

*Natia Phiphia*

### **Historical Memory about Migration of the Kaskians in Western Georgia \***

There were many migrations in ancient period in Georgia. Many tribes left their trace on this territory. Toponyms have been preserved till today and they reveal many interesting historical facts about Georgia. Sometimes they can shed light on many disputed issues. In our work we talk about the trace which was left in Georgia after the migration of the Kaška and the Abešla. This trace is revealed in toponyms, hydronyms and in colloquial language as well.

The Kaška first appear on the territory of the Hittite empire in the 15<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. and are mentioned till 8<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. Historians do not agree about the issue of their ethnical identity. At first, a theory existed about their Abkhazian-Adigeian origin. The Kaška were considered as hypothetical ancestors of modern Abkhazian-Adigeian tribes, who supposedly migrated from the south, from Anatolia to the North Caucasus after 12<sup>th</sup> c. B.C. Then they passed through eastern coasts of the Black Sea. Subsequently, a part of them moved back to the south – to Abkhazia. This theory is strengthened by many toponyms in modern Adjara and Guria (south-western regions of Georgia). We do not know any other historical fact that Abkhazian-Adigeian tribes lived on this territory. The existence of Abkhazian toponyms and hydronyms here it seems can be explained

---

\* This paper was presented at **56 RAI – Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale** (July 26-30, 2010, Barcelona, Spain).

just by migration of the Abkhazians. The elements “qva” (water in abkhazian) “psa” (common Abkhazian suffix) are attested in several West Georgian hydronyms and toponyms: 1) Maltaqva – village near port Poti, region of Guria; 2) Sarpi – village near the Georgian-Turkish border; 3) Boboqvati - village near Kobuleti; 4) Apsari, Apsarosi - River near Batumi, modern Chorokhi. Roman castelum has been preserved here, in Arryan’s times it was called Apsaros, modern Gonio; 5) Aqampsis – the same river near Batumi, today the Chorokhi; 6) Apsirte – name of Medea’s brother according to the myth about Argonauts. Some scholars believe that kingdom of Colchis of Ajetes was located near the river Chorokhi, not near the river Phasis; 7) Supsa - village and river in Lanchkhuti municipality; 8) Lagumpsa – supposedly the same Supsa or settlement near the Supsa in 5<sup>th</sup> c.

Besides, there are some Gurian surnames, with unusual suffix for Georgian surnames, „Artlakva, „Ingorokva” etc. It is interesting that this suffix in Abkhazian is not usual for Abkhazian surnames too, they are usual just for some toponyms (akva – Abkhazian name of Sokhumi), so we cannot be sure that they are connected just with the Abkhazians.

Despite toponyms in Western Georgia, historical memory about the migration of The Kaška and the Abešla has been preserved in Megrelian surnames. The Kaskian toponyms in Anatolia look like Mengrelian surnames very much. It seems this was some method of preserving memory about historical habitation – make names at first (which subsequently, after centuries, became surnames) with the use of toponyms of historical homeland. G. Giorgadze was the first who noticed connection between the Kaskian toponyms and the Megrelian surnames. He suggested comparing the Kaskian toponyms with the Megrelian surnames as they have same suffixes „iya”, „uwa”. Part of the Kaskian toponyms end on „ška” which means „in the middle” in Megrelian. For example hydronym „škayali” means “river in the middle”, toponym „žiryališka” means „place between two rivers”. Some Kaskian names may have meaning in Megrelian.

We have made a comparative table of the Kaskian and the Megrelian Onomastics. We should notice that metathesis is very usual for Megrelian, especially with loan words and onomastics.

Comparative table of the Kaskian and the Megrelian Onomastics

<b>Kaskian onomastics</b>	<b>Megrelian onomastics</b>	<b>possible explanation in Megrelian and in other Kartvelian languages</b>
<b>toponyms</b>		
<i>ašxarpaiya</i> ( <i>Ašxarbaia</i> , <i>ašxarbaia</i> )	<i>šxvacabaia</i>	
<i>eluriya</i> ( <i>Iluria</i> )	<i>ilori -eliri</i> ( <i>village</i> )	
<i>gaxariya</i>	<i>gaxariya</i>	
<i>katxariya</i>	<i>kantariya</i>	
<i>pataliya</i>	<i>parpaliya</i>	<i>Paṭala</i> ( <i>patala</i> ) – <i>stupid, be stupid.</i>
<i>šariya</i> ( <i>sariya</i> )	<i>šariya, sariya</i> ( <i>different surnames</i> )	
<i>šuxuriya</i> ( <i>suxuriya</i> )	<i>šuxuriya</i>	
<i>taxantariya</i>	<i>kantariya</i>	
<i>talipaciya</i>	<i>patsiya</i> ( <i>surname</i> ) <i>pat-sura</i> ( <i>name</i> )	<i>toli</i> – <i>eye</i> ( <i>in Megrelian a → o, kaci → koci. „tolipaciya” mean eye-defected</i> )
<i>takašturiya</i> ( <i>takasturiya</i> )	<i>turiya</i> ( <i>name</i> )	
<i>tipiya</i> ( <i>Tibiya</i> )	<i>tipiya, pipiya, topuriya</i>	
<i>vašxaiya</i> ( <i>Vašxaia</i> )	<i>vaxaniya</i>	<i>Vaxan-ebuli</i> – <i>person who does not live long</i>
<i>citaxariya</i>		<i>ca</i> ( <i>cit</i> ) – <i>heaven</i>

<i>xumintiška (xumintiska, xuminteška)</i>		<i>xumini – to come together „ška” - in the middle</i>
<i>muniška (munišga)</i>		<i>mun – „there” (ancient Georgian), “ška” in the middle</i>
<i>tatiška (tatiska)</i>	<i>dadi – great grandmother</i>	
<i>tutuška</i>		<i>tu – pig, ska – in the middle</i>
<i>duduška</i>		<i>dud, dudi – head (main), ska – in the middle</i>
<i>xatepa</i>		<i>xateci (pl. xatecepi)-bride</i>
<i>xacici</i>		<i>xeca - breakfast xacici – New Year’s breakfast</i>
<i>paata (paata)</i>	<i>paata (name)</i>	
<i>pacana</i>	<i>pacana (first name), pacacia (surname)</i>	
<i>pixunia</i>	<i>xupenia (surname) (methatesis is very usual for Megrelian)</i>	
<i>pia</i>		<i>“pia” - part, portion</i>
<i>pigapacui</i>		
<i>pipelu</i>	<i>papala (?) – rock</i>	
<i>picici</i>		<i>pitsi – oath (georgian), puchi in Megrelian</i>
<i>sapali</i>		<i>ali/ari suffix Kartvelian of origin</i>

**Natia Phiphia, Historical Memory about Migration of the Kaskians in Western Georgia**

<i>suismeli</i>		<i>eli</i> (Kartvelian suffix)
<i>dada</i> ( <i>tata, data</i> )	<i>tata, data</i>	“ <i>dadi</i> ” - grandmother
<i>dadilu</i>		<i>dadi</i> – grandmother, <i>daduli</i> - chicken
<i>temeti</i>		“ <i>eti</i> ” – Georgian suffix (for example, <i>Kakheti, Imereti</i> etc.)
<i>tita</i> ( <i>dita</i> )		<i>titi</i> – finger (Georgian), <i>tita</i> – sort of vine. “ <i>dita</i> ” - ouch!
<i>tutu</i>		<i>tu</i> – pig, <i>tuta</i> - moon
<i>Nenaša</i> ( <i>Nenasa</i> )		<i>Nenaši</i> – land of mother <i>ša</i> is a suffix indicating direction meaning - “to”
<i>xatencuwa</i>		<i>xateci</i> ( <i>xatenci</i> ) - bride
<i>cimumuwa</i>		<i>cimua</i> - strawberry

We should mention that most toponyms which have suffix “*uwa*” (*karasuwa, kattaladuwa, katxaiduwa, katitimuwa, sapiduwa, tapasawa, tikukuwa, tapapanuwa, tapapaxsuwa, kašaluwa, kasaluwa, kaškamuwa, kipuruwa*) have no possible explanation in Megrelian, just several of them (for example *xatencuwa* or *cimumuwa*) may have meaning connected with Kartvelian world.

In our opinion, these “*uwa*” suffixes can be related not with “*awa*” suffix as G. Giorgadze thinks and with the surnames like *Kardava, Mirtskhulava, Tsanava* etc., but with “*ua*” suffix. For example „*Tabaghua*”, „*Badzaghua*”, “*Gagua*”, “*Chkadua*” etc. Apart from similarity of surnames and toponyms, G. Girdadze noticed that „distribution of phonemes in Kaskian and Megrelian-Lazi languages is the same, especially

affixes”.

Who were the „Kaška” and the „Abešla”? Let us overview main opinions about it. V. Chirikba writes: “Hattic was related to the language of Kaskians. One of the tribes known to be in the Kaskian tribal union were the Abešla, whose name in some contemporary sources was given as a synonym for Kaskians”. So, by Chirikba’s opinion, the Kaška were related with the Abešla as well as with the Hattians.

I. Singer noticed that Kaskian and Hattic onomastics have important parallels. For example: „alli” and „ili” suffixes, which are typical for Kartvelian languages. And if suffixes “iya” and “uwa” seem less idiosyncratic, it seems that linguistic value of “ška” is much greater. We agree with Singer’s opinion that “iya” seems to be less idiosyncratic, but we should mention that toponyms with “iya” suffixes may have explanations in Kartvelian languages and they do not share just suffixes. Singer continues: “The Kaška could be part of Hattic population who were driven to the north by Hittites, but survived. Hattic population in main cities such as Hattussa and Tsalpa, assimilated with Hittites while other part of them preserved their identity in distant regions and became known as the Kaška.” We can add that it could explain their constant controversy with the Hittites. And if the Kaška are the same Hattians, it seems toponym “xeta” (village in Zugdidi municipal) was brought in western Georgia by them.

As for the Abešla: G. Giorgadze writes: “Kaška” and “Abešla” do not seem to be synonyms. They are mentioned together just once and they do not seem to be equivalents. We agree with his opinion and have our arguments: first of all the Abešla are mentioned just once in sources, They are listed together in so called prism inscription, according to the source they have to pay the same tribute. The fact that they listed together does not indicate that they are the same people; on the contrary, they are different.

We know about the Kaskians, that they were growing vines. Mursili II describes them as swineherds and linen-makers. It is interesting, that

Herodotus gives us information that Colchians were making linen too. He even uses that fact as an argument to identify Colchians with Egyptians.

In our opinion, the Kaška and the Abešla were different tribes. And if they are connected with Caucasian tribes, The Abešla seems to be more connected with the Abkhazians and the Kaška with the Colchians. „Abešla” seems to be close to the ethnonym „Apshili-Abazgi” and the Kaška as we see have no toponyms of Abkhazian origin. Their toponyms more look like Megrelian surnames. An additional argument is that toponyms and surnames are very much related in Megrelian. For example there is village „Mikava” and a surname “Mikava”. In this case surname comes from toponym. Other toponyms related with surnames seem to be elaborated from surnames, for example „lepipie” means „place or village where the Pipia live”, or „Saberio” - “place where the Beria live”. The fact is that in Megrelian surnames and toponyms are always connected.

There are much more parallels, but we did not include them in our research as in our opinion etymology of these words is not clear or the connection seems less reliable. As this is very sensitive case because of the lack of evidence we tried to represent just those examples, which seem to be real.

The fact is that both – the Kaška and the Abešla left their trace on the territory of Western Georgia and this trace has survived till today. Thus, historical memory can contain interesting information about ethnical changes in the Caucasus, even about a very ancient period.