

Circassian Bibliography & Library

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Compiled and edited

by

[Amjad M. Jaimoukha](#)

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Introduction

There are more than 2,000 entries in this compilation, mainly in Western European languages, including more than 120 online books, articles and dissertations. There are also sections on Circassian bibliographies and periodicals (journals, serials, magazines, newsletters, and newspapers). The scope of this work has been extended to include all the works on the Circassians and related issues in Circassian (Kabardian and Adigean) and Russian. Where possible, original names of Adiga writers are given in brackets after their Russian versions. The information between square brackets at end of an entry is mainly my commentary on the contents and other additions. Every effort has been made to include all diacritics in French, German, Turkish, and other entries.

There has been literally an explosion in the number of publications on Circassian issues since the beginning of the third millennium of our era. This is an indication of the increased interest in Circassian affairs at all levels. This trend is expected to continue with an ever enhanced pace as the Circassian issue moves steadily to central stage. Gratifying though this might be, it means that more energy and effort are required in accessing these publications.

In a work of this nature perhaps a description of what is left out is as important as the content. There have been thousands of books published on Circassian issues in Circassian (Kabardian and Adigean) and Russian in the last century. The internet has made access to these works more possible (but of course more, much more, work needs to be done in this regard by the academic and cultural institutions in Circassia). In addition, there have been innumerable papers and articles on these same issues. Another valuable resource is the hundreds of dissertations and thesis by Circassian (and non-Circassian) graduate students. Again, it is possible to have access to some of these works on the web. There have been many publications on the Circassians in Turkish, but much less than is commensurate with their number and potential importance as one of the principal minorities in Turkey and as the largest Circassian diaspora community. Georgian scholars and researchers have published

dozens of works on the Circassians (mainly in Georgian, but also in Russian) in the 19th and 20th centuries (before the unfortunate demise of Pan-Caucasian ideals).

In light of this, the compilation process henceforth shall concentrate more on including these works (this shall be done in phases). The formats and orthographies in which the entries will be configured shall display more variety (for example, specialized articles in Russian shall be entered in Cyrillic, since they are of use only to those who know Russian). The ideal aim is to include all (non-trivial) works on the Circassians and their related issues in the languages of concern (mainly: Circassian, English, Russian, French, German, Spanish, and Dutch). No systematic efforts shall be made to include works in Turkish and Georgian, mainly due to linguistic limitations. In this respect, help from Turkish and Georgian speakers is most welcome and much appreciated. The ultimate goal of this endeavour is to publish the collection of entries in book format.

For suggestions and additions, please contact: jaimoukha@gmail.com

Bibliographies & Journals

Bibliographies

‘Bibliograficheski ukazatel literaturi o Kubanskoi Oblasti, Kubanskomkazakhem voiske i Chernomorskoï Guberni’, E. D. Felitsyn, in *Kubanski sbornik*, Ekaterinodar, 5-6, 1899-1900.

Bibliografiya Caucasica et Transcaucasica, M. M. Miansarov, 1874-76, vol. 1, parts 1, 2. St Petersburg; reprinted: Amsterdam: Meridian Publishing Company, 1967. [Not published anymore, but still a fundamental bibliography. The volume published covers geography, ethnography, travels, antiquities, numismatics and history – B. Geiger et al, 1959, p72. 848 pages]

Bibliografiya Kabardino-Balkari, Karachaevo-Cherkesi i Adigei, Nalchik, 1967.

‘Bibliografiya Kubanskogo Kraya’, B. M. Gorodetski, in *Sistematicheski ukazatel literaturi o Kubanskoi Oblasti s retsenziyami i referatami*, Ekaterinodar, issues 1-4, 1918-19.

‘Bibliografiya po ètnografii i lingvistike Kavkaza [Bibliography of the Ethnography and Linguistics of the Caucasus]’, Belyaev in *Kultura i pismennost gorskikh narodov Severnogo Kavkaza* [The Culture and Literature of the Mountain Peoples of the Northern Caucasus], Rostov, 1931, pp 71-145. [Not all Russian and other authors are indicated - R. Traho]

Bibliografiya yazikovedcheskoi literaturi ob iberisko-kavkazskikh yazikakh, I [Bibliography of Linguistic Literature on the Ibero-Caucasian Languages, I], Tbilisi State University, 1958.

‘Bibliographie (Monographien)’, in *Neue Kaukasische Post*, no. 4, August 1997.

Bibliographie de la Caucase, par le Comité des Émigrés Circassiens en Turquie, vol. 1, Constantinople, 1919. [Not all Russian authors are indicated]

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- For a list of archival sources on the Caucasian War, refer to M. Gammer, *Muslim Resistance to the Tsar: Shamil and the Conquest of Chechnia and Daghestan*, London: Frank Cass, 1994; Portland, Oregon: Frank Cass & Co., Ltd, 1994, pp 434-5.
- For an extensive bibliography on the Russian-Caucasian War, refer to *Central Asian Survey*, vol. 10, nos 1-2.
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- Istoriya voini i vladichestva russkikh na Kavkaze* [The History of the War and Russian Rule in the Caucasus], T. 1, vol. 3: Bibliograficheski ukazatel istochnikov k dvum pervim knigam, N. F. Dubrovin, St Petersburg, 1871. [Contains 2355 titles. Annotated. Indexes of authors and subjects]
- ‘Kavkazskaya voina: XIX vek (neizvestnie stranitsi) [The Caucasian War: 19th Century (Unknown Pages)]’, in *Rodina*, 3-4, 1994, pp 10-151. [Recent collection of essays by Russian scholars on the North Caucasian Wars]
- Kto est kto v kavkazovedenii* [Who’s Who in Caucasology], Moscow: Akademiya, 1999.
- ‘Literature on Circassia and the Circassians’, in *Caucasian Review*, Munich, no. 1, 1955b, pp 145-62. [Seminal work by R. Traho]
- ‘Narodnaya slovesnost Kavkaza (Materiali dlya bibliograficheskogo ukazatelya) [National Literature of the Caucasus [Materials for a Bibliography]’, A. V. Bagri, *Izv. Vost. Fak.*, Azerbaijan State University, *Vostokovedenie*, I, Baku, 1926, pp 203-330.
- New York Public Library Circassian Language Collection*: 1. Q ZS n.c. 17, 35; 2. Q ZS (Circassian) n.c. 1-3-4; 3. Q ZS n.c. 16; 4. Q ZS (Kabardian) n.c. 1.
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- ‘Svedeniya arabskikh pisatelei o Kavkaze, Armeni i Azerbaidzhane [Information of Arab Writers on the Caucasus, Armenia, and Azerbaijan]’, N. A. Karaulov, in *Sbornik materialov dlya opisaniya mestnostei i plemen Kavkaza* [Collection of Materials for the Description of the Districts and Tribes of the Caucasus], Tiflis, vol. 29, 1901, vol. 31, 1902, vol. 32, 1903, vol. 38, 1908.
- Tsentralni gosudarstvenni arkhiv KBASSR* [Central State Archive of the Kabardino-Balkarian ASSR], Nalchik.
- Ukazatel sochineni o Chernomorskom poberezhii Kavkaza* [Index of Works on the Black Sea Coast of the Caucasus], N. Vorobiev, Petrograd (St Petersburg), 1915 (first edition). [‘The author gives detailed classification, running to about twenty headings, of works on the Kuban region, particularly general topics, geography, ethnography, history, linguistics, anthropology, archaeology, colonization and migration, bibliography and criticism, sketches and cartography.’ — R. Traho]
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Journals, Serials, Periodicals, Newsletters, Magazines & Newspapers

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- Annual of the Society for the Study of Caucasia*, Chicago, 1989-.
- Bedi Karthlisa*, Revue de Kartvelologie, Paris, 1957-84. Thereafter: *Revue des Études Géorgiennes et Caucasiennes*, Paris: Peeters France, 1985.

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- Birleşik Kafkasya*, Istanbul, 1964-67.
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- Bulletin du Comité de l'Indépendance du Caucase*, Paris: Editions Maisonneuve Frères.
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- Circassian Voice Newspaper* [[АДЫГЭ МАКЪ; Adige Maq](#)]. The republican newspaper *Adige Maq* is published five times a week in both Circassian and Russian ('Голос Адыга'). About 3,600 copies of each edition are published. This is the only systematic cyber publication in the Circassian language in the Republic of Adigea.

It deals with political and cultural issues and sports. On 8 March 2008 the Newspaper celebrated its 85th anniversary. Available online: <<http://www.adygvoice.ru/>>.

Circassian Word [[АДЫГЭ ПСАЛЪЭ; Adige Psalhe](#)]. Circassian language newspaper that is published five times a week. Organ of the Parliament and Government of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. It started publication in 1924. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://www.adyghepsale.ru/>>. Also available (in pdf format) at Mass Information Media Portal <<http://ap.smikbr.ru/index1.php>>.

Contemporary Caucasus Newsletter, The Berkeley Program in Soviet & Post-Soviet Studies, Graduate Training and Research Program on the Contemporary Caucasus, University of California. [Superseded by *Caucasus and Central Asia Newsletter*]

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Elbrus News, Tyrnyauz, the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. Available online: <<http://www.tyrnyauz.ru/gorod/prensa/prensa.html>>. [The social and political newspaper of the Elbrus District of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. It was first published in July 1979. The four page newspaper has one page in Circassian and three pages in Russian. It is issued twice a week, on Wednesdays and Saturdays. About 1,500 copies of each edition are printed]

Gazeta Yuga [Newspaper of the South: All News of Kabardino-Balkaria], Nalchik. Available online: <<http://www.gazetayuga.ru/index.html>>. [Newspaper published every Thursday since 1994, with an electronic edition. The newspaper and the website are in Russian. An archive of earlier editions is available online]

Georgica: A Journal of Georgian and Caucasian Studies. [Annual on Georgian and Caucasian issues]

Ghwaze. ГЪУАЗЭ [Beacon], Maikop. [The Circassian language newspaper *Ghwaze* is published by the Public Movement *Adige Xase* [Circassian Society] of the Republic of Adigea. The number of copies per edition is close to a thousand. The editor-in-chief is Khuseyn Dawir (Daurov)]

Goryanka [The Mountaineer Woman], Nalchik, 1993. [Russian language weekly newspaper on issues of concern to North Caucasian women. Archive available online: <<http://www.goryankakbr.ru/>>]

Izvestiya kavkazskogo otdela imperatorskogo (later: gosudarstvennogo) russkogo geograficheskogo obschestva [Proceedings of the Caucasian Department of the Russian Imperial

- (later: State) Geographical Society], Tiflis (Tbilisi), vols 1-29, 1872-1906.
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- Kafkasya—Kültürel Dergi*, Ankara, 1964-75.
- Kamçi*, Istanbul, 1970.
- Kavkaz* [The Caucasus], Tiflis (Tbilisi), 1846-76. [Newspaper; until 1849 daily, then biweekly]
- Kavkaz. Le Caucase*. Paris, 1934-39.
- Kavkaz i Vizantiya* [The Caucasus and Byzantium]
- Kavkazski ètnograficheski sbornik* [Caucasian Ethnographic Collection], Trudi instituta ètnografii [Transactions of the Institute of Ethnography], Moscow, 1955-.
- Kavkazski gorets* [The Caucasian Mountaineer], Prague, 1924. [Monthly magazine]
- Kavkazski kalendar* [Caucasian Calendar], Tiflis (Tbilisi), 1854-1916.
- Kavkazski sbornik* [The Caucasian Collection], Tiflis (Tbilisi), nos 1-30, 1876-1910. [For an index to the articles of the first 18 volumes, see ‘Ukazatel statei pervikh 18-ti tt. “Kavkazskogo sbornik”’, A. Gizetti, in *Kavkazski sbornik*, no. 19, 1898]
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- Le Caucase. The Caucasus. Der Kaukasus*. Organe de la Pensée Nationale Indépendante. Revue mensuelle, Paris, 1937-.
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- Les Montagnards du Caucase*, Paris: Parti Populaire des Montagnards du Caucase, 1929-1939. [Edited by Prince Elmurza Bekovich-Cherkassky and B. Baitugan; from May 1934 name changed to ‘Le Caucase du Nord’]
- [Literaturnaya Kabardino-Balkariya](#) [Literary Kabardino-Balkaria], Nalchik. Available online: <http://jurnals.smikbr.ru/downloads.php?cat_id=1>. [*Literary Kabardino-Balkaria* is the Russian language organ of the Union of the Writers of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic. It deals with

- literary, artistic, social, and political issues. The Journal is available for downloading (in pdf format)]
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- Nartlarin Sesi*, Ankara, 1972-76, 1978-80.
- Nibceğu* [Friend], Istanbul, 1980.
- Nur. HYP* [Light], Nalchik: Elbrus Press, 1982-. [A monthly magazine dedicated to children, *Nur*, first issued in January 1982, is published by the Union of the Writers of the Kabardino-Balkarian ASSR and the Regional Committee of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League of the Soviet Union. About 10,000 copies are printed by Elbrus Press]
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- [*Psine. ПСИНЭ*](#) [Fountain], Nalchik, 2007-. [This magazine is dedicated to celebrating the life-style and culture of the Circassians. It is published in Circassian. The editor-in-chief is Larisa Mereimqwl, and the staff are all Circassian. The website, also in Circassian, is both informative and stylish]
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- Rodnichok Adigey* [Little Fountain of Adigea], Maikop. [Children's magazine published quarterly in the Republic of Adigea in Russian (2,200 copies per edition)]
- Russian Regional Report (RRR)*, Open Media Research Institute (OMRI). [Provides weekly updates on political and social developments in the 89 regions of the Russian Federation]
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- [*Sovetskaya Adigeya*](#) [The Republican Newspaper 'Soviet Adigea'], Maikop, 1922-. [The Republican Newspaper 'Soviet Adigea' has been published since October 1922. It is a Russian language newspaper with mainly non-Circassian staff. 'Soviet Adigea' is published five times a week and some 8,500 copies of each edition are printed]
- [*Sovetskaya Molodyozh*](#) [Soviet Youth], Nalchik. Available online: <<http://www.smkbr.ru>>. [Published in Russian with one page 'Psine' («Псыне»; 'Fountain') in Circassian]
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- The Georgian Chronicle*, Tbilisi: Caucasian Institute for Peace, Democracy and Development (CIPDD). [Monthly bulletin covering major events and trends in the political, economic and social life of the Republic of Georgia]
- Trudi* [Transactions], Karachaevo-Cherkesski nauchno-issledovatel'ski institut èkonomiki, istorii, yazika i literaturi [The Karachai-Cherkess Research and Scientific Institute of Economy,

- History, Language, and Literature], Seriya filologicheskaya [Philological Series], Cherkessk.
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- Uchenie zapiski Kabardino-Balkarskogo nauchno-issledovatel'skogo instituta (KBNI)* [Scientific Transactions of the Kabardino-Balkarian Science and Research Institute], Nalchik. [In 1976 the Institute changed its name to *Kabardino-Balkarski ordena 'Znak Pochyota' (nauchno-issledovatel'ski) institut istorii, filologii i ekonomiki (KBNIIFE)* {The Kabardino-Balkarian (Research and Scientific) Institute of History, Philology, and Economy}]
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Zeqweshnigh. ЗЭКЪОШНЫГЪ [Friendship], Maikop: Adigean Branch of the Union of Soviet Writers, Adignatsizdat, 1946-. [*Zeqweshnigh* and its Russian version, *Druzhiba*, are the literary almanacs of the Adigean Branch of the Union of Soviet Writers. These Journals broach literary, artistic, political and social subject matters and issues. About a thousand copies of each edition of the quarterly *Zeqweshnigh* are published]

[Regional newspapers in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic](#) are also available online and for downloading: <<http://rgazets.smikbr.ru/index1.php>>.

[Newspapers & magazines in the Karachai-Cherkess Republic](#)
<<http://kavkaz-fm.ru/?29>>

Vesti Gor [News of the Mountains]: Russian language weekly (newspaper) on political and social issues.

Den Respubliki [Day of the Republic]: Published three times a week, the newspaper is concerned with political and social issues.

Zhizn [Life]: Weekly newspaper on political and social issues.

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- to divisions in Chechnya: The Chechen Revolution in late 1991 severed all party and institutional ties with the federal government and led to a situation of divided power within the Chechen republic, both of which made center-region negotiations problematic. The paper is part of a broader project that investigates federal states' very diverse capacity to defuse struggles between central governments and sub-national actors in pursuit of greater autonomy. Acknowledging that there is no "one-size-fits-all" federal solution to conflicts in divided states, I argue that the degree to which federal institutions can contribute to peace depends on how these institutions respond to characteristics of the societies they govern. I maintain that the "peace-preserving" effects of specific federal traits are conditional on any given region's wealth and ethnic composition]
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been gender neutral. Therefore, the central question is: After the abolition of patriarchy and the official installation of gender equality, are patriarchy and female discrimination returning in the region through the backdoor, although in a modernized version? The author is professor of Southeast European history at University of Graz/Austria. His research has been focussed on family and gender relations in the Balkans]

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— 'Cultural Reification in Circassian Diaspora: Stereotypes, Prejudices and Ethnic Relations', in *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, vol. 31, issue 1, January 2005, pp 129-49.

[Contemporary diaspora identities differ to a certain extent from conventional forms of diasporic formations in the sense that the former are no longer characterised by the overwhelming wish to return. Contemporary diasporas are built upon two principal pillars: modern communicative circuitry, and acts of exclusion by receiving societies. Deported by the Russians from their homeland in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Circassian tribes were welcomed by the Ottoman Empire for practical reasons. Since then they have been subject to several acts of both inclusion and exclusion by the Turkish Republic. They were also treated differently by their local neighbour groups. This paper claims that Circassian groups in diaspora have generated distinct ethnic and cultural identities depending on how they were recognised, or unrecognised, both by their neighbours and by the Turkish state. Cultural reification, or essentialisation, becomes common practice among diaspora groups, providing them with a safe haven against misrepresentation, prejudice, exclusion and discrimination. Cultural reification not only adds to the construction of a sense of communality, but also serves as a way of doing politics for the Circassians in diaspora. Culture, then, not only remains a heritage, but also becomes a political strategy]

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system, the shortage of a productive labour force for the land, the lack of technological innovation in agriculture and the disturbances caused by climatic and biological disasters. It is the aim of this paper to examine the situation of agriculture in Egypt during the half century before the fall of the Mamluk kingdom. An overview of this sphere of activity is provided. This is followed by a discussion of the economic climate within which it was took place and the factors which affected it.

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Bulghar. ‘The subject of this paper is to introduce, analyse and assess the significance of three medieval ‘Yemenite’ stories, both oral and literary, which have been borrowed and adapted to explain the origin of three Muslim peoples in medieval and post-medieval Eastern Europe; the Circassians, the Albanians (Shqiptars, or Arna’uts) around the city of Elbasan, and the Muslim inhabitants of the city of Bulghar, near Kazan, on the Volga. The Yemenites, who are introduced, vary in two respects. One tribal group were said to have been the Ghassanids, who allegedly emigrated to the area of Golan, in Syria, following the destruction of the Ma’rib dam, in the Yemen. The other tribal group - the Volga Bulgarians succeeded the pagan ‘Adites, who were mentioned in the Qur’an and who were unbelievers, and a people who were to be replaced by believing Yemenites. The stories are essentially adapted from the Arabian tradition. Arab blood is a mark of honour and esteem. However, in at least two of the stories, the Quraysh are central to the claim, thus introducing the Prophetic household, and the Quraysh, into the proud lineage, the nasab and the hasab, of diverse indigenous non-Arab peoples of Eastern Europe. Before presenting my examples, I should like to draw attention to a pioneering article by my Syro-Albanian friend and colleague, Dr Muhammad Mufaku al-Arna’ut, who teaches in Al al-Bayt University, al-Mafraq, Jordan. He entitled his article ‘The Arab origin of some of the Muslim peoples in Europe – history, myth, fantasy and policy, the Circassians’(al-Usul al-‘Arabiyya li-ba’d al-Shu‘ub al-Muslima fi Urubba – al-Ta’rikh – al-Khayal – al-Siyasa, al-Sharakisa). His article was published in the academic journal al-Manarah and it was issued by his University in Jordan, vol 2, issue 1, Dhu’l-Qa‘da, 1417 AH/1997 AD, pp 65-82. Jordan has a substantial Circassian community and so this enabled Dr Mufaku to obtain first hand comment and information from his Circassian colleagues and friends. I shall draw attention to his article later in my conclusion’]

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[Oliphant's travels included, besides Continental countries, the shores of the Black Sea, Circassia, where he was *Times* correspondent. 'He put forward a plan suggested by his previous journeys, which is described in a pamphlet called "The Trans-Caucasian Provinces the Proper Field of Operation for a Christian Army" (1855). He succeeded in obtaining from Lord Clarendon a recommendation to Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. He wished to be sent as an envoy to Schamyl with a view to a diversion against the Russians. His father accompanied him to Constantinople. They found Lord Stratford about to visit the Crimea, and accompanied him thither. Oliphant had a glimpse of the Siege of Sebastopol: and, though he could not obtain an authorisation for his scheme, was invited by the Duke of Newcastle to join him on a visit to the Circassian coasts. He sailed at the end of August, and made a short rush into the country. He afterwards joined the force under Omar Pasha, and was present at the battle of the Ingour. The fall of Kars made the expedition fruitless: and after much suffering and a consequent illness during the retreat, he returned to England at the end of 1855. *The Trans-Caucasian Campaign of the Turkish Army under Omer Pasha: A Personal Narrative* (1856), describes his experiences.' 'Omer Pasha is fortunate in having been accompanied through Abkhasia and Mingrelia by a clear-headed Englishman, who uses his pen with liveliness and vigour.' — Examiner.]

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- handsome production due mainly to the numerous attractive and charming hand-coloured illustrations which appear as vignettes in the text as well as additional plates. They depict the natives of the regions traversed, their costumes and occupations, the scenery and landscapes, showing for example fine views of Bakhchisaray, the Sebastopol and Balaklava bays]
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the Maikop Culture emerged, to what extent a relative chronology can be established through stratigraphy and typology and what can already be said about the absolute dating. Five types of grave constructions were encountered in stratigraphically meaningful contexts, so that four phases can be defined and illustrated in schematic plates of types. The find material indicates connections with the west lasting from Tripol'e B/Cucuteni A, Amuq F, and Arslantepe VI A until Tripol'e C1-2, Usatovo, Cernavoda III, and Foltesti I (horizons 8-10 after Parzinger) and supported by C14-dates. Relations with Central Europe exist in the shape of the Novosvobodnaja monuments of a "cultural block" expanding from the Funnel Beaker Culture to the Caucasus and characterized by black burnished pottery and megalithic traditions. Together with Anatolian and Near Eastern elements, it led to the formation of the Maikop Culture. English and Russian summaries]

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Appendix

The Circassians

(also includes an account of the Kabardians)

Capsule Summary

Location: Northwest Caucasus, mainly in three constituent republics of the Russian Federation.

Self-designation: Adiga.

Total population: 2-6 millions (about 1 million in the Caucasus).

Religion: Native religion and beliefs (99%), Orthodox Christianity (1%). Pagan/polytheistic beliefs still prevalent.

Essay:

The Circassians, together with the kindred Abkhaz-Abaza and the Ubykh, have formed the autochthonous population of the Northwest (NW) Caucasus for thousands of years. The number of Circassians in the Caucasus has gone over the 1 million mark. The majority live in the following republics of the Russian Federation, in each of which they have a different nominal designation: the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (Kabardians, about 600,000, almost 60% of the population of the Republic), the Karachai-Cherkess Republic (Cherkess, about 100,000) and the Republic of Adigea (Adigeans, about 150,000). There are also Circassian communities that exist outside these republics, but inside Russia, including the Shapsugh community of almost 20,000 in the Tuapse and Lazareyvsky regions on the Black Sea coast, and the Christian Kabardian community in Mozdok, which numbers a few thousands. There are also significant Adigean and Kabardian communities in the Krasnodar and Stavropol Krai, respectively. In the Krasnodar Krai there are about 60,000 Adigeans not contained within the borders of Adigea. The Circassians constitute almost 0.8% of the population of the Russian Federation.

There are Circassian diaspora communities in Turkey, Syria, Jordan, Israel, Egypt, Libya, Iraq, Germany, the USA, and the Netherlands, but their precise numbers are not known, with estimates ranging between 1 and 5 million people. It is generally accepted that the Circassian community in Turkey is the largest in the world, in some estimates reaching more than four million; however, it is scattered over the whole country, and many of its members have been assimilated.

Circassian is one of the three divisions of the NW group of Caucasian languages, which form a unique group distinct from the other major world language groups, the other two being Abkhaz-Abaza and the now extinct Ubykh. Though genetically related, the three languages are mutually unintelligible, the lexical differences between them being quite substantial. There are two official and literary languages of Circassian: Kabardian in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic and Karachai-Cherkess Republic and Adigean in the Adigey Republic (Adigea). The two languages, or more accurately dialects, are mutually intelligible and use Cyrillic orthography. It is thought that Northeast Caucasian, which is spoken by about 3.5 million people in Chechnya, Ingushetia, and Daghestan, is genetically related to NW Caucasian. The third group in the Caucasian language family is South Caucasian or Kartvelian: Georgian, Mingrelian, Svan, Adjar, and Laz, all of which are spoken by about 4.5 million people in the Transcaucasus and Northeast Turkey. Some linguists dispute the existence of any genetic link between North and South Caucasian. During the Soviet period, Circassian was relegated to a secondary position as Russian was made the language of instruction at schools and universities. In consequence, Circassian had suffered tremendously by the end of Communist rule. The challenge now is to restore the native language to pre-eminence. There are TV and radio broadcasts in Circassian, which are also relayed to the diaspora in the Middle East.

The Nart epic and the oral tales of the bards had formed the bulk of Circassian literature until the early part of the 19th century. The 20th century witnessed a quantum leap in quantity and quality of literary output, despite being somewhat tainted by Communist ideology.

History

In the Bronze Age, the Maikop culture flourished in the valley of the Kuban (Psizch) in the NW Caucasus, from the Taman Peninsula to present-day Chechnya, almost five millennia ago. It was contiguous with the Kuro-Arax culture of the kindred Chechens and Daghestanis. There are extant monuments to the glory of this civilization, especially in Western Circassia. Some authorities believe that the people of the

Maikop culture, together with a significant input from the Dolmen People, who inhabited the coastal and highland regions, engendered the forebears of the Adiga, or at least formed an important component of the proto-Circassians.

The Iron Age in the NW Caucasus began in the eighth century BC. Pre-Kuban culture is attributed to the proto-Circassian Maeots who inhabited the NW Caucasus and the steppes north of the Black Sea. Their civilization lasted for some 1,200 years. The Maeot State was contemporaneous with the Greek colonies on the Eastern Black Sea coast, which were established in the seventh and sixth centuries BC and lasted for almost a millennium. The Greeks set up trade relations with the Maeots. By the fifth century BC, the Sinds, a people kindred to the Maeots, had set up the magnificent Sindika civilization, which spread over the lower reaches of the Kuban (Psizch), the Black Sea coastal strip between Anapa and Taman Peninsula. The Romans occupied the Eastern Coast of the Black Sea in 64 BC. It was Strabo in 26 AD who first mentioned the name Zyghoy for Circassians, which replaced the old appellation Kerket.

The Goths, who established a state north of the Black Sea in the third century AD, invaded the NW Caucasus and engaged in fierce battles with the Circassians. The marauding Huns who had settled to the east undid the Eastern Gothic State in 370 AD and invaded the NW Caucasus in 374 AD. The Byzantine Empire secured a foothold in the Western Caucasus in the fourth century AD, erecting fortresses on the Black Sea coast and the Taman Peninsula. Thenceforward the Roman scribes referred to the Maeots as Zikhis. Christianity was introduced gradually among the upper classes of the Circassians, the masses clinging to their ancient beliefs. Byzantine presence lasted until they were replaced by the Venetians who were themselves displaced by the Genoese in the 13th century.

By the 10th century, the Circassians had emerged as a cohesive ethnic and linguistic entity. At the time, Circassia stretched from the middle of the Caucasus to the Black Sea. In the hinterland lived the Circassian nations of the Papaghis and Kasakhs. To the east of the Kasakhs (Kassogs), modern-day Kabardians, lived the Alans, ancestors of the Ossetes. The Circassians had kept their independence until the 13th century, when part of their country and Abkhazia were subjected by the Georgians under Queen Tamara (1184-1213) and Christianized. Around 1424 AD, the Circassians threw off the Georgian yoke for good. Ghenghis Khan led his Mongol hordes across the Caucasus in the 13th century and laid waste to the North Caucasus. Batu, grandson of Ghenghis, established the Khanate of the Golden Horde in the North

Caucasus in 1227. The Kipchak Khanate dominated the North Caucasus until the 15th century, when Tamerlane conquered the Caucasus and ended Mongol rule. In the 13th to 15th centuries, the Genoese constructed trading posts on the coastal regions of Circassia and Abkhazia. During their incessant wars with the Mongols and Tatars, the Circassians sought to forge closer relations with Russia, from whom they perceived no threat, being relatively distant and of the same faith. Circassian Mamluks furnished medieval Egypt with an important element of her elite warrior caste for about six centuries and its reigning Sultans for 135 years.

The Russian-Circassian War

After destroying the Empires of the Golden Horde at the end of the 16th century, Russia began to push south towards the northern steppes of the Caucasus in a process of gradual encroachments. Russia began to meddle in the affairs of Circassia in 1736. The construction of the Caucasian Military Line hastened the first open conflict between the Circassians and Russians in 1771. A protracted and devastating war extended for decades, and the Russian juggernaut had ground all resistance by 1864.

On 1 May 1864 – later dubbed the Circassian Day of Mourning, celebrated by all Circassian communities and even turned into a public holiday in the Circassian republics under pressure from the Circassian nationalists – Russia proclaimed the end of the Caucasian War. Covertly, the Russians pursued a policy of organized and systematic terror and thousands of people were massacred in cold blood. Those horrific acts, together with the collusion of the Ottomans, resulted in a mass exodus. Only 10% of the Circassians, about 200,000, remained in their ancestral lands to face occupation and persecution first under the Tsars and later the Communists. This is the most horrific genocide in modern history up to World War I.

During the tsarist period, Circassia remained desolate. There was an influx of Slav colonists, especially in the coastal regions. The Circassians joined the North Caucasian Mountain Republic in 1917. After victory of the Bolsheviks in the Civil War, the Circassians were divided into four regions, which kept changing status and nominal designations until the early 1990s. The horrors of centralization, the purges and World War II gave way to a long period of quiet and stagnation until the years of Glasnost and Perestroika. The demographic situation changed dramatically in the NW Caucasus, such that nowadays the Slavs constitute the majority in the region. However, figures from the 2002 Russian population census show that the increase in Circassian

population, especially in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, since the preceding census in 1989 had been colossal by any standards. For example, the number of Kabardians in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic rose from 364,494 in 1989 (48.2% of total population) to 498,702 in 2002 (55.3% of total population), an increase of 37%. In the same period, the Russian population in the Republic dropped almost 6%, from 240,750 (31.9% of total population) to 226,620 (25.1% of total population).

Current Political Situation

After the demise of the Soviet Union, Circassian nationalists became very active demanding more autonomy and even independence. The International Circassian Association was established in 1991 and it included organizations from the Caucasus and the diaspora. In 1993, it became a member of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation (UNPO), which was created in 1991 in The Hague to represent ethnic groups around the world that are barred from joining the United Nations for whatever reason.

The secessionist tendencies reached fever pitch during the Georgian-Abkhaz war of 1992-93. Victory gave the nationalists overwhelming popular support, but collusion of the local and central authorities, together with the onset of the Chechen war in 1994, overturned the tables. The nationalists have been on the defensive since the mid-1990s, being hounded by the local governments. People have been more concerned with their material well being, and nationalism has taken a secondary place in their reckoning.

The concept of a united Circassia is however still strong in the hearts and minds of all Circassian peoples. Some regard the re-creation of historical Circassia as inevitable, since Russia's colonial stance will have to ease for it to join the world comity. Ethnic tension is evident in all three republics: the Kabardians vs. the Balkars, the Cherkess-Abaza vs. the Karachai, and the Adigeans vs. the militant Cossacks. Fortunately, no serious conflicts have erupted thus far.

The Circassian diaspora, which is increasingly becoming more politicized, could play a decisive role in the demographic and political situations in the NW Caucasus, if the right conditions obtain. The few hundred Kosovar Circassians, who found refuge in their ancestral lands in 1998, caused trepidation among the local Cossacks, who had been wary of Adigean domination.

Attempts by the administration of the president of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin to repeal the autonomy of the Adigey Republic and subsume it under the administration of the Krasnodar Krai,

which started fervently in 2005, were narrowly defeated towards the end of 2006 by the unitary opposition of Adigea's President Hazret Sovmen and the Circassian nationalists in the Caucasus and diaspora. The mobilization of the nationalist forces and their solidary stance against this issue has brought to the fore the latent demands of the nationalists and brought back from the cold their erstwhile leaders, principally Yura Schenibe (Shanibov).¹ Sovmen was replaced in January 2007 by Aslancheriy Tkhakushinov, as he was denied a second term for his heroic stand against the Kremlin's attempt to deal a crippling blow to the Circassian Issue. Notwithstanding the tenuous victory of the nationalists, this episode underlines the precarious status of the Circassian political entities in the Caucasus and their vulnerability vis-à-vis arbitrary diktats issuing from Moscow.

The issue of the status of Circassia and the establishment of Greater Circassia is slowly but surely coming to the fore in current international politics, due mainly to the game of tug-of-war between Russia and the West regarding the formal independence of Kosovo on one hand and the status of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the other.²

Circassian Society

The eastern Circassians, those living on the right-bank of the upper reaches of the Kuban River (Psizch), are composed of the Kabardians and Beslanay. The western Circassians are composed of many tribes: Abzakh, Shapsugh, Temirgoi, Bzhedugh, etc. Some tribes and clans have disappeared from the Caucasus as a result of the Russian-Circassian war. The social structure of Circassian society was extremely complex and was generally based on hierarchical feudalism. The main castes were the princes, nobles, freemen, serfs, and slaves. A few egalitarian tribes existed in the mountainous regions of Western Circassia. The feudal system came to a tragic end in 1864 when Russia conquered Circassia.

Traditional Circassian society was martial in nature and the offspring of the upper-classes were required to go through a very harsh

¹ A fascinating biography of Shanibov – and an eye-opening account of the Kabardian intellectual elite in the last decades of the 20th century – can be found in Georgi M. Derlugian's *Bourdieu's Secret Admirer in the Caucasus: A World-System Biography*, Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005.

² For more on 'Greater Circassia' in contemporary politics, refer to P. Goble, 'A Greater Circassia "More Probable than Nuclear War," Moscow Analyst Says', in *Window on Eurasia*, 11 December 2007. Online. Available HTTP: <<http://windowoneurasia.blogspot.com/2007/12/window-on-eurasia-greater-circassia.html>> (accessed 15 February 2008).

training regime. Frugality and abstinence were cherished attributes. The code of chivalry had respect for women and elders, hospitality and blood-revenge as its trinity. Avoidance customs, as when man and wife and siblings are proscribed from associating in public, were manifestations of the severity of social relations. Women, especially of the upper class, enjoyed a relatively high social status. The position of Circassian women is significantly better in many respects than the Russian average.

Traditional economy was agrarian and pastoral in nature. During Soviet times, centralization and industrialization transformed and modernized the economy. However, individualism and initiative were frowned upon, and after collapse of the Soviet Union, the economic situation in the Circassian republics took a nosedive. The two Chechen wars and political uncertainty and tensions have aggravated the situation.

The Circassians are nominally Sunni Muslims. There is a small Christian community in Mozdok in North Ossetia. The two most powerful formers of Circassian system of beliefs are the ancient animistic-pagan religion and the code of conduct, *Adige Xabze*, which also has regulated the mundane life. Religious persecution during the Soviet period and great attachment to traditions, a characteristic of the Circassians, have resulted in a superficial knowledge and practice of religion. There is no tradition of religious fanaticism.

The Kabardians

Capsule Summary

Location: Central North Caucasus, mainly in the Kabardino-Balkarian and Karachay-Cherkess republics of the Russian Federation.

Self designation: Adige, Qeberdey.

Total population: Approximately 1 million.

Religion: Eclectic amalgam of mainly pagan/polytheistic native beliefs and practices with Muslim and, to a lesser extent, Christian influences. Orthodox Christianity (2%).

Essay:

Ethnically, the Kabardians form one of the main tribal divisions of the Circassians. Presently, they occupy the middle and northern regions of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (12,500 sq. km; about 1 million) making 55.3% of the population (according to 2002 Russian population census; but estimated now to make up almost 60% of the population of the Republic), form the majority of the Cherkess population of 100,000 in the Karachai-Cherkess Republic (14,100 sq. km; about 450,000), and are found in a few villages in Adigea and the Krasnodar and Stavropol Krajs. A significant Christian community is found in the area of the town of Mozdok in North Ossetia. There are about 750,000 Kabardians in the Caucasus, forming almost three-quarters of the Circassian population and almost 0.5% of total population in Russia. There are Kabardian diaspora communities scattered in the Middle East, especially in Turkey, Syria, and Jordan, with a total number estimated at 300,000. This diaspora formed mainly as a result of the Russian-Circassian War of the 19th century.

Linguistically, Kabardian, together with the closely related Beslanay, forms the eastern branch of Circassian. It has the status of an official and literary language in both Kabardino-Balkaria and Karachai-Cherkessia. Cyrillic orthography is used, although Arabic and later Latin adaptations had been used until 1923 and 1937, respectively. Kabardian in Kabardino-Balkaria is divided into four sub-dialects named after the main rivers in the republic: Balhq (Malka), Bax'sen (Bakhsan), Terch

(Terek), and Shejem (Chegem). Some authorities divide the language into Greater and Lesser Kabardian, the dialects spoken in Kabarda to the west and east of the Terch (Terek), respectively. Lesser Kabardian is also informally called Jilax'steney. Outside the nominal republic there are two more dialects, one spoken by the Christian community in Mozdok in North Ossetia, and Kuban Kabardian in Adigea, spoken in a few villages. The status of Kabardian has been slowly improving since the collapse of the Soviet Union. It is not thought that the language is under threat of extinction.

History

The earliest recorded instance of Kabardian differentiation from the rest of the Circassian nation was in *The Book of Administration of the Empire*, written in the 10th century by Emperor Constantine VII, Porphyrogenitus (905-959), according to which the Zikhis, or Western Circassians, occupied the eastern Black Sea littoral and the Kasakhs (Kassogs), modern-day Kabardians, lived in the hinterland. To the east of the Kasakhs lived the Alans, ancestors of the Ossetes.

In the 11th century, the Russians under Mstislav took part in routing the Khazar army in the Crimea. They then crossed the Taman Strait and defeated the Kassogs, or Kabardians, under their legendary leader Idar. Mstislav then subjugated the Iron, or Ossetes. He founded a small principality, Tamtarkan, or Tmutarakan, under the suzerainty of Russia, with the Kabardians and Ossetes as subjects. This state lasted for a few centuries, but with diminishing influence in Kabarda.

During this period some Circassian tribes abandoned their mountainous abodes and resettled in the plains around the Sea of Azov, and in the Crimea. The majority of migrants hailed from Kabarda, who settled among the Tatars between the rivers Katch and Belbek. To this day, the area of the upper reaches of the Belbek is called 'Kabarda', and the land between the two rivers 'Tcherkess-Tuss', 'Plain of the Circassians' in Tatar.

The Kabardians had to suffer Georgian rule until 1424. In the early 13th century, the Kabardians left their original homeland in the Kuban region and, after wandering for some time, headed towards the Crimean Peninsula and occupied it in 1237 AD. At the end of the 14th and beginning of the 15th century, the Crimean Kabardians were ruled by Abdun-Khan. They resettled in the middle of the North Caucasus between the rivers Psif in the east and Nefil in the west. This move was only possible after the demise of the Golden Horde, when a power vacuum was created by the defeat of Tokhtamish.

The establishment of Little Kabarda goes back to the middle of the 16th century, when a Kabardian prince, who wanted a large principality to rule, crossed the Terch (Terek), accompanied by his share of subjects, and established a principality to the east of Kabarda proper, or Greater Kabarda.

The Kabardians established a strong state in the 16th and 17th centuries. They built the town of Chantchir, which became the centre of their country. At the time, Kabarda had an area exceeding 40,000 sq km. It extended from the Kuban (Psizch) in the west to river Sunzha in the east, and from the plains north of Pyatigorsk and river Terch (Terek) in the north to Georgia in the south. An earlier instance of Circassian re-establishment in the middle plains of the Northern Caucasus was recorded as far back as 1250 AD.

Prince Inal Teghen (Tighwen), one of the descendants of Abdun-Khan, assumed the reins of power in Kabarda in the 15th century. He was brave, prudent and generous. During his reign many people submitted to his rule and chose to become part of his state. He managed to unite the Circassians and Abkhazians into one empire, which he ruled for a long time. In 1509, he invaded Imeretia and subsequently routed an army of Western Georgians. It is most probable that Tzandia Inal Daphita, desecrated in the Georgian Chronicles, was this self-same prince. However, after his demise Kabarda was riven into several rival principalities by his several sons. Civil war ensued in which the Kiakh (*Ch'axe*=Western Circassians) were instrumental in installing Prince Idar as sole potentate. It was during this chaotic period that Prince Qanoqwe son of Beslan left Kabarda to establish the Beslanay tribe.

Peace and stability prevailed for long years, allowing the Circassians to go on with their lives. As had become the usual scheme of things, a fresh wave of invaders broke on Circassian shores. A combined force of the Turghwt (ancestors of the Kalmyk) and Tatars of Tarki engaged the Kabardians at the confluence of the Balhq (Malka) and Terch (Terek). The first encounter went the way of the former party, the Circassians retreating to the Psigwensu River (in Kabarda).³ The Turghwt overwhelmed the entrenched Circassians, who were forced to take refuge in the mountains. At the third meeting, the Circassian forces were on the verge of total rout when a contingent of 2,000 warriors came to the rescue, turning the tide of the battle. The Turghwt were driven out and all Circassian lands were restored. The battle scene was

³ Psigwensu is a right tributary of the Sherej (Cherek), which is a right tributary of the Bax'sen (Bakhsan), which in turn is a right tributary of the Balhq (Malka), a left tributary of the Terch (Terek).

named 'Qereqeschqetaw', which means 'fleeing to the mountains' in Tatar.⁴

The feudal princes of Kabarda dominated the North Caucasus up to the start of the 18th century. By the end of the Middle Ages, Kabarda had become a formidable state. It spread its hegemony over the whole of central North Caucasus, reducing the Ossetes and various Turkic peoples, remnants of the Kipchaks, to vassalage. At times its power extended to the shores of the Caspian. Alliances were struck with the Shamkhals of Daghestan. These achievements would have supposed some degree of co-ordination and co-operation between the plethora of princes, the occasional civil strife notwithstanding. The main princely dynasties were Yidar (Idar), Qazi, Telhusten, Zhilax'sten, Mudar, and Zhambolet.

At its zenith, Kabarda was so dominant that all powers with vested interests in the area, namely Moscovy and the Ottoman Port, sought to court and bestow honours upon its princes in order to further their interests. This culminated in the betrothal of Tsar Ivan IV (1530-1584), nicknamed the Terrible, to Prince Temriuk Idarov's (Yidar Teimriqwe) daughter, Gwascheney (Gwaschene, in some sources; later baptized Princess Maria), in 1561 AD. This marriage of alliance served to cement the so-called 'Union' between Russia and Kabarda. In Soviet times, a bronze statue of Princess Maria was erected in the centre of Nalchik to mark the event. In this period, the Cherkasskys, Kabardian princes in the Russian court, as an aristocratic family formed whose descendants played a significant role in the Russian military and politics.

The date of the fictitious unification is reckoned by Russians to have occurred in 1557. However, as will be explained later, the authority of Temriuk over the other Kabardian princes was very tenuous and many of these declined to 'ratify' the alliance, which was at best symbolic. In 1705 (or 1708), the Tatar Khan, Qaplan-Gery, at the head of 100,000 men, marched against the Circassians of the Five Mountains. The Adiga, sensing the inferiority of their forces, decided to invoke ruse. They retreated into the mountains and built stone fortifications across the forbidding passes. Remains of these ramparts, called the 'Walls of the Crimea', can still be seen in Qenzhalischhe, in the environs of Pyatigorsk. In the absence of any resistance, the Tatars went into a rampage. The Circassians sent deputies to offer their submission to the Khan, who imposed stiff conditions. He demanded, among other things, 4,000 maids and boys as hostages. The Adiga pretended to accept the

⁴ The epic battle was immortalized in song, for example 'Qereqeschqetaw Zawem yi Wered' ('The Song of the Qereqeschqetaw Battle').

terms and sent provisions, including intoxicating liquors. The Tatars revelled in their 'victory'. One night, while they were in deep slumber induced by the strong drink, the Circassians rolled heavy stones on the tents below, and fell on the Khan's camp, massacring a great number of his men and putting the rest to flight. The Khan lost a brother and son. Thenceforth, the Kabardians were rid of the Tatars forever.

In 1736, a war broke out between Russia and the Ottoman Empire due to the latter's intervention in Kabarda. In the Treaty of Belgrade of 18 September 1739, the independence of Kabarda was formally guaranteed. The first military outpost of the Caucasian Military Line, Mozdok (Mezdegw=Deaf[=thick, deep]-Forest), was established in Kabarda in 1763 on the left bank of the Terch (Terek) at a distance of 250 km west of Kizliar.⁵ After this development, the Kabardians entered into negotiations with the Turks. In the summer of 1771, the Kabardian princes expressed their dissatisfaction with the policy of the imperial administration in the Caucasus and the construction of the military line between Mozdok and Kizliar. This hastened the first open battle between the Kabardians and Russians, which took place near the Balhq (Malka) River on 29 September 1771. The Russians under General Jacoby won the day.

In 1779 Empress Catherine instructed the Governor General of Astrakhan, Prince Potemkin, to pacify Kabarda by fair means or foul. General Jacoby was given his marching orders. He conducted an offensive in Kabarda, which lasted all summer. After the arrival of fresh enforcements from Russia, the expedition succeeded in penetrating deep into Kabardian lands. At the end of September 1779, a fierce battle was fought in which the Kabardian force, taken unawares, was massacred. About fifty princes and more than 350 noblemen were killed, a huge toll by the reckoning of those days. Dubbed 'Qeberdey Zheschteiwe' ('Kabardian Night Assault'), the battle marked one of the bleakest days in Kabardian history.⁶ By December, the Kabardian princes were defeated and the northern frontier of Kabarda retracted to the rivers Balhq (Malka) and Terch (Terek).

In 1810, the Russians conducted a campaign in which many Circassians were killed and about 200 villages burnt. The Kabardians sent a delegation to St. Petersburg to petition for peace and to request that the rights and privileges granted by Empress Catherine II in the

⁵ According to other accounts, Mozdok was established by the (Kabardian) Prince Qwrghwoqwe in 1759.

⁶ The memory of this battle has been preserved in the song 'Qeberdey Zheschteiwem yi Wered' ('The Song of the Kabardian Night Assault').

early 1790s be restored. Tsar Alexander I concurred with these demands. Some Kabardians, today's Cherkess, dubbed '*Hejeret*' – immigrant or fugitive Circassians – refused to accept Russian hegemony, and moved west to the land between the upper Kuban (Psizch) and Zelenchuk (Yinzhi) rivers. The war in Kabarda was localized and badly organized. The Circassian princes failed to present a united front, the Russians taking advantage of principal rivalries. When General Yarmolov (Ermolov), military commander of the southern Tsarist forces, arrived on the scene in 1816, Kabarda was on her knees. Four decades of open conflict had demoralized the people and left the land in ruins. The Kabardians suffered heavy losses. By 1818, their number had fallen from 350,000 before the war to a mere 50,000.

In 1821, Yarmolov demanded that the Kabardians living in mountainous areas move to the plains to facilitate their control. The mountaineers refused to obey, causing the General to move against them in 1822. He laid the foundations for several forts and imposed harsh punishments on the population. The Caucasian Military Line was pushed further into Kabardian territory and many massacres were committed against the populace, which had been ravaged by the plague for close to fourteen years. The intensity of conflict subsided in 1825. No serious disturbances occurred until 1846.

Many Kabardians were forced to leave their native lands during the exodus years 1862-64. During the tsarist years, Kabarda was subsumed under the Stavropol Province. Cossack and Slav settlers found a new home in the north-eastern parts of Kabarda. In September 1921, the Kabardian Autonomous Oblast (AO) was formed, and in January 1922, the Balkar Okrug was attached to the Kabardian AO to form the Kabardino-Balkarian AO. In December 1936, the status of Kabardino-Balkaria was elevated to autonomous republic within the Russian SSR. In 1991, it became a constituent republic of the Russian Federation with no right of secession.

Present Political Situation

The Kabardian nationalists are mainly represented by the Adige Xase (Circassian Association), which is a member of the International Circassian Association. The nationalists' principal demand is restoration of historical Kabarda as a first step towards re-establishment of Greater Circassia, with the concomitant repatriation of the diaspora. The nationalists rode on a wave of popularity that almost managed to wash away the old apparatchiks, but by 1996, the people had become more concerned with the economic woes that had gripped all Russia. President Vladimir Kokov, effective leader of the Republic from 1990 to 2005,

won the 1997 and 2002 presidential elections, putting more pressure on the already beleaguered nationalists. The Kabardians and Balkars have been at loggerheads since the latter were rehabilitated after their banishment. The Cossacks also aspire to secession. There is a small chance of open conflict, which could involve other kindred people.

In September 2005, Arsein Kanokov (Qanoqwe), a Kabardian businessman based in Moscow and president of the Sindika Company, replaced the ailing Kokov as president of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic (Kokov died on 29 October 2005). The new president is considered by many to be the right person to lift the Republic out of the myriad crises gripping it. Others have criticized him for being weak.

Kabardian Society

The Kabardians are part of the wider Circassian society, having the same traditions and customs with slight regional variations. The social structure was more elaborate and the *Xabze*, the code of conduct, was more developed. Despite feudalism, there was enough social cohesion to allow the formation of a huge empire in the 16th and 17th centuries, and enough clout to dominate the central northern Caucasus until the middle of the 18th.

‘The Kabardians well exemplify the peoples of the Northern Caucasus in their main socioeconomic indices. They are characterized by a low level of urbanization (44.3 percent of urban population) coupled with a high rate of urbanization (the growth of urban population from 1979 to 1989 was 89.3 percent). The age structure of the Kabardians shows a high proportion of young age groups (in 1989 as many as 32.4 percent of the population) and an insignificant proportion of people of pensionable age (9.9 percent). This is the result of a high birth-rate, especially in the countryside (2.6 births per woman), where the bulk of the population lives. The average age of the Kabardians is 28.5 years. The socioeconomic indices of the Kabardians (also the Cherkess and Adigeans) suggest that they are undergoing modernization but that they are far from its completion.’ — T. Mastyugina, L. Perepelkin, V. Naumkin (ed.), and I. Zviagelskaia (ed.), *An Ethnic History of Russia: Pre-revolutionary Times to the Present*, Greenwood Publishing Group, 1996.

Figures from the 2002 Russian population census show that the increase in Kabardian population, especially in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic, since the preceding census in 1989 had been colossal by any standards. For example, the number of Kabardians in the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic rose from 364,494 in 1989 (48.2% of total population) to 498,702 in 2002 (55.3% of total population), an increase

of 37%. In the same period, the Russian population in the Republic dropped almost 6%, from 240,750 (31.9% of total population) to 226,620 (25.1% of total population).

Kabardian Religion

The Kabardian Pantheon consisted of some three score deities that regulated the cosmos. Pagan and animistic beliefs, some of which are enshrined in the Nart legends, are still prevalent. Soviet propaganda and isolation have resulted in a superficial knowledge of Islam. The Kabardians of Mozdok are nominal Orthodox Christians, but they are almost indistinguishable from their pagan/Muslim kin culturally.

The Kabardian Language

Kabardian in Kabardino-Balkaria is divided into four sub-dialects named after the main rivers in the republic: Balhq (Malka), Bax'sen (Bakhsan), Terch (Terek), and Shejem (Chegem). Some authorities divide the language into Greater and Lesser Kabardian, the dialects spoken in Kabarda to the west and east of the Terch (Terek), respectively. Lesser Kabardian is also informally called Jilax'steney. Outside the nominal republic there are two more dialects, one spoken by the Christian community in Mozdok in North Ossetia, and Kuban Kabardian in Adigea, spoken in a few villages. In the heyday of Kabarda's dominance in the 16th to 18th centuries, Kabardian influenced Digor, a western dialect of Ossetian, in which Circassian loanwords are to be found in the semantic fields of economic life, especially in agriculture and animal husbandry.

Literary Kabardian is based on the dialect of Greater Kabarda. There are 57 letters in standard Kabardian, 19 of which are digraphs (e.g. хъ, пI), five trigraphs (e.g. хъу), and one tetragraph (кхъу). These combinations are used to represent the inordinate number of consonants.

Other works by Amjad Jaimoukha

Books

- *The Circassians: A Handbook*, London: RoutledgeCurzon (Taylor & Francis); New York: Palgrave, 2001. [This book has received world-wide acclaim and was reviewed in many prestigious journals and periodicals, including **The Times Literary Supplement** (UK), **Book News, Inc.** (Portland, Oregon), **Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies** (UK), **Choice Magazine** (USA), **Ethnos: A Journal of Anthropology** (UK), **Europe-Asia Studies** (Institute of Central and East European Studies, University of Glasgow, Scotland), **Indigenous Nations Studies Journal** (University of Kansas), **Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society** (UK), **Middle East Studies Association Bulletin** (USA), **Royal Court Research Department/Majlis El Hassan** (Jordan), **Slavic and East European Journal** (USA), **The American Historical Review** (USA), **Canadian-American Slavic Studies**, **Faits & Projects Magazine** (Paris). Sample pages and extracts from the book are available on Amazon.com. For more information, refer to <http://geocities.com/jaimoukha/circhandbook.html>]
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Other articles appeared in a number of local periodicals and on some Internet sites. There have also been a number of interviews by international and national media, such as the BBC (Arabic Service), Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (North Caucasus Service), *Faits & Projects Magazine* (Paris, September 2003, pp 51-52), etc.