. It would increase their chances of obtaining international recognition from the Paris Peace conference if they were seen as peaceful independent states, rather than warring parties. Unfortunately for Georgia, the territorial conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan, combined with historical animosities and complete distrust, made cooperation impossible and foreign intervention in the region more likely. Soviet Russia successfully exploited Transcaucasian disunion, first annexing Azerbaijan in April 1920, followed by Armenia in December (see Kazamzadeh 1951, chs. 18,19).

But despite flaws in the implementation of Georgian democracy, the republic introduced the vote for women, the separation of church and state, a multiparty legislature, defended private property (in most cases), promoted free and universal education, redistributed land in the countryside, and more or less, preserved a free press (opposition newspapers were often closed down by the government, but would reappear again under a different name). Such policies, though imperfectly fulfilled, were advanced for their time, and all the more remarkable given the massive economic and political obstacles Georgia encountered.

Legacies

The final question concerns legacies and lessons from the DRG for Georgia today. The DRG had only three years to establish its legacy. It established the institutional foundations of democracy. Today, too, barring the Baltic republics, Georgia represents the most successful democratic transition in the Former Soviet Union (FSU). There are significant problems remaining, such as the persistent tendency toward single party rule, and the role of outsized personalities in political life by dint of their populist appeal (President Saakashvili) or their money (Bidzina Ivanishvili). But there is little doubt, as public opinion surveys attest, to the commitment among the majority of Georgians to democratic values (CRRC 2020).²⁰ The current Georgian constitution specifically acknowledges “the historical-legal legacy of the Constitution of Georgia of 1921”, and a comparison of the current constitution with that of 1921 shows that both enshrine liberal constitutionalism and the defense of political and civil rights (Kandelaki 1953, 182–209, Georgian Parliament 2020).²¹ The 1921 constitution was briefly repatriated in Georgia in 1992, after the fall of President Zviad Gamsakhurdia.

The commitment to European models of government, and to an alliance with European powers, began with the DRG. In 1918, fear of imperial neighbors and a vulnerable geography led Georgians to look to the West for aid, but the model of social democracy was determined by the leaders’ intellectual allegiance to the West, and to their strategy of Europeanization. Noe Jordania and his social democratic colleagues believed socialism was inherently democratic, modern, and national. This is a vital point, and it connects the DRG to the current democratic system in Georgia. Georgians (both intellectuals and Georgians on the street) have since the 19th century claimed a European heritage. In 1918–21, it led the DRG to European models of democratic socialism. Since 1991 it has led to a free market system. The idea Georgians hold of the West may be a rather fanciful one, but it has determined in large part the current Georgian leadership’s aspirations for democracy and the integration of its economy into European structures. Democracy is seen today, as it was between 1918–21, as a mark of Georgia’s Europeanness.

20 See CRRC 2020, for the best data on Georgians’ evolving attitudes toward democratic values.

21 The 1921 constitution in English can be found in Constantin Kandelaki 1953. The current constitution can be found on the webpage of the Georgian Parliament <http://www.parliament.ge/uploads/other/28/28803.pdf>.

However, not all legacies are positive. One striking parallel between the DRG and the post-Soviet period is a persistent inability to integrate non-Georgians into the workings of the state. Georgia's post-Soviet elites, as in 1918–21, failed to avoid the entanglement of security with national minority rights, stimulated in part by Russia's claims to protect South Ossetian and Abkhazian minorities, but also by Georgians' own fears of a genuine devolution of power to non-Georgian communities. There is an important lesson here for the West too. In 1921, after the Bolshevik invasion, Jordania wrote to the *London Times*:

If Europe bears in silence the crying injustice committed against Georgia by the government of Soviet Russia then this will mean the sanctioning of the right of any great power to attack its neighbors and seize their territory (Kandelaki 2009).

The situation in 2008, when Georgia and Russia went to war, was very different from 1921 (Russia is now a nuclear power), but Western states' relationship to Georgia has been consistently soft. When the British army left Batumi in the summer of 1920, and began negotiations in May 1920 for an Anglo-Soviet trade deal, this was a clear signal to the Red Army commanders, and to Stalin and Sergo Orjonikidze, who were in political command, that occupation of the DRG would not bring in British troops. Jordania complained that the Georgian government had not received a single rifle or loaf of bread from the British. Though not strictly true, Western financial and military support for the beleaguered republic in 1920–21 was practically non-existent (see Hovannisian 1996, 331–352).

The 2008 war with Russia was different from the Soviet invasion of February 1921 in other ways. In 1921, Soviet Russia was intent on annexing and absorbing Georgia; in 2008, Russia wished to punish and control. In 2008, the Georgian army received US training, and the government obtained generous financial aid from the World Bank, EU, USA and IMF. But both 1921 and 2008 underlined the fact that Western powers are reluctant to get involved in Georgian affairs if it means challenging Russia. In December 1920, the League of Nations turned down Georgia's bid for membership partly because of Article 10, which committed member states to preserve the territorial integrity of its members against "external aggression" (The Avalon Project 2008).²² The demonstrable lack of commitment to Georgia's survival as an independent state undoubtedly influenced Soviet Russia's decision to invade. There was no Western

22 For the League covenant see https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/leagcov.asp.

reaction beyond regret and condemnation. Similarly, in April 2008, the NATO Summit in Bucharest turned down Georgia's application for membership. Four months later Russia invaded, and five years after that, came the assault on Crimea and Eastern Ukraine. There was no Western military support during the 2008 war, the United States ended its delivery of lethal hardware, and President Obama began his "reset" of relations with Russia one year later in 2009. US and European behavior in 2008 bears a remarkable resemblance to the pattern displayed by Western powers 87 years before, Zurab Avalishvili, a roving diplomat for the DRG, concluded:

the independence and union of the Caucasian republics was not adequately supported by the Great Powers [...] On the contrary, having allowed the Soviets freedom of action in the Caucasus and having refused to exercise any influence in this part of the world, the Great Powers [...] systematically helped to restore there the imperial positions of Russia.

Ramsay MacDonald wrote in *The Nation* in 1920, that "there exists no more solid barrier against Bolshevism today than the socialist government of Georgia" (Kandelaki 1953). Georgia today is the strongest barrier to Russian authoritarianism in the South Caucasus, and we should, in the interests of Georgian citizens as well as in our own strategic interests, ensure its survival as an independent democratic state.

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DEREK HUTCHESON & BO PETERSSON

Rising from the ashes

The role of Chechnya in contemporary Russian politics

The “Chechen Problem” – resistance to Russian and Soviet rule in the North Caucasus – is not new: in Tsarist times there was intense resistance to incorporation into the Russian Empire, and the Soviet mass deportation of Chechen and Ingush people in the 1940s ranked amongst the most brutal of Stalin’s repressions, even by his standards (Eide 2001; Werth 2006). However, this chapter focuses on the general importance of Chechnya in and for Russian politics from the dissolution of the Soviet Union and up to the present day. The main argument pursued is that the post-Soviet wars on Chechnya have had a profound impact on Russian power politics. The First Chechen War, in 1994–1996, epitomized the turmoil and disarray that post-Soviet Russia was in at the time, and served to undermine Boris Yeltsin’s presidency and delegitimize him personally. On the other hand, the Second Chechen War, taken up in 1999 while Vladimir Putin was still a freshman Prime Minister, earned him the reputation of being a man of resolute action, and a guarantor of stability and order, using authoritarian means if need be. Those are ascribed traits that, after more than 20 years, still seem to legitimize Putin’s hold on power. From being a symbol of chaos and separatist ambition, Chechnya has in official discourse increasingly come to signify stability, growth, and loyalty to the federal center. In several respects Chechnya is depicted as it were as a metonymy of the Russian Federation. This includes the way that the figure of the regional strongman, Ramzan Kadyrov, is communicated as a mirror image of the federal president, Vladimir Putin, albeit with an even greater penchant for using harsh and uncompromising methods to secure him power and allegiance.

The First War and Yeltsin's downfall

Shortly before the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, the seizure of power in Chechnya by retired air force general Dzhokhar Dudayev and the republic's unilateral declaration of independence eventually led to the First War on Chechnya 1994–1996. The war was patently unpopular among the Russian citizens. As more and more young men were brought home in body bags the popular discontent with the incumbent president, Boris Yeltsin, increased, as he was attributed much of the blame. Some six months before the first round of presidential elections in the spring of 1996, Yeltsin's rating in the opinion polls was still written in single digits, and he was trailing far behind more popular candidates, notably the communist Gennadii Zyuganov.

After his campaign was profusely supported financially by Russia's industrial tycoons, the oligarchs (apparently in exchange for significant economic and political influence), Yeltsin made a highly unexpected comeback. He made it to the second round of the elections and, once there, beat Zyuganov in the contest for the presidency. However, the campaign had put a tremendous strain on him, and it is probably no exaggeration to state that the war on Chechnya had indirectly taken a heavy toll on his health. He required major heart surgery in late 1996, following prolonged illness, and he never regained his political or physical strength fully thereafter.

In 1996 the separatists had forced the Russian central state to the humiliating Khasavyurt peace accord through which Chechnya's status of *de facto* independence was confirmed. In 1997, internationally observed and recognized presidential elections were held in Chechnya, whereby Aslan Maskhadov was elected as a legitimate president (OSCE 1997). In May 1997 he was invited to the Kremlin, symbolically signing a vaguely-worded (though ultimately short-lived) peace treaty with Yeltsin (Zainetdinov 1997). Though leaving important decisions to the future, it contained a significant concession by Russia that affairs between the two entities would be regulated on the basis of international – not domestic – law. Though formal sovereignty was not relinquished by Russia, Chechnya *de facto* now operated outside Russia's legal, economic and security sphere (Hughes 2007, 92–94). At the same time, the economy of the Russian Federation was in disarray, political instability and chaos reigned, and there seemed to be very little that the federal center could do to stop Chechnya from fulfilling its ambitions to go for full independence.

Aside from the geopolitical implications of the fact that the key Baku-Novorossiisk oil pipeline traversed the republic (Hughes 2007, 62–65), this also prompted fears of a row of falling dominoes from the point of view of Moscow. If one of the constituent parts of the Federation were to leave, the perceived risk was that it would soon be joined by others, such as Tatarstan or regions in the Far East.

In short, the Chechnya debacle had brought Yeltsin's presidency into disrepute, and as contemporary history was written, that also seemed to be the impression left for posterity. The years of the Yeltsin administration of the unruly 1990s became synonymous with the most recent reincarnation of the cyclically recurring periods in Russian history of *smuta*, or Times of Trouble (Petersson 2013), and there was no single event or process that bore this out with more brutal clarity than the developments in Chechnya.

The Second War and Putin's rise to political stardom

By way of forceful contrast, Chechnya contributed very strongly to Vladimir Putin's rise to the stars. When Putin was elected president for the first time in 2000, it was largely thanks to his tough policies on Chechnya. When Putin was elevated to the Prime Minister's office in August 1999 by the ailing Yeltsin, it did not take him long to reopen the war on Chechnya which had been paused since 1996. Chechen militants had initiated small-scale armed incursions into the neighboring Republic of Dagestan just before Putin became prime minister in August 1999, raising the specter of spreading the militant insurgency and avowed Islamic fundamentalism into the wider region of North Caucasus. This was followed by a series of terrorist attacks in September 1999 against apartment blocks in Moscow, Buynaksk, and Volgodonsk, in which several hundreds of people were killed (Cornell 2003). Even if their guilt was never conclusively proven and the circumstances of the bomb blasts were shrouded in mystery, the attacks were widely attributed to Chechen terrorists (Dawisha 2014, 207–223). Together, these events provided Putin with the *casus belli* that he needed to initiate the Second Chechen War. On 23 September 1999, Russian forces took up heavy air bombardment of Grozny, the capital of Chechnya (Golotyuk 1999), and on 30 September troops started massive ground operations.

The dice had indeed been rolled, and in passing this Rubicon, Putin succeeded in initiating a hold on power in Russia which has so far lasted (in four presidential terms and an interregnum as prime minister) for more than twenty years. Following the constitutional changes introduced in the Russian Federation in the spring of 2020, it may, his health and the political conjunctures permitting, even be extended as far as until 2036. By comparison, Peter the Great served as the czar for 43 years (1682–1725), the reign of Catherine the Great lasted for 34 years (1762–1796), and Joseph Stalin was the leader for around 29 years (1924–1953). The predicted length of Putin's presidencies would put him in the same league as those prominent leaders of Russian and Soviet history, whom Putin himself on different occasions has referred to as sources of inspiration, albeit in different ways. The argument pursued here is that it was the unfolding of the Chechen War that made it possible for him to claim that position.

Winning hearts and minds: The importance of framing

Putin's reopened war in Chechnya in 1999 was as popular as Yeltsin's unsuccessful campaign in 1994–96 had been unpopular – especially since the initial swift and decisive victories were generously reported, particularly by state-controlled media. Moreover, in the prevailing political discourse during the time leading up to the presidential election in 2000, Chechnya epitomized everything that was bad in Russian society and almost all threats against the country: the specters of irredentism and separatism, Islamic fundamentalism, and organized crime, to mention but a few (Pettersson 2018). The Chechen hydra was thus depicted as having many heads. By reopening a merciless war campaign against the recalcitrant republic, Putin took them all off in one fell swoop.

No doubt, the authorities had learnt their lesson from the First War in the 1990s: a war needed to be won not only on the battlefield itself but also in the hearts and minds of the people at the home front (Shayk-hutdinov 2019). The First Chechen War in 1994–1996 had seen examples of almost unprecedented media freedom in Russia, with media outlets reporting on losses, atrocities, dismal material standards of equipment, and inept leadership. Without doubt, the critical media attention contributed to bringing the First War to an end (Wagnsson 2000). Against this vocal and unified public opinion, the authorities could not win.

Again by way of contrast, the Second Chechen War was framed very differently by the powers that be. Whereas the First War had been described as a fight against ethnically inspired warlords who wanted to secede from the motherland, the Second Chechen War was depicted as a staunch and merciless fight against terrorism where Russia was described as taking a global lead (Wilhelmsen 2017). Indicatively, when the United States had been hit by the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, Vladimir Putin was among the first to get in touch with his US counterpart, President George W. Bush, to declare his support and collaboration in the unwavering struggle against global terrorism. Putin's quick expression of sympathy served the purpose of underlining the common struggle that Russia and the United States had to undertake. Russia's reputation for combating terrorism played a very central part in building the Putin regime's global influence and domestic legitimacy, and it was in relation to Chechnya that this reputation started to be built (Hedenskog 2020).

Moreover, by successfully framing the Chechen separatist struggle as a case of global terrorism, Putin gained increasing international acceptance for the Russian war effort to bring Chechnya back into the fold (Lapidus 2002), thus winning a *carte blanche* of sorts for waging a war where Russia had earlier drawn much international criticism for excessive human rights abuses. In addition, in pace with increasing Russian success on the battlefield in Chechnya, the Chechen separatists became ever more radicalized, as more militant forces got the upper hand in relation to Maskhadov-style moderates. The violent and bloody actions taken outside of Chechen territory, most prominently in the seizure of the Dubrovka theater in Moscow in 2002 and the North Ossetian Beslan school siege in 2004, were widely condemned by the outside world. Even if much of the bloodshed was caused by heavy-handed countermeasures by Russian security forces, the attacks made the Chechen rebel cause lose much of the international moral support that it had once had. The sympathies tilted increasingly to the federal side (Gerber and Mendelson 2008).

It was also in connection with the Second Chechen War that Putin, first as Prime Minister, then as Acting President, started to establish his reputation for being a doer, a real man of action, a posture which was signaled both in deeds and words. In response to a question from a journalist about the aerial bombardment of Grozny in September 1999, the new prime minister vowed to "take out" the Chechen separatists

wherever they were, even “in the shithouse” (Wood 2011). The expression he used – “*my ikh v sortire zamochim*” – is almost impossible to translate into English in an adequate manner, but the remarkable thing was not just the vulgarity of the implied location, but that the phrase came from the jargon of hardened convicts and criminals, and hardly of respectable heads of state or government. The message was strong: the new man at the top could both talk the talk and walk the walk.¹

In addition, by depicting Chechnya as Russia’s universal enemy, Putin could buy time in relation to the electorate, as he really had no political program for his presidential tenure, except for bringing Chechnya back to heel (Pettersson 2018). The strategy was successful indeed. This was Othering institutionalized (Clowes 2011, 140-163). By pointing out who was the Other of the contemporary Russian Federation, he managed to get the message across that there was something uniting the Russian Self, if only disdain against that outlying Other. He could successfully claim to have saved the country from disintegration and to have reestablished order and stability in Russia, delivering it safely from the Time of Troubles. This would turn out to become a familiar theme; he was to go on to exploit this legacy throughout his presidencies (Pettersson 2017).

Indeed, Chechnya was consistently depicted as the litmus test and the crucial turning point in Russian post-Soviet political history. In the following years Putin would allude to the Chechen Wars as a time when scheming foreign powers, especially the United States, were tacitly supporting the insurgency, trying to bring Russia to the same situation as Yugoslavia ended up in before its dissolution in the 1990s (President of Russia 2014). By resolutely putting an end to such attempts, Russian sovereignty was resurrected, and Russia could again emerge as the master of its own house – thanks to the leadership exerted by its President. By all appearances, the popular majority believed this, and have responded by voting Putin into presidential power four times over.

1 Reflecting on the incident 12 years later, Putin claimed that he had initially regretted the vulgar choice of words until he was told a day or two later about a taxi driver with whom a friend of his in St Petersburg had travelled. The driver had heard the phrase and apparently commented “there is a guy who says the right things”. In Putin’s version, this made him realize that his words and actions vis-à-vis the Chechen rebels had struck a chord with ordinary people (Government of Russia 2011).

The importance of Chechnya to Putin's support

The recapture of Chechnya was thus a central motif of Vladimir Putin's ascent to and consolidation of power. Using a series of nationwide representative opinion surveys conducted at regular intervals since early 2000, it is possible to chart the importance of Chechnya to the narrative of his presidency over the past two decades.

In January 2000 – three weeks after Putin had become Acting President due to Yeltsin's resignation, three months into the Russian counter-offensive, and a few days before the siege of Grozny ended in its capture by Russian troops – the war dominated the headlines. Reflecting this, the importance of stabilizing Chechnya was one of the most important issues facing the country, as cited by Russians at the time. Asked what issues the next government should give 'highest priority' to (as opposed to general 'importance', 'lower priority' or 'unimportant'), the war in Chechnya was cited by 72 per cent of respondents as a top-line issue, as was the threat of terrorist attacks in Russian cities (68 per cent) (NRB8 survey 2000, C13). Only concerns about price increases were regarded as more pressing.

Unlike in 1994–1996 – in which the disastrous course of the war led to a loss of trust in Yeltsin and perception of state weakness (Vaughn 2007, 57–77) – the Kremlin managed to retain public support for its actions in Chechnya throughout the 1999–2000 war and beyond. Following the apartment bombings, the issue of Chechen militancy was suddenly one that could affect people in their everyday lives, rather than a distant war in a remote corner of the country. As Table 1 shows, the Russian government's 1999–2000 actions to fight back in Chechnya had the support of about three-quarters of Russians in January 2000 (a third offering 'full support' and 40 per cent 'to some degree'). Fewer than one in ten 'definitely opposed' it (NRB8 survey 2000, C23).² Over the following decade, after the official end to the war in 2000 but during a continued series of terrorist attacks attributed to Chechen rebels, support for the government's actions on Chechnya fluctuated, but still enjoyed the backing of over half the electorate in 2008.

2. Among the nearly half the electorate who planned at that point to vote for Putin in the presidential election due on two months later, the numbers were higher still, with 42 per cent fully supportive and a further 39 per cent somewhat supportive.

Table 1: Support for the Russian government's policy on Chechnya (per cent)³

	2000	2004	2008
Strongly support	33.6	21.5	20.1
Somewhat support	39.5	30.9	40.5
Somewhat critical	18.2	28.9	27.0
Strongly disapprove	8.7	18.7	12.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Sources: NRB8 survey 2000; Russian Research surveys 2004, 2008.

As Table 2 shows, despite having viewed the almost choreographed progress of the Russian army towards Grozny in evening news bulletins since the start of the conflict, fewer than half of respondents were optimistic of a Russian victory in January 2000. The majority thought that it would either end with enormous losses on both sides (as in 1994–1996) or ignite conflict in the whole Northern Caucasus region (NRB8 survey 2000, C25).⁴ By April 2001, Russian public opinion had hardened: 45 per cent of respondents thought that Russia should ‘act more severely, to destroy the bandits and their bases’, compared with only 12 per cent who thought the country should seek agreement with respected Chechen leaders (Russian Research survey 2001, D2).⁵ Such sentiment was mirrored in Putin’s public pronouncements over the following few years.

Remarkably, pessimism was more widespread in 2004 even if several years had then passed since the military recapture of Chechen territory. However, these results should be seen in the context of the high-profile terrorist attacks that had taken place in and outside Chechnya in the interim: Dubrovka, Beslan and the assassination of the Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov. Also, a regular series of lower-level attacks (such as car bombs) threatened to undermine the message that the Chechen issue was solved.⁶ On each occasion, Putin generally vowed to crack down harder on renegade Chechen fighters, but fear of contagion was even

3 The question asked was “How do you feel about the actions of the federal authorities in Chechnya?”, with the four answers listed. “Don’t know” answers excluded.

4 The question asked was ‘How do you think the conflict in Chechnya will end?’, with the four answers listed in Table 2. “Don’t know” answers excluded.

5 The question asked was “What policy should the Russian government conduct in Chechnya now?”

6 For an overview of the continual struggles of the counterinsurgency and Chechen attacks, see Kramer (2004).

greater by 2004, and the chances of Russia's ultimate victory considered lower (Russian Research survey 2004, E12). Looked at in the longer-term perspective, one recent analysis has argued that support for the President receded at times of major terrorist attacks but increased with minor incidents that tended to remind that harsh corrective action was still justified (Fedotenkov 2020).

Table 2: Expected outcomes in Chechnya 2000 and 2004 (per cent)

	2000	2004
Fighters will be overcome / Chechnya returns to Russia	39	33
Chechnya north of River Terek returns to Russia	6	4
Enormous losses for both sides / end as in 1996	19	24
Protracted / will spread to other North Caucasus	35	39
Total	100	100

Sources: NRB8 survey 2000, C25; Russian Research survey 2004, E12.

In view of this gloomy public mood it is perhaps less surprising that fewer people at the time viewed the Second Chechen War as critical for Russia's territorial integrity than the later post-victory narrative might suggest. After the First Chechen War back in 1996, as many as 35 per cent would actually have been happy to see Chechnya go, roughly a quarter (24 per cent) thought that a separation of Chechnya would not elicit any particular feelings in them, and 21 per cent were in principle against a secession but would accept it. Only 8 per cent thought that such an outcome had to be prevented by any means necessary, up to and including military intervention (Levada-Center 2015b). In late 1997, which is the first point in figure 1, 29 per cent regarded Chechnya as *de facto* separated from Russia already, and almost the same number (28 per cent) would in principle have been happy to see it becoming so.

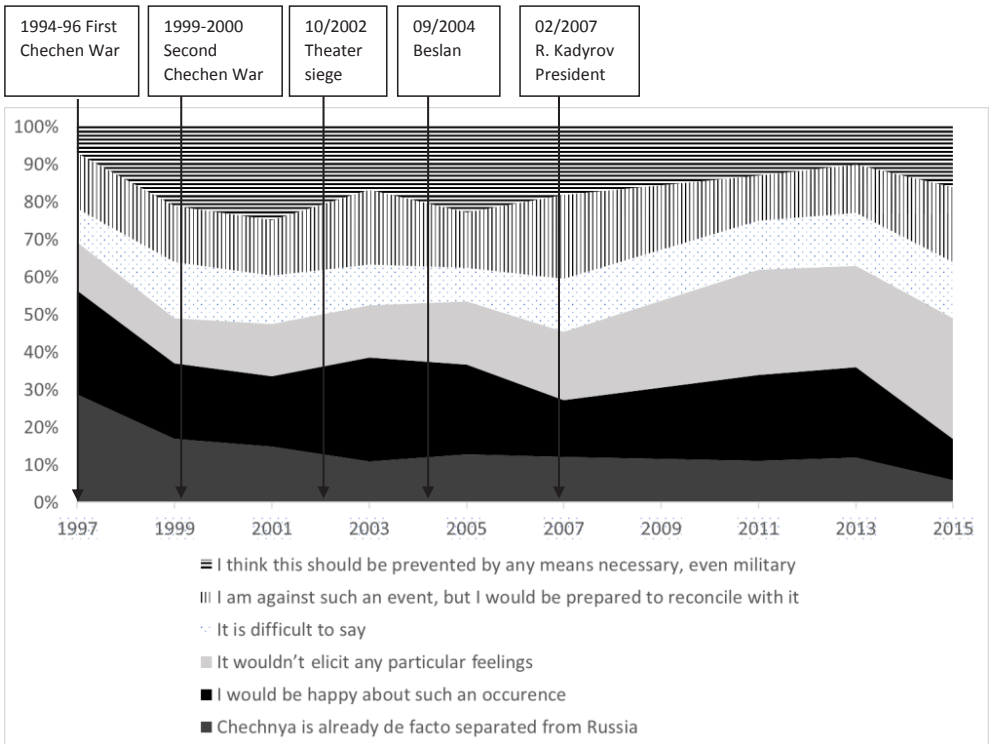
From Figure 1 it is also visible that support for preventing Chechnya from leaving the Federation had increased by the time of the Second Chechen War, but that a sizeable minority regarded it as either *de facto* likely or even desirable that Chechnya would attain its independence. Throughout the early 2000s – despite (or perhaps because of) the series of terrorist attacks that continued to remind people of the problems in the North Caucasus – the number of people who thought that Chechen independence should be prevented by any means necessary was never more than a quarter, even as late as in 2007.

Chechenization and the Kadyrov rule

As the previous section has shown, attitudes towards the Chechen question changed substantially between the mid-1990s and the mid-2000s. Whereas the majority of people after the First Chechen War would have been happy to see the Chechens go their own way, the resolve to crack down on Chechen terrorism grew in the early Putin years. At the same time, there was a continued weariness on the part of the Russian people as Chechen issues frequently intervened in the domestic security agenda. Since around 2007, however, the matter has essentially been considered resolved – or has at least faded from public consciousness.

To understand the fundamental change of scenery from disarray to stability and from resignation to optimism in public opinion about the retention of Chechnya in the federal fold, it is necessary to shift focus of attention to the republican level of politics. The “doer” image so densely

Figure 1. Attitudes to Chechen independence, 1996–2015



Source: Levada-Center 2015b

associated with Putin has been remarkably replicated and magnified on the regional level. The Chechen president, Ramzan Kadyrov (born in 1976), has been the head of the republic since 2007, when he, following a few years of interregnum, was elevated into that position replacing his father Akhmad Kadyrov, who had been assassinated by Chechen militants in 2004. Ramzan Kadyrov has come to epitomize the so-called Chechenization of the conflict of the 1990s, which has meant a considerable amount of stabilization and avoidance of large-scale conflict by the iron-clad use of domestic Chechen forces and structures of security (Russell 2009; Zhirukhina 2018). Indeed, Kadyrov's personal impact has been so deep that the term 'Kadyrovization' has been suggested as more adequate than Chechenization to describe the current situation in the Republic (Souleimanov and Jasutis 2016).

Just like Putin has done at the federal level, Kadyrov has, albeit with more repressive means, constructed his legitimacy on the republican level by living up to the image of a macho man of deeds, a strongman, a builder and rebuilders of post-war Chechnya (Souleimanov 2007; Scicchitano 2019). Moreover, by controlling the republic so completely, whilst at the same time publicly subordinating himself to Putin, Kadyrov simultaneously demonstrates to the federal center its dependence upon him to keep order, whilst in exchange giving it his loyalty (Wilhelmsen 2018). According to a survey undertaken by the Levada-Center in January 2015, this image seems to have landed well among the public in the Federation at large. 1600 respondents over the age of 18 and distributed in 134 localities of 46 of the country's regions took the poll which included a question about their attitude towards Kadyrov. 56 per cent associated him with positive characteristics, such as respect or sympathy, whereas 33 per cent were neutral or undecided, and only 12 per cent assessed him negatively, with dislike, annoyance or other bad feelings (Levada-Center 2015a).

On the Russian presidential website (www.kremlin.ru), official working meetings between Putin and Ramzan Kadyrov, particularly discussing the socio-economic situation of the republic, are regularly reported on. The summaries and excerpts provided of the talks are brief, but always convey the same message. The republic is making steady progress toward reconstruction and further development, and often Kadyrov is quoted referring to the unemployment figures that reigned in the republic when he took office in 2007. At that time, they were at an appalling 76 per cent and were then successively reduced to 23 per cent in August 2013, to 13.9 per cent in December 2015, 12.1 per cent in March 2016, 9.2 per cent

in April 2017, and 8 per cent in August 2019 (President of Russia 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019). This is still a high figure, of course, but vastly better than the disastrous figure of the baseline year of 2007. By way of response, Putin makes a habit at the working meetings of underlining that the trends are positive, but that much remains to be done in terms of battling corruption, reconstructing schools, building and renovating housing, improving the basic infrastructure, *et cetera* (President of Russia 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2019). However, given all these problems, Putin indicated in December 2015 that Chechnya could serve as a role model for the country at large:

I saw for myself how Grozny is developing. It certainly serves as a role model for many. I recall the situation when it was in such a state that we were considering whether the capital of Chechnya should remain there at all [...] And you were able to rebuild the city, so that now it is in excellent shape. I ask you to continue to give this matter your attention, because it is important for the republic and for all of the North Caucasus as a good example of development (President of Russia 2015).

Later during that meeting, Putin expressed himself in an even more appreciative manner when he assessed the work of his Chechen counterpart: “You are the one that made it happen”, even if he also extended his gratitude to all Chechen residents and their “hands, care and labor” (President of Russia 2015).

During those working meetings other kinds of progress are also reported on. At a meeting in 2016, Kadyrov provided another success story while still using 2007 as a baseline year. At that time, the Chechen president told, there were “157 murder attempts [against law enforcement personnel], and 56 law enforcement officers were killed. There were 56 illegal armed groups, of which 14 were of a terrorist nature”, but in 2015 there was “not a single murder attempt in 2015 and not a single law enforcement officer was killed in special operations carried out. At the same time, 19 gunmen were killed and around 50 arrested” (President of Russia 2016). This is another way of saying that the operations of Chechen separatist forces have practically been quenched and that the harsh and uncompromising policy of Chechenization has been implemented successfully. Stability has finally been achieved, albeit at a high price. At the working meeting with Putin in March 2016, Kadyrov seemed very content to conclude that “We have no serious problems now in the republic” (President of Russia 2016).

Putin appeared to agree and again praised the Chechen president greatly:

I know that Chechnya has been transformed over these last years. We see this with our own eyes. This is a clear fact. The transformations are not just external. Where we once saw devastation, towns and villages in ruins, we now see flourishing places, and this is no exaggeration. We see towns and villages in which people live comfortable, convenient lives. We see ever more beautiful new buildings that are the pride of not just Chechnya and the Caucasus, but all of Russia too (President of Russia 2016).

During the same meeting Putin went on to conclude that “Chechnya really has become a safe place for our citizens, for the republic’s people, and your efforts have contributed to achieving this. Chechnya is perhaps an even safer place than some other parts of Russia” (President of Russia 2016).

Chechnya as metonymy

It is a reasonable conclusion to draw that the reign of Ramzan Kadyrov, and his loyalty, however conditional, to the Kremlin, have transformed public perceptions in the Russian Federation at large. The image of Chechnya as a source of threat to the rest of Russia has thus clearly diminished as compared to what was the case in the early 2000s. However, it seems as though it took several years after Ramzan Kadyrov’s ascent to power for this image to take hold. By June 2015, the balance of people who thought that the amount of terrorism from the North Caucasus had diminished over the previous 10 years relative to those who thought it had increased was +38 per cent, compared with -1 per cent in 2011 (Levada-Center 2015b). By way of heavy contrast to the early 2000s, people largely saw Chechnya as an integral part of Russia again. As noted in Figure 1, only 6 per cent regarded it as de facto separate from the rest of the Federation, and just 11 per cent would have been happy if it left (Levada-Center 2015b). Indeed, nearly half were indifferent or could not say their opinion. This indicates the extent to which the Chechen problem has been, in the views of the Russian public, solved or subordinated to new issues. On the other hand, according to these estimates, the attributed importance of retaining Chechnya inside the Federation also seems to have increased among the populace as stability and order have tended to rise in the republic and the Federation at large.

All this confirms the impression of *post hoc* mythmaking that ties together Chechnya's renewed loyalty and Putin's role as guarantor and restorer of stability in Russia. Back in 2001, more people (33 per cent) personally blamed President Yeltsin retrospectively for the conflict than the Chechens themselves (29 per cent) or the Russian side generally (23 per cent) (Russian Research survey 2001, D1).⁷ Despite being appointed as Yeltsin's hand-picked successor, Putin gradually cast himself as the antithesis of the elderly, erratic Yeltsin, and with that, as the restorer and guarantor of stability. From 2008 to 2014 the numbers of people who thought that Putin had been very or mainly successful in dealing with the challenges posed by Chechen separatists and settling the political question of Chechnya (as president up to 2008 and from 2012 onwards, and prime minister in the interregnum) remained very stable, at around two thirds of respondents in both cases. These figures remained constant even when perceptions of his other successes – bringing economic prosperity, stability and international respect to Russia – declined slightly from 2008–2014 (Russian Research surveys 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014).

Moreover, the hard-won stability in Chechnya under Ramzan Kadyrov's rule has come to signify a metonymy of the Russian Federation in its experiencing increasing stability and internal order at a price of heightened authoritarianism and repression. In his talks with Putin in April 2017, Kadyrov, without naming the source or whether it was domestic or foreign, complained about “provocative articles” that according to him spread unfounded allegations about repression and human rights violations in Chechnya (President of Russia 2017). It seems as if the frequent media image projected of the situation in the republic was an irritant to him. Likewise, he has claimed that the frequent allegations of purges and harassment of LGBT activists in Chechnya (Scicchitano 2019) were nothing but “an invention by foreign agents who are paid a few kopecks”. According to him, the alleged human rights abuses were an outright falsification since LGBT persons simply did not exist in the republic. To corroborate this, he added that “If there were such people in Chechnya, the law-enforcement organs wouldn't need to have anything to do with them because their relatives would send them somewhere from which there is no returning” (Independent, 30 January 2018).

At other times also Kadyrov has showed a propensity for attacking

7 The question was “Whose fault was it, in your opinion, that the war in Chechnya arose?”. Respondents could choose between the Chechen side, the Russian side, President Yeltsin, Middle Eastern extremists, or the United States.

media which he believes has treated Chechnya unfairly. In the spring of 2020, during the outbreak of the coronavirus, the Moscow-based newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* was particularly branded by him. Addressing the fact that the newspaper published articles about the Chechen regime's harsh measures to combat the virus, Kadyrov exclaimed: "How long will this provocative and explosive anti-Chechen harassment brazenly and shamelessly organized by *Novaya Gazeta* continue?", adding that a named journalist of the newspaper was in practice "a foreign agent" and that the paper tried hard to "label my people as hardened criminals, medieval heathens and stranglers of freedom with their myths" (*Moscow Times*, 14 April 2020).

From time to time there are reports suggesting that the federal authorities consider the actions of the Chechen regime to be over-zealous. Maybe some concern over the local authorities' eagerness to resurrect stability in Chechnya could even be gleaned between the lines of Putin's statement during the working meeting in March 2016. At the time, he pointed out that there was a need for closer cooperation with federal authorities, especially on security matters (President of Russia 2016).

Kadyrov has thus remained in power since 2007, which is a long time given the fact that his power ambitions often seem to have stretched beyond the borders of the Chechen Republic and he therefore would have been likely to strain the patience of powerful federal elites. His behavior is often erratic, which is prone to create some tension. Kadyrov's ostentatious appearance would at first glance seem not to go well together with Putin's decidedly more calculated and rational manners. The flamboyance of the Chechen president's style came through during the FIFA Football World Cup in Russia in 2018. The championship was dispersed across twelve different stadiums in eleven cities across the Federation, and Chechnya served as a local point of accommodation quarters of a couple of the competing teams. Kadyrov happily posed before the camera together with the Egyptian star footballer Mohammad Salah, who was subjected to harsh criticism for showing a poor sense of political judgement.

The happy but maybe less than statesmanlike snapshot with the footballer was a trifle and a lighthearted diversion, but Kadyrov's impulsiveness could have serious consequences when applied to other fields. In the spring of 2020, Kadyrov caught the headlines when he commented that Chechens who had been infected by the coronavirus and disregarded the rules of self-isolation and quarantine should be punished with death (*Moscow Times*, 25 March 2020). Against the background of this rash statement, it was

almost an irony of fate when Kadyrov himself contracted Covid-19 and was flown to Moscow for hospital treatment (Roth 2020).

Personality traits aside, there have been rumors of Putin and Kadyrov being on the point of falling out over important political matters. Such speculations were particularly intense in relation to the involvement of Chechen assassins in the murder of the Russian opposition leader Boris Nemtsov in 2015. However, so far, the relations between Putin and Kadyrov seem based on calculations of mutual benefit. The federal center continues to prop up the Chechen republic through extensive economic support. The price tag is almost staggering, and in 2015 federal funding still made up 82 per cent of the republic's budget (Souleimanov and Jasutis 2016, 122).

On the other hand, Kadyrov continues to be a guarantor of iron-clad stability in the Chechen republic, that delivers, time after time, near-unanimous levels of support for the Kremlin's favored candidates in federal official electoral statistics. As one Western journalist, profiling Kadyrov, cynically put it, "There are times when you need every vote you can get, and it's nice to know where you can find 611,578 without having to worry" (Bullough 2015). Moreover, Kadyrov has often expressed a total devotion to Putin's persona, giving loyalty for the President a face throughout the federation. By often showing that his range of activities extends beyond the republic as such he may also signal that any opposition to the President may meet with tough countermeasures from his hardliner supporters. Overall, despite his brazen manners, Kadyrov has basically remained within "Moscow's comfort zone" and advanced its interests (Souleimanov and Jasutis 2016). There seem to be no immediate signs that the strategic accord between the federal center and the republic is about to break up any time soon.

Conclusion

The main argument of this chapter is that political and military processes involving the republic of Chechnya in the 1990s and onwards meant the decline of Boris Yeltsin's presidential career and provided the take-off and the very preconditions for Vladimir Putin's long presidential tenures. The First Chechen War in 1994–1996, so unsuccessful for the federal center, underlined the waning of Yeltsin's presidency and the faltering of the Russian Federation itself. It almost cost Yeltsin the victory in the 1996 presidential elections and left him hamstrung for the rest of his presidential tenure. Developments in Chechnya symbolized the general dissolution

and disarray of the Federation characterizing the turbulent 1990s.

Putin, on the other hand, could use the Second Chechen War, which was victorious for the Federation, to bring home the message that it was he who salvaged the Federation, resurrected stability and order, defeated the separatist enemy within, and brought this latter-day Time of Troubles to a close. His Chechnya policies brought him the reputation of being a man of action, a staunch defender of national sovereignty and a fierce opponent of terrorism, nationally as well as globally. The strategy won him formidable popular support at home and helped him construct a platform for political legitimacy which, 20 years on, in combination with authoritarian policies, is still largely there to secure him the electoral wins that he needs for his repeatedly renewed tenures of power.

This chapter has shown that developments in Chechnya have a greater overall significance for Russia than the republic's limited size and peripheral geographical location would seem to suggest. Chechnya continues to play a significant role for the Putin administration, as a symbol for the reestablishment of political stability in the South and the Federation at large, and as a region which under Ramzan Kadyrov's rule demonstrates total loyalty and allegiance, albeit conditional, to the Putin presidency. In going from chaos and dissolution in the early 2000s to stability and national role model status a decade later, Chechnya stands as a metonymy of the overall situation in the Federation. This is further borne out by Kadyrov's presidency. Ever since he took up the position of President of the Chechen Republic in 2007 (later renamed to Head of the Republic in 2011), he has represented an amplified mirror image of traits that are customarily attributed to Putin – a macho “doer” and guarantor of stability, often accused of using authoritarian practices to achieve his aims. The fact that Kadyrov – who began his career as a militia leader against the rule of Yeltsin's Russia in the mid-1990s – is the underwriter of the Republic's loyalty to Putin's modern-day Russian Federation, has huge symbolism. From being the greatest existential threat to Russia in the 1990s, the symbiosis of the Chechen–Russian relationship means that it has now become one of its strongest symbols of its stability.

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NRB8 survey (2000) and Russian Research surveys (2001, 2004, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2014) used with kind permission of original compilers or according to normal Data Archive rules (where appropriate). The original compilers bear no responsibility for any errors of interpretation of the

survey data by the current authors. Where appropriate, the datasets have been reweighted by demographic attributes and actual election turnout by the current authors.

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LARS FUNCH HANSEN

Russification and resistance

Renewed pressure on Circassian identity and new forms of local and transnational resistance in the North Caucasus

The fall of the Soviet Union resulted in a surge of mobilisation among the Circassians which included the establishment of new civil society organisations and new publications to address the key issues of concern – as was the case all over the North Caucasus and many other parts of the former Soviet Union. Civil society protesting as a form of resistance towards the political level was a new pursuit that began slowly during the years of *perestroika*. The different parts of the Circassian World began increasingly to be aware of each other, though contacts and active cooperation were limited during the 1990s.¹ Still, Circassian activists quickly began to address not just the authorities at local level, but also started to address issues of concern to the joint Circassian World – both inside Russia and internationally.² A very diverse group of activists began to address Circassians at large, as well as the authorities and the general public in Russia. The former included the promotion of awareness on Circassian culture, history and identity in a context, where many had

1 The term Circassian World is widely used to assign both Circassians in the homeland and in the diaspora, in total between three and six million altogether. Ca. 800,000 in Russia.

2 The joint transnational day of commemoration on May 21st in a modern understanding was established in 1990 and have since become a significant and highly institutionalised annual event among Circassians all over the world. The first marking of May 21st took place in 1961.

lost much of this knowledge – partly because this for many years used to be only expressed orally and mainly in private.

Overall, the actions addressing the local republican and/or the federal authorities of the Russian Federation were on issues concerning indigenous rights in the North Caucasus, as can be seen from the examples below. Resistance and protests are mostly reactions to pressure from the authorities, including from local and federal intelligence services. This has often led to a spiral of reciprocal actions and re-actions. The increased level of protest in the second part of the 2010s and the early 2020s is indicative of increased tightening of indigenous rights and of the space for action of civil society actors in the North Caucasus in particular and in Russia in general. However, resistance can also take place in more subtle ways, as illustrated by ethno-tourism and the many ways of dealing with historical memory, including the use of the internet.

Ever since the early phases of the inclusion of the North Caucasus into the Russian Empire via extended and often extremely violent warfare against the indigenous peoples, the region has been subject to shifting policies and processes of Russification versus indigenisation. The empty lands in the north-western parts of the Caucasus were slowly populated by ethnic Russians, Ukrainians and other primarily Christian peoples in the late 19th century. A similar trend of demographic Russification continued in the areas of the three contemporary Circassian republics during the Soviet period, but the trend has reversed since 1991. This is not due to de-Russification policies as seen in many of the post-Soviet states, but is rather related to similar processes of “unmixing of peoples” that occurred in relation to the fall of empires (Brubaker 1996, 171). The census of 2010 showed an increase in share of the indigenous population in these republics, but a fall in the number of peoples speaking local indigenous languages. This reflects a linguistic Russification that has been enhanced by the significant role of media such as television, social media and the internet in general. However, this development has also generated protests and motivated renewed activism among the Circassians. A key point of this contemporary resistance is a critique of the development of federalism in Russia, which is both a shared and outspoken critique among republics in the North Caucasus and in the Volga region.

In the following, five examples of Circassian resistance and protesting in the North Caucasus will be presented. These examples constitute key examples of ongoing Circassian activism of the late 2010s and early 2020s focussing on indigenous minority rights, and can be seen as a way of

addressing examples of increasing Russification of Circassian language, culture and everyday life. As mentioned, shifts between phases, processes and policies of Russification versus ditto periods of indigenisation, have characterised the Circassian existence since the gradual inclusion in the Russian Empire during the nineteenth century, which continued in the subsequent Soviet period. As we shall see, these perceptions can still be relevant.

New amendments to Russian constitution 2020

The suggested amendments to the constitution of the Russian Federation presented in January 2020 resulted in a number of protests from Circassian actors, many in cooperation with representatives from other non-Russian republics. The suggested changes became widely known internationally as they potentially opened up for an extension of Vladimir Putin's presidency until 2036. By mid-March 2020, the constitutional amendments had been endorsed by both houses of the Russian parliament and by all regional and republican parliaments, and were ready for a nationwide vote in April, but were cancelled due to the spreading of the Corona virus.

The new amendments were met with strong criticism from the non-Russian republics, including at times also key persons from the local political structures, often tightly controlled by the Kremlin. The main point of their critique was the elevation of the status of the Russians and the Russian language, which simultaneously reduces the status of the non-Russian peoples and their languages. This alteration changed the former basic tenet of equality of the peoples of the Russian Federation. Some labelled this a Russification of the federation.

A group of researchers from the Kabardino-Balkarian Institute for Humanitarian Research published a statement on March 7th outlining the main points of criticism under the following headline: "the attempt to establish only one 'state-forming people' is contrary to the spirit of federalism and the right of peoples to self-determination" (my translation). The researchers summarised their critique into the following three main points ("Statement" 2020):³

3 The statement was published by the NGO Kabardino-Balkarian Human Rights Centre, not the Institute.

Firstly: “The attempt to establish only one ‘state-forming people’ of the Russian Federation is unacceptable, contrary to the spirit of federalism, the principles of human rights and freedoms, and the right of peoples to self-determination, as set in the basic laws of the state. We affirm that the state-forming are *all the peoples of the Russian Federation, without exception.*”

Secondly: “The proposal that ‘the Russian Federation provides support to compatriots living abroad in the exercise of their rights, the protection of their interests and the preservation of the all-Russian [общероссийской] cultural identity’ also seems to be discriminatory. The end of the thesis, declaring the need for support only to those compatriots who maintain a ‘nationwide cultural identity,’ essentially excludes from the concept of *compatriot* millions of Circassians, Tatars, Kalmyks and other peoples whose republics, together with other entities, form the Russian Federation.”

Thirdly: “The proposition about the ‘millennial’ character of the Russian Federation appears unconvincing. The need to ensure “protection of historical truth” also do [*sic*] not seem self-evident, since science does not operate with the concept of “historical truth”. The researchers note that the already existing scientific methods, standards and procedures in modern historiography should render these elements redundant in relation to the constitution.

The new formulation that has led to most reactions from representatives of the non-Russian peoples is the linking of the Russian language – that already has the formal status of being the joint state language of the federation – to the Russians as the “state-forming people”. Not only is this perceived as the introduction of a new form of inequality, but also a direct continuation of the reduced rights of the indigenous languages of the non-Russian peoples that were introduced in 2018, when teaching in these languages was made voluntary, which also was met with protests from the republics (Kaplan 2018).

An Open Appeal to the political leaders of the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria and their representatives in both chambers of the Russian parliament from twenty organisations, well-known artists, authors, scientists etc. was published 8 March 2020 (“Open Appeal” 2020). This group included some of the most outspoken Circassian civil society actors, who also took part in the 2018 protests against the reductions in the school teaching in Circassian languages and in support of Martin Kochesoko in 2019. In the appeal, they warn that the suggested

amendments will lead to *ethnocide* among the non-Russian peoples.

The confederation of Circassian and Caucasian organisations in Turkey, Kaffed, released an “Open call and protest against changes in the constitution of the Russian Federation” in four languages signed by 94 organisations of which 14 are located in Europe and North America (mainly within a Turkish-speaking sphere) (“Open Call” 2020). They voiced the same concerns as the above-mentioned, protesting the new Russian “superior status over the other peoples of the Russian Federation” and the reduction of the languages of non-Russian peoples “to a secondary position.” On the proposed new status of Russians as “state-forming people,” it is noted: “This provision is against the principle of prohibition of discrimination, which is one of the fundamental norms of the Universal Law of Human Rights. The provision has the potential to create the legislative grounds for the assimilation of non-Russian peoples.” Generally, the organisations from outside Russia are more critical in their choice of terms, when those located in Russia have to be more careful – Russia has a semi-authoritarian regime where critical civil society actors of the non-Russian periphery are regularly subject to both threats and violence. A number of Circassian activists and academics in Russia have been forced into exile.

The Kaffed-led protest also objects to the inclusion of a thousand-year old Russian history into the constitution and links this to one of the key issues of the world-wide Circassian revival since the fall of the Soviet Union. As this “creates the risk of the emergence of a dogmatic official history and the covering up of many issues by law, especially the Circassian Genocide and Circassian Exile, which must be explored by objective scientific methods and open discussions” (“Open Call” 2020). When the second wave of post-Soviet Circassian civil society mobilisation began in the mid-2000s, most of these organisations avoided using the term genocide, which a number of both younger and more radical organisations insisted upon doing. This is an example of how they managed to elevate “genocide recognition” into a key element of the wider Circassian movement.⁴ New organisations appeared in Turkey during this period, including, for instance, Patriots of Circassia and Circassian Federation, who, as could be expected, also referred to the issue of genocide recognition in their protests.

4 Further assisted by, for instance, new research into imperial Russian archives in Georgia that, for instance, resulted in the book *The Circassian Genocide* by the American historian Walter Richmond in 2013.

“Patriots of Circassia” from Turkey used the occasion to voice a wider protest and lobby the UN for recognition of the Circassian Genocide, which they see as a way of combatting the lack of rights of the Circassians in the Russia Federation: “And the increase in those threats becomes even more significant with the introduction of so-called ‘amendments’ to the initially imperfect Constitution of the Russian Federation” (“Application” 2020).

In other words, the process of such “amending” shows that the position of the contemporary authorities of Russian Federation is akin to that of the Russian Emperors of the late 18th–early 20th centuries. Therefore, “the recognition of the genocide of Adygs (Circassians) will serve not only the revival of one people, but will also become an incentive for others to free them from lawlessness – both in the national and in a wider sense. This, as we can hope, will serve as the main factor in the return of the Russian Federation onto the path of democratic rebirth” (“Application” 2020). Beyond UN Secretary General, António M. Gutierres, the “application” is also addressed to the UN Special Rapporteur on cultural rights, Karima Bennoune, who is responsible for monitoring cultural rights, including indigenous rights to material as well as immaterial cultural heritage. In a related approach, Circassian activists addressed the Council of Europe and requested an investigation including a monitoring mission to the North Caucasus, to “assess the situation of Russia’s indigenous peoples and national minorities, in the light of decisions taken in Russia on ethnic segregation and discrimination of its peoples” (“Request” 2020).

Demographic scenarios based on the gradual reduction in the share of ethnic Russians in the population of the Russian Federation have been a concern of politicians, scientists and others over many years. Bogdan Bezpalko, a member of the working group that prepared the suggested amendments to the constitution, stated “. . . that the right of ethnic Russian lands that are now within the non-Russian post-Soviet states to join the Russian Federation should be declared in a new version of the country’s basic law.” He further declared that “such a right, contained within the constitution, would make the assembly of the entire Russian world easier and help Russia solve its demographic problems” (Goble 2020a). Others subsequently protested against the suggestions of Bezpalko and they were only partly included in proposed amendments, mostly because they could be regarded as intimidating by neighbouring post-Soviet states. Still, the fact that he had a seat in the working group is an illustration of the role of these beliefs in official Russia.

Reactions to the statements of the Russian Ambassador to Turkey

In an interview in February 2020 about the war and refugees from Syria, the Russian Ambassador to Turkey, Aleksey Yerkhov, suddenly began to complain about Circassian activism. He referred to the attempts at reassessing the history of the nineteenth century war as a large-scale tragedy that could also be labelled as an act of genocide as a “beautiful legend,” which to many Circassians was an outright provocation that required quick reactions – not least on social media. The ambassador managed to reject the results of widely recognised historical research and the sources they are built upon, which was explicitly exemplified in the application (“Application” 2020). Hereby he came to illustrate much of the ignorance demonstrated by the Kremlin towards the Circassian issues, and inherently exposed this approach. Yerkhov also managed to complain about the various demonstrations of Circassian/Caucasian organisations in front of the Russian consulate in Istanbul, when he was stationed there.

This was an example of civil society action that managed to gather all Circassian actors in joint or parallel protests. Even the International Circassian Association (ICA), that is widely criticised all over the Circassian World for being controlled by the Kremlin, took part in the protests (“Appeal ICA” 2020). The leadership of ICA chose to employ unusually strong formulations when presenting the statements of the ambassador as “erroneous and destabilizing, incorrect and inciting ethnic hatred. The ambassador’s remarks contradict documented historical facts and the studies of many domestic and foreign historians who studied the problems of the Caucasian War.”

The ambassador apparently did not understand that comments of this type are counter-productive in relation to the Circassian World. Perhaps a sort of big-brother syndrome that is widespread in Russia, where many still feel that Caucasian minorities should just feel fortunate to be part of Great Russia. To many Circassians, the statements of the ambassador came to both embody and reveal the overall consciously ignorant as well as manipulative approach of the Kremlin towards the Circassians.

Protests generated in relation to Circassian memorialisation event by the Black Sea coast

In May 2017, the annual Circassian memorial day event (May 21st) took place in the Black Sea town of Golovinka that is located not far from the village Bolshoi Kichmai, famous for its 33 waterfalls and different forms of Circassian ethno-tourism. As before, a prayer led by Ruslan Gvashev was held in the Circassian language at an ancient tree with symbolic importance among the Circassians, known as the Tulip Tree. Subsequently Gvashev was detained and fined for “organising an unsanctioned demonstration”, which came as a surprise to the participants as this event had taken place annually during many years without official approval (Stateynov 2017). Gvashev, who is a former chairman of the Council of Elders of the Shapsugs, is a well-respected Circassian elder, who has been active in Circassian organisations and events over many years. After the court upheld the fine, Gvashev protested by going into hunger strike in September 2017. Statements of support for Gvashev quickly grew beyond the borders of Russia, and became a widespread spontaneous campaign. Portraits of Gvashev were quickly created in graphically simple digital versions that could easily be shared for use on social media and made into posters, including one in the style of the famous Barack Obama “Hope” poster from 2008. They were immediately circulated via social media and became popular visual signposts for the spontaneous campaign. Many Circassians and others supporting the case opted to use these portraits as an avatar or profile picture on their social media sites. A web-based petition was initiated under the headline: “Ruslan Gvashev. Without



Two examples of popular digital images of Ruslan Gvashev as shared on social media

the right to remembrance!”, and participation encouraged via social media (“Petition” 2017). The hashtag “Ruslanisnotalone” quickly became popular on social media. All of this turned out to be a persuasive way of gaining widespread publicity for a local case among a small community of Circassians and suddenly Gvashev became famous all over the Circassian World.

Since Gvashev already had health issues, many were worried and tried to persuade him to give up the campaign. Finally, after 25 days, he was persuaded to stop the hunger strike before it became fatal (Avetisyan 2017). Gvashev suffered a mild stroke during the hunger strike and still suffers from the after-effects. Contrary to what the authorities might have hoped for, these events have far from silenced Gvashev. It should be noted that in the years running up to the Sochi Winter Olympic Games in 2014, Gvashev was one of the most critical and outspoken persons among the Shapsugs (Youtube 2013a, 2013b). Gvashev has also spoken strongly against the well-funded official attempts in Krasnodar Krai at rewriting the history of the North-Western Caucasus as the land of the Kuban Cossacks labelling Cossacks as the indigenous people of the region.

Zaurbek Kozhev, a historian at Institute of Humanitarian Studies in Kabardino-Balkaria commented the case of Gvashev and the wider context of Circassian memorialisation events: “Despite the fact that [remembrance events] are not covered in official media, information about them is promptly disseminated via the internet and becomes public. Such information inflicts a serious blow to the image of Russia as an international state that is united in a single family and civilised the ‘wild’ peoples of the Caucasus” (Tashev 2017). According to Murtaz Tlepshev, an expert in international relations from Karachay-Cherkessia, it is “impossible to explain the prohibitions on memorable dates rationally. It’s just not clever.” Tlepshev points at the role played by dissatisfied national groups in the fall of the Soviet Union and queries whether the present Russian leadership has forgotten how this form of pressure resulted in significant counter-actions (Tashev 2017).

In an official Appeal to the Commissioner on Human Rights in the Russian Federation, representatives from Circassian organisations pointed at the fact that a similar commemoration event among Cossacks in neighbouring Stavropol Krai was allowed to take place without official permission in the same period (Hadzhukue 2017). They asked the commissioner why there were different standards for different ethnic groups in different places on the issue of commemorating ancestors.

The main term assigned to Ruslan Gvashev on the many reactions to the case was “hero” or “Circassian hero,” and some even used the title of the famous book by Michael Lermontov, “Hero of Our Time” as a headline (Youtube 2017). Lermontov’s book holds one of the key positions in the literary canon in Russia as part of the so-called “golden age” of Russian literature. However, the main events of the book take place in newly conquered Circassian lands, while in the process of being gradually and violently subjugated over the course of many decades by the imperial Russian army in the mid-19th century. Therefore, the book has, especially since the fall of the Soviet Union, been used as part of the Circassian attempts at changing the understanding in Russia from being a “Caucasian war” into a “colonial war” or simply the “Russian-Circassian war.” This is a shared trend among many of the peoples from the Caucasus area. Linking this book to the case of Gvashev can therefore also be seen as a parallel to contemporary reassessments of colonial periods taking place all over the world, often referred to as post-colonial theories and debates, which are only slowly spreading in the Russian Federation – though highly disapproved of by official Russia. As such, the actions of Gvashev can be seen as contemporary representations of the repressed voices from historical Circassia, including the tradition of oral transmission of Circassian culture and traditions. The respect for elders is a central part of Circassian traditions and one that is still widespread among Circassians everywhere. The momentous level of respect voiced towards Gvashev became an illustration of this tradition, which might have been overlooked by the authorities. That Gvashev speaks in the Circassian language and often makes emotional but well-articulated speeches, often shared via social media, is also a link to ancient Circassian oral traditions. The fact that he resides in the historical homeland, tells tales from the historical homeland, mostly while actually in the historical homeland, has – not least among the diaspora – assigned him with a strong level of authenticity.

The magnitude of the protest campaign must have come as a surprise to authorities that usually have applied different methods to contain conflicts with local indigenous groups, whether in Krasnodar Krai or at the federal level. On the other hand, it was also remarkable that the authorities chose to take action against a Circassian/Shapsug event at this point, as they must have been aware that the issue could backfire. It is especially surprising as marking May 21st has become a highly institutionalised annual event among Circassians everywhere, a process that

has been further enhanced as use of the internet has become an integral part of planning and reporting from these events. Since the core of these events is to commemorate the tragic exodus from the homeland, which is still not fully researched as most archives are closed for historians, requests for recognition as an act of genocide are often voiced at these events. This is an issue that Russia regularly rejects – as does Turkey in relation to the Armenian genocide.

Shapsug protests in the 2020s

Shapsug activists from the Black Sea coast have repeatedly lobbied the authorities in Krasnodar Krai as well on a federal level for recognition and for increased rights as an indigenous people of the area (Goble 2011). The Shapsugs are a Circassian sub-ethnic group of approximately 10,000 persons living by the Black Sea coast (around 30,000 Circassians live in total in the Krai, mostly Shapsugs), and from 1924 to 1945 they had their own Shapsug National District that included most Shapsug villages in the area. The Shapsugs are one of the largest Circassian sub-groups with more than half a million in the Circassian diaspora.

In 2020, Shapsug activists protested against a new large railway line from Krasnodar to Sochi, where so far the railway line runs along the Black Sea coast, which president Putin has deemed strategically weak (Bashqawi 2020). This is an expensive infrastructure project which parallels the building and rebuilding of large areas in Greater Sochi in relation to the 2014 Winter Olympic Games. The new line is planned to pass through Shapsugia including the territories of several Shapsug villages, and many villagers will be forced to relocate. Since many Shapsug villages have already lost their schools and those remaining have suffered severe reductions in the teaching of Circassian language and history (which includes teaching about material and historical items from earlier village life), this is seen as yet another step in the removal or total marginalisation of Circassian/Shapsug existence in the region. This is much in the same way as the celebration of Russian and Cossack history during the Winter Olympic ceremonies, with its ignoring of the local indigenous presence and history in the area.

According to some observers, this issue has the potential to become a rallying call for Circassians around the world, much in the same way as the many protests against the Olympic Games that marked a significant increase in Circassian activism around the globe (Goble 2020c). The

extensive anti-Olympic campaign brought knowledge of the existing Shapsug areas in the region into the consciousness of a wider public sphere, including the Circassians in the diaspora (Petersson and Vamling 2013). It became known that certain Shapsug villages during the six-month holiday season daily receives large quantities of visiting tourists from Sochi,⁵ and a few years later the fining and charging of Ruslan Gvashev in the same area for holding a memorial service by the Black Sea coast was circulated intensively among Circassian and Caucasian internet platforms (Cherkes 2018).

At one location, a Shapsug village is planned to be fully demolished and replaced by an extended station project "...and they will resettle us in apartment blocks" (Goble 2020c). Regarding the potential for protests and conflicts, it is important to remember what Ruslan Gvashev has noted, namely "...that young Circassians are no long afraid of challenging the authorities" (Goble 2020c). The Black Sea coast has become a Circassian symbol after the Olympic Games in Sochi in 2014.

Protests in relation to charges against Martin Koschesoko

Martin Kochesoko, chairman of the organisation Khabze, from the capital Nalchik in the Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria became a symbol of Circassian revival and resistance after he was arrested for possession of drugs in June 2019. Persons who knew Kochesoko quickly rejected the possibility that he either used or traded drugs and, generally, the charges were met with widespread disbelief, as in a similar case in Moscow where the critical journalist Ivan Golunov was finally freed after public protests ("Appeal to the International Community" 2019). The scepticism was also prompted by the awareness that planting of drugs for a long time has been a popular method of incrimination used by the police and intelligence services towards persons whose actions were unpopular in the eyes of the Russian authorities (Azar 2019; Biznes Online 2019). Activists in the Caucasus have long been subjected to this and other forms of incriminating actions, such as intimidations and threats towards close family members or late-night beatings by anonymous attackers that subsequently turn out to be impossible for the police to find and prosecute. Several Circassian

5 Digital visual representations shared on social media and various internet sites such as TripAdvisor, Pinterest etc.



Two examples of the popular digital images of Martin Kochesoko circulated via social media

activists and journalists have been forced to go into exile after having experienced similar types of threats in situations where they felt that for themselves and their families basic security could not be guaranteed by the police, the intelligence services or the courts.

Protests against the imprisonment of Kochesoko quickly became transnational as news bulletins and protest statements were spread widely via sharing and linking on social media. As in the case of Ruslan Gvashev, social media were promptly brought to use. Digital portraits were taken from the internet, Kochesoko already had several photos of himself in the traditional Circassian dress (the Cherkesska) and hat on his personal sites. Different versions appeared and three or four quickly became the most popular versions shared again and again on social media. These images became significant and unified visual signposts that also made Kochesoko a visual icon of the Circassian movement – online as well as offline. The hashtag “freedomformartin” quickly became popular and circulated over and over on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and often included the same images.⁶ This hashtag was supplemented by variations on the same theme in especially Russian and Turkish languages. A demonstration was held in Istanbul with different slogans and posters that immediately were shared and circulated on the internet.

Kochesoko took the initiative to establish Khabze in 2017, after a

number of years as active in the Circassian Congress during his student years. The organisation quickly became active and visible in the republic and beyond. The name Khabze in Circassian means “law” or “order,” generally known to refer to the Circassian code of conduct or etiquette and a well-known term in the Caucasus region (Khabze). This type of symbolic naming of civil society organisations is a widespread trend among Circassians.

Less than a month before the arrest, Khabze organised a local seminar on federalism, democracy and their potential relevance in the contemporary Circassian and wider North Caucasian context. Local academic specialists involved in university teaching and research in Kabardino-Balkaria participated actively in the event. A few days later, Kochesoko took part in a similar type of arrangement at the federal level, called “Problems and prospects of federalism in the Russian Federation” (Kochesoko 2019), at the initiative of the Democratic Congress of the Peoples of Russia (Biznes Online 2018). Representatives from more than fifteen different national groups and republics participated.⁷ The event included contributions from academic specialists and activists from the non-Russian republics and regions, and it was reported widely in the media in Russia, especially on the internet (Youtube 2019).

The focus on the criticism of the official understanding of federalism was controversial in the eyes of the federal authorities, where intelligence services for many years have been monitoring the actions of the local indigenous organisations and their leaders. However, a number of key aspects of federalism have step-by-step been reduced by the leaders in the Kremlin, diminishing the rights and concerns of the federal republics. This was illustrated by the reduction of the role of the local indigenous languages in various pedagogical institutions, which used to be seen as one of the key aspects of being a federal republic and local indigenous identity in general (Yusupova 2018).

The Circassian writer and activist Aslan Beshto summarised the general understanding of many of the protesters: “The very fact of a search and seizure of computers and electronic media in the office of the public organization Khabze says that the real reason for the persecution of Kochesoko is his public activity” (OC Media 2019). The link to Kochesoko’s participation in the May 21 event and subsequently in the two round-table seminars on federalism in Nalchik and Moscow, respectively, is obvious. The seminars questioned the understanding of

7 Held in Moscow 24–25 May 2019.

federalism, which was perceived with great seriousness by the authorities in Russia, who had planned a quick process of completing the amendments to the constitution over a few months and avoiding too much public debate (Khramova and Troitskaya 2020).

The extensive and widespread level of protest against the arrest of Kochesoko apparently surprised the authorities and rendered it difficult to carry out a public trial based on a fabricated charge. After spending the first part of the summer in arrest and the second part in house arrest, Kochesoko was released by the end of August 2019, officially while further investigations were still ongoing. Whether the transnationalisation of the issue helped is always difficult to assess in a Russian context, where international links and support are often regarded as potentially suspicious and local organisations risk being labelled as foreign agents. In February 2020, the charges against Kochesoko were reactivated by the authorities following a continued investigation (Maratova 2020).

Circassian activism and civil society development

The cases presented above outline some of the key themes and issues of the Circassian movement in the beginning of the 2020s. It has become clear that, in spite of its dispersed character, a Circassian movement exists, and shows continuity in the issues raised and perseverance in the growing civil society activism and internet presence. This is in spite of attempts in Russia to relegate these issues to an agenda of lesser importance. It is obvious that the Circassian movement today is in a quite different place, in spite of the difficulties and restrictions of civil society actions in the two key states of Russia and Turkey, than it was in the late 2000s. Shared experiences over the years and the development of social media and the internet have entailed an increased transnationalisation of the Circassian World with a multitude of cross-border links. However, the Circassian movement is still a diverse and multi-faceted undertaking unfolding in many states and continents of the world, but the diversity is no longer as fragmented as it was a decade ago.

A number of actors have predicted the gradual demise of this Circassian activism, especially due to the difficulties of performing ethnic minority civil society activism in the semi-authoritarian environments of Russia and Turkey. However, precisely the threat of increased assimilation – the final

loss of language, culture and traditions – has led many into contributing to the still ongoing Circassian revival.⁸ A number of Circassian activists have disappeared from the public eye since the end of the 2000s, but an even larger number of new activists have appeared. These are activists of all ages and all trades. The arrival of the internet and not least social media have played an important role in this development.

Circassian activists – whether sitting in front of a computer screen or out and about – or both – are displaying a significantly increased level of agency, that today appears more mature and self-confident than before. Circassian activism has clearly managed to carve out an enlarged space for action by taking the various options of the internet and social media into service.⁹ However, it is important to stress that without the offline work of the activists and organisations, all the online activism might be in vain. The examples of the difficulties that the Circassian activism has brought into the lives of Gvashev and Kochesoko are illustrative of the increased attention the authorities in Russia have found it necessary to offer Circassian offline activism in the second half of the 2010's. That activists are faced with resistance or counter-actions both in the form of official as well as unofficial actions, including physical threats and violence, only serves to stress the potential gravity of the situation. Circassian activists have on many occasions been forced to leave Russia and the Caucasian homeland without knowing if they will ever be back with family, friends etc. Russia may well be expected to further increase the pressure on these forms of unwanted activism. However, as the example of Kochesoko illustrates, new generations of activists and organisations still keep appearing and show the rest of the Circassian world that persistent and well-performed activism is possible after all.

The enlargement of various national as well as transnational public spheres, has played a key role in increasing the visibility of Circassian issues and activism – also beyond the borders of the Circassian World. This has, as mentioned above, increased the overall space for action for Circassian activism and has resulted in an additional element of information activism, which already for many decades has been a key element of Circassian activism. Digitalisation of documents, journals, newspapers, books etc. and the subsequent sharing of these digital versions

8 “The Circassian Revival: A Quest for Recognition” was the title of my PhD dissertation from 2014, subtitled: “Mediated transnational mobilisation and memorialisation among a geographically dispersed people from the Caucasus.”

9 As understood by Jürgen Habermas and others.

have implied additions to the libraries established by the diaspora groups forced into exile, often in cooperation with these libraries (Hansen 2015). The counterstatements presented in the well-argued responses from Aloyev and Kalmykov can be substantiated by reference to these works that have become easily accessible. This might in the future render it more difficult for another Russian ambassador or the like to act similarly mindlessly.

One of the achievements of the various forms of Circassian information activism has been the increased links to international media. This was illustrated in April 2020, when the Russian Prosecutor General declared the American think tank, the Jamestown Foundation, an “undesirable” organisation in Russia, and directly referred to their reporting on the Circassians as “inciting ethnic separatism in the national republics of the Russian Federation and promoting the separation of certain territories of our country” (Press Release 2020).¹⁰ Jamestown runs the web-based publication *Eurasia Daily Monitor* that regularly covers news from Circassian republics, organisations and individuals, which subsequently are taken up and recirculated by other media outlets as well as social media.¹¹ Russia has previously complained about the JF, for instance, when they organised a conference in Georgia in 2010 that became a stepping stone towards the Georgian recognition of the Circassian genocide in 2011 (Tsibenko and Tsibenko 2015).

Conclusion

As illustrated above, *memorialisation* is often a controversial issue in the North Caucasus and has led to a so-called “war of monuments” (Charny 2020). “The erection of statues to Russian generals involved in the conquest and subjugation of the North Caucasus, actions taken by local officials to show their loyalty to Moscow, are intended to underline ‘the Russianness’ of this region [...] Akhmet Yarlykapov says; but such monuments can have exactly the opposite effect” (Goble 2020b). In the republics and areas where Circassians reside, many monuments were erected to the memory of the Circassian tragedy and mass-exile of 1864, as was also the case in many Cossack communities. However, Circassians

¹⁰ Jamestown took part in organising a conference in Georgia in 2010 that became part of the process leading to the Georgian recognition of the Circassian genocide in 2011.

¹¹ Jamestown and EDM will continue their reporting and they no longer have offices or reporters in Russia.

and their organisations often complained about the Cossack monuments, as for instance, the famous generals of the nineteenth century celebrated by new monuments were often the ones involved in the war against the Circassians, that resulted in the death of perhaps half a million people, and the forced exile of 90% of the Circassians.

The Circassians now find themselves in a perplexing and confusing situation, where increasingly historical information on the actions of the Russian army, including bands of Cossacks, has become available, researched into by historians and shared via publications and the internet. While at the same time, Cossacks are encouraged by the Russian authorities, including for instance Krasnodar Krai, to celebrate their history in the North Caucasus as a positive contribution to the foundation of today's Russia. Subsequently, examples of *competing memorialisation* can be found all over the North Caucasus, where cities such as Nalchik have these types of competing memorials placed within short distances from each other. Simultaneously, many Circassian villages have today erected monuments to the Circassian tragedy of 1864 (including local heroes), while neighbouring Russian or Cossack villages celebrate opposing generals from the nineteenth century. Consequently, in Krasnodar Krai, we can observe Circassian *pockets* of alternative memorialisation opposing the general trend of the region.¹² Perhaps the message sent to the Circassians by the charges against Gvashev was to push Circassian memorialisation back into the pocket or tightening the pocket: “stay away from our neo-Russian tourist coast – go to your own village seven kilometres inland”? The Circassian village is already affected by de-indigenisation policies of language teaching in schools, while on the other hand also developing their own indigenous narratives within the growing success of local ethno-tourism.

One of the political trends that has contributed to marginalising the Circassians in Krasnodar Krai, is the ongoing promotion of *patriotism* strongly supported by the federal authorities in different ways. When the promotion of patriotism is accompanied by a focus on *positive* aspects of Russian history, including the Stalinist period, this can easily lead to highly contradictory situations in the Caucasus region of Russia. This can be confusing to the Cossacks and their organisations, which for the last more than twenty years have labelled the Stalinist period as genocidal and lobbied for the recognition of this as the Cossack genocide. They now

12. Potentially extended by Circassian internet activism as a way of “widening the pocket.”

largely have to disregard this argument, however, but a lot of new support for the Cossacks and their organisations is flowing from the Kremlin, now under the headline of patriotism. Fortunately for the Cossacks this was already celebrated as one of their key attributes in their ongoing revival, where historical loyalty to the Russian Czar and the Russian Orthodox Church are other key elements.

Ruslan Gvashev has over the course of many years been an outspoken Circassian activist criticising the process of indigenisation of the Cossacks as the native people of the region of Krasnodar Krai.¹³ As stated by Kutzegov and Popov: “The Krai authorities actively support the renaissance of the Kuban Cossacks, using the Cossack movement for the reconstruction of regional identity” (Kutzegov and Popov 2008, 235). Gvashev has done this in different forms over the years, but always by pointing at the many historical sources that document long Circassian historical presence in the region. The regional authorities have actively concealed or downplayed this – also during many years of the Soviet period. Today, the activities of Gvashev and his fellow activists have become a stone in the shoe of authorities on all levels, as he presents narratives of indigenous identity and culture in the area, which in many ways run counter to the renewed official policies on promoting patriotism and positive aspects of history. In other words, Gvashev and other Circassian activists in the North Caucasus are fighting for an indigenous space within an overall reduced space for indigenosity and indigenous rights. This is a *de facto* marginalisation of indigenous minority rights and potentially an act of discrimination as understood by international institutions such as OSCE or the Council of Europe, in both of which Russia is a member.

Much of the development outlined above share similarities with earlier periods, for instance around 1950, when a shift towards rehabilitation of the old Russian colonial policies were required of historians, publishers and others in the Soviet Union (Schwarz 1952). Suddenly the Caucasian mobilisation and resistance against a colonising empire could no longer be seen as anti-imperialist, and once more the colonisation was re-labelled as progress brought to poor, distant and partly feudal societies in the Caucasus. Key understandings from this period are experiencing a revival in today's Russia. Early in the Soviet period, the 1920s and the first part of the 1930s, policies of indigenisation were part of the consolidation of the Soviet Union, where many administrative units were established in the name of indigenous peoples of the Caucasus. Several of today's territorial

13 See for instance Kutzegov and Popov (2008).

units in the North Caucasus can trace part of their history back to this period.

To many Circassians, the fall of the Soviet Union signified the right to finally write their own history using their own voice, using sources formerly hidden in old archives, oral narratives transferred from generation to generation, etc. This has now turned into a struggle, where official Russia can accept these types of discussions as long as they are kept strictly academic and away from social media and the internet. However, as the examples in this paper have shown, the different types of Circassian actors will most probably not abide to this solution. That might require a new phase of repressive politics in Russia – even a violent one. However, this will in turn generate renewed Circassian/Caucasian resistance.

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LIDIA S. ZHIGUNOVA & RAYMOND C. TARAS

Under the Holy Tree

Circassian activism, indigenous cosmologies and decolonizing practices

Cherishing environmental values has regularly been used by indigenous peoples as a strategy for obtaining political recognition and perhaps autonomy. This chapter focuses on new forms of Circassian mobilization that target recognition, protection of sacred spaces, and defense of political activists. A key event was the arrest and persecution of an elder of the Black Sea Shapsug community by Russian authorities after his prayer under the Tulip Tree, one of Circassian sacred sites located in Sochi. The spiritual ceremony at the ancient holy tree was conducted on May 21 2017 during the annual commemoration of victims of Russian colonization of Circassia between 1763–1864. Repressive measures taken by authorities against the elder mobilized Circassian communities and led to renewed debate about the rights of indigenous peoples in Russia.

The protest also revitalized interest among scholars and activists in spiritual practices which were nearly erased. It sparked renewed interest in traditional ecological knowledge accumulated by the Circassian community over generations. The importance attached to indigenous places of worship in the North Caucasus and to restoration of links that deepen relations between people and nature is now on the agenda again. Reestablishing Circassian consciousness and identity – put simply, what it means to be Circassian – is more salient than for over 150 years.

We examine the intersection of Circassian indigenous rights and environmental protections as a critical point for advocacy and activism. We draw attention to the ways in which newly emerged eco-spiritual movements contribute to remembering and re-imagining Circassian

identities, to debates about other epistemological models, and to the crucial imperative of decolonizing knowledge and knowledge production.

Circassian practices today

In recent years, new forms of Circassian activism have emerged that attempt to decolonize knowledge production by reconnecting with and reviving indigenous cosmologies, epistemologies, and spiritual practices that have been nearly erased by Russian/Soviet modernity. One example of such activism is Circassian mobilization around the issue of protecting the indigenous rights of the Black Sea Shapsug community in Russia to hold prayers at their sacred sites. One is the Tulip Tree in the district of Golovinka (*Shakhape*), in Sochi. The spiritual ceremony of praying under a holy tree – a testament to the druidic roots of Circassians (also known as Adyghe), the indigenous people of the North Western Caucasus – is one of the last remaining signs of alternative epistemological models and indigenous practices in the region. Traditional Circassian social and spiritual practices of maintaining sacred spaces in the natural environment of forests and groves, where people gathered for worshipping, festivals, and community *Khasa* (Council) meetings under the holy trees – all but forgotten during the Soviet period – had a strong presence in Circassian lands before their forceful incorporation into the Russian empire culminating in 1864. May 21 was chosen as the Day of Remembrance and Sorrow in memory of all who died defending their homeland and those who perished of starvation and disease in the last, particularly brutal years of the long Russian conquest of Circassia (1763–1864).

The Shapsugs, once one of the largest ethnic groups among Circassians who lived in the Sochi-Tuapse region on the Black Sea shore prior to the Russian conquest, are now few in number. Administratively they form part of the Krasnodar Krai in which ethnic Russians comprise a majority population. Officially, they are not recognized as the indigenous people in the constitution of the Krasnodar Krai. There are other Circassian communities in the North Caucasus, scattered across the republics of Kabardino-Balkaria, Karachaevo-Cherkessiya, and Adygea,¹ who

1 As part of Soviet nationality policy, Circassians were divided into several autonomous republics under different names – Circassians, Adyghean, and Kabardians – and separate languages were created based on the dialects. These republics were created artificially from remaining Circassians who belonged to different sub-ethnic groups such as Kabardian, Shapsug, Bzhedug, Ubykh, Abaza, Beslaney,

commemorate the Circassian Day of Remembrance. They usually hold official ceremonies and light candles at symbolic monuments; they play solemn music on traditional instruments; and they hold a minute of silence to commemorate centuries of oppression. These memorial events in the “Circassian” republics are held at the state level and the day is declared a non-working day.

Small commemorative events are also held in other regions where Circassians live, namely in the Stavropol region to the east and in Krasnodar Krai by the Black Sea, the historic home of the Shapsugs, but they are not official occasions. Events are also held abroad in countries with significant Circassian diasporas such as Turkey, Germany, the US, Jordan and other Middle East countries. As a result of Russian and Soviet imperial policies, nowadays more Circassians live outside their homeland in the North Caucasus. They are dispersed in regions as far apart as the Middle East and the United States. The single largest Circassian diaspora population – descendants of those expelled from their homeland during the Russian colonial conquest of the nineteenth century – is located in Turkey where an estimated 5–6 million live.

The Shapsugs, however, is the only Circassian community to revive and continue the ancient druidic traditions of their ancestors. Since 1998 it has become customary that on 21 May people from nearby Shapsug villages in the Sochi area gather together spontaneously under the Tulip Tree, without enjoiners or notifications, to memorialize their ancestors who tragically perished during the genocide a century ago involving Russian colonization of Circassia. The ancient *Liriodendron* tree, also known as tulip tree since it blooms with large tulip-shaped flowers of bright orange color, is considered sacred by local Shapsugs due to its size and age. The tree reaches 30 meters in height; the diameter of the trunk is 2.5 meters; and the span of the crown is 27 meters.

The local Shapsugs come to the Tulip Tree every year on May 21 not just because the tree is one of the oldest in the area but also because there is a tragic story associated with it. They claim that nearly 160 years ago the tree was the last place of gathering of the Shapsugs and Ubykhs²: whose

Abzadzekh, Temirgoy, Natukhai, Makhosh, and others. They referred to themselves as Adyghe in their own language. Similarly, Balkar and Karachai, who belong to a Turkic group, have been divided and made titular nations in the republics of Kabardino-Balkaria and Krachai-Cherkessiya. The end result of the Soviet regime’s divide-and-rule policy for Circassian peoples was partition into five “subjects” (administrative districts) of the Russian Federation.

2 The Circassian province, where Sochi is located, was called Ubykhia, and it was the

villages had been destroyed by the Russian imperial army in its final push against the native population. Thousands of people were brought to this space before being shipped off to the Ottoman empire. Since most had to wait for their ships to arrive for months, many died at this place of hunger and disease (Sokolova 2019, 16). Additionally, the Tulip Tree stands at the place which was once a sacred grove *Shakhape* (lit. “at the mouth of the river *Shakhe*” or Sochi) that had been destroyed in the 1830s during the hostilities between the Russian army and Ubykhs and Shapsugs. They vowed to defend their shrine until they died (Sokolova 2019, 134).

A prayer under the Tulip Tree

As in past years, the 2017 annual prayer ceremony under the Tulip Tree took place under the direction of Ruslan Gvashev, an icon of the post-Soviet Circassian national movement and elder of the Shapsug community who had conducted these prayer-ceremonies since the 1990s. Most likely, the event would have gone unnoticed, if not for the local Sochi authorities who decided to end this practice, once and for all, by accusing Gvashev of organizing and holding an unsanctioned rally. According to him, the prayer ceremony, conducted in the presence of some two hundred people, began with a traditional prayer to *Tkha* (Circassian supreme deity) for the souls of those who perished in the tragic events. It concluded with sampling of the traditional Circassian funeral meal – *zharyma* or *zhama* – round deep-fried beignet-type pastry which was distributed to people gathered on the site. After the ceremony, a small group of people walked a few miles down the road to the shores of the Black Sea and placed flowers and wreaths on the water (Sokolova 2019, 25).

This particular Tulip Tree has been officially recognized as one of the oldest in the Sochi area and is under the protection of municipal authorities. The scientists, invited by the city officials to determine the age of the tree, have confirmed that it was in fact over 260 years old (Sokolova 2019, 251). It has been a popular tourist attraction even though for the

last district of historical Circassia to be defeated by the Imperial Russian army in 1864. During the nineteenth century wars, Ubykhia increasingly became a part of the united Circassian resistance and eventually came to be regarded as a Circassian province, although earlier Ubykhia had often been regarded as an independent unit. Linguistically Ubykh constitutes a separate category parallel to Western Circassian and Eastern Circassian (Kabardian). Together with Abkhazian, they constitute the group of Northwestern Caucasian languages.

Shapsug community it is a sacred site. The goal of the authorities to be rid of the prayer ceremony may have been intentional; it was revealed that in the same year that the Sochi authorities launched their campaign against Gvashev and his prayer ceremony, the Mayor of Sochi announced that the city intended to build a tourist infrastructure (restaurants, shops, and hotels) around the tree in order to attract more visitors (Gritsevich 2017). Until the pandemic beginning in 2020 put severe restrictions on travel, tourism seemingly reigned supreme. Whether catering to tourists in sacred spaces would subsequently be reduced in scale is an issue that many indigenous places of worship – whether in Australia, Africa, Asia, or the Americas – have a stake in.

A week after the ceremony was held, Gvashev was arrested at his home by local police and brought to the Lazarevsky courthouse in Sochi to be charged with organizing an unsanctioned meeting. According to the authorities, the Tulip Tree was supposedly not registered as one of the sacred spaces officially designated for spiritual and religious acts and Gvashev needed to obtain a permit beforehand. But the Shapsug spiritual leader contended that it was his ancestral right to pray under the sacred tree and he disputed the charges in the Court of Appeal in Krasnodar, which seemed to accept his argument. But the case was sent back to the court in Sochi for a final decision and the Lazarevsky court ruled that charges would not be dropped. Gvashev disagreed; he viewed the prayer as a protest, defended the rights of Shapsugs to observe their own historical memory and their own religious practices and, most importantly, it was unconstitutional since the Russian Constitution grants freedom of religious practices, as Gvashev's defense attorney stated (Sokolova 2019, 262).

For Gvashev, then 67 years old suffering from various health issues, the court's decision and his treatment during the whole process was the last straw: he began a hunger strike that lasted 25 days. Close to death, the Shapsug elder was determined to fight for the rights and the dignity of his people. As he himself put it: "I am declaring this hunger strike as a protest against the biased, unfair, and cynical attitude toward my people and personally toward me and the trial held over me. This is my last attempt to draw attention to flagrant illegal actions on the part of the authorities. I hope that I will be heard" (Sokolova 2019, 92).

Gvashev's biographer, Bella Sokolova, noted how he had long irritated authorities with his independent thinking and uncomfortable questions. In preparations for the Sochi Olympics held in 2014, he had opposed the construction of roads in places of mass graves of Circassians and critici-

zed the barbarous destruction of the environment caused by the Winter Games. He demanded recognition of the Shapsugs as the indigenous people of the Krasnodar Territory and restoration of the Shapsug National District (Sokolova 2019, 56). In short, Gvashev's activism was well known to Circassians, Abkhaz (a people on the Black Sea coast south of Sochi who live in a "de facto state" independent of Georgia), and others in the North Caucasus region.

Although we have no surveys measuring public opinion, some Circassians living in the three republics of the Russian Federation, Adyghea, Kabardino-Balkaria, and Karachaevo-Cherkessiya, were upset by the decision of the Sochi authorities to ban the prayer ceremony and put Ruslan on trial. Some 300 Circassians drove to Krasnodar and gathered in front of the courthouse – an unprecedented event, if not a large one, since the Russo-Circassian War ended. Circassians also mobilized in Sochi to express their support for the elder. Delegations of Circassians and Abkhazians, including several high-ranking officials, went to Gvashev's house to persuade him to end his hunger strike. The protests rallied Circassians living in diasporas around the world including in Abkhazia, Turkey, Israel, Germany, and the United States. This single prayer under the holy tree reawakened the national spirit and the repressed memories of past events. It also sparked an interest in indigenous practices, above all, the protection of the sacred groves and the cultivation of forest-gardens that, according to many past travelers throughout the region, had flourished across Circassia prior to Russian colonization.

Circassian mobilization in response to the 2014 Olympics provided much-needed international attention to the Circassian question. Those who lived in the diaspora organized an effective campaign of peaceful protest³. Ever since, according to Lars Funch Hansen, "Sochi as a renewed site of memory within the Circassian memorialization process has increasingly become part of the rituals and performances carried out by Circassians in relation to the annual May 21 events" (Hansen 2013, 102). As Bo Petersson and Karina Vamling rightly observe, "the Circassian situation was paradoxical in the sense that whereas the group vehemently opposed the organization of the Winter Games in Sochi, the Games themselves denoted a rare opportunity for them to make their voices heard internationally" (Petersson and Vamling 2017, 505–506). The Sochi Games helped to unite the Circassian movement and gave their cause wider attention in global society. In a similar fashion, Hansen argues that Circassians locally and transnationally used the Sochi Olympics to

generate knowledge of Circassian history in the region which had been suppressed or manipulated by Soviet and Russian authorities (Hansen 2013). He underscored how a mega-sports event such as the Olympics was able to amplify wider processes of transnational Circassian revival and activism (Hansen 2013, 101–104).

One important development overlooked in the many objections raised about the Sochi Olympics – environmental, costly, corrupt, nationalistic, commercial, exploitative – was the growing discontent among Circassians inside Russia and their aspiration, despite political pressure against them, to join forces with diasporas who spoke out against the Olympics. This discontent was expressed in the form of the small but powerful protest held in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria, on February 7, 2014, the day the Olympics opened. Dozens of Circassian Kabardians occupied the main square in the center of Nalchik, in front of the Soviet-era monument “Forever with Russia,” and unfurled their own flags and banners with slogans “NO Sochi” and “Sochi, the Land of Genocide.” The demonstrators were immediately surrounded by police and taken to the headquarters of the internal Russian police unit known as the Anti-Extremism Center. According to Circassian activist Andzor Akhokhov, who was among the arrested, about 50 people were detained and police units used torture and threats of force against young people to make them confess to crimes they did not commit. Police units reportedly used electric shock and plastic bags to simulate suffocation (Dzutsati 2014).

To protest the Nalchik arrests, a Circassian diaspora group took to the streets in places as far from each other as New York and Istanbul. However, the Kremlin-controlled Russian media largely ignored the Circassian anti-Sochi protests at home and abroad (Orttung and Zhemukhov 2017, 91). Similarly, it was silent on Gvashev’s 25-day hunger strike;⁴ the one exception was an article by Artur Priymak, reporter of *Nezavisimaya Gazeta*, titled “The Small ‘Tulip Revolution’ of the Circassians.” He reported that Circassian efforts to defend their holy tree and their anger at Gvashev’s treatment attracted attention “at the highest levels” (Priymak 2017; Goble 2017).

Thus, just three years after the Olympic games and 153 years after the end of the bloody conquest of Circassia, Sochi became, yet again, the

4 The only news source that extensively covered Ruslan Gvashev’s case in Russian and English languages was the online news site Kavkazsky Uzel [The Caucasian Knot], an independent media focusing on politics and human rights issues: <https://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.eu/>.

site of Circassian resistance. What is different about Gvashev's example is that, first, it drew attention to the commemorative practices and the sacred spaces of Circassians. Second, it helped to renew the conversation about discriminatory policies targeting Circassians in the Black Sea region and, specifically, it raised questions about the official status of the Shapsugs within Krasnodar Krai. Third, it revived the interest in nearly-forgotten traditional Circassian spiritual practices based on inviolable links with nature.

Interrogating and memorializing the first genocide

Historical memory has a habit of reappearing after being seemingly lost for generations. In recent decades much research by historians and social scientists examines the nature and importance of commemorations for nations. Commemorations are simultaneously symbols and events, collective and personal, political and cultural, about the past and the future. The way in which a nation's past is remembered is instrumental in the making of its futures. Circassian communities mark the Day of Remembrance in ways that validate three dimensions: the memory of the homeland, the significance of local community, and the embrace of the diaspora.

The first large-scale commemoration in the diaspora was by the Caucasian Association in Ankara that included organizations from the homeland and other diaspora countries in 1989. That meeting gave birth to the World Circassian Association that transcended international borders. The Circassian Day of Remembrance on 21 May, it has been claimed, marked one of the cruelest cases of human suffering in modern history: the expulsion of the Circassians to the Ottoman Empire in the 1860s unprecedented even in Russian history. This genocide may not be singular or unique in modern history but, unlike other horrific crimes against indigenous peoples, it is largely unknown throughout the world – in Russia itself but even in the Caucasus (Shenfield 1999). As historian Walter Richmond stressed, then, Europeans need to remember the date of the continent's first modern genocide (Richmond 2013, 1).⁵

5 We are aware that genocide was a term first used by a Polish-Jewish jurist working for the U.S. Army around 1944. Theoretically, it should not be used retroactively. On the other hand, "genocidal acts" are usually an acceptable form of describing

Prior to Russian colonization, Circassian peoples inhabited and ruled the eastern coast of the Black Sea from the Taman Peninsula to Abkhazia, in addition to inland areas that extended east to the principality of Kabarda. For over a century, Circassians resisted Russian conquest even though there was no organized army or significant international support. In 1862, the Russian military campaign made use of the notorious “fire and sword” tactics, similar to scorched earth methods. Russian cavalry units and Cossack forces ravaged Circassian homelands destroying villages, massacring populations, burning fields and orchards, and creating conditions forcing people to leave their land. Hundreds of thousands of Circassians perished as a result of famine and disease while others died crossing the Black Sea while trying to escape to Turkey.

On May 21 1864 a Russian imperial military parade was held in the place which the Ubykhs call *Kbaada* and the Shapsugs *Tkhash* – known in Russian as *Krasnaya Polyana*. The parade feted the end of the Russian conquest of the North Caucasus. Shapsugs, Ubykhs, and other Circassians who remained fought the last battle of the war in this location. They were defending not only their freedom but also a sacred place called *Tkhash* which means “under the God”. They kept fighting even though they had already lost the battle. But they could not surrender their sacred groves.

Today remaining Shapsugs live alongside Russian speakers in scattered villages in the coastal valleys of Tuapse and Sochi. Already in 1872, just eight years after many Circassians died in refugee camps set up in the Sochi area, the Russian imperial administration began preparations to turn Sochi into a holiday resort. For visitors today, Sochi is known for being a picturesque Black Sea resort with beaches, spas, sanatoriums, and hospitals. But its profile changed when in Guatemala City in July 2007 Sochi was named as the host site for the 2014 Winter Olympics. In playing host to the Games its seaside image was broadened. Skiing, sledding, ice hockey, and other winter sports had not been associated with the city, but under President Vladimir Putin the seaside resort was transformed into an all-weather destination city. Many of the sport events were held in the mountains at Krasnaya Polyana, far from the seaside. Most visitors are unaware of the names of the hills, woods, streams, and settlements that still bear baffling non-Slavic names – not just Sochi (Shakhe) but rivers and mountains called Fisht, Tuapse, Mzymta, and Pshade. They are a faint whisper of the native tongues of earlier generations.

the elimination of entire groups of people by political authorities.

Revising the Shapsug National District

Shapsugs are one of the twelve main Circassian (Adyghe) ethnic subgroups that historically inhabited the coastal part of the North Caucasus. As mentioned earlier, Krasnodar Krai where Sochi is located had been the historical homeland of Ubykhs, Shapsugs, and other Circassian subgroups. The Ubykhs had been crushed in colonial wars and survivors were expelled from the Caucasus. Shapsugs shared much the same fate except for a few thousand who returned to their historical homeland after being forced to settle in mountainous areas where they carried out resistance.

Prior to Russian colonization, ancient Shapsugiya was a populated region that included hundreds of picturesque villages located on both slopes of the Main Caucasus Range. Today only eleven Shapsug villages remain; their inhabitants escaped capture by hiding in thick forests. In 1864, after the Russian-Circassian war ended, the presence of the Shapsugs was severely diminished; those living on the Black Sea coast from modern Sochi to Tuapse were either killed or expelled to the Ottoman Empire. Between 1870 and 1880, Russian Czar Alexander II pardoned them and they returned to the Black Sea coast now increasingly populated by Russian colonists.

In 1924, early in the Soviet period, the Shapsug National District was established in Krasnodar Krai. But Shapsug autonomy was short-lived and in 1945 it was abolished, to be replaced by Lazarevsky District, in honor of Russian imperial admiral Mikhail Lazarev (1788–1851), Commander of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, who participated in the destruction of Circassia from the sea during the Russian conquest. This decision did not sit well with the Shapsugs who were stripped of their rights and prevented from participating in government on their ancestral territory. All the efforts of Circassian Shapsugs to restore their national district were rejected by Russian officials including those making up the Russian majority in Krasnodar Krai. The same fate befell other demands made by Circassians in Russia in the post-Soviet era, including the appeals to recognize the Circassian genocide⁶ and to remove monuments glorifying the Russian imperial conquest of the Caucasus.

The Russian government continues to push hard against any Circas-

6 The Parliaments of both republics, Kabardino-Balkaria and Adyghea, appealed to the Russian State Duma asking to recognize the Circassian genocide in 1994 and 1996. Georgia is the only country to pass a resolution in 2011 that labeled as genocide the preplanned mass killings of Circassians by the Russian Imperial Army in the 1860s.

sian efforts to redress past policies or to reevaluate Russian imperial legacy. Unlike in other parts of the North Caucasus, Russians strive to efface the presence and legacy of Circassians in their homeland. No traces of Circassians – apart from occasional toponyms – can be found in cities along the Black Sea coast. Sochi remains an example of a continuous imperial-colonial paradigm still in existence. During the Soviet period, millions of workers from all over the country were sent to Sochi to take mineral waters and other medical and spa-relaxation treatments. Few had any idea that the area used to be home to the Shapsugs and Ubykhs; not a single site or nameplate reminds visitors of the colonization period.

Similarly, Anapa used to be an Ottoman fortress which Circassians agreed to have built on their territory in order to defend against Russian ships. It had been attacked eight times by Russian imperial forces before it was finally captured in 1829. Today, a memorial erected in 1996 commemorates Russian soldiers who “died at the walls” of Anapa struggling to capture the fortress. Interestingly, the memorial is in the form of a cross-shaped military medal with an inscription on it “For service in the Caucasus, 1864.” Although Anapa was captured three decades before this date, the memorial refers to Russia’s victory over Circassia. With the fall of Circassia, the conquest of the entire Caucasus by the Russian empire had been completed.

Since 1996 many other memorials commemorating Russian imperial generals who expelled Circassians from their homeland have appeared all over the North-West Caucasus. Despite multiple protests by Circassian activists who see it as an apparent government-sponsored campaign of renewed conquest, authorities inaugurated a monument to the notorious Russian general Grigory Zass, whose infamy earned him the title of “collector of Circassian skulls.” Another Russian general Aleksei Yermolov, who was responsible for the deadly campaign against Circassians in Kabarda in the eastern part of Circassia, was honored by the Kremlin with multiple monuments. A Circassian activist inveighed how “There is not a single monument of the defenders of the [North] Caucasus or Circassia across the [North] Caucasus” (Dzutsati 2016). But more recently, some memorials now honour “Cossacks who settled and made livable this wild place.” To be sure, the inference is that nobody lived on this land prior to the arrival of Russians.

At the end of June 2020, Sochi yet again became “an epicenter of Russian-Circassian conflict” when a new monument was installed featuring a metal cast of a Russian military fort (Goble 2020). It was a replica

of the Holy Spirit Fort which was constructed by the Russian army in 1837 during the war with Circassia. The initiative to erect the monument belonged to the deputies of the Sochi-Adler city assembly, the clergy of the Holy Trinity Church, members of the military-historical society, and the employees of the Adler District Museum of History. A plaque on the monument indicated that it was erected in memory of the victory of Russian soldiers over their enemies. The monument caused a wave of indignation among the Circassians of Russia including the local Shapsug community and the diaspora. They appealed to both President Putin and the local authorities in Sochi with a demand to remove the monument. Much to Circassians' surprise, the city decided to take down the monument acknowledging that officials did not follow proper procedures. Circassians who signed the Sochi petition began receiving public threats from Russian nationalists and media personalities who were shocked that the monument was removed and were seeking to reverse the decision of the city officials.

Elsewhere, in the case of other cenotaphs, memorials, monuments, and busts, authorities have disregarded Circassian protests. The only action they have taken is installing cameras to ensure safety. Of course we have no data on current public opinion but *Fingerspitzengefühl* may suggest to us that Shapsugs feel that they have little autonomy in Krasnodar and believe they have been made invisible, silent, and marginal.

The Tree of Life

Ruslan Gvashev's prayer on the Circassian Day of Remembrance set under a sacred Tulip Tree is a testament to the druidic roots of Circassians. It also marks one of the last remaining signs of alternative epistemological frames and indigenous practices dating back to time immemorial. Not only did the prayer and persecution of the well-known Circassian Shapsug leader forge popular unity, it helped Circassians to re-connect with their cosmological roots and re-establish links to their partially erased histories. This includes spiritual practices related to the purity of nature that modernity has discarded.

The Tree of Life is a universal symbol found in many spiritual and mythological traditions around the world. Sometimes known as the Cosmic Tree, the World Tree, or the Holy Tree, the Tree of Life symbolizes many things including wisdom, strength, protection, abundance, beauty, and redemption. The Tree of Life is one of the most ancient of cosmogonic

images. In Circassian cosmology, it represents a bridge between the natural and the human world. According to ethnologist Mikhail Myzhaev, in Circassian mythology the universe is represented as threefold: it consists of lower, middle, and celestial worlds which are interconnected by the world tree:

The main parts of the world tree are believed to correspond to the trichotomic division of the universe into zones: the upper (branches) – the heavenly world; the middle (trunk) – the earthly world; the lower (roots) – the underground world. . . . The world tree acts not only as a connecting bridge between these worlds, but also as a mediating link between the universe (macrocosmos) and man (microcosmos) (Myzhaev 1994, 57).

Two powerful images found in the Circassian *Nart Sagas* are connected to the tree of life (Colarusso 2016). The first one is the image of the all-knowing and wise *Zhig Guasche* (“Tree Goddess”) who, thanks to her crown spreading out to heaven and roots going deep into the ground, reads information about the Universe and willingly shares it with people. This is the tree of wisdom and knowledge. The second one is found in a tale about the Golden Tree which provides the Narts with eternal youth, health, strength, and beauty. According to the Shapsug legend, the destruction of the Golden Tree by the trickster *Emenezh* predetermined the existence of the whole Nart-nation. With the disappearance of the Golden Tree, the Narts disappeared as well. The link between the Golden Tree of the Narts with the universal mythopoetic tree of life is obvious.

The Tree of Life still has a strong resonance in Circassian culture. It has, for instance, become a central symbol of memorialization practices in Nalchik, Kabardino-Balkaria. The memorial “The Tree of Life,” designed by a Circassian Kabardian sculptor Arsen Guchapshev, was erected in central park in Nalchik in 2004. Since then, it has become a focal point for the annual May 21 commemoration events. The monument represents a tall tree with seven branches reaching up to the sky and the inscription on the monument reads: “Dedicated to the memory of the Circassians – the victims of the Caucasian war (1763–1864).” In Nalchik, people gather at the monument on the eve of the Day of Remembrance and light 101 candles according to the number of years of the war; they play solemn music on traditional instruments and sing tragic songs – *Ghybza* – which were composed during or right after the war and passed down from generation to generation. In their own language, Circassians

refer to the Tree of Life monument – *Pse Zhyg*, which means the Soul Tree, emphasizing the spiritual aspect of the tree and its connection to the soul. As the sculptor of the monument Arsen Guchapshev explains:

The tree of life goes back to our national roots and is a modern interpretation of the traditional design found in the ancient Maikop and Hattian cultures of our ancestors. The seven branches of the tree symbolize seven generations – among the Circassians, the kinship is determined up to the seventh generation. I want to emphasize that this monument is not so much about war or sorrow, it is more about life; it has a life-affirming meaning; it embodies the wisdom of the Circassian people (Khmelevsky 2015).

The Tree of Life memorial is yet another example of the Circassian community's distinctive connection with the natural environment evocative of a tradition.

Pagan roots of traditional Circassian religion

In recent decades, a growing number of publications have focused on the recovery of the nearly erased traditional ecological knowledge accumulated by the Circassian community over generations (Khotko 2005; Tkhagushev 2008; Kuek 2015; Dmitriev 2017). This trend suggests the importance attached to the process of restoration of the missing links that involve people-nature relationships and spiritual practices. These links are necessary in order to reestablish Circassian consciousness and identity.

Along with monotheistic religions that dominate today among Circassians in the North Caucasus – Islam, for the most part, and Christianity to a lesser extent – the ancient beliefs and rites of Circassians show startling vitality, demonstrating boundless possibilities of adaptation to modern life. Sacred trees, groves, dolmens, stones, and illustrious burials have been reported as places of worship throughout Circassia. First Christianity, and later Islam, was formally adopted by the Shapsugs, but so-called pagan rituals continued to exist well into the twentieth century. The Russian-Caucasian war interrupted the growth of the Circassian people with 90 percent of the indigenous population exterminated or evicted from its homeland in the North Caucasus.

According to longtime American nationalities specialist Paul Goble,

“The Shapsugs are Sunni Muslims but the level of their religiosity is quite low and they retain many pre-Islamic religious beliefs and practices. Nonetheless, some outside forces may seek to turn the Shapsugs in the direction of Islamist ideas and movements” (Goble 2015). There is no imminent danger of radicalization as occurred in the 1990s when two Russo-Chechen wars made Chechen president Dzhokhar Dudayev say how “it was the Russians who made Islamicists out of us.” But neither can radicalization be entirely dismissed in a volatile region of the world.

The majority of local traditions and rituals were forgotten in the Soviet period. But despite the consequences of regional wars, a series of repressions, and forced assimilation of Circassian peoples, sacred trees still fulfill an important religious and social role in the Black Sea Shapsug community. This continuity suggests strong roots of traditional Circassian religion, revealing close links that existed in the past between ancient peoples and cultures, especially with Celtic culture.

The Celts worshiped oak trees (the ancient Greek word for “oak” is *drus*) and the term used for sanctuary is close to the Latin *nemus* or “grove.” Druidism and the veneration of trees has become one of the most enduring traditions of Circassia and, similar to the Celtic tradition, oak groves were especially revered among Circassians. A deep understanding of the laws of nature, and reverence for her, were at the heart of ritual ceremonies. Similar to the traditions of the Celts, Circassians worshiped the tallest and oldest trees as keepers of the secrets of nature. People believed that trees not only possess wisdom but also possess a soul. The symbol of the Celts – the T-shaped cross usually made from oak branches – had been noted by many travelers to Circassia as late as in the nineteenth century. The English writer and traveler Edmund Spencer, for example, in his “Travels in Circassia” (first published in 1836) describes the ways in which sacred spaces were used in Circassia and how the priests, similar to Ruslan Gvashev’s role, were selected to perform spiritual ceremonies:

Their clergy do not form a distinct body: the aged and those highly esteemed among their compatriots for virtue, wisdom, and courage, being always selected as the most holy and fit persons to offer up the prayers and thanksgivings of the people to the throne of the great Thka (God of gods, Lord of lord). Their religious ceremonies are always celebrated in a sacred grove, exclusively appropriated to that purpose, and characterized by some religious emblem, generally a cross in the Latin or Greek form. Once or twice I observed the

emblem while passing through their sacred groves in the valley of Adler, more resembling a T than a cross, said to be extremely ancient (Spencer 1839, 344–345).

According to Russian ethnographer Leontiy Lulie (1805–1862), Circassians “do not have any special buildings for prayer, but altars; a sacred grove under the open sky serves as a temple for them... with the only symbol of worship – a T-shaped wooden cross, leaning against a tree” (quoted in Dmitriev 2017, 109). Such groves usually grouped along the valleys of mountain rivers were associated with communities: they performed a vital role in the life of the community. The holy groves and holy trees were therefore places of worship and prayer but also of community gatherings, festivals, and sites where elders of the *Khasa* (Community Council or Assembly) would meet to debate important issues. The sacred grove was, for example, the site of an annual autumn festival in honor of Marem-Merissa, which was an analogue of the Intercession holiday held in September–October. The holiday lasted for several days accompanied by feasts, dances, and the sacrifice of a bull (Dmitriev 2017, 110).

Teofil Lapinsky (1827–1886), a Pole who visited Circassia in 1857–1860 and participated with his Polish military detachment in the anti-colonial war on the side of the Circassians, became an eyewitness to a similar festival held in a sacred grove:

Powerful centenary oaks, forming a circle, cast a thick shadow over a kind of a rough stone altar, in the middle of which a very old, crudely made wooden cross rose. Around the altar stood four young bulls, eight rams and eight goats, held by the horns by a group of young men. On the stone throne-like slab, there were large bowls with bread, wheat and maize cakes, honey and butter, as well as vessels with milk... In the distance, forming a semicircle around the altar, there stood men with fur hats under their arms, a little further back – a large group of women and girls. Approximately a hundred paces from the altar, about 30 fires were burning in a wide semicircle, over each of them hung a large cauldron in which water was boiled... The entire population of the village, to a certain extent, a small independent republic, i.e. the community, took part in the feast... I often saw sacred groves, oaks decorated with multi-colored ribbons, under which the inhabitants perform their services; food and drinks for the gods are also brought there (quoted in Dmitriev 2017, 110).

Until the middle of the nineteenth century the entire area of the Kuban and Black Sea slopes of the North-Western Caucasus had been covered in forests and groves, many of which were in ritual use. To characterize the way of life of Circassian communities prior to Russian colonization, two factors should be stressed: the transfer of sacred activities to forest areas (sacred groves and wooded capes of mountains as well as rivers) and the absence of a desire to separate the culture of life support from nature management. In other words, in Circassian sacred topography, there was no clear division between the natural, social/cultural, and economic domains.

If we are to connect ethos and ethnic consciousness, on the one hand, to the use of natural resources, on the other, we must take as a starting point that people actively act upon their surroundings. It is through experiences of these actions that meaning evolves. In historical Circassia, certain ways of organizing the use of natural resources, bound by particular restrictions, were advanced; one of them was the sanctity of sacred groves. They were untouchable, breaking trees and branches was disallowed, no hunting was permitted, game taking refuge in that forest or grove would be sheltered from harm.

The cultivation of forest-gardens by Circassians is another example of this unique type of relationship, a practical engagement between humans and their environment pursued over centuries. Circassians revered trees and knew how to care for them, as evidenced by many written sources that describe the famous Circassian forest-garden model, a specific gardening style, and a form of fruit-tree breeding. Every time he went out to the forest (in late fall or early spring), an adult male Circassian was expected to graft wild fruit trees that were abundant in the region. Grafts were taken from his own garden. Professor Madina Tlostanova of Linköping University (Sweden) emphasizes that these practices, similar to the Earth Democracy movement in India, are “an expression of a specific Circassian cosmology and ethics in which the tree of life was a central code while the human being was responsible for careful preservation and multiplication of life in all its manifestations – human and nonhuman, animate and inanimate” (Tlostanova 2017, 7). These traditions reflect a holistic approach to the nature-culture paradigm: Circassians understood “culture” and “nature” as a unified category, not in opposition to each other. Nature and culture are intertwined, rather than dichotomized.

Locals across Circassia have extracted natural resources in different ways and by different means over the past several hundred years. At no point were there reports that large areas were deforested due to logging

for private use and for sale (even though tree wood was one of the products exported by Circassia in exchange for other needed goods). This signifies that in the pre-colonization period, the use of natural resources was carried out in a controlled manner. Only with the advance of Russian colonization did deforestation become a problem.

The system of land usage included marking forests and fields which were used as a commons by the people connected to the area. The main use of land has been harvesting fruit trees and collecting fruits, berries, and herbs, animal grazing, collecting firewood, etc. The local principle for gaining access to the commons seemed to be based on concepts of collectivity, equality, and autonomy. Everyone living in the community, regardless of being a landowner or not, had the same rights to use the commons for their own purposes but also bearing the same responsibility for maintaining it (cleaning up, grafting fruit trees, etc.). No one had the right to monopolize resources at the expense of others; it was regarded as a collective right.

Ironically, it had been the Bolsheviks after 1917 who proscribed privatization, besieged the kulaks, and indoctrinated state property as being *nashe* (“ours”). Subsequent Russian-Soviet imperialism and aggressive modernization undermined this rich cultural and historical legacy. Forests were cut to build roads, other infrastructural projects razed environmental features, and just as importantly knowledge about these spiritual practices has been nearly erased.

Looking back at this legacy, we can draw a conclusion that Circassian forest-gardens and sacred groves are unique types of landscape, an ecosystem, an outcome of centuries of interactions between people and their environment. These are, then, spaces in which nature and culture overlap, and a clear separation between “wilderness” and “culture” (or “civilization”) cannot be drawn. As a result, the biological diversity of species, plants, flora and fauna can be preserved. This legacy could serve as a model of human land use governed by ethics, aesthetics, and functional principles. It is not the use of resources itself that was particularly Circassian but the accumulated experience connected to it which was then transformed into consciousness of being Circassian.

Sacred spaces

The spiritual domain is sacrosanct in Circassia. Its spiritual philosophy requires that *Tkha* (God) should not be worshipped within the walls of

churches or mosques but outside, at the sacred spaces nature has created. As mentioned above, trees occupied a central place in the spiritual life of the Circassians; they selected sacred groves and sacred trees under which they prayed. Important decisions were made here. The sacred groves were places where the community regularly gathered for holidays and festival celebrations; they signified places of communal spiritual experience. In these groves chopping down trees or breaking off their branches were forbidden. Hunting too was prohibited; if the hunted animal hid in the holy grove, the hunt would immediately be called off. The tree could act as the representative of the forest “kingdom” or the natural environment, but it also had a sacral and social meaning – Circassians believed that a branch cut down from a sacred tree would take the life of the offender, a ruined tree would deprive the whole family of life, and the destruction of a grove would lead to the destruction of the entire community to which it belonged (Dmitriev 2017, 111). And, according to the Russian ethnographer Vladimir Dmitriev, these beliefs undoubtedly were the reason why Circassian warriors during the Russian–Circassian war fiercely defended these sacred spaces from being despoiled by the enemy at the cost of their lives.

Worshipping at sacred spaces created by the natural environment is not only a sign of antiquity, but also a sign of modernity for many peoples, including Circassians in the Northwestern Caucasus. Sacred spaces called *Tkhal’auya* in Circassian are places of worship, and praying to *Tkha* is still prominent among Circassians. There is a sacred tree in almost every family in the Shapsug villages near Sochi. They are still used for some rituals and community gatherings. In 2017, the photojournalist Stanislava Novgorodtseva interviewed Shapsug members as part of her project on the druid traditions of the Shapsugs. Today, we learn much from oral history of this group. Among those interviewed are Kaspolet Khusht (89 years old) and his son Madin:

Kaspolet Khusht: “I planted this poplar tree in 1985. This tree is a descendant of the sacred tree that my ancestors went to. When the tree began to die, I planted a stalk in its place, grown from its own seed. Shapsugs are excellent gardeners. In the old days, when going to the forest, a man used to take cuttings with him and grafted the wild trees – this is how the fruit trees appeared for many kilometers around the settlements. I continue this tradition as much as possible. My penknife has been with me since the 1950s, thousands of trees in the area have been grafted with this knife.”

Madin (his son): “Imported religions, Christianity and Islam, are like Pepsi-Cola for us, that is, not our traditional drink [foreign for us]. They [these religions] were imposed in the interests of certain groups, usually self-serving, in order to turn people into a herd and control them. Our pantheon of gods is attached to our local ecosystem, and my people are part of it. The number of people was determined by the amount of food resources. We did not wander around... we cultivated the land around us. My religion is my home, my river, my forest.”⁷

As seen in these testimonies, Circassian Shapsugs still think of themselves as part of the sacred topography cultivated with great care by their ancestors, and they try to carry on their centuries-old traditions as much as they can. However, profound disruptions to their culture caused by Russian/Soviet imperialism, including the dispossession of their land and the enforcement of assimilationist policies resulting in the dissolution of their political rights, present this community with challenges for survival.

The disappearance of sacred spaces that used to signify places of communal spiritual experience undermines the potential that these sacred sites offer for healing intergenerational and interethnic traumas. Why did Circassian sacred spaces disappear? It seems plausible that Shapsugs react to Russian policy differently: some have assimilated, others accept dual identities, while others still search for their original roots. To be sure, sacred spaces were affected by the imperial tactics of fighting Circassians through deforestation; many took refuge in the forests. During the Soviet period, Soviet modernization and industrialization policies created more ecological problems in the region and significantly contributed to the disappearance of the holy groves. The promotion of atheism as state ideology and declaring all traditional spiritual practices and local knowledge as backward and obsolete damaged the connection to indigenous cosmologies and epistemologies. In recent history, post-Soviet corruption and neglect of environmental issues contributed to the near-complete extinction of the relic forests of the *Buxus colchica*, or boxwood, endemic to the Caucasus and dating back millions of years.

7 The interviews were conducted by Moscow-based photojournalist Stanislava Novgorodtseva for her online project on minority groups in Russia. The article about the project was published by Olga Osipova. 2017. *The Indigenous People of Sochi and their Sacred Trees in the Project of the Moscow Photographer Svetlana Novgorodtseva*. Accessed 7 August. <https://birdinflight.com/ru/vdohnovnenie/fotoproect/20170807-zemlya-ov.html>.

Another factor that contributed to the discontinuity of ancient spiritual traditions is growing Islamization of the Circassian population. This process has been accelerated by the vacuum created by the falsification of Circassian history in official Russian historiography and due to the erasure of links to local traditions and spiritual practices which had been deemed obsolete during the Soviet period. In addition, the Bolsheviks initially encouraged and supported the pan-Islamic movement in the North Caucasus as an instrument of recruiting local populations but later, under Stalin, this religious movement was suppressed in the midst of ethnic cleansing and exile of populations.

Conclusion

When the USSR disintegrated after 1991, Circassians were absent from the narrative. Two back-to-back volumes published by Cambridge University Press shortly after Soviet collapse were evidence of these “unnoticed” peoples. To be sure, in the comprehensive 1993 book titled *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States*, the 19th chapter of the 21-chapter book, authored by Jane Ormrod, was titled “North Caucasus: fragmentation or federation?” It concluded that “the ethnic consciousness of the North Caucasian peoples was expressed in either narrow clan loyalties, or a broad, North Caucasian Mountaineer identity.” At this juncture, the author had just completed her fieldwork (in 1991). She added: “the priority of the North Caucasian national groups has not been to define themselves with respect to Moscow, but rather, to define themselves both culturally and politically with respect to each other” (Bremmer and Taras 1993, 470–471).

In 1997 a more comprehensive book was published called *New States, New Politics: Building the Post-Soviet Nations*. Ormrod’s latest fieldwork (carried out in 1993) was re-titled “The North Caucasus: confederation in conflict.” It was now included as chapter three after John Dunlop’s case study of Russia. Her tentative conclusion was that national self-interest in the North Caucasus had recently come into play. Nonetheless, “(h)aving survived the brutal Caucasian Wars of the nineteenth century, the genocidal deportations of 1944, pressures to assimilate into the cultures of the larger nations of Georgia and Russia, and, since the collapse of Soviet power, wars with these two larger powers, the peoples of the North Caucasus have perceived themselves as targets for attack and aggressive defenders of their cultural and territorial integrity.” With Russian pres-

sure to destroy Chechen independence drives in the 1990s, the policies of North Caucasian republics were “to reopen past wounds and revive national narratives of Russian aggression” (Bremmer and Taras 1997, 126). For the three republics, it was a Hobbesian choice.

Caucasus Studies north of the mountain range of the same name have been largely neglected even as they offer unique research experiences. In 2006 linguist Karina Vamling observed how “linguistic diversity of Europe is comparatively low” so languages of the Caucasus make up one-quarter of the total of all Europe’s languages. She added therefore that “the Caucasian languages contribute to a large extent – much more than is usually assumed” (Vamling 2006). She also explored the complexities of Caucasian morphology and phonology – not part of our study. In 2020 King’s College London scholar Konrad Siekierski went further on the Caucasus – “a mind-blowing patchwork of different cultures, languages, and religions” (Siekierski 2020, 222). Indeed, local unofficial religious practices have thrived, whether competing against Soviet atheism or today’s Kremlin-sanctioned official religious denominations. What is the status today of the North Caucasus?

A robust, patriotic sense of Circassian identity has been emerging despite a long history of exile, assimilation, and cultural change. The pushback is that Russian authorities still intend to regulate other societies in their own image. Snow leopard notwithstanding, the natural habitat is given low priority, economic assets maximized to the full; drilling for gas and oil in the High North is a case in point.

Non-Russian communities defend their way of life typically by invoking ethnic values. In Circassia, as we have seen, these represent historic attachments linking people with nature. But this region remains an archetypal case of David versus Goliath. Prospects for greater ethnic autonomy diminish as economic imperatives override all other ones. President Putin did make the snow leopard the mascot of the Sochi Games but why should the woods and the scrublands in which it lives be excluded from this ecological calculation?

Environmental degradation, deforestation, effluence, and poisoning that result from human-induced change in the natural environment reduce biological diversity and raise the prospects of species extinction. Radical change needs to be based on decolonizing and unshackling *indigenous knowledge* which is passed on from generation to generation, often by word of mouth and cultural rituals. It can serve as the basis for local health care, education, agriculture, conservation, and other actions

sustaining a society and its environment for many years.

Finally, ethnic consciousness is important when shaping a community's relationship with the natural environment; it is "value added" that the Circassian legacy has endowed. When combined, ethnicity and environmentalism can form integral components of a struggle for political recognition, as the Circassian case has shown.

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ALEXANDRE KUKHIANIDZE

Georgia: Democracy or super mafia?

Liberal democracy and free markets work best in societies dominated by a positive attitude towards Western values. In developing countries, the process of democratization is a struggle between the bearers of democratic and undemocratic values, which is not a clash of religious or ethnic cultures, but a series of progressive transformations and retaliatory actions by authoritarian elites whose traditional existence is under threat of modernization (Fukuyama 2001). The correctness of these views can be clearly seen in the example of the modern conflict between the West and the authoritarian Russian leadership, on which the future of Georgia significantly depends.

What is meant by organized crime, and how does this matter for understanding modern types of political regimes in Russia and Georgia? What are the relations between them? What did the EU and the United States receive as a result of Georgia's long-term assistance – a free and democratic country or an oligarchic mafia-style government? Is the existing regime in Georgia stable and unchanging, or are improvements possible and does the country have better prospects? These questions, which are existential for Georgia, are discussed in this article.

The article draws on the experience of many years of previous research by the author during the Soviet period and especially after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Personal observations and participation in field research in the period of the greatest flourishing of organized crime and corruption in Georgia in the 1990s and during the Rose Revolution, known for its anti-crime and anti-corruption orientation, allow for a deeper understanding of modern processes in the country – both the reasons for the continuation of such a fierce confrontation between the two main opposing political groups, the United National Movement (UNM) and the Georgian Dream (GD), and the essence of the modern regime in Georgia.

Political and professional organized crime

Usually, organized crime refers to such organizations as the Sicilian Mafia, Camorra, Ndranghetta, or Sacra Corona Unita in Italy, Chinese Triads, Japanese Yakuza, or the institute of Thieves in Law (*Vory v Zakone* or Soviet Mafia). Most criminologists share the point of view that the motivation for organized crime is illegal profit (Kupatadze 2012, 46). In the years 1945–46, the Nuremberg trials recognized the Nazi leaders as international criminals, not prisoners of war, and the organizations they created, such as the National Socialist German Workers' Party, the SS, the Gestapo and others, as criminal organizations. In the first months after the Bolshevik revolution of 1917, revolutionary repressive organs were created, and millions of people were shot or found in exile, prisons and concentration camps. A famine (*golodomor*) was organized in Ukraine in 1932–33 (Kiger 2019), and 21,857 Polish prisoners of war and political prisoners were summarily executed by the Soviet People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs (NKVD) in Katyn in 1940 (Kosicki 2011). Leon Trotsky, who, in the first years after the 1917 coup in Russia, played a key role in the Bolshevik party, actively promoted the ideas of red terror as a necessary condition for the victory of the Bolshevik revolution. Many people were killed as a result of the implementation of these ideas, especially in 1937 known as the Great Terror (Decree of the Council 1918; Courtois et al. 1999, 184–202). Georgia was the victim of a Bolshevik invasion in February 1921, as a result of which the legitimately elected Social Democratic Government was forced to emigrate to Europe, and executions and political persecution began in the country (Kautsky 1921). Both in Nazi Germany and Bolshevik Russia, mass crimes were carried out through the creation and use of repressive party and state bodies, for example, in Germany, the SS and the Gestapo, and in Russia, the NKVD and the Cheka (Extraordinary Commission). The example of these two classic totalitarian regimes shows that, firstly, both of them are criminal in nature, and secondly, political leaders committed their crimes through the organizations they created – the Nazi and Bolshevik parties. Crimes of this kind are ideologically directed and motivated by political goals, not by a thirst for personal illicit enrichment. In this case, we are talking about political organized crime, which is fundamentally different from the organized crime that is often called the mafia.

Professional organized crime is a mafia-style crime which is carried out illegally for the purpose of personal enrichment, through the use of permanent organizations. Both leaders and ordinary members of these

criminal gangs are engaged only in criminal activity, this is their job and they are professionals in their criminal craft. Professional organized crime is more successful if it has corrupt ties with politicians, government officials, the police, prosecutors and judges. It also tries to gain some public support. To ensure the safety and prosperity of their criminal business, professional organized crime is always trying to influence or participate in politics by entering state structures, for example, by participating in parliamentary or local elections and appointing high-ranking officials to their people. If they succeed, then a criminal seizure of the country takes place with all its negative consequences for the majority of the people that follow. As a rule, such countries are called failed states. The best antidote to this situation is the development of democracy, therefore, in countries with developed liberal democracy, both political and professional organized crime have little chance of criminal seizure of the state, although separate organized criminal groups (organized crime groups) may exist in these democracies. Democracy is not tolerant of them and always tears them away from its body, in other words, the state and its law enforcement agencies are constantly fighting them and prosecuting them in criminal proceedings. But how are things in non-democratic countries that have embarked on the path of democratization and even proclaimed as their goal sovereign democracy or a formal entry into the European Union and NATO? At the present stage, such states include Russia and Georgia.

Super mafia and oligarchic rule

If the distinction between political and professional organized crime can be traced very clearly, then what about understanding the situation in which state power is seized not only by politicians, but also representatives of special services and the mafia-style organized crime groups? They act in concert, and their actions are so intertwined and secretive that it is quite difficult even for experts to separate politics from criminal activity. In fact, representatives of the mafia are turning into big business people and politicians, and politicians and representatives of special services implement mafia functions. The main goal of this type of mafia is a combination of both illegal enrichment and political power.

In other words, state capture is not carried out only by ideologically motivated political organized criminal groups, nor only by a profit-oriented professional organized criminal group. It is carried out by representatives

of the state and the oligarchy in close cooperation with the leaders of the mafia, with the dominance of mercantile interests over political and ideological ones. The main purpose of state capture is to maintain state power by combining a number of measures: the indoctrination of the population, the persecution of political opposition, suppression of independent media, the killing or imprisonment of oppositional political leaders, journalists and civic activists, the adoption of laws restricting civil protests, massive falsification of elections, the creation of strong punitive law enforcement structures, the outbreak of military conflicts and in the wake of military-patriotic euphoria raising the rating of the ruling group, the transformation of regional military-political conflicts into a more global conflict of values, and, most importantly, control of the legislative and judicial branches of power and the Central election commission. But all these seemingly purely political measures are aimed at fulfilling the main goal – control over state power in order to preserve and increase the wealth obtained in an illegal way. It is not difficult to understand that the classic example of this type of state is modern Russia under President Vladimir Putin, who in the summer of 2020 achieved the adoption of constitutional amendments in order to maintain his presidency for the next decades. As Louise Shelley (2018) states, “today, Putin controls the oligarchs, and together they control and exploit the criminal world to their mutual advantage”.

If we look at the policies of the Russian leadership over the past twenty years, we can easily see that the armed attack of Russia on Georgia in 2008, followed by the de facto annexation of Georgian territories – Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region – the attack on Ukraine in 2013, followed by the annexation of Crimea and war in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions, as well as the involvement of Russia in the civil war in Syria, against the backdrop of a targeted anti-Western information war, ultimately served the main purpose – to maintain supreme political power as a lever of personal security and super profit by upgrading the ratings of Vladimir Putin and the United Russia party on the basis of the military psychosis, militaristic propaganda, nuclear threats, and radical nationalism. This phenomenon hardly fits into the framework of the traditional model of the institute of thieves in law (*vory v zakone* or Russian mafia bosses) set forth in the renowned book by Mark Galeotti (2018), *The Vory: Russia's Super Mafia*, which provides a brilliant analysis of Russian professional organized crime. The state of affairs in the Russian Federation with its repeated political killings, unprecedented thefts of

state resources, the suppression of political opponents, the creation of bloody medieval regimes in the North Caucasus, is significantly different from the traditional understanding of organized crime. The Sicilian Mafia has always relied on a wide network of bribed politicians, government officials, police officers, prosecutors and judges. But the mafia has always been outside state structures. In Russia, there is not only cooperation between corrupt representatives of the state and organized crime. Former KGB and FSB officers, for example, relying on oligarchs and leaders of Russian organized crime, seized the state, and then, subjugating them to themselves or physically eliminating them, took on two main functions: government and robbery. As a result, the Russian state was captured by a group of people combining in their actions the functions of special services, oligarchs, leaders of organized crime and politicians. This can be called a Super Mafia. At the same time, as in the case of the Sicilian Mafia, the backbone of the group that carried out the criminal seizure of the state was composed of people who have known and trusted each other for several decades. Based on the foregoing, it seems that the term Super Mafia is more suitable for the modern political regime of Russia than for Russian professional organized crime, existing under the name of the institute of thieves in law or *vory v zakone*. Mark Galeotti outlines the essence of the existing political regime in Russia, that it is not so much “how far the state has managed to tame the gangsters, but how far the values and practices of the *vory* (mafia bosses) have come to shape modern Russia” (2019). Like the Sicilian Mafia, the Russian institute of thieves in law is outside the state. However, the specificity of the Russian political regime lies in the fact that the group of people that run the country combine political and criminal traits and is not the bearer of any pronounced political ideology like the Bolshevik or Nazi, and therefore there is more reason to attribute it to mafia-style crime than to the form of political organized crime. The modern Russian political regime is more appropriately defined as a Super Mafia, that is, a mutant that includes some features of political organized crime, such as political assassinations or support of Ramzan Kadyrov’s regime in Chechnya.

An analysis of the Russian political regime is directly related to understanding the nature of the modern Georgian political regime (Slade 2011). Firstly, for decades, Russian and Georgian politics and crime have been closely intertwined, and secondly, the current Georgian regime, represented by the ruling political party GD, has been accused by the political opposition of cooperating with Russia as an occupying country.

They accuse the party leader Bidzina Ivanishvili of being an informal ruler of Georgia who has subjugated all state bodies, a conductor of Russian interests in the country, and is responsible for creating criminal corruption enrichment schemes for his clan. In part, this is the management style that Georgia is striving for under the informal leadership of oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, who made his multibillion-dollar fortune in Russia in the 1990s, during the period of political turmoil, and uncontrolled crime and corruption (Gente 2013). An analysis of Georgia's political transformation after the collapse of the Soviet Union in December 1991 will help to understand the current state of affairs in the country.

European aspirations and harsh reality

Despite the current crisis in the countries of liberal democracy and the criticism of the European Union emanating from its member states themselves, Georgia has repeatedly stated that it is unwavering in its position of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, setting as its ultimate goal full accession to the European Union and NATO. In 2018, 72 percent of Georgian citizens supported accession to the EU and 64 percent to NATO (NDI 2018). In the EU and NATO, Georgia is seen as a successful country in terms of European and Euro-Atlantic integration, and its citizens have been granted a visa-free regime with the Schengen countries since 2017. However, it is also important to understand what the EU and the United States received as a result of their long-term and multibillion-dollar support to Georgia – a free and democratic country or an oligarchic mafia-style state?

The real process of building Georgian liberal democracy turned out to be much more complicated than its proclamation, and the modern political history of this country has turned into a difficult test for its people. After restoration of its independence in 1991, Georgia faced serious obstacles to democratization, going through bloody civil conflicts, a wave of crime, corruption and the invasion of the Russian army in 2008. It turned out that the process of democratization involves not only free and fair elections, but also the formation of a multi-party system, civil society, the art of reaching political compromises, observing the principles of independence of the three branches of government, the existence of legal government, democratic legislation, independent media, respect for national, religious and sexual minorities' rights, gender equality and a free market economy. Former Soviet citizens simply did not know all this

and did not have the skills to observe democratic principles, including at the political level – a phenomenon which Piotr Sztompka called “civilizational incompetence” (Sztompka 1993). Therefore, in the first years of independence, democracy was perceived as freedom from everything, that is permissiveness. As a result, the country, not having had time to form as an independent state, found itself drawn into countless political, social, civil, labor, ethno-political, religious and other kinds of conflicts, which were also fueled by the nationalistic great-power forces of Russia.

Coup d’etat and criminalization (1991–1992)

When in 1990 and 1991, Georgian citizens voted for the presidential candidate, former dissident Zviad Gamsakhurdia, they were naive to assume that if only they cast off the yoke of communism, they would live happily, as if in the West. But shortly after the election, the situation in the country turned out to be the exact opposite: massive unemployment, suddenly impending poverty and marginalization of the vast majority of the population.

Among the generation of people brought up on Bolshevik philosophy about the intransigence between communist and bourgeois ideologies and an understanding of victory as the annihilation of the enemy, in the early 1990s, few people understood that politics is the art of compromise. This led Georgian society to the first armed civil conflict and a coup d’etat against the elected president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia, in Tbilisi, in December 1991 – January 1992. The collapse of the USSR and the coup d’etat in Georgia, led to a deep political crisis and economic disaster, the collapse of state structures and the demoralization of the law enforcement system. The spread of weapons of the Soviet army and the armed ethno-political conflicts that ensued created all the conditions for widespread criminalization in the country.

Instead of liberal democracy and a Western standard of living, the people of Georgia obtained chaos. In a matter of days, the country was swept by a wave of banditry, and the demand for weapons led to corrupt agreements with the Russian military or attacks on the Georgian police. The paramilitary and purely criminal armed groups consisted of poorly trained and poorly disciplined volunteers, united on a feudal basis around their leaders and subordinate only to them. If political tasks were set for them, their execution was usually accompanied by looting. This made the “Mkhedrioni” group, which was repeatedly sent to western Georgia

to suppress the supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia and which was simultaneously engaged in robbery of the population, especially distinguished. Here was a situation that Thomas Hobbes described as the war “...of every man against every man” (Hobbes 1886, 64).

But the most detrimental result of the coup was the antagonistic split of Georgian society into supporters of Zviad Gamsakhurdia (Zviadists) and his opponents, who called themselves Democrats. However, the democrats did not behave democratically, and in the eyes of the “Zviadists” the term democracy became a negative word and they were called “putschists”. There was no discussion of any democratic or economic reforms; the term democratization was simply unfamiliar; instead, the country became totally criminalized.

The coup organizers, former thief in law Jaba Ioseliani, previously convicted sculptor Tengiz Kitovani and economics professor Tengiz Siguia, could not cope with the chaos and agony in society, and invited the former USSR Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze, to be the head of Georgia. He arrived from Moscow to Tbilisi in March 1992. Together they created the State Council which thus included representatives of the former top Soviet cadre and the criminal underworld. They began cooperation in the illegitimate central government body, illegitimate since none of them was elected democratically. Step by step Shevardnadze returned to power his former party and Soviet colleagues who knew well how to steal state money (Wheatley 2016, 103–142).

Corruption and the role of the West (1992–2003)

Georgian thieves in law, who are now called the bosses of the Georgian Mafia in the West, have had corrupt ties with the Soviet and Communist nomenclature and law enforcement agencies since the 1920s. In the 1990s, they actively penetrated the country’s economy, participated in privatization and money laundering, and controlled markets, small businesses and smuggling. This control was carried out in cooperation with the police, which at that time was also very demoralized due to low salaries and discipline, and through the penetration of the criminal world into its ranks. Violations of human rights, torture, illegal arrests, extortion of money from business people and car drivers, bribery, falsification of the results of investigations, direct participation in crimes and even murders were common practice in the 1990s police (Slade 2012, 623–649).

Corruption in politics was also a characteristic phenomenon in 1991–2003 and this was manifested mainly in the form of illegal and unfair redistribution of state property through voucherization, privatization and auctions, theft of funds allocated by Western donors to assist Georgia, an unprecedented extent of bribery and direct merging with professional criminal groups, primarily related to the smuggling of various goods across the poorly guarded borders of Georgia (Kukhianidze et al. 2004, 35).

Despite all these negative factors, starting in 1992 the opening of embassies of Western countries in Georgia and representative offices of international organizations began, with the help of which the first local non-governmental organizations began to appear in the country and independent media were strengthened. The young civil sector of Georgia had taken the first steps aimed at civilian control of power and peaceful resolution of conflicts. As the head of state, Shevardnadze was caught between two fires – on the one hand, members of the former communist party and the Soviet government officials, which returned to power and went into the sphere of private business, and on the other hand, the Western embassies, international organizations and the local civil sector funded by them with a demand for democratization. The weakness of Shevardnadze and his entourage was that Georgia did not have, like neighboring Azerbaijan, oil and gas in order to independently provide for its power. Therefore, the government needed money that came to Georgia from Western donors, but subject to democratization. The beneficial influence of the West on Georgia as a whole contributed to its formation as a country oriented towards European integration, and thereby coincided with the long-standing attempts of society to break free from the control of authoritarian Russia and join the family of developed European liberal democracies. Now these attempts began to develop into multifaceted, professional, and systematic efforts towards the democratization of political processes in Georgia.

Thus, since 1992, two opposing trends have been growing in Georgia: criminalization and democratization. The constant deterioration of the economy, the decline of morality, social pessimism and the growth of falsification of presidential and parliamentary elections by the ruling party, “Union of Georgian Citizens”, against the backdrop of continued impoverishment of the population, increasing criticism of the authorities and the exposure by the civilian sector of numerous major corruption scandals, led to deep political crises and a change of power as a result of the Rose Revolution in November 2003.

The Rose Revolution: Reforms and failures in democratization (2003–2018)

After the Rose Revolution, the country needed a strong presidential power in order to effectively fight comprehensive corruption and organized crime, to carry out radical reforms and create a modern European state based on the principles of liberal democracy.

One can agree with the opinion that “color revolutions” are not the best way to develop society if there are opportunities for an evolutionary democratic path. The 1917 Bolshevik revolution and its consequences in the form of repression and massacres left such deep wounds in the minds of people that, after almost a century, they recall it with a shudder. Revolutions are not only bloody and communist, but also anti-corruption and velvet and take place when corrupt rulers do not want to return power to the people, in other words, when they make free and fair elections impossible. The events that took place in 2003 in Georgia had a global resonance and were ambiguously perceived in different regions of the world. From the very beginning, the leadership of the European Union, the United States of America and Russia welcomed the Rose Revolution in Georgia, although later the attitude in Russia was transformed towards negative assessments. Russian leadership’s blame for the “color revolutions” began to be laid on the forces that participated or helped, ignoring those who brought the state of affairs in the state to a revolutionary situation. Thus, attempts were made to veil the true causes of post-Soviet revolutions: “seizing” the state by criminal clans, merging corrupt political and law enforcement structures with the criminal world, restricting democratic freedoms and mass rigging of elections in order to maintain power. Ultimately, it was these reasons that led to a deep political and economic crisis in Georgian society, leaving deceived voters with only one option if they wanted to change the situation: to take to the streets and demand the resignation of the political and criminal groups in power, as well as free and fair elections. Revolutionary leaders are only the result of crises, they can direct the movement of the protesting people, but they cannot turn it around; moreover, neither the USA nor George Soros can do that. Accordingly, revolutionary leaders, as well as Western assistance, are not needed where democracy and a market economy are successfully developing and the government pursues an effective policy in the interests of the general population. Russian critics do not pay attention to this main

aspect of “color” revolutions. Obviously, a negative assessment of the “color” revolutions is beneficial to those corrupt and criminal clans who are afraid of losing the power they hold in an undemocratic way.

The Rose Revolution brought large-scale reforms, a sharp increase in budget revenues and the rapid restoration of the dilapidated infrastructure in the country. Georgia has achieved success in the fight against corruption and smuggling, tax collection, timely payment of pensions and salaries, positive macroeconomic changes, the reintegration of the autonomous republic of Adjara into the economic, social and administrative system of Georgia, and the restoration of confidence in Georgia from foreign investors. The Rose Revolution also had a successful impact on the fight against transnational organized crime.

The ongoing reforms were carried out strictly, in the form of shock therapy, and changes for the better were evident to anyone who had seen Georgia before 2003. However, despite its effectiveness in terms of optimizing public administration, the reforms were carried out without developing serious programs for the social rehabilitation of laid-off employees, which caused discontent among part of the population.

The reformation of the education system and of law enforcement has become one of the central links in the process of optimizing public administration. A comprehensive reform of education has led to the replacement of the old and corrupt Soviet system of admission to universities with a new system for passing a single national exam. In July 2005 and 2006, for the first time, admission of young people to Georgian universities was held under the new system, which, according to the results, was a breakthrough in the fight against corruption in the field of education. This became one of the most advanced and non-corrupt systems of admission to universities in Europe. At the same time, the reform of teaching at universities began, aimed at optimizing the entire educational process and freeing universities from corrupt clans led by former rectors. In the summer of 2005, this process was accompanied by intense passions and a fierce struggle between supporters and opponents of the reform, but nevertheless by September it ended with a change in the management system at universities (Berglund and Engvall 2015).

Instead of a thoroughly corrupt traffic police, a completely new service was created – the Western style patrol police. Admission to the ranks of the patrol police was carried out on a competitive basis, mainly from among young people. Much attention was paid to education and training, raising salaries and creating a modern logistics – the repair of police

stations, the installation of modern equipment, communications, a new police uniform, the acquisition of new police cars and service weapons. The population began to trust the patrol police. In 2011 up to 87 percent of the population have been favorable about the work of Georgian police and only 9 percent unfavorable (Georgian National Study 2011).

Reform of the law enforcement system affected all structures: the prosecutor's office, the police, the border service, the courts, the prison system, and the financial police within the Ministry of Finance. The reform was carried out comprehensively and involved the modernization of both the regulations and logistics, as well as structural reorganization and personnel policy. The United States of America and the European Union provided substantial assistance in reforming the law enforcement system through projects with the participation of international experts who conducted training and helped Georgian experts work on new legislation, introducing a system of open tenders to fill vacant posts or solve logistical issues.

But all these reformed structures remained under the control of the ruling political group and were not depoliticized (Berglund 2014). As a result, the main problem Georgia faced was the need to strengthen the rule of law, primarily the independence of the judiciary. The state of human rights and the fight against political corruption in the country directly depended on this, but this was not done.

In addition to the reform of state bodies of power and administration, during the Rose Revolution the Georgian government made the fight against organized crime one of its national priorities. Since 2004, a massive onslaught of the institute of Georgian thieves in law has led to a significant decrease in crime in the country. Moreover, the adoption of the Organized Crime and Racket Act in 2005 made it possible for law enforcement agencies not only to arrest dozens of organized crime leaders (thieves in law), but also to confiscate their property (Slade 2011). In accordance with this law, belonging to the status of thief in law (leader of the Georgian Mafia) was criminalized and subject to criminal punishment for at least 6 years, and by 2018 the sentence for thieves in law was increased to 15 years.

Currently, Georgian thieves in law are in prisons or hiding in other countries. As Baigent mentions, "...it is important to note that a core reason for the reason of a Georgian organized crime presence in the EU is due to the success of anti-Mafia reforms which have been adopted within Georgia" (2019). In fact, the institute of thieves in law in Georgia no

longer exists in the form in which it existed from the beginning of Soviet power in the 1920s until anti-criminal reforms were carried out during the Rose Revolution. As a result of the successful implementation of the anti-corruption and anti-criminal reform, Georgian thieves in law have lost protection from the police and prosecutors and have lost their image of the omnipotent leaders of the Georgian Mafia. Moreover, they lost control of the criminal underworld and influence in prisons, which they had been able to control for decades. They also lost influence in the broader sections of the population, especially among young people. “Organized crime has gone from being a mainstay of politics and everyday life, to a rare underground phenomenon”, and “the fact that this transformation has taken place is essential for understanding the Georgian crime that is happening in the EU” (Baigent 2019).

Legislation has been tightened with respect to petty crimes. For example, the offender could be imprisoned for up to 10–15 years even for such a petty crime as the theft of a mobile phone. As a result, the level of petty crime in the country has significantly decreased and by 2012 Georgia became the safest country in Europe, although harsh and sometimes cruel methods of combating this type of crime have been the subject of fierce criticism from opponents of such methods, including human rights defenders.

However, the revolutionary methods of reforming the country did not extend to strengthening measures to protect freedoms and political human rights, and Georgia remained among the semi-free countries in terms of freedom ratings. There were other reasons for the downgrade of the ruling UNM, led by President Mikheil Saakashvili. First of all, the very fact of radical reforms leads to the loss of income not only among the thousands of corrupt public servants and local business representatives, but also a considerable number of their relatives and friends. In a small country with traditionally close kinship relations and loyalty to corruption and violation of the law, this led to the formation of a fairly large part of the population who were dissatisfied with the reforms. Secondly, after the Russian armed attack on Georgia in August 2008, relations between the two countries remained extremely hostile. The negative attitude of the Russian leadership towards the rose color revolution in Georgia and its tendency to unleash hybrid wars, political killings and interference in the conduct of national elections in other states, in combination with local groups of people who were dissatisfied with the ruling party, played a fatal role in the 2012 parliamentary elections.

Free and fair parliamentary elections in 2012 or special services operation?

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili repeatedly called the change of power in Georgia an operation of Russian special services, after Russian oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili founded and led the opposition political coalition GD and won the 2012 parliamentary elections amid a prison scandal involving the publication of video footage of torture and sexual abuse in prisons, which, as it later turned out, was staged in order to discredit the ruling UNM immediately before the parliamentary election (Berlinger 2012). This scandal led to an explosive protest of a conservative and quite homophobic Georgian society. “According to the official version, the video materials were prepared by the “criminal group” of the prison administration with the aim of transmitting it to the “customer”, who, according to the Georgian chief prosecutor Murtaz Zodelava, paid prison survivor Bedukadze \$2 million. In a speech on September 20, Zodelava did not specify the name of the customer. He noted, however, that the negotiations between the “criminal group” and the “third party” took place through a prisoner associated with opposition leader Bidzina Ivanishvili” (Charkviani 2012). As a result, despite the forecasts of sociologists, the GD coalition won the parliamentary election in November 2012. Table 1 clearly shows the fall in the rating of the UNM and the sharp rise in the rating of the GD in September 2012 when the scandal erupted, two months before the parliamentary elections in November 2012 (Navarro and Woodward 2012).

Table 1: Change in public opinion before and after the 2012 parliamentary election.

	August 2012	November 2012
Micheil Saakashvili's UNM	38	10
Bidzina Ivanishvili's GD Coalition	14	63

Four years after these events, the organizer of the production of the video footage, Lado Bedukadze, stated in one of his television appearances that he occasionally met with Bidzina Ivanishvili. Then, together with Valery Khaburdzania, the former Minister of State Security of Georgia in 2001–2004, who currently lives in Moscow and is known for his pro-Russian political views and close ties with the Kremlin (Information Agency Kavkazski uzel 2013), Lado Bedukadze appeared as one of the leaders of the little-known (in Georgia) political organization “Centrists” to participate in the 2016 parliamentary elections.

The chairman of this organization was Temur Khachishvili, one of the leaders of the former Mkhedrioni paramilitary group, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia in 1992–1993, then the Deputy Minister of State Security, who was sentenced to 11 years in prison in 1996 on charges of organizing a terrorist attack against Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze on August 29, 1995. However, Shevardnadze pardoned him in 2002. The main organizer of this terrorist act was Khachishvili's head, Igor Giorgadze, the Minister of State Security of Georgia and former high rank KGB officer, who is currently living in Moscow. Kremlin always ignored repeated demands of the Georgian government to extradite him to Georgia. After his release, Temur Khachishvili founded the pro-Russian party “Datvi” (“Bear”), which did not gain popularity in Georgia (Information Agency Novosti Federatsii 2002).

In 2016 the electoral campaign promises and videos of the Centrists were entirely dedicated to Russia. They featured video frames depicting Russian President Vladimir Putin and Russian tanks. In case of their victory in the parliamentary elections, the Centrists promised to provide Georgian pensioners with the payment of Russian pensions to the amount of USD 174 per month, which was higher than Georgian pensions (Information Agency NRegion 2016). They took the initiative in adopting a law on dual citizenship, as well as signing an agreement on the deployment of Russian military bases in Georgia. The Georgian non-governmental organization “International Society for Fair Elections and Democracy” (ISFED) appealed to the city court to deregister the Centrists, but lost the appeal.

Later, however, shown on the First Channel of Georgia's Public Broadcaster, the party's pre-election advertising clips caused serious political scandal in Georgian society, criticism from the political opposition and even from some government officials. The opposition accused the authorities of creating favorable conditions for activating and strengthening the positions of political forces controlled from Russia. As a result, the Central Election Commission barred the Centrists from participating in parliamentary elections. Subsequently, on August 22, 2016, Khachidze and Bedukadze announced at a briefing that they would participate in the parliamentary elections as representatives of the political party “Communist Party of Georgia – Stalinists”, although Bedukadze also proposed to run as the majority deputy from the city of Mtskheta (Georgian Information Agency Gruzinform 2016). Neither of them got into parliament.

It should be noted that by 2016 the oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili already effectively controlled the First Channel of Public Television, the courts and the Central Election Commission, and Bedukadze himself stated that the opinion of Ivanishvili was important to him (Information Agency NRegion 2016). With a high degree of probability it can be assumed that the founder of the GD tested the probability of strengthening pro-Russian forces in the Georgian parliament, but was forced to retreat under the pressure of public protests. It can also be assumed that President Saakashvili's repeated statements about the participation of Russian special services in the change of power in Georgia were justified.

The ruling UNM was defeated in the parliamentary election of 2012, and the presidential election of 2013, and the GD political coalition came to power. At this stage, Georgia's great achievement was that, at least formally, for the first time in the post-Soviet period, power in the country changed as a result of elections, and not as a result of a coup or revolution, which in 2012 contributed to its perception as a country with a democratic government. However, the coming of the oligarch and his political force to power by discrediting the ruling party already meant that this new force would not continue the country's ascent to the Olympus of democracy. As the next eight years of the GD's reign showed, especially during the 2018 presidential election, an informal oligarchic style of government reigned in the country, with all three branches of government and special services controlled by one person – oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili. There followed repeated new corruption scandals, devaluation of the national currency, and a drop in the income level of the population; the courts and the law enforcement system became completely dependent on the will of the oligarch and the elections falsified through bribery, blackmail and intimidation of voters. In connection with the 2018 presidential election in Georgia, a statement by the U.S. Department of State explicitly stated that it was unacceptable to abuse state resources for party propaganda, and that these actions were not consistent with Georgia's commitment to a fair and transparent election. The State Department called on the Georgian authorities to eliminate these shortcomings (Nauert 2018). The OSCE observer mission also severely criticized the election, saying that there had been cases of misuse of administrative resources in the election campaign. The announcement of a series of social and financial initiatives during the election campaign, in particular debt relief for 600,000 people by a private financial institution associated with the chairman of the ruling party, oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili, qualified as a bribe to voters. Accord-

ing to the OSCE mission, these incidents and the participation of senior government officials from the ruling party in the election campaign have blurred the line between the state and the party. The collection of voter data and mapping of political preferences, together with voter tracking on election day, raised concerns about the possibility of intimidation and the ability of voters to vote without fear of retaliation, as stipulated by OSCE commitments, the Council of Europe and other international standards (International Election Observation 2018). Such harsh criticism has not been directed at previous presidential and parliamentary elections since the 1990s.

In general, from 1991 to 2018, Georgia made a difficult, but still significant transition from totalitarianism and authoritarianism towards liberal democracy. However, in recent years, it has been increasingly approaching the Mafia-kleptocratic form of government and moving away from the democratic system. Outwardly, the principle of separation of powers is declared in the country: the courts, police and prosecutors function, and ordinary citizens enjoy a low level of corruption and crime, but all the main decisions on the appointment or removal of the chairman of parliament, members of the Supreme Court, the Prime Minister and all ministers, in particular the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Chief of the State Security Service and the Chief Prosecutor are made by one person – oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili. This fact has been pointed out not only by all representatives of the political opposition, but also by those members of parliament and government who, at different periods in time, broke off relations with the GD. This control, commonly known as informal government in Georgia, presupposes the existence of a shadow government in the Mafia style, through relatives, business people and people with a criminal past close to the oligarch, in order to seize land and create corruption schemes to seize the most profitable areas of businesses and illegally obtain multimillion-dollar funds from the state budget through tenders, and manipulate elections through bribery and the intimidation of voters. In the case of protests by the political opposition and civil society activists, they are prosecuted with the help of law enforcement bodies which are informally subordinate to Ivanishvili, through the manipulation of investigative materials – for example, the use of false witnesses and the planting of illegal weapons or drugs. This is not the Mafia in the classical sense of the word as professional organized crime, which is located outside the state, but exerts influence on it through corrupt transactions with politicians and officials. It is more like a mafia style illegal informal

governance, carried out by a small group of people led by a person who, together with his group, wholly and completely controls the state. The Sicilian Mafia has never reached such a level of state capture as the mafia in Russia under President Vladimir Putin and in Georgia under the informal leader and oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili. This style of government, which in fact is the complete seizure of the state, both in Russia and Georgia, can qualify as a Super Mafia. Imitating the Russian style of government, the Georgian regime constantly encounters fierce resistance from the political opposition, the power of civil society, and from time to time, the mass protests of young people. Against them the protest movements in Russia look completely suppressed and cannot be compared with the relatively high level of influence of Georgian civil society on the behavior of authorities and the oligarch. In this regard, the question arises: does the political opposition and civil society of Georgia have the strength to free the country from oligarchic rule and the Super Mafia?

Is the Georgian Super Mafia immortal?

After the attack on Georgia in August 2008, Russia recognized the separatist regimes in Abkhazia and the Tskhinvali region / South Ossetia as independent states. In response, Georgia broke off diplomatic relations with Russia and adopted the Law on the Occupied Territories, according to which the border checkpoints on the Abkhaz and South Ossetian sections of the Georgian-Russian border are closed until the restoration of the territorial integrity of Georgia. Accordingly, entry into the territory of the Abkhazia and Tskhinvali regions from Russia is considered a violation of the state border of Georgia. In June 2019, a political scandal erupted in the country when, at the invitation of the ruling party, the Russian parliamentary delegation visited the Georgian parliament, whose members repeatedly violated this law, and its head sat in the chair of the Speaker of the Georgian parliament. This caused fierce protests in society, while the Georgian youth were most active. As a result, there were clashes between the demonstrators and the police and special forces in front of the parliament building where the latter opened fire on demonstrators with banned rubber bullets designed to stop large animals. This clash led to serious injuries and loss of eyesight in several young people. The political opposition was finally able to unite around one of its main goals: the ousting of the Mafia-oligarchic regime through democratic elections. The political situation in the country was so heated that the oligarch

and his party were forced to remove the Chairman of parliament and agree to electoral reform – replacing the mixed proportional-majority election system with a proportional one. The political opposition has been demanding this reform for a long time, since the ruling party easily manipulates elections, pushing the majority of deputies into parliament, who then become obedient executors of the oligarch's will. However, already at the beginning of 2020, when political unrest subsided, the oligarch and his obedient majority rejected the promises made to the Georgian and international communities, which led to a new round of political tension. During this period, Georgian law enforcement authorities carried out arrests, held court cases, and imprisoned a significant number of representatives of the political opposition and activists. This not only strengthened the unity of the political opposition, but also led to the rapid collapse of the GD political coalition itself and the withdrawal of the most famous politicians, some of whom joined the opposition. Representatives of the European Union and the United States of America sharply criticized the policies of the oligarch and his party leaders not only for deceiving the Georgian and international communities and carrying out undemocratic methods of government, but also for expelling Western investors from Georgia. Actually, the oligarch does not need any foreign competitors, he himself is the main investor.

On May 15, 2020 the four U.S. lawmakers – Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX), Senator John Cornyn (R-TX), Congressmen Jodey Arrington (R-TX19) and Markwayne Mullin (R-OK2) – addressed the Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and the Secretary of Treasury Steven Mnuchin, concerning deteriorating good governance and potential illicit financial activities in Georgia. They stated that the current government of Georgia is implicated in efforts to endanger critical American national security interests, such as the exclusion of American companies from port construction in Anaklia, motivated by geopolitical considerations, and reported ties between Bidzina Ivanishvili, chairman of the GD party, and the Russian government (History of the Investigations 2020). “History of the Investigations Launched Against the Founders of TBC Bank and the Anaklia Port” shows how oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili and his Government of Georgia intimidate the TBC Bank founders, who represent the largest commercial bank in Georgia, and block the TBC Holding and American companies from the Anaklia Development Consortium from building the strategically important deepest sea port on the Georgian Black Sea coast, which is not in the interests of Russia (2020). The letter of refusal

highlighted that over the previous year, foreign direct investment into Georgia had decreased by nearly 50%, while in fact taxes and bureaucratic barriers had increased for Western businesses, legitimate business had been pushed out, illicit trade had taken its place, and the port in Batumi had emerged as a target for illicit Iranian oil activities (Sen. Cruz 2020).

After the expulsion of American companies involved in the construction of the strategically important deep sea port of Anaklia on the Black Sea coast, the leader of the political movement Lelo and the founder of TBC Bank, suggested that the oligarch Ivanishvili himself is not free in his decisions, hinting at dependence on the Russian leadership, which is not interested in building this port as a competitor to Russian Black Sea ports and because of geopolitical interests.

On June 10, 2020 the Republican Study Committee (RSC) which is a caucus of conservatives of the Republican Party in the U.S. House of Representatives, released a report entitled “Strengthening America and Countering Global Threats,” in which it stated that: “Bidzina Ivanishvili, the richest man in Georgia, is a close ally of Putin and involved in destabilizing Georgia on Russia’s behalf” (RSC 2020, 37). The report issued a serious warning to Ivanishvili’s clan which is involved in the storing of illicit Iranian oil in Georgia, its processing into oil products and further transportation to third countries with Georgian certificates as if they were made in Georgia: “The United States should aggressively target all businesses and countries engaged in storing Iranian oil regardless of the location” (2020, 45).

But the report also underlined that Georgia is “a democratic U.S. ally” (2020, 39) – a very important assessment of the country’s current state. This means that disregarding any critique of Ivanishvili, Georgia is a democratic state with active political opposition, a vibrant civil society, human rights defenders, and the will of its people to join the European Union and NATO but it is captured by the mafia-style oligarchic ruler and his clan, and the country should be released from this Super Mafia through free and fair elections. The massive falsifications by the GD of the parliamentary election held on October 31, 2020, only strengthened these concerns of the Georgian public which requires an early parliamentary election.

Conclusion

Georgian political history is repeating itself. As in the case of the corrupt rule of the 1990s under President Eduard Shevardnadze, the oligarch Bidzina Ivanishvili and his ruling party are under serious pressure from both the united political opposition and civil society, as well as the West. The only difference is that Shevardnadze needed Western money, and Ivanishvili was seriously threatened with the freezing of his multibillion-dollar assets in the West. In 2020 Ivanishvili could choose:

1. Ensure the holding of free and fair elections and, in case of defeat, peacefully cede power to the political opposition, thereby increasing the chances of his own escape from criminal prosecution and freezing of assets.
2. During the next parliamentary elections of October 31, 2020, use all possible administrative and financial resources in order to manipulate and falsify the elections, and thereby create an extremely unpredictable and explosive situation in the country.

He used the second way. In 2003, Eduard Shevardnadze had gone the second way too, which led to the Rose Revolution, his immediate removal from power and the arrest of corrupt representatives of his party and government. As a result, the Union of Georgian Citizens party ceased to exist. Ivanishvili's attempt to follow the same path can lead not only to a loss of power, but also to the final collapse of the GD party.

His strongest ally is Covid 19, which helped him to restrict massive public protests after the falsification of the 2020 parliamentary elections. The political opposition is boycotting participation in the Parliament, leaving the GD as the only party in the Parliament, and hoping that warmer weather in Spring and the vaccination might change the political climate in the country.

In 2021, the Georgian Super Mafia has every chance of losing control of state power, although the question of its eternity or end remains open and depends not only on the will of the people, the strength of the opposition and the internal political situation, but also on the outcome of the pressure on the oligarch Ivanishvili – from Russia or, alternatively, the EU and the United States. The liberation of Ukraine and Moldova from the dominance of oligarchs in politics has strengthened anti-oligarchic sentiments in Georgia, and the country's civil society and political opposition are much stronger and more influential than in neighboring Russia. That gives hope for the success of democracy in Georgia.

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About the authors

CHRISTOFER BERGLUND holds a PhD in Political Science from Uppsala University and is Senior Lecturer at the Department of Global Political Studies, Malmö University. He is also associated with the School of Social Sciences at Södertörn University, where he manages a project on “Conscription as Political Socialization in Divided Societies? Evidence from post-Soviet Estonia and post-independence Finland”. Berglund’s research revolves around nationalism, ethnic minorities, and state-building with a particular focus on post-Soviet Eurasia. His most recent articles have appeared in *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict*, *Nations and Nationalism*, *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, and *Nationalities Papers*. He is also a member of the editorial board at *Nordisk Østforum*.

GERD CARLING is Associate Professor of General Linguistics at Lund University. Her research interests target historical linguistics and language evolution, in particular on Indo-European and South American languages. She has initiated a research program on language diversity and evolution at Lund University and founded the database infrastructure and lab DiACL – Diachronic Atlas of Comparative Linguistics, which harbors data from a large number of languages worldwide. Recent publications include the volume *Mouton Atlas of Languages and Cultures* (De Gruyter 2019), *A Dictionary and Thesaurus of Tocharian A* (Brill/Harrassowitz 2021) and articles in journals such as *Linguistic Typology*, *PLOS ONE*, *Diachronica*, *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, and *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*.

MERAB CHUKHUA is a Professor at the Faculty of Humanities of Ivane Javakishvili State University of Georgia, where he heads the Teaching-Scientific Institute of Caucasology. He is founding Director of the Circassian (Adyghe) Cultural Center in Tbilisi (2012). His special interests include comparative linguistics, the grammatical structure of Iberian-Caucasian languages, comparative phonetics-phonology, and linguocultural issues,

and he is the author of grammars of Laz-Megrelian and Ingush languages. He was involved in the national liberation movement of the Caucasian peoples in Georgia, as well as in Chechnya and Ingushetia. In this field he authored a special monograph “Vainakhs – the struggle for freedom”. He is author of the monograph “The Circassian genocide”, on the basis of which the Parliament of Georgia recognized the Circassian genocide committed by the Russian Empire (2012). At the Arnold Chikobava Institute of Linguistics he heads the Department of Lexicology, where, along with other dictionaries, the historical-etymological dictionary of the Georgian language is compiled. Professor Chukhua’s latest monograph deals with etymological studies: “Georgian-Circassian-Apkhazian Etymological Dictionary”. He has published more than two hundred articles and is editor in chief of the magazine “Etymological Research” and chair of the Council of Experts on the Georgian State Language.

KATRINE BENDTSEN GOTFREDSEN is Senior Lecturer in Caucasus Studies at Malmö University and holds a doctoral degree in anthropology from the University of Copenhagen. She has done extensive ethnographic fieldwork in the Republic of Georgia and explored the everyday experience, accommodation, and contestation of social and political transformations in the post-Soviet period, with a particular focus on subjects such as uncertainty, memory, and identity. Recent publications include the book chapter “A Museum of a Museum? Fused and parallel historical narratives in the Joseph Stalin State Museum” in the volume *Museums of Communism: New Memory Sites in Central and Eastern Europe*, edited by Stephen Norris (2020), and the monograph *Georgian Portraits: Essays on the Afterlives of a Revolution*, co-authored with Martin Demant Frederiksen (2017). She is a member of the International Advisory Board for the PhD and MA programs in Sociocultural Anthropology at Ilia State University, Tbilisi, Georgia.

LARS FUNCH HANSEN, PhD, was a founding member of the Danish Association for Research on the Caucasus (1997) and has almost thirty years of experience of working with issues such as minorities, ethnicity, conflict and displacement in the North Caucasus. His special areas of interest also include the southern Russian republics and regions, the Circassians, indigenes, and territorial identity. He has taught these subjects within the framework of Caucasus Studies at Malmö University, Sweden (2011–2018). His doctoral dissertation (Copenhagen University, 2014) is entitled *The Circassian Revival: A Quest for Recognition*. He

remains in close contact with colleagues at Malmö University and was co-organiser of the conference “Circassians in the 21st century: Identity and survival – in the homeland and diaspora” (2017) jointly hosted by the research platform “Russia and the Caucasus Regional Research” (RUCARR) and the Section for Caucasus Studies.

JEAN HUDSON is Professor emerita in English Linguistics at Malmö University. In her doctoral dissertation (Lund University) she developed a cognitive/functional model of degrees of fixedness in English and suggested some hypotheses concerning the process of fixation in the diachronic perspective. She spent two years at the University of Nottingham as a Research Assistant (subsequently Senior Research Fellow (Hon)), where she designed and oversaw the compilation of a one-million word corpus of spontaneously spoken English (CANCODE: Cambridge and Nottingham Corpus of Discourse in English) financed by Cambridge University Press (CUP). She spent a number of years as in-house grammarian and researcher at CUP, providing authors of grammar materials with up-to-date, evidence-based data on modern English usage, while continuing to pursue her particular research interest in the investigation of spoken English, now using a construction grammar approach. She has been affiliated to Malmö University since the year 2000. Her ties to Georgia have long been purely personal, but current plans include collaboration with colleagues in Tbilisi aimed at developing curricula and methodologies for the teaching of English nationwide.

DEREK HUTCHESON is Professor in Political Science in the Department of Global Political Studies (GPS), where he is also Vice Dean of the Faculty of Culture and Society (KS), with special responsibility for doctoral education. He has published extensively on electoral politics (especially in Russia), transnational citizenship and electoral rights; and local democracy in Scandinavia and Russia. Prior to working in Sweden, he was head of European Studies at University College Dublin, Ireland, from 2006 to 2013 and an ESRC and British Academy Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Glasgow, UK (2002–05). In association with his involvement in the Global Citizenship Observatory, he was also invited to spend several months at the European University Institute (EUI) in Florence as an EU Research Fellow in 2016. Recent research projects include the ICLD-funded project on ‘Legitimacy, urban planning and sustainability in Russia and Sweden’ (LUPSRUSS, 2017–19, 2020–21), and the EU-funded project, “Fostering Awareness, Inclusion and Recognition

of EU mobile citizens' Political Rights" (FAIREU) (2017–19). He is a member of the editorial board of *Russian Politics* and of the National Advisory Board of *Europe-Asia Studies*.

STEPHEN JONES received his Ph.D from the London School of Economics and Political Science. He has taught at the universities of California, London, and Oxford. He currently teaches at Mount Holyoke College. His books include *Socialism in Georgian Colors: The European Road to Social Democracy, 1883–1917* (HUP, 2005), *War and Revolution in the Caucasus: Georgia Ablaze*, (ed., Routledge, 2010), *Georgia: A Political History Since Independence* (I.B. Tauris, 2012), and *The Birth of Modern Georgia: The First Georgian Republic and Its Successors, 1918–2010*, (ed., Routledge, 2013). He was the English Language Editor-in-Chief of *kartlis tskhovreba* (*The History of Georgia*), (Georgian Academy of Sciences and Artanuji Publishers, 2014). Professor Jones is a Foreign Member of the Georgian Academy of Sciences and received an honorary doctorate from Tbilisi State University in 2012.

KLAS-GÖRAN KARLSSON is Professor of History at Lund University. In the late 1980s, after defending his thesis on history teaching and politics in Russia and the Soviet Union in the years 1900–1940, he turned to Soviet nationality problems, in particular to the ethno-territorial conflicts that at that time ravaged the South Caucasian area. As a scholar within genocide studies, another of his Caucasian focus areas has been the Armenian genocide and its aftermath. He has a particular interest in problems of history culture, highlighting how history has been used – or misused – to orientate or guide posterity. With this focus, in the years 2001–2008, he served as leader of the large research project “The Holocaust and European Historical Cultures”. Forthcoming books are *Folkmord. Historien om ett brott* (Genocide. The history of a crime) (2021) and *Lessons of Borderline Histories: Communist and Nazi Atrocity History as Learning Processes* (2022). He is also the editor of a multi-volume global history that will be published in Swedish in 2022.

MANANA KOBALDZE is a Senior Lecturer in the Georgian Language at Malmö University. Her areas of interest include the structure and history of the Georgian language, as well as dialectology and sociolinguistics. She has published articles, mostly in Georgian, in journals such as *Iberian-Caucasian Linguistics*, *Structure of Kartvelian Languages*, *Etymological Issues*, *Annual of Georgian Philology*, and *Caucasus Studies*. She is co-author

of the *Dictionary of Morphemes and Modal words of Georgian* (1988) and co-author of the online material for the course Georgian Language.

ALEXANDRE KUKHIANIDZE is Professor of Political Science at Ivane Javakishvili Tbilisi State University. In 2013 he was a visiting professor at Malmö University (financed by the Swedish Institute); in 2010-11 visiting researcher at Monterey Institute of International Studies, USA; in 2003–2010 Director of the Transnational Crime and Corruption Center (TraCCC), Caucasus Office; in 2003 DAAD visiting researcher at Free University of Berlin; in 2000–2001 Deputy Chief of Party of the USAID Local Government Reform Initiative; and in 1998–99 Fulbright Researcher at Mount Holyoke College and Johns Hopkins University. In the 1990s he worked on issues of democratization and civil participation, and since 2003 he has carried out research on organized crime, smuggling, corruption, security, and conflict resolution in the Caucasus region. He is a participant and organizer of international conferences and author of publications on issues of organized crime, corruption, and armed conflict. He currently teaches the following courses at Tbilisi State University: Political Corruption and Organized Crime; Security Studies; Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism; Emergency Management.

BO PETERSSON is Professor of Political Science at Malmö University, where he is one of the founders of the research platform Russia and the Caucasus Regional Research (RUCARR). Prior to joining Malmö University, he served for many years at Lund University, first as Senior Lecturer (1996–2006) and then Professor of Political Science (2006–2010). His areas of interest include legitimacy, authoritarianism, national identity and political myth. Geographically he has often specialised in political developments in Russia and the former Soviet Union. One of his most recent publications is “Nationalism and greatness: Russia under the Putin presidencies”, in Liah Greenfeld and Weying Zu (eds): *Research Handbook on Nationalism* (Edward Elgar (2020)). His book *The Putin Predicament: Problems of Legitimacy and Succession in Russia* is forthcoming at Ibidem Verlag in 2021. He has published articles in journals such as *Demokratizatsiya*, *East European Politics*, *Europe-Asia Studies*, *Forum of EthnoGeoPolitics*, *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, *Nordeuropa Forum*, *Nordisk Östforum*, *Sport in Society* and *Problems of Post-Communism*. He is a member of the editorial board of *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* and a member of the advisory board for the *Journal of Intangible Heritage*.

OLIVER REISNER is Professor in European and Caucasian Studies, Jean Monnet Chair (09/2016 – 08/2019) at Ilia State University, Tbilisi (Georgia). He received his Dr. phil. degree in East European History for a thesis on the formation of the Georgian national movement (Georg-August-University, Gottingen, 2000). He worked as operations manager at the Delegation of the European Union to Georgia (2005–2015) being in charge of culture, education, youth, minorities and of the monitoring and evaluation of EU-Georgia cooperation. Recently he has published articles on Europeanisation, religion, and the specifics of civil society in Georgia. He authored the Georgia country reports for the Bertelsmann Transformation Index 2016, 2018 and 2020. He is a board member of the Association of European Studies for the Caucasus (AESC) and a member of the advisory council of the *European Journal of Minority Issues* (EJM). To date, he has published a monograph and more than 20 papers in German, Georgian and English journals as well as in several volumes. Currently he is leading a research project “In Search of Social Cohesion in Minor Urban Settings of Georgia” (Rustaveli National Science Foundation), with a strong focus on youth and intergenerational dialogue. He is co-editor of the series *Caucasian Studies* at Reichert Verlag, Wiesbaden.

RAYMOND TARAS is Professor of Politics at Tulane University and is the author or editor of some 20 books which include a focus on Russian affairs. This includes a comprehensive, fundamental text (with Ian Bremmer) about the post-Soviet transition, *Nations and Politics in the Soviet Successor States* (Cambridge University Press, 1st edn 1993). His current research examines ‘xenophobia in extreme times’ in a variety of settings including the significance of russophobia. He has served as Willy Brandt Guest Professor at Malmo University in 2010–11.

LIDIA ZHIGUNOVA is Professor of Practice in the Department of Germanic & Slavic Studies, Tulane University (New Orleans, USA). Her main areas of research include 19th and 20th century Russian literary and artistic traditions as well as postcolonial and feminist literary theories and indigenous studies. She is a native of the North Caucasus. Her most recent projects focus on the political, environmental, social, religious, and cultural histories of Circassians, one of the indigenous peoples of the North Caucasus. She has published articles and essays in *Gorizonty Gumanitarnogo Znaniya*, *Journal of Caucasian Studies*, *Lichnost*, *Kultura*, *Obshchestvo*, and other publications.

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