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Research paper

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A MUSCOVITE PRINCE IN KHAN UZBEK'S CAMPAIGN: RECONSTRUCTING YURI DANILOVICH'S SOJOURN IN THE HORDE

Abstract. The presence of Russian princes and their retinues at Khan Uzbek's headquarters during the winter of 1318–1319 remains unresolved. However, an examination of contemporaneous events indicates that, at that time, the Horde's forces were engaged in a campaign in Transcaucasia. Indirect evidence suggests that the retinues from the appanage principalities of the Grand Principality of Vladimir had assembled at the Horde ruler's headquarters, including the warriors of the executed Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver, commanded by his twelve-year-old son, Konstantin. This concentration of military units can be attributed to strategic military necessities. Consequently, it is plausible that the forces of the Grand Principality of Vladimir, under the leadership of the grand prince, Yuri Danilovich of Moscow, participated in Uzbek's Transcaucasian campaign, engaged in combat operations, and incurred losses. Horde troops, potentially incorporating Russian retinues, clashed at the crossings of the Kura River and sustained casualties during the retreat through Derbent. It is highly probable that Prince Yuri's ally and patron, the noyon/emir Kavgadyi, perished in these engagements. Moreover, Arabic sources from the East document the presence of Russian units at Khan Uzbek's headquarters in 1318–1319. The alignment of the timeline for the Vladimir forces' stay at the khan's headquarters with these source accounts enables us to equate Yuri Danilovich's troops with the "host of Circassians, Russians, and Jasz." A thorough synthesis of the available direct and indirect evidence allows for a tentative reconstruction of the chronology of Russian troops' involvement in Khan Uzbek's Transcaucasian campaign.

Keywords: Derbent; Yuri Danilovich; Uzbek; Hulagu; Kura; Golden Horde; Ilkhanate; Kavgadyi

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Исследовательская статья

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МОСКОВСКИЙ КНЯЗЬ В ПОХОДЕ ХАНА УЗБЕКА: ШТРИХИ К ХРОНОЛОГИИ ПРЕБЫВАНИЯ В ОРДЕ КНЯЗЯ ЮРИЯ ДАНИЛОВИЧА МОСКОВСКОГО И ВЛАДИМИРСКОГО

Аннотация: Факт пребывания в ставке хана Узбека русских князей и их дружин зимой 1318–1319 гг. не подвергался осмыслению. Между тем анализ событий данного времени показывает, что в это время ордынские войска совершили поход в Закавказье. Выявленные косвенные свидетельства позволяют утверждать, что в ставке ордынского правителя были сконцентрированы дружины удельных княжеств великого Владимирского княжества, в том числе ратники казненного князя Михаила Ярославича Тверского во главе с его двенадцатилетним сыном Константином. Такая задержка войсковых подразделений может быть объяснена военной необходимостью. В этом случае мы можем предполагать, что войска Владимирского княжества во главе с верховным правителем князем Юрием Даниловичем Московским могли принимать участие в походе Узбека в Закавказье, участвовать в боевых операциях и нести потери. Ордынские войска, среди которых могли оказаться русские дружины, вели боевые действия на переправах реки Куры и понесли потери при отводе войск через Дербент. С большой долей вероятности можно предполагать, что именно в ходе этих действий погиб союзник и покровитель князя Юрия нойон/эмир Кавгадый. Кроме того, восточные (арабские) авторы сохранили свидетельства о наличии у хана Узбека в 1318–1319 гг. подразделений из русских войск. Совпадение хронологии пребывания владимирских дружин в ставке хана и известий источников позволяет отождествить войска Юрия Даниловича и «рати Черкесов, Русских и Ясов». Комплексный анализ имеющихся прямых и косвенных свидетельств позволяет предположительно реконструировать хронологию участия русских войск в походе хана Узбека в Закавказье.

Ключевые слова: Дербент; Юрий Московский; Узбек; Хулагу; Кура; Орда; Ильханат; Кавгадый

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In the course of the struggle for the Vladimir throne, Princes Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver and Yuri Danilovich of Moscow consented to present themselves at the khan's court. In the autumn of 1318, Prince Mikhail was executed. Prince Yuri and his comrade-in-arms, Prince Kavgadiy, served as the chief prosecutors at the trial.

Nevertheless, immediately following the execution, Prince Yuri Danilovich and his retinue (*druzhina*) did not return to Rus' but remained in the Horde until the summer of 1319. Meanwhile, the Tver retinue returned to the principality's capital, and Prince Mikhail's remains were interred in the Savior Cathedral in Tver only on September 6, 1319, upon the Muscovite delegation's return from Khan Uzbek.

Researchers have not sufficiently addressed the issue of Prince Yuri's stay in the Horde. N.M. Karamzin [1, pp. 116–119], S.M. Soloviev [2, p. 254] (whom modern scholars often follow in this foundational work [3, p. 40]), A.V. Ekzemplyarskyi [4, p. 66], E. Klug [5, p. 114], and A.A. Gorskyi [6, pp. 50–53; 7, p. 42] all note Prince Yuri's presence at the khan's headquarters during the execution and the subsequent return of the Muscovite retinue. N.S. Borisov characterizes the prince's qualities, observing that "the fundamental character trait of this man was ambition" [8, p. 202]. A.N. Nasonov [9, p. 87] and V.L. Egorov [10, pp. 216–217] discuss Khan Uzbek's intention to advance with military forces into Transcaucasia. Nevertheless, scholars have not linked Prince Yuri's presence at the Horde ruler's headquarters with Uzbek's subsequent operations on the Caucasian front.

There are, however, grounds to suggest that Prince Yuri Danilovich was expected to participate in the Horde's campaign.

This is primarily evidenced by the chronology of his sojourn at the khan's headquarters. On the eve of the Transcaucasian invasion, during the execution of Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver on November 22, 1318, Prince Yuri was present at Khan Uzbek's headquarters and actively participated in carrying out the sentence. Prince Yuri returned to Moscow before September, most likely in early to mid-August 1319 [11, p. 90]. Russian princes typically spent about one and a half to two months traveling to and from the Horde khan's headquarters [12, pp. 104–105; 13, p. 34]. Accordingly, Prince Yuri must have departed from Uzbek's headquarters no earlier than early to mid-June 1319, having remained at the khan's court from November 1318 to May 1319. It was precisely during this period that military operations unfolded in Transcaucasia.

The confrontation between the Jochid and Hulaguid dynasties has traditionally been associated with disputes over Persian Iraq, Arran, and Azerbaijan – territories that, by right of conquest, should have belonged to the House of Batu but were instead assigned to Hulagu and his descendants. M.T. Gadzhimuradov includes Southern Dagestan among the contested regions [14, p. 68]. Specialized studies by I.Kh. Kamalov and I.M. Mirgaleev emphasize that the rivalry between the Ulus of Jochi and the Ulus of Hulagu arose from the struggle for the economically and strategically vital territory of Transcaucasia [15, p. 350; 16, pp. 3, 37; 17]. I.M. Mirgaleev also provides a survey of scholarship on military conflicts between the Mongol uluses [15, p. 346].

The prelude to the conflict during the reign of Khan Uzbek was the death of Ilkhan Öljaitü at the end of 1316. Subsequently, in 716 AH (March 26, 1316–March 15, 1317; probably January 1317), Uzbek received an overture from the Iranian aristocracy -particularly from Emir Čoban (Chupan, Dzhupan) – to seize the throne of the Hulaguids. However, on the counsel of Emir Kötlük-Temür, he declined the offer [18, pp. 325–326; 19, pp. 521–522]. The twelve-year-old Abū Saʿīd, son of Öljaitü, thus ascended as the head of Mongol Iran.

Arab chroniclers (Ibn Duqmāq and al-ʿAynī) attribute the outbreak of hostilities to the policies of Emir Čoban, who "arbitrarily ruled over the Khudābandah clan (i.e., Öljaitü's lineage – author's note)" [18, pp. 328–329]. At the same time, Čoban "ordered the execution of Yarundzhī and Qurmishī, along with many others" [18, pp. 328–329]. Two of Qurmishī's sons fled to Uzbek and informed him of Čoban's actions [19, pp. 521–522]. Uzbek, ruler of the Horde, "was incensed by the arbitrary conduct of this Chinggisid and dispatched an army" [18, pp. 328–329]. The Arab chroniclers present this account of the campaign's origins based on statements from Uzbek's envoys, who arrived in Cairo in 1320. Thus, what we have here is the Jochid court's perspective on the causes of the military actions in Transcaucasia.

Persian sources do not specify the causes of the military escalation but acknowledge that "the royal throne was ruled by Karaju Chupan" [20, p. 86]. According to the *Taʾrīkh-i Shaykh Uwais*, Čoban exploited Abū Saʿīd's minority to seize complete control of the state and resolved to exact vengeance on Khan Uzbek [21, p. 105].

Consequently, between March and October–November 1318, Emir Čoban ordered the execution of numerous members of the Ilkhanate's ruling elite – "a total of forty emirs" [19, p. 518], including scions of

the Genghisid clan. Those who evaded the purge sought refuge in the Horde, where they garnered Uzbek's patronage: "King Uzbek drew them near, befriended them, and entrusted one with command of a tumen" [19, pp. 521–522]. Admittedly, Persian chroniclers date the execution of Emir Qurmishī to the period following the war of 1318/1319.

Čoban's actions were perceived as a usurpation of authority by the "golden lineage" of Chinggisids and furnished the pretext for the Horde's invasion of Transcaucasia, spearheaded by the khan in person.

It is reasonable to suggest that the military operations ascribed to 718 AH (March 5, 1318–February 21, 1319) transpired between December 1318 and February 1319. In addition to explicit references attesting that these events occurred "in winter" [22, p. 85] ("midwinter" [20, p. 88]), the campaign's timing can be inferred from the execution of Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver at Khan Uzbek's headquarters. The hagiography (*zhitie*) chronicling the prince's final days records that the death sentence was carried out on November 22, 1318. At that time, Khan Uzbek's headquarters was located in the North Caucasus near Derbent: "beyond the Terek River, on the Seventsi River, beneath the city of Dedyakov, as one traverses the high mountains of the Jassky-Cherkasy, near the Iron Gates" [11, p. 86; 23, p. 111]. Given the profound astrological significance of celestial alignments in Genghisid decision-making, it is plausible that the Transcaucasian offensive commenced following the full moon of December 8, 1318.

According to the *Tārīkh-i Wāṣṣāf*, the route from Derbent was defended by the forces of Emir Ṭarmatāz (Barmiyāz) "with his personal thousand (*khazāreh-i-khāṣṣeh*)." Furthermore, "the Lezgin tribes… maintained strong ties with that [Golden Horde] side" and failed to warn the emir of the enemy's approach. As a result, "Ṭarmatāz's (Barmiyāz's) troops hastily retreated" [20, pp. 86–89]. The whole of Shirvan was subsequently occupied by Jochid forces. Ḥāfiẓ-i Abrū reports that the Horde's vanguard was commanded by Emir Küyat [22, p. 85].

The *Tārīkh-i Wāṣṣāf* further recounts that Uzbek arrayed his troops in strict adherence to military doctrine: along the banks of the Kura River, "the right and left flanks, the vanguard (*mankyla*), and the rearguard (*kechka*) were stationed" [20, pp. 86–89].

On the opposite bank, Abū Saʿīd's forces, which had wintered in Karabakh (Gavbari), stood arrayed [22, p. 85]. Yet the Jochids held a marked numerical superiority. Meanwhile, Emir Čoban's troops, originally bound for Khorasan, were hastily redirected to Transcaucasia [20, pp. 86–89]. In an effort to halt Uzbek's progress, Abū Saʿīd directed that tents be pitched along the riverbank at double their standard dimensions, thereby inflating the perceived size of his army. It is reasonable to surmise that the Horde's forces attempted to cross the Kura but could not secure a foothold on the opposing shore: the army "had no opportunity to cross the Kura River" [18, pp. 328–329].

Furthermore, captives from Abū Saʿīd's ranks revealed that Emir Čoban had mustered a substantial force, which was enveloping the Jochids from the rear. Alarmed by the prospect of encirclement and rout, Uzbek commanded a retreat northward beyond Derbent [20, pp. 86–89; 21, pp. 103–104; 22, p. 85; 24, p. 144].

The onrushing Hulaguid army promptly entered the battle, with Emir Čoban "having crossed the river, pursued [with his troops – author's note] the fugitives, slaying many and taking others prisoner, whom he delivered to the padishah" [22, p. 86].

No peace agreement was concluded, and Uzbek's envoys in Cairo reported that, during the winter of 1319–1320 (prior to the death of the Chagatai Yasa'ur – "In mid-Jumādā al-Awwal 720 AH [mid-June 1320], Prince Yasa'ur was killed" [22, p. 110]) – Horde forces had once again sought to vanquish the Hulaguids [18, pp. 328–329]. The delegation was charged with renewing the alliance against the Hulaguids but received no firm assurance from the Horde.

Consequently, Khan Uzbek's Transcaucasian campaign extended from December through January, and likely February, encompassing the entirety of the winter of 1318–1319. By March or April, the khan was presumably already in the North Caucasus. He may have returned to Sarai by May or June. It was there, along the Volga or in the North Caucasus, around June 1319 that Uzbek disbanded his forces, enabling Prince Yuri to return to Moscow.

Beyond the chronological framework, additional indirect evidence supports the participation of Russian forces in Uzbek's campaign.

For instance, the *Life of Mikhail of Tver* records that "Prince Yuri departed with Kavgadyi and proceeded ahead to the Horde, taking with him all the princes of Suzdal and boyars from the cities and Novgorod" [11, p. 76]. In other words, the Muscovite prince was accompanied by his allied princes and their retinues, the

personnel of which were commanded by boyars. Prince Yuri, naturally, was attended by his own retinue. Moreover, the retinue of the executed Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver was detained in the steppe: "The following summer, Prince Yuri, having arrived in Rus', brought with him Prince Konstantin and his father's retinue" [11, p. 90]. Thus, the armed forces of the Grand Principality of Vladimir came under the control and command of Prince Yuri, as the head of the "Russian ulus." Furthermore, the retention of the executed rival prince's retinue was motivated by some compelling necessity – one that could arise in the context of impending military operations for which these contingents were earmarked.

Another indirect corroboration of the involvement of Russian forces in the campaign against Hulaguid territories is referenced in the *Life of Mikhail of Tver*, which alludes to the fate of Emir Kavgadyi: "it befell the accursed and lawless Kavgadyi: not having lived even half a year, he ended his wretched life in a foul manner, accepting eternal torment." In essence, Kavgadyi outlived the execution of Prince Mikhail (November 22, 1318) by less than six months, succumbing under circumstances left unelucidated by the hagiographer no later than the latter half of May 1319. This period aligns precisely with Khan Uzbek's Transcaucasian expedition. Amid the confrontation along the Kura River, the Shaykh Uwais describes how "a battle ensued, and [the combatants] showered one another with arrows" [21, pp. 103–104]. Horde forces likewise secured the bridges over which enemy detachments endeavored to advance: "the troops of the emirs and valiant warriors, breaking through the ranks, resolved to cross the bridge of Prince Mengü-Timür and obstruct the enemy's route to Derbent" [20, p. 89]. Furthermore, during the retreat, Horde troops suffered losses as Emir Čoban "slew many of them, captured others, and brought them to the padishah" [22, p. 86].

It is plausible that Emir Kavgadyi sustained his mortal wound in precisely these clashes.

It is noteworthy that in the *Life of Mikhail of Tver*, Prince Yuri is invariably portrayed in close association with Kavgadyi. It is highly probable that, during the Transcaucasian campaign, Russian forces operated in conjunction with Kavgadyi's detachment or were integrated into the unit under his command. These narratives thus indirectly indicate the involvement of Vladimir-Suzdal troops in hostilities against the Hulaguids.

Another piece of indirect evidence supporting Prince Yuri's participation in the Horde's Transcaucasian campaign is the assertion by the Arab author al-ʿUmarī that "The sultan of this state has hosts of Circassians, Russians, and Jasz" [25, p. 230]. Al-ʿUmarī, a contemporary (d. 1349), refers explicitly to Uzbek: "The one who is there is now its sultan, Uzbek Khan…" [25, p. 232] and "Uzbek, who now rules the Kipchak state" [25, p. 241]. His informant on the composition of the Horde's forces was ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Nūmān al-Khwārizmī: "Sheikh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn, son of Nūmān, was asked about his [Kipchak] troops and said…" [25, p. 241]. Notably, ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Nūmān al-Khwārizmī resided in Cairo – where al-ʿUmarī could have consulted him – for a year and a half on an ambassadorial mission, spanning 718 AH (March 5, 1318–February 21, 1319) to 720 AH (February 12, 1320–January 30, 1321) [26, pp. 57–59; 27, p. 32]. This interval corresponds precisely to the course of the Jochid–Hulaguid war. Thus, al-ʿUmarī acquired firsthand intelligence on Khan Uzbek's military contingents. Among these, the substantial Russian detachment that ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Nūmān al-Khwārizmī considered salient enough to report could only have been the Vladimir-Suzdal army, under the command of the principality's grand prince, Yuri Danilovich of Moscow.

It should be noted that Prince Yuri Danilovich was married to Khan Uzbek's sister and thus held the status of the khan's son-in-law. The involvement of the khan's kin, including his sons-in-law, in military campaigns constituted a paramount obligation. The presence of Uzbek's cousins (sons of his aunt) – Kötlük-Timür and Saray-Kötlük – as well as Isa-gurgan, is attested during the 1318–1319 expedition [20, pp. 86–89]. Isa-gurgan was the husband of Itkudzhudzhuk, Uzbek's daughter, and simultaneously the father of Urudzhi, Uzbek's wife [27, pp. 92, 93; 28, pp. 295, 296]. Although by this juncture Prince Yuri had become a widower – his wife, Uzbek's sister Končaka (baptized Agafiya), having perished in captivity in Tver [29, pp. 7–37] – the Muscovite house was nonetheless enmeshed in the intricate web of matrimonial alliances binding the Horde's aristocracy. Consequently, its participation in the military campaign represented an ineluctable duty.

Thus, the complex of indirect evidence from diverse sources permits the reasonable inference that Prince Yuri Danilovich of Moscow, in his capacity as grand prince of Vladimir, was not merely in attendance at Khan Uzbek's headquarters following the execution of Prince Mikhail Yaroslavich of Tver but, with considerable likelihood, participated in Uzbek's military campaign against the Hulaguid domains. Prince Yuri commanded a contingent comprising Vladimir-Suzdal retinues, including the Tver forces under Prince Konstantin. It is

reasonable to conclude that Russian troops engaged in the combat at the Kura River crossings, most probably as elements of the unit led by Emir Kavgadyi, who likely perished in these very clashes. By the end of May 1319, Uzbek's army – and evidently the Russian contingents – had retreated to the territory of the Ulus of Jochi. By August, the retinues of the Russian princes had returned to their principalities.

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Research paper

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ENGELBERT KAEMPFER'S MAP AS A NEW SOURCE ON EARLY RUSSIAN FISHING SETTLEMENTS (UCHUGS) IN THE VOLGA DELTA IN THE LATE 17TH CENTURY: INTERPRETATION OF TERMS

Abstract. This study aims to identify toponyms denoting uchugs – the earliest Russian fishing settlements established in the Volga Delta during the 17th century – on Engelbert Kaempfer's map of 1697 and to conduct a comparative-historical analysis using other cartographic sources. Specific objectives include translating and identifying the toponyms on Kaempfer's map; comparing them with those appearing on Adam Olearius's maps (1647), seventeenth- and nineteenth-century drawings of Russian uchugs, and modern place names; and determining the precise locations and ownership of these uchugs. Detailed analysis of Engelbert Kaempfer's map demonstrates that it is a unique seventeenth-century cartographic source. It complements existing knowledge of the socio-economic development of the Volga Delta, accurately reflects the geographical configuration of the Caspian lowland in that period, and illustrates European interest in the region's resources. Toponyms designating fisheries in the delta portion of the map have been identified, and their correspondence to the names of the rivers or channels on which the uchugs were located has been established. The primary reason for the abandonment of uchugs was the rise in Caspian Sea level during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which flooded settlements and altered hydrological conditions. The results broaden our understanding of historical cartography, the economic history of fishing in the region, and its cultural geography.

Keywords: E. Kaempfer's map; fishery; uchugs; zaboyka; Volga Delta; Caspian Sea; cartographic history

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Исследовательская статья

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КАРТА ЭНГЕЛЬБЕРТА КЕМПФЕРА — НОВЫЙ ИСТОЧНИК О ПЕРВЫХ РУССКИХ ПОСЕЛЕНИЯХ — УЧУГАХ В ДЕЛЬТЕ ВОЛГИ XVII в.: ИНТЕРПРЕТАЦИЯ ТЕРМИНОВ

Аннотация. Цель исследования – идентификация топонимов, обозначающих учуги — первые русские поселения XVII в. в дельте Волги, на карте Энгельберта Кемпфера (1697 г.), их сравнительно-исторический анализ с иными картографическими источниками. Среди задач: перевести и идентифицировать топонимы на карте Кемпфера; сравнить их с картами А. Олеария (1647 г.), чертежами российских учугов XVII, XIX вв. и современными названиями; определить имущественную принадлежность учугов. Детальный анализ карты Э. Кемпфера показал, что данный документ является уникальным картографическим артефактом XVII в., дополняющим сведения о социально-экономическом развитии дельты Волги, отражающим географические реалии Прикаспия XVII в. и интерес европейцев к ресурсам региона. Идентифицированы топонимы, обозначающие рыбные промыслы в дельтовой части на карте Э. Кемпфера, определены их наименования, идентичность названиям рек, на берегах которых они располагались. Повышение уровня Каспийского моря в XVIII–XIX вв., вызвавшее затопление поселений и изменение гидрологических условий, стало основной причиной прекращения деятельности учугов. Полученные данные расширяют представления об исторической картографии, экономической истории и культурной географии региона.

Ключевые слова: карта Энгельберта Кемпфера; рыбный промысел; местоположение учугов; забойка; дельта Волги; Каспийское море; история картографии

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Introduction

The history of the development and formation of the vast territory of the Volga Lowlands, which was annexed to Russia during the reign of Ivan the Terrible, remains largely unexplored to this day. Of particular interest are questions concerning the settlement of one of the peripheral territories of the Russian state in the XVII century – the Volga Delta. Astrakhan's geographical location, far from the central regions of the Moscovia, and the availability of free land and riverine areas have always attracted the Russian population, especially fugitive peasants.

The fishery industry in the region began during the Khazar Khanate period (VIII – X centuries) and continued to develop during the periods when the region was a part of the Golden Horde (XIII – XIV centuries) and the Astrakhan Khanate (XV century) [1, p. 226]. After Astrakhan joined the Russian state in the mid- XVI century, spontaneous colonization promoted the economic development not only of the Astrakhan region, but also the Volga Delta as a whole. Russian settlers learned how to catch fish using uchug traps from the locals [2, pp. 220–221; 1, p. 226]. Fishing grounds – uchugs consisted of fences 'zaboyka' (wooden structures that blocked the river where the fishery was conducted) and camps 'stan' (fishermen's settlements on the banks of rivers, where they lived and processed the fish caught in the fences) and where both fugitive peasants and free labourers settled.

At the end of the XVII century, uchugs became large fishery enterprises, fortified with palisades, with impressive farm and residential buildings, churches and militarised guards, even armed with artillery.

Despite the extensive literature available on the history of colonization of the Volga Delta and the development of fisheries in its territory [3–9], maps illustrating the location of fish traps — the earliest Russian settlements of the XVII century — have not been previously published, nor the reasons for cessation of activity at some fisheries have been established.

The objective of our study is a detailed review of the toponyms referring to uchugs – the first Russian settlements in the Volga Delta of the XVII century on E. Kaempfer' map 'Hetsuydelykste gedeelte van de Vliet Wolga' (Southern part of the Volga River), published in N. Witsen' book 'Northern and Eastern Tartary' (1697). This paper is a continuation of the authors' research of the above-mentioned source, in the course of which a comparative-historical analysis of hydronyms of the Delta part of Kaempfer's map was made and a historical and geographical reconstruction of the water route of the traveller's journey from Astrakhan to the Caspian Sea was carried out [10].

To achieve the goal of our study, we set the following tasks: 1) to consider and introduce into scientific turnover the translation of toponyms denoting uchugs on the Delta part of Kaempfer's map; 2) to compare the location of uchugs on the maps of E. Kaempfer (1683), A. Olearius (1637), the Trinity Monastery's uchugs drawings (II half of the XVII century); 3) to indicate the reasons for uchugs termination.

A number of recent publications [11-14] have been devoted to the problem of the Caspian Sea level fluctuations in historical retrospect and their impact on the fate of the local inhabitants. This work has its relevance on the background of the ongoing shallowing of the Volga Delta and the Caspian Sea, as it illustrates examples of the negative impact of natural and climatic factors on changes in the economic infrastructure for coastal residents.

Materials and methods

In order to solve the tasks, we provide translations of designations and interpretation of toponyms on E. Kaempfer's map. To clarify the authenticity of E. Kaempfer's findings, we present extracts from European writers who travelled along the Volga-Caspian in the XVII century, such as Adam Olearius, secretary of the Schleswig-Holstein embassy (1637), [15], Jan Streiss, a Dutch carpenter from the ship 'Eagle' (1670) [16],

and other Russian sources of the XVII – XIX centuries. We provide comparative characteristics of toponyms on E. Kaempfer's and A. Olearius' maps and the drawing of the Trinity Monastery's uchugs, in which both preserved and out-of-use toponyms of the Volga Delta are presented.

By the time of E. Kaempfer's expedition (1683), there were only A. Olearius' maps about the Volga Delta [17], (Fig. 1), which mention the names of several rivers and settlements on the banks of the Volga. About the condition of Russian maps of the XVII century, A. Olearius noted that they were "completely wrong and did not allow to determine the way" [15, p. 361]. Another map was authored by J. Streiss [18], where only the Volga River and the city of Astrakhan are marked.

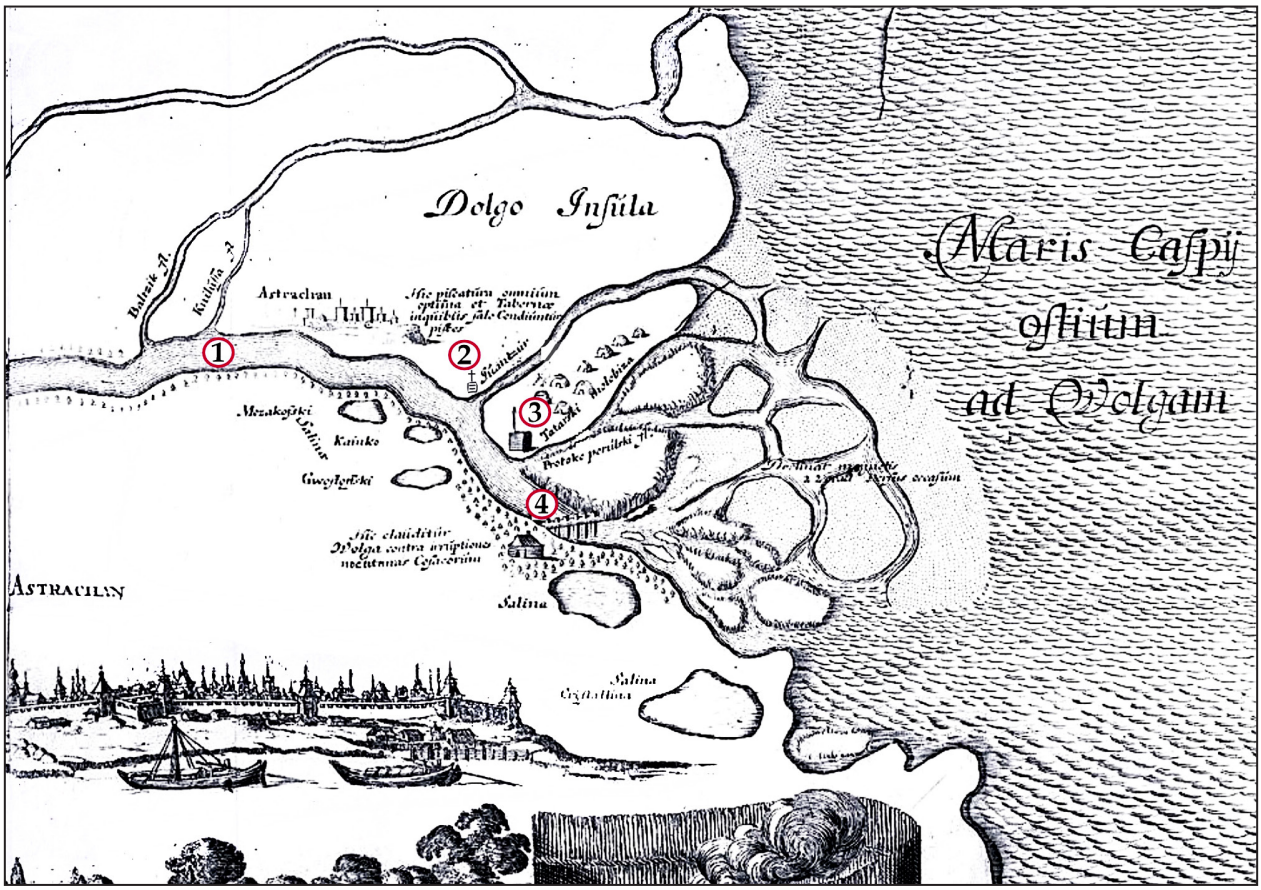


Fig. 1 Fragment of A. Olearius' map of the Volga River (delta part) [17]. 1 – Astrakhan (Astrakhan); 2 – Juantzur (Ivanchug); 3 – Tatarski molobiza (Tatarski molobiza); 4 – Zaboyka – (Urustoba).

Рис. 1 Фрагмент карты р. Волга А. Олеария (дельтовая часть) [17] 1 – Astrakhan (Астрахань); 2 – Juantzur (учуг Иванчуг); 3 – Tatarski molobiza (Татарский молобиза); 4 – забойка – (учуг Урустоба)

There is a drawing of the uchugs location from the Complaint Church Letters of the Astrakhan Trinity Monastery, dating back to the second half of the XVII century, with images of camps and fences allocated to the mentioned monastery (Fig. 2).[1] This drawing, more similar to a scheme, is of great interest as it reflects the location of some camps (uchugs) on the river banks. The first detailed Russian map of the Volga Delta with

1 Drawing of fishing uchugs and vatagas in the Volga Delta. Second half of the 17th century // Manuscripts Department of the Astrakhan Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve. KP 41422/5. L. 260 ob.

illustrations of the delta channels and fences was compiled by S.M. Gmelin and published in 1777 [19], but it lacks the fisheries mentioned by E. Kaempfer.

The documents of the Astrakhan fishery office indicated the boundaries of fishing grounds and marked measurements of distances from Astrakhan to Uchugs [22], however, maps of fences have not been preserved[2].

E. Kaempfer' cartographic materials (1651 – 1716) are particularly valuable for studying the history of fishing and Russian colonisation of the Volga Delta in the XVII century. In 1683 Kaempfer as a secretary of the Swedish delegation travelled from Stockholm to Isfahan through Moscow and Astrakhan along the Volga to the Caspian Sea [22].

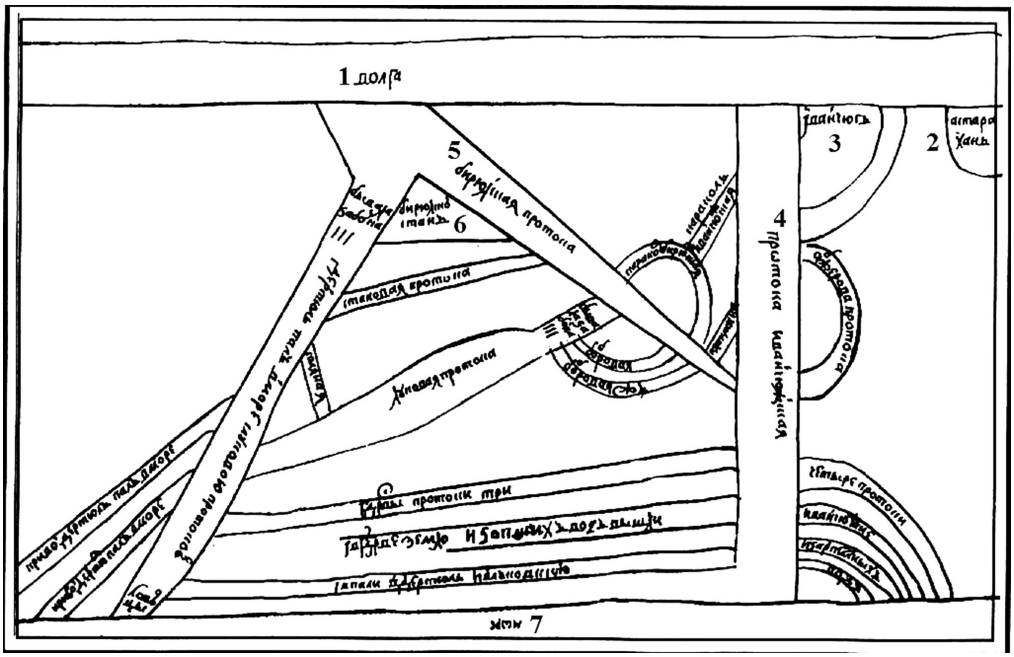


Fig. 2 Drawing of the location of uchugs and fishing vatagas in the Volga Delta. [3]

1 – Dolga (Volga); 2 – Astarakan (Astrakhan); 3 – Yadantyug (uchug Ivanchug); 4 – Idanchug (Stary Ivanchug river); 5 – Biryul channel (Biryul river); 6 – Biryul station (Uchug Byuryul); 7 – sea (Caspian Sea).

Рис. 2 Чертеж расположения учугов и промысловых ватаг в дельте Волги.

1 – Долга (Волга); 2 – Астаракань (г. Астрахань); 3 – Ядантюг (учуг Иванчуг); 4 – Иданчуг (р. Старый Иванчуг); 5 – Бирюльская протока (р. Бирюль); 6 – Бирюльский стан (учуг Бюрюль); 7 – море (Каспийское море)

It's worth noticing that foreign authors in their publications paid little regard to E. Kaempfer's notes on Russia, or did not mention his name among the travellers who visited Russia in the XVII century. [23]. The explanation for this is the complexity of reading the traveller's documents written simultaneously in German and Latin [23, p. 5; 15], poor preservation of manuscripts [22, p. 9] and the loss of some documents [23; 24, p. 148].

At the beginning of the XXI century, two books were published in Russia from the notes of E. Kaempfer: F.P. Adelung concerning his stay, mainly in Moscow [26] and notes on Stepan Razin' uprising [26].

The Russian diary (1683) of E. Kaempfer with a description of his journey from Moscow down the Volga to Astrakhan was published in German editions in 1968 [27] and 2003 [21, p. 83]. The translators of the first

2 The case of the Astrakhan fish office (1765-1781) // State Archive of the Astrakhan region. F. 614. Inv. 1. Doc. 560. 1775.
3 Drawing of fishing uchugs and vatagas in the Volga Delta. Second half of the 17th century // Manuscripts Department of the Astrakhan Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve. KP 41422/5. L. 260 ob.

edition E.L. Dubman, S.I. Dubinin and the translator of the second edition A.L. Khoroshkevich pointed out the author's translation mistakes in proper names and geographical locations [29, p. 311-312], as well as the absence of the Volga Delta descriptions in his diaries [29].

During his travells in Russia E. Kaempfer not only kept a diary, but also prepared maps of his travel routes, which are stored in the Manuscripts Department of the British Library in London, including 10 sheets depicting the Volga River. The only author who worked with these maps is M. Lazar [31], who published one sheet with a Volga River drawing depicting 'the Astrakhan surroundings' [25, p. 68] with barely legible inscriptions. M. Lazar specifies that E. Kaempfer took along with him on his journey Olearius's publication "*Vermehrte Newe Beschreibung der Muscotuitischen und Persischen Reyse*" (Schleswig, 1656 г.) [31, pp. 68, 71].

N. Witsen served E. Kaempfer' descriptions and route map as the main source for his map "*Hetsuydelykste gedeelte van de Vliet Wolga*" (Southern part of the Volga River), later included in the second expanded edition of N. Witsen' book '*Noord en Oost Tartarye'* (Northern and Eastern Tartaria) [31]. E. Kaempfer was in correspondence with Witsen in 1693 – 1694 and shared with him the information collected about Russia, in particular, about the Lower Volga [27, p. 7]. For the first time in Russia, this map from this book was published by E.V. Gusarova [32]. In N. Witsen' book '*Northern and Eastern Tartaria'* published in Russian in 2010, translations of toponyms and hydronyms to this map are not given [33, p. 754].

M. Lazar reports that on his journey by waterways E. Kaempfer obtained topographical information by interviewing ship crews and local residents, but language barriers were the reason for many illegible place names [30, p. 68]. On the map presented in Witsen' book, several toponyms and symbols in the lower part of the map are already written in the Dutch language[4].

The comparative-historical method with a detailed analysis of E. Kaempfer' map and cartographic method were used to visualise the location of XVII century fisheries in the Volga Delta. The application of the cartographic method with the written sources is the main component of this study.

We also used materials previously published by the authors devoted to comparative-historical analysis of the delta part hydronyms on the Kaempfer's map [10]. We've revealed similarity of some hydronyms in the western delta part with the Olearius map (1647) and the present-day ones.

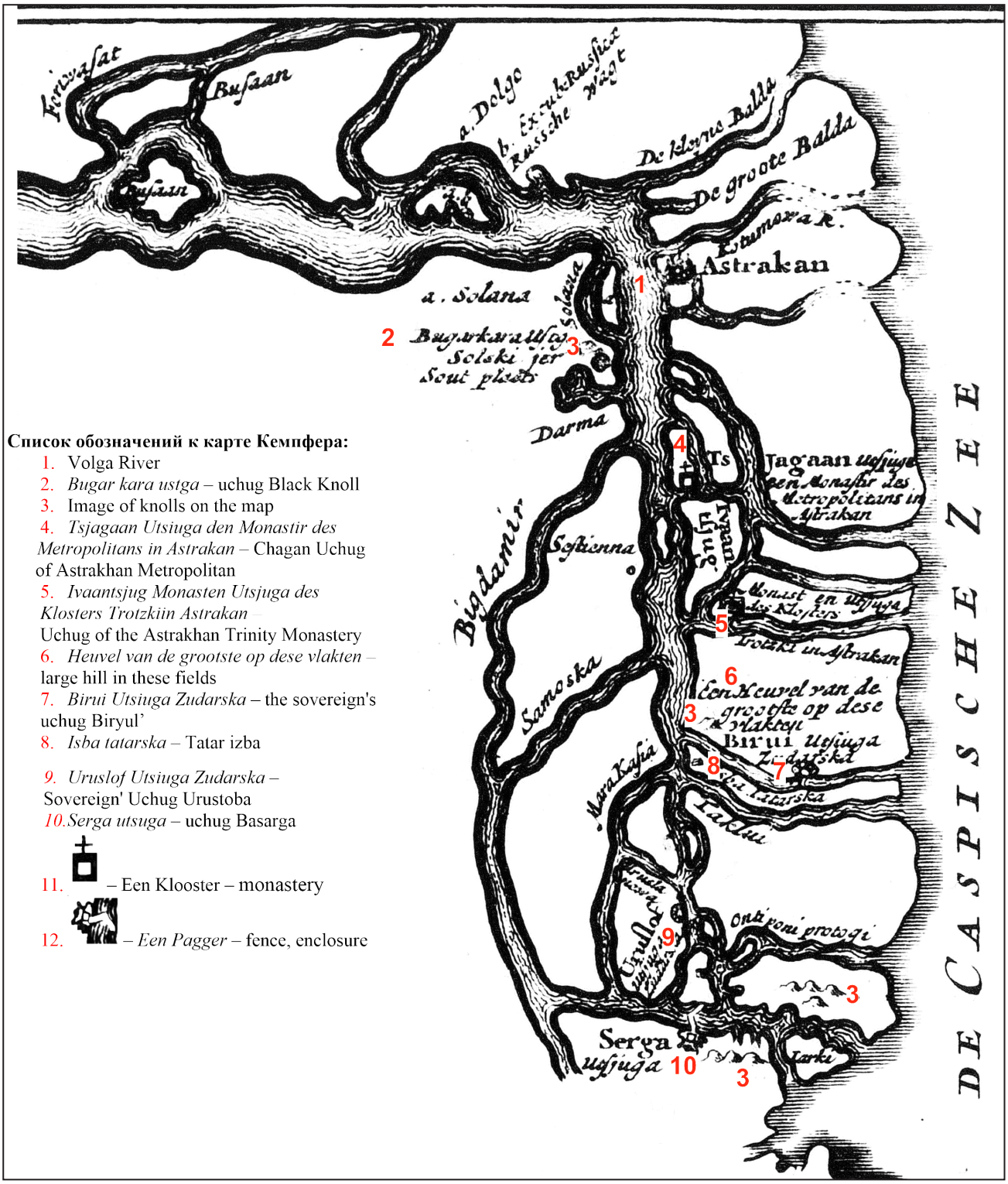
Thus, the systematisation of the material in terms of temporal and spatial aspects allows us to substantiate the accumulated records on the settlement of some areas of the Volga Delta and confirm the regularity of the settlement in the fishing grounds.

Results and discussion

В работе рассматривается участок карты от *Astrakan*[5] (г. Астрахань[6]) (рис. 4/1) до *De Kaspische Zee* (Каспийского моря) (рис. 4/16). Описания топонимов приводятся в направлении с севера на юг.

In our attempt to translate the toponyms on E. Kampfer' map, we have established that many points noted by the author are Russian homonyms written in Dutch letters, which significantly facilitated the authors' interpretation of these toponyms. In this work, we present translations of purely Dutch words, while for Russian toponyms written in Dutch letters, we provide their Russian pronunciation and interpretation. For the first time, the authors offer decipherment of Russian toponyms and hydronyms written in XVII century in cursive script on the drawing of uchugs belonging to the Trinity Monastery (second half of the XVII century)[7]. For comparison we present the location of toponyms on E. Kampfer's map with their positions on A. Olearius' map (Fig. 1) and the plan of the Trinity Monastery' uchugs (Fig. 2).

4 We are grateful for the translation of the texts from Dutch to Slavist Professor Emmanuel Wagemans (Antwerpen, Belgium).
5 Here and further in the text Russian toponyms and hydronyms written in Dutch letters are in italics.
6 Here and further in the text for Russian toponyms and hydronyms written in Dutch letters their Russian pronunciation is given in brackets.
7 We are grateful to A.I. Bogatyryov, a journalist and local historian from Astrakhan, for deciphering the toponyms written in Russian cursive script in the XVII century.



Список обозначений к карте Кемпфера:

1. Volga River
2. *Bugar kara ustga* – uchug Black Knoll
3. Image of knolls on the map
4. *Tsjagaan Utsiuga den Monastir des Metropolitans in Astrakan* – Chagan Uchug of Astrakhan Metropolitan
5. *Ivaantsjug Monasten Utsjuga des Klosters Trotzkiin Astrakan* – Uchug of the Astrakhan Trinity Monastery
6. *Heuvel van de grootste op dese vlakten* – large hill in these fields
7. *Birui Utsiuga Zudarska* – the sovereign's uchug Biryul'
8. *Isba tatarska* – Tatar izba
9. *Uruslof Utsiuga Zudarska* – Sovereign' Uchug Urustoba
10. *Serga utsuga* – uchug Basarga
11. – Een Klooster – monastery
12. – *Een Pagger* – fence, enclosure

Fig. 3 Fragment of Kampfer's map showing an area of the Volga Delta from Dolgy Island (a. Dolgo) to the Caspian Sea (De Kaspische Zee). Prepared by Kotenkov S.A.1 – 12 – numbers of populated localities, fish uchugs, and conventional symbols

Рис. 3 Фрагмент карты Кемпфера с изображением участка дельты Волги от о. Долгий (a. Dolgo) до Каспийского моря (De Kaspische Zee). Выполнена Котеньковым С.А.
1 – 12 – номера топонимов населенных пунктов, учугов (забоек), условных обозначений

The first toponym on this section of the map is located on the right bank of the Volga River (Fig. 3/1) and bears the name *Bugar kara ustga* (Bugar kara ustga) (Fig. 3/2), which can be identified as Bugar, meaning "hill, knoll" in Russian, kara means "black" in Turkic languages, thus translating to Black Knoll. Next to it, a hill is depicted, representing one of the Baer knolls (natural elevations), repeatedly shown on the map (Fig. 3/3). Nearby, there is an inscription *Een Heuvel van de grootste op dese vlakten* (Fig. 3/6), which translates from Dutch as "big hill on these plains." To translate the toponym *Ustga* (ustga), let's refer to the list of markings on E. Kampfer's map, where the similar-sounding Dutch word *Utsiuga* (utsyuga) is designated as *een visscherij* (Fig. 3/13), which translates from Dutch as "place of fishing." According to our opinion, the word *ustga* is a reduction of the word *Utsiuga*. In turn, the word 'utsyuga' ("place of fishing") sounds like the Russian word 'utchug' ("fish trap, fence"). On E. Kampfer's map, the word Utsiuga (uchug) is indicated on riverbanks with a sign resembling a flower opposite toponyms denoting fish traps (Fig. 3/2, 4, 5, 7, 9). At three toponyms (Fig. 3/4, 7, 9), a light bracket blocking the river is depicted. In the list of symbols, the sign shaped like a "flower" is marked with the Dutch word *Een Pagger* (Fig. 3/12), which translates into Russian as "fence, enclosure," in our case, "fish fence." H. Barrow, an English negotiator traveling along the Volga in 1580, was the first European to mention the term '*utchug*,' noting that "*utchug is the name of a dam in the Tatar language*" [34, p. 268]. The construction of the fish trap consisted of a solid palisade of logs driven into the bottom across the river to block the passage of large fish. Traps called "*utchuzhny izby*" (fish-trapping huts) were arranged inside the structure, where sturgeon species swimming upstream to spawn would become trapped, allowing fishermen to catch them with spears, load them onto boats, and transport ashore, where they would then cut up and prepare the fish at stations [19]. Therefore, the toponym *Bugar kara ustga* literally means "Black Hill Fish Trap." However, establishing its exact location and identifying the river on whose shores it was situated proves impossible.

The place name on the left bank of the Volga River, *Tsjagaan Utsiuga den Monastir des Metropolitans in Astrakan*, translates from Dutch as "Chagan Utsiuga Monastery of the Metropolitan of Astrakhan" (Fig. 3/4). This toponym corresponds to the Chagan utsuuga, located on the strait of the same name [21, p. 116][8]. This fishery, known since the early XVII century, belonged to the Astrakhan Metropolis [8, pp. 74-75]. On the map, next to the fishing ground, there is a symbol in the form of a rectangle with a cross at its top, marked in the list of symbols with the Dutch word *Een Klooster*, which translates as 'monastery' (Fig. 3/11). There was indeed a church dedicated to the Great Martyr Catherine, built in the XVII century [35, p. 110]. The name of this uchug comes from the Turkic word chegen – a pile, a long log – the main detail in the construction of the walls on uchugs [3, p. 125]. It is likely that the river on which the uchug was located was subsequently named after this fence.

Further downriver, on the left bank of an unnamed river, marked with a bracket sign, there is a toponym named *Ivaantsjug Monasten Utsjuga des Klosters Trotzkiin Astrakan*, which translates from Dutch as "Ivanchug monastery uchug of the Trinity Monastery in Astrakhan" (Fig. 3/5). On A. Olearius' map, this fishery is called *Juantzur* (Yantzur) (Fig. 2/2), on the plan of fish fences of the Trinity Monastery, it is referred to as *Yadanchug* (Fig. 2/3), located on *Ivanchuzhny Channel* (Fig. 2/4)[9]. Originally, this uchug bore the name Yamany, meaning "bad barricade" in Tatar, but later it was renamed Ivanchug in Russian style. From the time of the capture of Astrakhan until 1575, the fish trap was leased to Tatars, and after 1575, it was transferred to the Trinity Monastery [36, p. 85]. In this case, the river on which the fish trap was located subsequently took its name from this uchug.

The next toponym downstream is *Birui Utsiuga Zudarska* (Biruy utsyuga zudarska) (Fig. 3/7). The first two words are defined as the Biruil uchug, and the word "zudarska" may mean "state," since this enterprise was located within the Palace Administration [8, p. 76]. This fence, known in the XVII century as the Biruil fish trap, was situated on the banks of the eponymous channel [37, p. 68].

8 Case of the Astrakhan Fish Office (1765–1781) / State Archive of Astrakhan Region. Fond 614. Inventory 1. File 560. 1775.
9 Drawing showing the location of fishing grounds and fishing camps in the Volga Delta. Second half of the XVII century // Manuscripts Department of the Astrakhan Historical and Architectural Museum-Reserve. KP 41422/5. L. 260 ob. pp. 116–117.

Next comes the point *Isba tatarska* (Tatar house) (Fig. 3/8) – an unknown Tatar settlement in the Volga Delta. In records and on A. Olearius' map, this toponym is mentioned under the name *Tatarski molobiza* (Tatar Molobiza), "...known among Russians as the Tatar shrine... " (Fig. 1/3) [15, p. 358].

Another point on the map — *Uruslof Utsiuga Zudarska* (Fig. 3/9)—which we have determined as the state-owned fish trap 'Urustoba', located under palace administration on the Uruslovo Pleso channel [8, p. 76].

The next toponym, *Serga utsuga* (Serga Utsyuga) (Fig. 3/10), has been identified as the Basarga fishing ground. This fishery, owned by the Archbishop of Astrakhan, was located on the river with the same name [38; 21, p. 118].

The fate of the fishing grounds in the Volga Delta marked on E. Kaempfer's map has developed in different ways. In the XVI century, with the sea level (–31 – –30.0 m abs.) [36] and in the XVII century, with the sea level (maximum –25.0 m abs.) [39], the hydrological situation was favourable for the development of fisheries even in the estuary area. However, between the 1740s and the early XIX century, the level of the Caspian Sea rose, remaining at –23.5 m above sea level for 70 years [14, p. 155]. The records of the Astrakhan Fish Office for 1742 contain information that fishing ceased on Biryul, Urustoba and Basarga uchugs due to the rise in sea level, the flooding of their buildings and the filling of their fishing nets with sand [21, pp. 116-118]. It should also be taken into account that the installation of a 'palisade' of logs across the river slows down the water flow, contributing to the silting up and shallowing of the riverbed at this location.

Nowadays, E. Kampfer's map is the only surviving map of the XVI–XVIII centuries depicting the western part of the Volga Delta with placement and naming of certain uchugs along with their property ownership.

Fisheries were the only Russian settlements in the Volga Delta. On the Volga-Caspian route, trading vessels could stop only at fish traps for rest, where they might receive assistance in repairing their ships, getting off shoals in the estuary area, defending against attacks by robbers or pirates, and replenishing provisions [16].

Terminology related to the names of fish traps almost always has Turkic origins. Fisheries such as Birul', Urustoba, Basarga received their names from rivers with Turkic designations, whereas Chagan and Ivanchug ucgugs gave their names to the rivers upon which they were built. This fact confirms the version that these fisheries existed already in the XVI century and belonged to the Astrakhan Khan and the Tatar aristocracy until the 1570s [2, pp. 220–221].

The hydrological situation in the Volga River Delta during the XVII century was favorable for the functioning of fisheries. The rise in the level of the Caspian Sea between the 40s XVIII and early XIX century altered the hydrological regime in the Volga Delta, particularly in the estuarine area, leading to flooding of some uchugs, filling up of certain channels, and consequently making it impossible to catch fish using fences. Fishery workers had to relocate from abandoned fish traps to other areas.

A series of place names on the studied map represent distorted pronunciations of Russian toponyms, which can be explained by mistakes made by the author who drew information from various sources that often contradicted each other.

E. Kampfer's map surpasses A. Olearius' map and the chart of Troitsky Monastery fish uchugs both in cumulative detail and accuracy of depicting geographic realities of the Volga Delta, reflecting a greater number of fishing grounds on a scale closer to reality. Even the delta map by S.M. Gmelin published one hundred years later (1777) failed to outperform it [21].

As a result of analyzing the delta section of E. Kampfer' map, inscriptions were translated from Dutch into Russian, and names of Russian geographical toponyms written with Dutch letters were fully identified.

Finally, this makes it possible to commence research aimed at determining the location of the first Russian settlements of the XVII century in the western part of the delta.

Conclusions

In the presented work the authors managed to fulfil the objectives. The research on detailed analysis concerning the delta part of E. Kaempfer's map, one of the earliest cartographic documents of the XVII century, which records the places of uchugs – the first Russian settlements, some of which still exist today, has been carried out.

The translation of the toponyms denoting fisheries in the delta part on E. Kaempfer' map was performed, and their names were determined to be identical to the names of the rivers on the banks of which they were located.

The coincidences in the location of uchugs on E. Kaempfer's (1683) and A. Olearius' (1637) maps and the drawing of the Trinity Monastery (II half of the XVII c.) have been ascertained.

The main reasons for the termination of Uchugs' activity were the rise in the level of the Caspian Sea, which occurred in the period from the 40s of the XVIII century to the beginning of the XIX century, which changed the hydrological situation in the region, resulting in the flooding of several Uchugs and filling of the channels on which they were located.

The results of the research into toponyms of the Volga Delta according to the map of E. Kaempfer expand our knowledge of historical and geographical realities of the XVII century, forming new perspectives for research in cartography, history and cultural geography of the Volga Delta and its lower reaches.

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YUSUF AFANDI AL-YAHSAWI: BIOGRAPHICAL INSIGHTS FROM THE KLYCHEV FAMILY MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

Abstract. This article explores certain aspects of the life and work of Yusuf Afandi Klychev (al-Yahsawi), a distinguished Dagestan scholar, political figure, theologian and poet from the mid-nineteenth century. These details have come to light through the examination of his manuscripts, now preserved by his descendants in Khasavyurt, Republic of Dagestan. Famous as one of Imam Shamil's ideological opponents, Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi held significant respect among Dagestani scholars. At the same time, he was also marked by his broad outlook, cultivated by his time in the Life Guards Caucasian-Mountain Half-Squadron and his contacts with religious leaders from the Volga region and the Middle East during his Hajj pilgrimages. By studying the marginalia of Yusuf Afandi's copy of al-Hariri's *Maqāmāt* – which he made while stationed in Tsarskoye Selo and brought home to his village of Aksay after returning – it has been possible to determine the exact dates of his service in the imperial convoy and other key events in his life. In addition, this work has greatly expanded what is known about Yusuf al-Yahsawi's family: the precise number of Yusuf Afandi's children, their full names, and birth dates have been identified, and a family tree for the well-known Klychev kin in Zasulak Kumykia has been created.

Keywords: Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi; Dagestan; Caucasian War; ulama; Sharia; Arabic language; manuscript; marginalia; family chronograph; genealogical tree

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Исследовательская статья

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СВЕДЕНИЯ БИОГРАФИЧЕСКОГО ХАРАКТЕРА О ЮСУФЕ-АФАНДИ АЛ-ЙАХСАВИ (ПО МАТЕРИАЛАМ РУКОПИСНОГО АРХИВА СЕМЬИ КЛЫЧЕВЫХ)

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются некоторые аспекты жизни и деятельности выдающегося дагестанского ученого, политического деятеля, богослова и поэта середины XIX в. Юсуфа-афанди Клычева (ал-Йахсави), ставшие известными после изучения его рукописей, хранящихся в настоящее время у потомков ученого в г. Хасавюрт, Республика Дагестан. Юсуф-афанди ал-Йахсави, известный как один из непримиримых противников имама Шамиля, обладал большим авторитетом в среде алимов Дагестана. В то же время он отличался определенной широтой взглядов и суждений, приобретенных во время службы в Лейб-гвардии Кавказско-Горского полуэскадрона, а также в процессе общения с представителями духовной элиты Поволжья и Ближнего Востока во время поездок в хадж. Благодаря изучению маргинальных записей рукописи сочинения «Макамат» ал-Харири, переписанной Юсуфом-афанди еще в годы службы в Царском Селе и привезенной на родину после возвращения в с. Аксай, стал известен точный временной отрезок службы Юсуфа ал-Йахсави в Императорском конвое и другие важные моменты в его жизни. Кроме того, удалось значительно обогатить сведения о семье Юсуфа ал-Йахсави: установить точное количество детей Юсуфа-афанди, их полные имена, даты рождения, а также составить генеалогическое древо известного в Засулакской Кумыкии рода Клычевых.

Ключевые слова: Юсуф-афанди ал-Йахсави; Дагестан; Кавказская война; ученые-алимы; шариат; арабский язык; рукописная книга; маргинальные записи; семейный хронограф; генеалогическое древо

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This article aims to explore specific aspects of the life and work of Yusuf Afandi Klychev (al-Yahsawi), a leading Dagestani scholar, political figure, theologian, and poet from the mid-nineteenth century. It also uncovers previously unknown periods of his life and examines his Arabic-language manuscripts, preserved by his descendants.

The study employs descriptive, cultural-historical, chronological, analytical, retrospective, periodization, and visualization methods.

The practical value of this article lies in the potential of its materials to contribute to source studies, historical, and ethnographic research.

Yusuf Afandi, the son of Musa Haji Klychev (al-Yahsawi) from Aksai, holds a special place among the leading Dagestani religious scholars and active political figures of the mid-nineteenth century. The figure of Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi (1795–1870) has long drawn the attention of historians studying the Caucasian War. Some of them (M. Kemper, V. Bobrovnikov, M. Musayev, and others) see Yusuf Afandi as a controversial figure and a promoter of Russian imperial ideology. Most researchers describe him as a qadi, known as an ideological adversary of Imam Shamil, who challenged the legal opinions of the Imamate's leaders and strongly criticized Shamil's doctrine.

Thus, in his work *The Sharia Discourse of the Imamate in Dagestan in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, the German historian M. Kemper discusses Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi's appeal to Muslim spiritual leaders in the Middle East, calling for a fatwa against the legitimacy of Imam Shamil's movement [1, pp. 107–124], which took the form of a letter to the ulama of the Shafi'i legal school in Mecca. Kemper also describes the reply from the Mufti of Mecca, 'Usman Ahmad ad-Damiyati al-Shafi'i, who, contrary to Yusuf Afandi's hopes, justified Shamil's actions in the Caucasus by citing a hadith in which the Prophet Muhammad requires Muslims to join jihad under any imam, righteous or corrupt (*fājir*) [1, p. 113][1]. However, ad-Damiyati's arguments did not persuade Yusuf Afandi, who stood by his original view.

A brilliant scholar fluent in local and Oriental languages, Yusuf al-Yahsawi earned high respect among Dagestan's scholars, who regarded him as an expert in Arabic language and literature, and particularly in religious studies [2, p. 195]. In his home village of Aksai, Yusuf served as a qadi for many years, while also teaching at the local madrasah.

Since the roots of Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi's pro-Russian stance have been thoroughly examined in existing scholarship, this article focuses on some previously unexplored facets of the scholar's life and work, tied to the military and political history of the Russian Empire and several Middle Eastern countries. It also broadens knowledge of his family and descendants through analysis of details drawn from the Arabic-language manuscripts of the Klychev family, held by Yusuf Afandi's descendants. Drawing up a genealogical tree for the Klychev family forms part of this family-related analysis.

Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi's family came from the high-ranking Kumyk uzdens[2] [3, pp. 1–10; 4, pp. 3–15; 5, pp. 67–69; 6, pp. 220–224]. He received his early education from his father, the scholar Musa Haji, and other ulama in the village of Yakhsay (Aksay). As an educated man himself, Musa Haji Klychev devoted considerable effort to teaching his children the sciences, regarding Yusuf as the most gifted of his sons. To advance his studies, Yusuf traveled to the village of Arakani[3] to pursue religious and philosophical sciences under his father's longtime friend, one of Dagestan's most renowned scholars at the time, Said al-Kharakani (1763/4–1834). The young man soon became one of Said's finest muta'alims.

His teacher described Yusuf as diligent and assiduous, unwilling to settle for superficial knowledge but eager to delve deeply into the sciences:

" ..... وقد وقعت المعرفة والمحبة بيني وبين الولد آلكريم يوسف وانست منه آلرشد والاهلية
" .... والاستحقاق للافادة والاستفادة ورضيت عنه ودعوت له بالتوفيق والهداية إلى اوضح طريق

1 Letter from Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi to the spiritual authorities of the Shāfi ī madhhab in Mecca. Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of RAS (IHAE DFRC RAS). F. 16, inv. 1, no. 174.

2 The high-ranking uzdens (sala-uzdens) constituted the elite stratum of the landowning peasantry. Exempt from certain obligations, they played a role in adjudicating communal affairs, disputes, and legal matters; people's judges were typically selected from their ranks

3 Arakani is presently a village in Untsukulsky District, Republic of Dagestan

"Friendship and love have grown between me and your noble son Yusuf. I have observed in him prudence, competence, and the ability to teach and mentorship. I am pleased with him and pray for his success and guidance on the right path" [7, pp. 126–127].

He likely showed the same diligence in his later studies with other teachers. Evidence indicates that, in addition to Said al-Kharakani, Yusuf studied under other prominent scholars of that time, including Nur Muhammad, the Qadi of Khunzakh [8, pp. 44–48]; Daitbek Gogotlinsky and Khadbulav Khvakhitlinsky [10, pp. 56–62][4]. With Nur Muhammad, the Qadi of Khunzakh, Yusuf focused mainly on the natural sciences and mathematics.

These productive studies earned him a reputation as a learned man, deeply knowledgeable in various fields of science. Moreover, though the son of affluent parents, Yusuf remained a modest and principled young man [9, pp. 4–5].

After completing his studies, he returned to his home village of Aksai, where he served as a qadi while also teaching at the local madrasah. Many Dagestani scholars – both his contemporaries and later ones – noted his strong command of Arabic. For example, the prominent Dagestani scholar and educator Ali Kayayev (1878–1943), in assessing Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi's poems, wrote: "He had a natural poetic talent in Arabic" [11, pp. 96–97; 10, pp. 56–62]. The twentieth-century Dagestani literary scholar Mansur Gaidarbekov also remarked that "…Yusuf has a very smooth, developed, even rich, Arabic language. He would never make a grammatical error. He has a very extensive vocabulary."[5] Gaidarbekov further praised Yusuf al-Yahsawi's excellent Arabic style, regarding him as the finest in Dagestan: "Yusuf's poems were widely known and praised long before his death. Their content and universally acknowledged elegance captivated almost all the ulama and muta'alim, even those from the camp hostile to him. He was a poet and scholar, recognized even by his most ardent enemies."[6]

Nazir ad-Durgili regarded Yusuf as "…a knowledgeable faqih, an outstanding scholar, a writer, a katib, and a smart poet. He had an excellent knowledge of the Arabic language" [12, p. 136]. These assessments show that Yusuf al-Yahsawi's reputation went beyond that of an "opponent of the highlanders' movement" to include recognition as a major Dagestani scholar. As a result, Yusuf al-Yahsawi, along with several other Dagestani ulama, was listed among the 1000 scholars of the Islamic ummah in the three-volume encyclopedia *Al-Mukhtār Al-Maṣūn min aʿlām Al-qurūn*, published in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1995 [13, pp. 107–118], and compiled by the Jeddah-based scholar Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Uqail Musa.

Much is known about al-Yahsawi's public life. In 1825, Yusuf Afandi began serving in the tsarist army as a qadi, and by November 1832, he was assigned to the Life Guards Caucasian Horse-Mountain Half-Squadron (later renamed His Imperial Majesty's Own Convoy), based in Tsarskoye Selo (now Pushkin), near St. Petersburg. After five years of service there (until 1837), Yusuf Afandi retired from the Half-Squadron with the rank of lieutenant, recommending his student and son-in-law, Umar al-Yahsawi, to take his place.

Yusuf Afandi returned to his homeland in June 1842, having been promoted to the rank of staff captain of the guard. In November 1858, he was appointed qadi of the Kumyk District People's Court, a position he held until his dismissal in 1860. As a major scholar with widely recognized authority in Sharia and the adats of his people [14, p. 246], Yusuf-qadi served in the Terek regional administration, where his contributions were greatly valued [14, p. 297]. After his dismissal, he received a pension of 400 rubles from the Kizlyar district treasury and retired to his estate in the village of Kazak-Murza-yurt.[7] Yusuf Afandi performed the Hajj three times. He died on 5 Jumādā al-Ākhirah, 1287 AH,[8] as noted in the newspaper *Russkiy Invalid*

4 Gaidarbekov M. Yusuf from Aksay. In: *Anthology of Dagestan Scholars*. Scientific Archive of the IHAE RAS. F. 3, inv. 1, no. 129, l. 8.
5 Ibid. L. 17.
6 Ibid. L. 8.
7 Kazak-Murza-yurt was a now-extinct village on the left bank of the Yaryksu River, south of Kandauraul village and northeast of Khasavyurt city, in present-day Khasavyurt District, Dagestan. Last referenced in 1914.
8 The precise date derives from the gravestone epitaph; an imprint is held in the personal archive of I. I. Khanmurzaev. 5 Jumādā al-Ākhira 1287 AH corresponds to 2 September 1870 in the Gregorian calendar.

(December 11, 1870, no. 276), in the section on "Highest Orders of the Military Department of December 10, 1870."[9]

Contemporaries remarked on Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi's exceptional linguistic skills: besides his native Kumyk, he spoke Avar and Chechen. His proficiency in Kumyk also allowed him to communicate in Tatar and Turkish. Evidence indicates that Yusuf Afandi met and engaged with members of the Tatar spiritual elite in St. Petersburg. In addition to Arabic, he was fluent in Persian, and during his time in St. Petersburg, he learned Russian, as evidenced from his letters home from his service in the imperial convoy in 1249 AH (1833–1834), where he mentions having "acquaintances among the Russians."

Life in St. Petersburg, his service as a qadi in the Imperial Convoy, and his travels through the Middle East on the way to Mecca greatly broadened Yusuf al-Yahsawi's horizons, equipping him with extensive life experience and the ability to realistically assess the socio-political situation in both the Russian Empire and the Middle East. Having lived in the Russian capital and witnessed its power and strength firsthand, al-Yahsawi recognized the devastating consequences for the Dagestanis of fighting a war against it. Yusuf's father, Musa Haji, had also previously held a pro-Russian position.

Yusuf al-Yahsawi's compatriots remembered him as an ideological adversary of Imam Shamil, who rejected the legitimacy of his authority under Sharia and actively opposed what he saw as a futile armed struggle against the Russian Empire. To support his position, he invoked Sharia principles prohibiting "jihad by the obviously weak against a stronger enemy," striving to dissuade the imams from such a risky endeavor through persuasion and, later, outright accusations. As one of Dagestan's most active political figures at the time, al-Yahsawi – following his teacher Said al-Kharakani – sharply criticized the imams' actions. Nazir al-Durgili wrote: "He portrayed all of the imam's actions as a form of unrest (*fitna*) in Islam and condemnable in the faith" [12, p. 137]. Reflecting on this, the Dagestani Arabist scholar M. Gaidarbekov, known for his emotional style, observed: "From the very beginning of this struggle, he saw in it only the suffering and death of the peoples of Dagestan, especially the highlanders. Therefore, he tried to dissuade the imams from such a risky undertaking by any means necessary, from persuasion to open vilification and insults."[10]

The next argument against the legitimacy of armed struggle concerned the validity of the title "imam." Yusuf Afandi grounded his position in the core Islamic principle that only one caliph should govern all Muslims. For this reason, he viewed Shamil's claims to the title of imam (while the Ottoman sultan held recognition as the caliph) and his ambition to lead the region's Muslims as a breach of Shari'a. It is worth noting that he was not alone in these views: other Dagestani scholars and ulama voiced similar statements and appeals. Imam Shamil also had numerous supporters; many members of Dagestan's spiritual elite regarded his actions as "divine providence" and a mission to restore Shari'a.

In this regard, it is noteworthy that, like Yusuf al-Yahsawi, most of the active participants in the events of the Caucasian War were educated at the madrasah of Said al-Kharakani (from the village of Arakani) – both supporters of armed struggle and its opponents. The first group included Muhammad al-Yaragi, Gazi-Muhammad al-Gimravi (from Gimry), Gamzatbek al-Khuzadi (from Gotsatl), Tashav Haji al-Indiravi (from Endirey), Imam Shamil, Said al-Ikhali (from Igali), Muhammad-Tahir al-Karakhi (from Karakh), Daitbek al-Gogotli (from Gogotl), Zagalav al-Khvarshi (from Khvarshi), Idris al-Indiri (from Endirey), Abubakar Haji al-Argvani (from Argvani), Charanav al-Muguhi (from Mogokh), Nurav as-Sughuri (from Sogratl), Shahabbas al-Qarani (from Karanay), and many others. The second group included Yusuf Qadi al-Yahsawi himself, Nurmuhammad Qadi al-Avari (from Khunzakh), Muhammad (Mama Gishi) al-Indiri, Mirza Ali al-Akhti (from Akhty), Abdurrahman al-Ghazanishi (from Kazanishche), Ayub Qadi al-Dzhunguti

9 *Russkii Invalid* [Russian Invalid], 11 December 1870, No. 276. Column: "Highest Orders of the Military Department, 10 December 1870," p. 1.
10 Gaidarbekov M. Yusuf from Aksay. In: *Anthology of Dagestan Scholars*. Scientific Archive of the IHAE RAS. F. 3, inv. 1, no. 129, l. 8.

(from Dzhengutai), Barka Qadi Kakamakhinsky, Zukhum Qadi Akushinsky, Aslan Qadi Tsudakharsky, Mirza Tagi Mullah Derbentsky, and others.[11] Opponents of the armed struggle against tsarist Russia issued "separate brochures, qasidas, and commentaries on these qasidas, and almost all of them accused the imams of lust for power, ambition, adventurism, egoism, and predation" [15, pp. 632–639].

The renowned English scholar A. Zelkina notes this fact in her work *The Arabic Linguistic and Cultural Tradition in Daghestan: An Historical Overview*, describing Yusuf al-Yahsawi as a scholar who disliked Imam Shamil and criticized him in his poetry [16, p. 95].

Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi stood out among the opponents of the armed struggle. His strong religious education, broad perspective, and profound knowledge of Arabic enabled him to employ all available means of the time – preaching sermons, engaging in polemics, and writing works and poems that sharply and vividly critiqued his opponents. Zelkina also observes that Shamil's famous companion and chronicler, Muhammad-Tahir al-Qarakhi, included a verse by al-Yahsawi in his work – one that belittled Imam Shamil after his surrender to the Russians – and then rewrote it as a laudatory poem in the same style and rhyme, with only minor alterations in word order and phrasing [16, p. 97].

"Yusuf, unlike other religious figures," notes Mansur Gaidarbekov, "did not consider the imams to be messengers of Allah for the restoration of Islam. He doesn't recognize them at all. He doesn't find in them even the most essential qualities of a caliph."[12]

Despite Yusuf al-Yahsawi's widespread fame and central role in Dagestan's social and spiritual life, little information about his family has survived. This gap has been substantially filled through the examination of his manuscripts. Part of Yusuf Afandi's collection has been preserved, now held by his descendant, Yusup Klychev from Khasavyurt, Dagestan. In 2008, we examined this collection, which includes about 20 manuscripts and early printed books in Arabic and Turkic. Among them is a handwritten copy by Yusuf of the renowned *Maqāmāt al-Harīrī*[13] by Muḥammad ibn al-Qāsim al-Harīrī al-Baṣrī (1054–1122), one of his favorite works. This volume proved a rich source of information about the scholar's family. It bears the title كتاب المقامات للحريري "The Book of Maqamat al-Hariri," with al-Yahsawi's addition: "with the commentary (*sharḥ*) of the scholar Abū Bakr, son of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Zamzamī al-Makkī."

Another noteworthy discovery consisted of two letters enclosed within the manuscript. The first, from Muhammad Salimov al-Araghi (الاراغي) of Kasumkent[14] and composed in Turkic, bears the date 1913 and is addressed to Abdulazim Klychev, grandson of Yusuf Afandi (inserted between folios 147 and 148).

The second letter, authored by Yusuf Afandi himself in Arabic, is directed to Qadi Dukai (دوكي) and affixed between folios 151 and 152 of the same volume. This Dukai evidently corresponds to Mullah Dukai Aukhovsky,[15] a figure frequently referenced in Russian sources of the time. An adversary of Imam Shamil, Mullah Dukai, like Yusuf Afandi himself, maintained a pro-Russian orientation.

The manuscript measures 21.5 × 17.7 cm, bound in a hardback cover, no flap, sheathed in embossed brown leather. The main text spans 180 folios (17 lines per page). Two blank sheets of thick, glossy texture are placed before and after the text. It is executed on factory-produced Russian white paper, employing black, red, and gold inks. Maqāmāt numerals are accentuated in red, while poetic interspersions are marked by a red dot encircled in gold. Pagination proceeds folio by folio, accompanied by catchwords. The script adheres to the Dagestani variant of *naskh*,[16] with the margins replete with an array of annotations and scholia.

11 Gaidarbekov M. Said Arakansky. In: *Anthology of Dagestan Scholars*. Scientific Archive of the IHAE RAS, 1965. F. 3, inv. 1, no. 129, ll. 170–171.

12 Gaidarbekov M. Yusuf from Aksay. In: *Anthology of Dagestan Scholars*. Scientific Archive of the IHAE RAS. F. 3, inv. 1, no. 129, l. 9.

13 Maqāmā constitute a genre prevalent in medieval Near and Middle Eastern literature, anticipating the European picaresque novel. Al-Ḥarīrī composed a cycle of fifty maqāmāt, featuring the wily protagonist Abū Zayd al-Ṣarūjī, who assumes a fresh persona in each installment yet consistently extricates himself from dire predicaments. The text employs rhythmic prose interspersed with poetry.

14 No information on this individual has been identified.

15 *1840, 1841, and 1842 in the Caucasus: Documents*. Part VI. *Caucasian Collection*, vol. 11 (1887). Electronic resource. URL: https://vostlit.info/Texts/Dokumenty/Kavkaz/XIX/1840-1860/1840_1841_1842_gody/text6.htm (accessed on 5 April 2024).

16 Dagestan *naskh* represents a regional adaptation of the *naskh* script, entrenched in Dagestani Muslim calligraphy since the 17th century and still in use today.

The ownership inscription, written in Arabic on the manuscript's opening folio, declares:

كتبه الفقير الى رحمة الله تعالى يوسف الصديق لنفسه اللهم اجعله عملا مبرورا وسعيا مشكورا جنب عنا وعن احبابنا وعن المؤمنين والذين اذا ذكر الله وجلت قلوبهم كل الافات وجميع البليات انك مجيب الدعوات امين

"This volume was transcribed for my own use by Yusuf, the veracious (*al-sadiq*) and aspirant to divine clemency. O Allah, render this endeavor (the transcription of this tome) a righteous act and meritorious labor! Avert all adversities from us, our companions, the faithful, and "those whose hearts tremble at the invocation of Allah's name!"[17] Verily, Thou art the Responder to supplications! Amin!"

On the same folio, in the upper left quadrant, appears a black octagonal seal impression, 1.8 × 2.1 cm in dimensions, bearing the legend: يوسف الصديق سل شمل التوفيق ("Yusuf, the veracious, seeks [Allah's] succor").

Centrally positioned in the upper margin of the work's opening folio, above the *basmala*, is another black seal impression, 1.2 × 1.4 cm, inscribed in Arabic: عبده يوسف ٥٥٢١ "His servant is Yusuf. 1255." In such legends, the numeral customarily denotes the year of seal's fabrication.[18] An identical impression recurs on folio 136 of the manuscript.

The manuscript's colophon reads as follows:

تمت هذه المقامات الفاخرة والملح الزاجرة بحمد الله وحسن توفيقه سنة الازدواج بالنجم الوهاج فيا له من ابتهاج ورونق كما للسراج بيد من رزق له التوفيق يوسف الصديق ابن الحاج موسى اللهم اغفر لهما وارحمهما وثقل موازينهما انك سميع الدعاء واسع العطاء مجيب الدعاة غافر العصاة ولابائهما واصدقائهما واحبائهما وامهاتهما واحيائهما واموانهما بعفو شامل شمول الوابل وصلى الله علي سيدنا محمد وعلى اله واصحابه اجمعين

حرر في العشر الاوسط من شعبان سنة ١٢٤٥

"These sublime maqāmāt and captivating stories have come to an end, praise be to Allah and His benevolent aid, in the year of the conjunction with the radiant star. Oh, what a joyful and luminous occasion this was, akin to a beacon, by the hand of the one favored with the succor of the Veracious – Yusuf, son of Musa the Pilgrim. O Allah, absolve them both and show them mercy, and weigh down their scales. For Thou art the Hearer of supplications, the Bestower of bounties, the Responder to prayers, the Pardoner of the errant. And [absolve] both their forebears, brethren, associates, and mothers – the quick and the departed – with an all-encompassing pardon, [like] a deluge. And may Allah bless our lord Muḥammad, his full family, and his companions!" Penned in the mid-decade of Shaʿbān 1245 (5–14 February 1830).

We were particularly struck by the marginal notes written in several places in the manuscript, which, based on the handwriting, appear to be by Yusuf al-Yahsawi himself.

The first entry is in gold ink, the others in black ink, using the Dagestani *naskh* script.

Between folios 149 and 150, a paper insert contains the following entry in Arabic:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على محمد واله اجمعين

وبعد فلقد ولد ليوسف ولد عمرهما الله تعالى تعميرا مباركا طيبا وانبته انباتا حسنا في سنة الف وماتين وستة واربعين من هجرة سيد الكونين في الشهر الاوسط من الربيع في صبح الخامس والعشرين من نيسان في ليلة السبت وكانت تلك الليلة الليلة الخامسة والعشرين من ذي القعدة سنة قويان الهما رشدهما من حضرت الملك الديان ووقيا من شرور الانس والجان وقد سماه والدتي باسم جدي قريم سلطان ولا زال الله نُعانُ امين

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and salutations upon Muḥammad and his family! A son was born to Yusuf – may Allah bestow a long, blessed, and good life, and nurture him in the most exemplary manner – in the year one thousand two hundred forty-six following the emigration (*Hijrah*) of the Sovereign of the two realms, during the medial month of spring, on the morn of the five-and-twentieth Nissan, upon the eve of Saturday, corresponding to the twenty-fifth of Dhū al-Qaʿda (7 May 1831), in the Year of the Hare (Kumyk: *Qoyan*). May God protect him and us from the malevolence of mortals and jinn! Our mother named him after our grandfather, Krymsoltan. May God perpetually bestow upon us His succor and aid! Amin!"

17 Qurʾān, Sūrat al-Anfāl, verse 2.

18 1255 AH corresponds to 1839–1840 in the Gregorian calendar.

Further, at the end of the volume – on folios 190 and 191, after the text of al-Harīrī's *Maqāmāt*, a page-and-a-half-long chronograph in Arabic records biographical details about the owner's children. These entries cover the period from 1831 to 1853.

The choice of ink color for the first entry is deliberate, reflecting the scholar's deep joy at the birth of his firstborn son, whom he named after his cherished grandfather. This entry largely repeats the text from the paper insert mentioned earlier, with only a few minor variations:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم الحمد لله رب العالمين والصلاة والسلام على محمد واله اجمعين
وبعد فلقد ولد ليوسف ولد عمرهما الله تعالى تعميرا مباركا طيبا وانبته نباتا حسنا في سنة الف وماتين وستة واربعين من
هجرة سيد الكونين في الشهر الاوسط من الربيع في صبح الخامس والعشرين من نيسان ليلة السبت سنة قويان في الخامس
والعشرين من ذي القعدة وسماه والدتي بقريم سلطان وقاه وايانا من شرور الانس والجان ولا زلنا نعان امين يا مجيب

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, and blessings and salutations upon Muḥammad and his family! A son was born to Yusuf – may Allah bestow a long, blessed, and good life, and nurture him in the most exemplary manner – in the year one thousand two hundred forty-six following the emigration (*Hijrah*) of the Sovereign of the two realms, during the medial month of spring, ere the dawn (*subḥ*) on the five-and-twentieth Nissan, upon the eve of Saturday, corresponding to the twenty-fifth of Dhū al-Qaʿda (7 May 1831), in the Year of the Hare (Qoyan). May God protect him and us from the malevolence of mortals and jinn, and perpetually bestow upon us His succor and aid; and my mother named him Krimsoltan. Amin! O Responder to entreaties!"

Next entry:

ولقد ولد الحاج موسى صنو قريم سلطان سنة ٨٤٢١ سنة يلان في (في عاشر ذا الحجة) اواسط الشهر الاوسط من الربيع
ووصل الى كتاب البشارة وانا في شهر فطربورغ في خامس عشر صفر من سنة ٩٤٢١ اللهم يا ذا الفضل العظيم انبتهما انباتا
حسنا وبلغنا الى مرادنا وردني الى اهلي حاشرا شمل النيات مهيبا في كل الولايات كاشرا سعيدا الحمد لله رب العالمين وشكرا
له الى يوم الدين

"Hadji Mūsā, brother of Krymsoltan, was born in 1248 AH, the Year of the Snake (Kumyk: Yılan), in the middle month of spring, on 10 Dhū al-Ḥijja (April 30, 1833). The letter bearing the glad tidings reached me while I was in the city of St. Petersburg, on 15 Ṣafar 1249 (July 4, 1833). O Allah, Possessor of Vast Mercy, rear them both in the finest manner and guide them to our aspirations. Return me to my family with a pure heart, esteemed in every respect, filled with joy and contentment! Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds, and thanks to Him until the Doomsday.

Next entry:

ولقد ولد لي ولد في خامس جمادى الاولى سنة ١٢٥٩ وسمّيته بحميد سلطان انبته الله نباتا حسنا وجعله من اهل احسان
امين سنة قويان

My son was born on the fifth [day] of Jumādā al-Ūlā, 1259 AH (June 3, 1843), the Year of the Hare (Qoyan); I named him Hamidsoltan. Rear him in the best way and count him among the righteous [people]. Amin!"

ثم ولد له ولد في الليلة التاسعة والعشرين من شعبان سنة ٩٥٢١ سنة قويان وسميته بعليم سلطان بارك الله لي فيه امين

"Then a son was born [to me] on the twenty-sixth night of Shaʿbān, 1259 AH (September 21, 1843), the Year of the Hare (Qoyan); I named him Alimsoltan. May God bless me in him! Amin!"

The entries continue on the following page:

قد ولد لي ولد في العشر الاوسط من جمادى الاولى وسميته سعد الله اسعدنا الله تعالى ووقانا من جميع البليات
وقد كان ولادة الابنة زبيدة قبل ذلك بخمسة ايام وذلك سنة ثلث وستين بعد ماتين والف سنة قوي في الربيع في اخر الحمل

"A son was born to me in the mid-decade of Jumādā al-Ūlā (April 27–May 6), and I named him Saʿdullah! May God bless us and shield us from all afflictions! The birth of the daughter Zubaydat occurred five days earlier (April 17–May 16), in 1263 AH (1847), the Year of the Sheep (Kumyk: Qoy), in spring.

وولادة باشو في صفر سنة ٤٦٢١

"Birth of Bashaw has happened in Ṣafar 1264 AH (January 8–February 5, 1848)."

وقد ولد ابو العلاء في اواخر سنة تسع وستين بعد ماتين والف

"Abu ʿAlaʾ was born at the end of 1269 AH (October 14, 1852–October 4, 1853)."

وقد ولد حفيدنا عبد العظيم في ثالث ذي القعد يوم الخميس عام اربعة وثمانين بعد ماتين والف انبته الله نباتا حسنا ورزقنا واياه سعادة الدارين بجاه سيد الكونين صلى الله عليه وسلم

The entry concludes with details of Yusuf's first grandson: "Our grandson Abdulazim was born on Thursday, 3 Dhū al-Qaʿda, 1284 AH (February 26, 1868). May God rear him in the best way and grant us felicity in both worlds for the sake of the Lord of the two worlds – may Allah bless him and grant him peace."

One noteworthy detail is that al-Yahsawi records his children's birth dates using different calendars: in this instance, the Hijrah calendar is alongside the 12-year animal cycle. This system, which originated among the Turkic nomadic pastoralists of Central Asia [17, p. 119], remained in use during the mid-19th century among the North Caucasus's Turkic peoples, including the Kumyks. Its adoption by the Kumyks was first documented by G. M.-R. Orazayev (1947–2023) [18, pp. 36–37; 19, pp. 155–156].

We have corroborated these details from additional sources: oral histories shared by Klychev family members and the "Notebook of Generational Lists of the Klychev Family," kindly provided by Soltanakhmed Klychev, a direct descendant of Yusuf Afandi. They confirm that al-Yahsawi had five sons – Krymsoltan, Musa-hajji, Alimsoltan, Abu, and Javad, and one daughter, Abidat. By comparing these names with the records cited above, we can draw the following conclusions.

First, the full birth name of Yusuf al-Yahsawi's son *Abu*, as recorded in the "Notebook...," is *Abu al-ʿAlāʾ* (lit. "The Exalted Father"), which was evidently abbreviated to Abu (evidenced by the inscription on the stone slab over his grave).

Hamidsoltan died young and left no descendants (his name does not appear among the Klychev family lineages in the documents). The same holds for Yusuf Afandi's son *Saʿdullah*, who also died in childhood.

The "Notebook of Generational Lists of the Klychev Family" contains no references to Yusuf Afandi's daughters *Zubaydat* and *Bashaw* (*Bashu*). We infer that they died in infancy. Although Yusuf al-Yahsawi is known to have had a son named *Javad*, he is absent from the chronograph in al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* manuscript. He was likely born after 1853, or *Javad* may have been the renamed version of one of his sons – *Hamidsoltan* or *Saʿdullah* – following illness or misfortune, a common practice at that time.

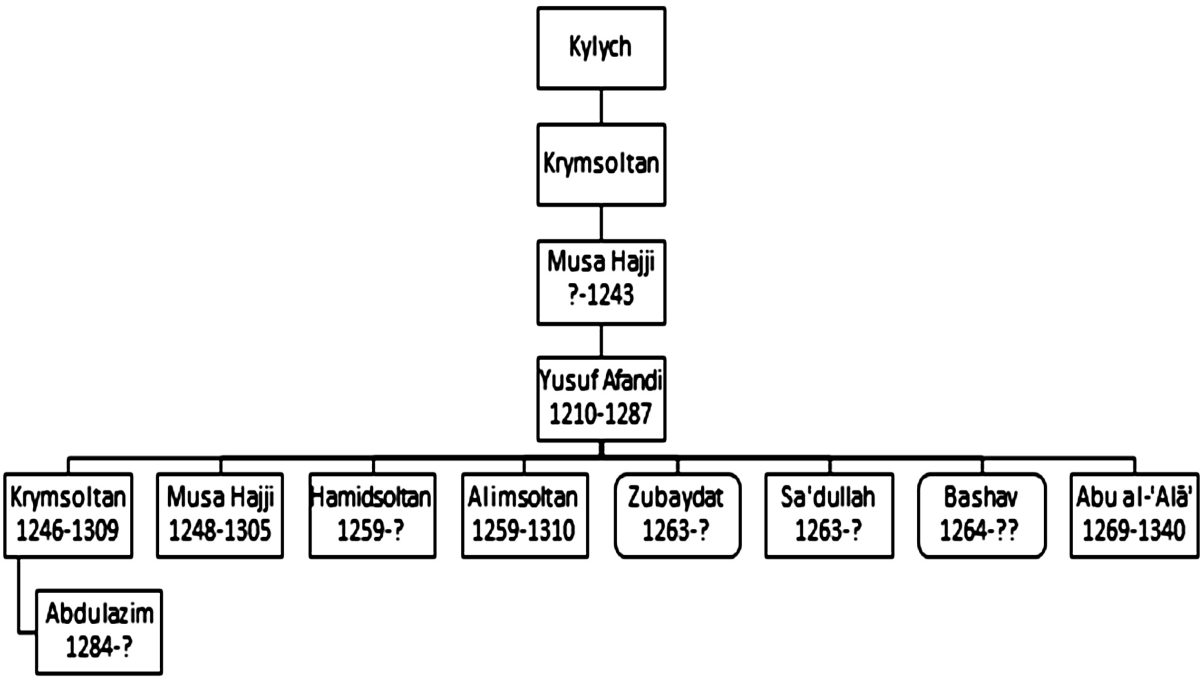
Analysis of the birth dates of Yusuf al-Yahsawi's children (particularly the births of two children just five days apart) indicates that the scholar had at least two wives during this period. Regrettably, the names of Yusuf Afandi's wives are not recorded anywhere, nor is it possible to identify which children belonged to which mother.

The personal notations of events in the manuscript clarify the precise duration of Yusuf al-Yahsawi's service in the Imperial Convoy (1832–1837). The *Maqāmāt* manuscript was likely in his possession during his time in St. Petersburg. Moreover, the interval between the birth of his son Musa (April 30, 1833) and his receipt of the news (July 4, 1833) offers a rough estimate of postal delivery times from the village of Aksay (Yakhsay) to St. Petersburg.[19]

Using the information presented above, we have compiled a genealogical tree for the Klychev family covering the years 1795-1922. In addition to names, it includes birth and death dates according to the Hijrah calendar (see Diagram 1). The death dates are drawn from an analysis of epigraphic records for Klychev family members, preserved in the personal archive of I. I. Khanmurzaev.

19 Thus, the letter required just over two months for delivery.

Diagram 1. *The immediate ancestors and descendants of Yusuf-Afandi al-Yahsawi*



In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Klychev family was related to numerous prominent figures in the spiritual and political elite of Zasulak Kumykia. In the Soviet period, the family's descendants rose to prominence across various spheres of public life.

Among them was Yusuf Afandi's grandson, Abdulazim Krymsultanovich Klychev (1867–1956), a graduate of the Abdullatif Gotsinski (al-Khūtsī) madrasa and one of the first trained physicians in Dagestan and Chechnya. Amid the revolutionary events and Civil War, he served as a centurion in Shaykh Uzun-Ḥajji's forces, combating General A. Denikin's troops. On April 22, 1918, during the ravaging of Khasavyurt sloboda by the forces of Uzun-Ḥajji and Nazhmuddin Gotsinski, Abdulazim – opposing their conduct – escorted roughly 200 Russian inhabitants from the settlement to his ancestral village of Kazak-Murza-Yurt (then known as "Klychev's farm"). Renowned locally as a healer, he nonetheless fled to Chechnya following the consolidation of Soviet authority in Dagestan, evoiding the onset of repressions [20, p. 160; 21, pp. 168–169]. He died in Grozny in 1956.

Another grandson of Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi, Yusuf Krymsultanovich Klychev (1883–1942), graduated from the Stavropol gymnasium in 1903 and, in 1912, from the Kharkov Medical Institute, where he worked at the clinic until 1915. He later served as head of the hospital in the village of Yenikeyevo (now the city of Donbass) and was then transferred to head of the regional hospital in the village of Chilik in the Ural region. In 1918, Yusuf returned to Dagestan, where he maintained a private practice in Port-Petrovsk from 1918 to 1920. Following the establishment of Soviet power in 1920, he was appointed deputy People's Commissar of Health for the Dagestan ASSR, making substantial contributions to the development of medicine in the republic. In 1942, he was arrested by the NKVD on charges of "anti-Soviet activities" and confined to a forced labor camp in Makhachkala, where he died later that year [21, pp. 169–170].

Isa Klychevich Sultanov (1917–1945), a Hero of the Soviet Union, also belonged to this family. By decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR on April 10, 1945, he was posthumously awarded the Gold Star medal and the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. For his military service, he also received the Order of Lenin and the Order of the Red Banner.[20]

20 Isa Klychevich Sultanov. *Immortal Regiment*. Electronic resource. URL: https://www.moypolk.ru/soldier/sultanov-isa-klychevich (accessed on 4 July 2025).

Conclusion

Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi (1795–1870) stood out as one of the foremost figures in Dagestan's spiritual elite during the mid-nineteenth century. Contemporaries widely recognized his gifts as a teacher, poet, and writer, as well as his profound expertise in Islamic law and theology. A resolute ideological adversary of Imam Shamil, Yusuf Afandi deemed resistance to the Russian Empire's military advance in the Northeast Caucasus futile, anchoring his view in Sharia principles. He anticipated the highland forces' defeat at the hands of a numerically superior and better-equipped enemy, imploring that Muslim lives not be wasted in needless bloodshed. Though his stance was deeply unpopular in Dagestan at the time, Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi commanded respect from both supporters and adversaries: he was esteemed as an upright and irreproachable man.

Life in the Russian imperial capital, his service as a qadi in the Imperial Convoy, and his global travels expanded the scholar's worldview. His encounters with the religious elite of the Middle East and Volga region further enriched his mastery of Islamic sciences, which later formed the core of his teaching.

Despite his stature as a leading political and religious figure, gifted educator, and man of considerable means, Yusuf Afandi remained profoundly modest, shielding his private life from view. Almost nothing was known about the al-Yahsawi family. Yet through examination of the title page, colophon, and marginal notes in al-Ḥarīrī's *Maqāmāt* manuscript, – owned by Yusuf al-Yahsawi, one of Zasulak Kumykia's preeminent Dagestani scholars – we have begun to delineate key phases of his life, intertwined with military and political developments in the Russian Empire and wider world, alongside the names and birth dates of his descendants. The Klychev lineage endures nowadays: Yusuf Afandi al-Yahsawi's descendants reside in Dagestan and elsewhere, preserving the memory of their distinguished ancestor.

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Research paper

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THE TRANSFER OF THE KARANOGAI PRISTAVSTVO FROM THE STAVROPOL GOVERNORATE TO THE TEREK OBLAST: REFORMING ADMINISTRATION IN THE TEREK AND KUBAN OBLASTS, 1883–1888

Abstract. This study examines the causes, objectives, and consequences of the administrative reform implemented by the Caucasian administration in March 1888, which entailed the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo (district) from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast. Analysis of newly identified archival sources from the Russian State Historical Archive and the State Archive of the Stavropol Krai reveals that this specific administrative change was a component of a broader initiative to reorganize the administrations of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts. The primary objective of this larger reform was to preserve the Kuban and Terek Cossacks as a distinct military estate. Consequently, the reform planned to subject all social and ethnic groups within both regions to the control of the Cossack military administration. The integration of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast under this framework was necessitated by the close economic and land-use relationship between the Karanogais and the Terek Cossacks. The reform, devised by the Caucasian administration under Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, entirely disregarded the interests of the Karanogai people. Its implementation in March 1888 compelled the administrations of the Stavropol Governorate and Terek Oblast to address the division of "the total Mohammedan capital of nomads in Stavropol Governorate" into two parts. In 1889, the issue of apportioning pasturelands and delineating a precise administrative boundary between the Terek Oblast and Stavropol Governorate arose. The latter question remained unresolved until 1917. Overall, the reform proved unsuccessful. First, it exacerbated conflicts over pastures and watering places among the nomads of the Nogai Steppe – namely, the Karanogais, Edishkul and Yedisan Nogais, and Turkmens – who were divided between the two administrative units by the reform. Second, it exerted a profoundly negative influence on the socio-economic development of the Karanogai people.

Keywords: Caucasus region; Kuban Oblast; Terek Oblast; Stavropol Governorate; Karanogai Pristavstvo; Achikulak Pristavstvo; Karanogais; Terek Cossacks; administrative reform; Alexander III; A.M. Dondukov-Korsakov

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Исследовательская статья

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ПЕРЕДАЧА КАРАНОГАЙСКОГО ПРИСТАВСТВА ИЗ СТАВРОПОЛЬСКОЙ ГУБЕРНИИ В СОСТАВ ТЕРСКОЙ ОБЛАСТИ В КОНТЕКСТЕ РЕФОРМЫ УПРАВЛЕНИЯ ТЕРСКОЙ И КУБАНСКОЙ ОБЛАСТЯМИ В 1883–1888 гг.

Аннотация. Статья посвящена исследованию причин, целей и последствий проведенной в марте 1888 г. кавказской администрацией административной реформы по передаче Караногайского приставства из Ставропольской губернии в состав Терской области. Анализ выявленных в архивах (Российский государственный исторический архив и Государственный архив Ставропольского края) новых источников показал, что данное административное преобразование являлось частью более обширной реформы по преобразованию управления Кубанской и Терской областей. Главной целью этой реформы являлось сохранение Кубанского и Терского казачества в качестве военного сословия. Реформа предусматривала передачу под контроль казачьей военной администрации всех социальных и этнических групп населения обеих областей. Передача Караногайского приставства в состав Терской области в рамках данной реформы была обусловлена существованием тесных хозяйственных и поземельных связей караногайцев с терскими казаками. При этом разработанная кавказской администрацией кн. А.М. Дондукова-Корсакова реформа совершенно не учитывала интересы караногайцев. Проведение реформы в марте 1888 г. поставило перед администрациями Ставропольской губернии и Терской области вопрос о необходимости разделить на две части «общий магометанский капитал кочующих в Ставропольской губернии». В 1889 г. возник вопрос о размежевании пастбищных земель и проведении точной административной границы между Терской областью и Ставропольской губернией. Последний вопрос не получил окончательного решения до 1917 г. В целом реформа оказалась неудачной. Во-первых, она привела к росту конфликтов из-за пастбищ и водопоев между кочевниками Ногайской степи (караногайцами, едишкульскими и едисанскими ногайцами и туркменами), разделенных согласно реформе между двумя административными единицами. Во-вторых, реформа крайне негативно отразилась на социально-экономическом развитии караногайцев.

Ключевые слова: Кавказский край; Кубанская область; Терская область; Ставропольская губерния; Караногайское приставство; Ачикулакское приставство; караногайцы; терские казаки; административная реформа; Александр III; А.М. Дондуков-Корсаков

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Introduction

Examining the history of the Karanogai Pristavstvo, alongside that of the four Nogai pristavstvos established in the late eighteenth century across the steppes of the North Caucasus, is essential for comprehending the broader history of the Nogais, one of Russia's indigenous peoples. Notably, the creation of these administrative structures enabled the Nogais – who endured the military confrontations between the Russian and Ottoman Empires, as well as a series of catastrophic military-political events, at the end of the eighteenth century – to survive, avoid erasure from the historical record, and preserve their ethnic and cultural identity.

Naturally, an objective assessment of the role of the pristavstvo institution in the North Caucasus in Nogai history necessitates a thorough preliminary understanding of the administrative and political history of these institutions. However, scholarly progress in this area has long stagnated. Despite the substantial body of literature on the history and culture of the North Caucasian Nogais [1–5], our understanding of the administrative and socio-economic evolution of the Nogai pristavstvos remains schematic. This stagnation in research stems from the scarcity of archival investigations yielding new historical documents on the Nogais in the nineteenth century. Among recent works that have incorporated novel archival materials, only the studies by I. V. Lidzhieva stand out [6, 7]. Consequently, the objectives and contexts of numerous administrative reforms enacted by Russian authorities in the nineteenth century with respect to the North Caucasian Nogai pristavstvos remain poorly understood. In particular, the circumstances surrounding the 1888 transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast are virtually unknown.

The first historian of the Karanogai Pristavstvo, F. I. Kapelgorodsky, described this event as follows: "On April 16, 1888, by order of the military department No. 90, the transformation of the administration of the Kuban and Terek oblasts was announced. At the same time, Karanogai, along with the entire Kizlyar district, was incorporated into the Terek Oblast. Thus, the Karanogais were separated from their kin – the Edishkuls, Yedisans, and Dzhemboyluks – who remained within the Stavropol Governorate" [8]. Soviet historiography contributed relatively little additional information to this topic. For instance, the renowned scholar I. Kh. Kalmykov observed: "In 1888, the Karanogai Pristavstvo was transferred to the Terek Oblast, but the boundary line between the oblast and the governorate was established only in 1909... The transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast occurred by decision of the Tsarist government without the knowledge of the Nogai population. The authorities were guided solely by political considerations – by evenly distributing the territory between administrative bodies, the primary focus of the administrative apparatus was to be directed toward strengthening supervision over the so-called aliens" [9]. Among contemporary historians, only I. V. Lidzhieva has noted that the reform "eliminated certain administrative inconveniences associated with the pristavstvo's remoteness from the provincial center" [6].

Nevertheless, scholars have yet to address the central question: why did the question of transferring the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast emerge in the 1880s? Drawing on newly discovered documents from the Russian State Historical Archive (RGIA) and the State Archive of Stavropol Krai (GASK), this article seeks to reveal the reasons, objectives, and consequences of the administrative reform of the pristavstvo enacted in March 1888.

Administrative reform of Kuban and Terek Oblasts in 1883–1888

First, it is noteworthy that the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast was executed pursuant to the "Highest Approved Statute on the Administration of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts and the Black Sea District," dated March 21, 1888. This statute culminated years of efforts by the Commander-in-Chief of the Civil Administration in the Caucasus, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov, to reform the governance of the Caucasian Cossack Host. Consequently, the transfer of the pristavstvo can be regarded as inextricably linked to the broader reform of the Cossack administration.

In 1882, during an inspection tour of the Caucasus, Dondukov devoted particular attention to conditions

within the Kuban and Terek Cossack Hosts. In his "Most Loyal Memorandum of the Commander of the Troops of the Caucasian Military District, 1882–1890," the prince expressed profound concern over the marked transformation in the Cossack population's way of life, particularly "the decline of its military makeup." He attributed these shifts to the policies of the War Ministry in the 1870s, whose principal aim had been the abolition of the Cossacks as a distinct military estate [10]. Viewing such a policy as profoundly misguided, the prince resolved to appeal directly to Emperor Alexander III concerning the future of the Caucasian Cossacks.

In his Most Loyal "Memorandum on the Transformation of the Administration of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts in Connection with the Neighboring Alien Population," dated April 7, 1882, Dondukov affirmed the enduring value of maintaining the Caucasian Cossacks "in the form of a military class force" and identified several factors that, in his view, had contributed to the erosion of this "force." These included, first, the influx of aliens into the Kuban Oblast beginning in 1868; second, conflicts between the Terek Cossacks and the highlanders; and third, the introduction in 1869 of an administrative system "on the basis of a common provincial institution" in the Kuban and Terek oblasts. According to Dondukov, the latter development engendered dual authority, conflicts between civilian and Cossack administrative bodies, and the neglect of the Cossacks' economic, administrative, and military interests. In his estimation, the principal outcome of these factors on the lives of the Terek and Kuban Cossack Hosts was the erosion of the Cossacks' self-perception as a distinct military estate.[1]

In order to prevent the disappearance of the Caucasian Cossacks, Dondukov proposed to carry out a number of administrative transformations, in particular "the local population, both Cossacks and aliens, located on the territory of the Kuban and Terek Cossack Hosts, should be subordinated to the military ministry in the police-administrative sense," and also "to unite the regional and military economic administration into one body common to each troop."[2]

Incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast

Concurrently, Dondukov advocated for the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast. In the same memorandum, he contended: "The eastern portion of the territory of the Stavropol Governorate, occupied by the nomadic Karanogai peoples, should be transferred, in police matters, to the administration of the Terek Cossack Host, and, in judicial matters, to the Vladikavkaz Judicial District. This measure is necessitated by the fact that the Yedisan and Edishkul Karanogais, who roam in the rear of the Cossack settlements, persistently engage in horse theft and the pilfering of livestock from Cossack farms, thereby inflicting substantial damage on Cossack agriculture. The court and principal administration of the Karanogais are presently located in Stavropol, so distant from the Terek Host – particularly the former Greben villages – that Cossacks often forgo initiating legal proceedings for restitution of stolen property, rather than expending time and funds on a journey of 400–500 versts to Stavropol for that purpose. Therefore, subordinating the Karanogais to the same administrative and judicial authorities as the Terek Cossacks would confer substantial benefits in terms of property security, and consequently, the welfare of the Cossack population, as well as curbing Karanogai theft."[3]

It is noteworthy that this excerpt from the memorandum suggests that both Dondukov and his immediate entourage evidently lacked a precise understanding of the actual conditions in the Karanogai Pristavstvo. For instance, the memorandum failed to distinguish between the Yedisan and Edishkul Nogais and the Karanogais proper. Evidently, the commander-in-chief's office had overlooked the fact that the Edishkul Nogais had been transferred from the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Achikulak pristavstvo as early as 1862 [11]. Moreover, there was no necessity to subordinate the Karanogais to the Vladikavkaz Judicial District, as they were already under its jurisdiction.

On August 28, 1883, Emperor Alexander III approved the commander-in-chief's Most Loyal Memorandum, thereby authorizing the establishment of a special commission to examine the transformation

1 Memorandum on the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts in Connection with the Neighboring Alien Population // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 272–274.
2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

of the administration of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts.[4] In December 1883, the commission commenced its deliberations in Vladikavkaz, convening in the district court building. According to the minutes of the commission's meeting dated January 12, 1884, its members were tasked with devising a plan for reforming the Cossack administration to foster conditions conducive to "maintaining the military significance of the Cossack Hosts in the sense of combat and defensive state power."[5]

Notably, the commission regarded the subordination of the entire population of the Terek and Kuban oblasts – encompassing both Russian nonresidents and "aliens" such as highlanders and nomads – to the Cossack military administration as the principal condition for preserving the Cossacks' military significance. The commission deemed it especially critical to place the highlanders and nomads under Cossack control, attributing to them the primary cause of the "lack of personal and property security" in the Terek Oblast. Accordingly, the commission advanced the following reform proposals: 1) the elimination of the mixed administrative system, with the transfer of control over the Kuban and Terek oblasts to the Cossack military administration; 2) a prohibition on aliens settling in Cossack villages; 3) the establishment of robust police authority over the highland population of the Terek Oblast; and 4) measures to disarm the highland population in the near term.[6]

Among the proposed measures, the Karanogais were not mentioned, as the matter of subordinating them to the police oversight of the Terek Cossack Host administration required negotiation with the Stavropol provincial authorities. This issue was addressed during a meeting on January 26, 1884, which featured a report from Stavropol Governor K. L. Zisserman. Notably, in presenting arguments for the transfer of the pristavstvo, the governor emphasized not the necessity for enhanced police control owing to purportedly frequent instances of livestock theft by nomads from Cossack holdings, but rather the extensive economic and land connections between the Karanogais and the Terek Oblast, as opposed to the Stavropol Governorate. The governor highlighted the evident administrative inconveniences of overseeing the pristavstvo from Stavropol, owing to the considerable distance, as well as the longstanding judicial subordination of the Karanogais to the Vladikavkaz District Court.[7] His report elaborated: "The said pristavstvo constitutes the most remote eastern corner of the Stavropol Governorate, embraced from the south and east by the lands of the Terek Cossacks; the Karanogais roam within the borders of the pristavstvo in summer; in winter, they all reside within the Terek Oblast, on Cossack lands along the Terek River or along the shores of the Caspian Sea. Such seasonal migration of residents from one governorate to another impedes police supervision over them, which – given the savagery of the people – is exceedingly necessary. Moreover, all the material interests of the Karanogais gravitate toward the city of Kizlyar and the Cossack villages… Thus, the Karanogai Pristavstvo maintains only an external connection with the Stavropol Governorate, subordinating here to the provincial authorities, and therefore all of the above indicates the need to separate it from this governorate and incorporate it into the Terek Oblast…"[8]

The commission members, concurring with the governor's assessment, deemed it advisable to record in the minutes that "the interests of the Cossacks would undoubtedly benefit from the subordination of the said nomads to a single police authority, as it would afford the nomads fewer opportunities to conceal cattle stolen from the Cossacks in territories under another police jurisdiction."[9] Nevertheless, the cursory treatment of this matter by both the governor and the commission – coupled with their primary emphasis on the economic interdependence between the Karanogais and the Cossacks – suggests that skirmishes over cattle rustling were episodic, rather than symptomatic of any acute social conflict.

Despite the compelling arguments advanced in the report of the Stavropol Governor, the commission elected to proceed cautiously by instructing two of its members, A. I. Bakradze and S. I. Pisarev, to compile additional information on the Karanogais.[10] Having promptly assembled the necessary data, they presented the commission with a special memorandum on February 23, 1884, the contents of which substantiated K. L.

4 Copy of the report of the head of the Main Directorate of Cossack Hosts, Major General Narbut, to the commander-in-chief of the civilian unit in the Caucasus dated September 3, 1883 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, l. 275.
5 Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 12, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 156–156.
6 Ibid.
7 Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 26, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 162v–163v.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.

Zisserman's assessment of the close economic and land ties between the Karanogais and the Terek Cossacks, identifying this interdependence as the foremost justification for transferring the pristavstvo. In particular, the memorandum stated: "The lack of convenient places for grazing livestock and the scarcity of water in the steppe they occupy compel the Karanogais to roam on the lands of private owners, stanitsa and rural communities, and state-owned quitrent plots in the Kizlyar District, either for a special fee or under other conditions. The number of nomads in the Terek Oblast reaches 2½ thousand kibitkas; of these, only the wealthier ones migrate to the Karanogai steppes in spring to protect their livestock from gadflies and mosquitoes, while the majority remain year-round in the Terek Oblast; some are hired as laborers, herdsmen, and shepherds, while others engage in cultivating gardens in Kizlyar and villages along the Terek."[11]

Thus, the reform of the administration of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts, initiated in 1883 by Dondukov, was designed to safeguard the interests of the Caucasian Cossacks as a distinct military estate. Given the close economic ties between the Karanogais and the Terek Cossacks, the Terek Cossack administration proposed incorporating the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast. Notably, the primary impetus was not the suppression of nomad "predation," but rather the necessity of comprehensive administrative control over the Karanogais to effectively protect the broader economic interests of the Terek Cossacks in the Kizlyar District. From the Karanogais' perspective, the reform's advantages were perceived to lie in the transfer of the functions and prerogatives of the chief bailiff – tasked by law with "protecting the rights and property of aliens" – to the ataman of the Kizlyar District, who was situated proximally in Kizlyar rather than in remote Stavropol.[12]

The commission resolved the matter of the pristavstvo at its meeting on February 23, 1884, the minutes of which recorded: "Then, turning to the question of the Karanogai Pristavstvo , the commission, having reviewed the explanatory memorandum prepared on this subject and appended hereto, resolved to approve the incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo – as proposed in minutes No. 12 – into the administration of the Terek Cossack Host, in the manner suggested by the Stavropol Governor, with the administration of the pristavstvo assigned to the Kizlyar-Grebenskii District, the ataman of which shall be vested, with respect to the said pristavstvo, with the rights of the chief bailiff of the Muslim peoples of the Stavropol Governorate; the expenses for maintaining the said pristavstvo shall be fully allocated to the same sources as at present, and in the manner recommended by the subcommittee."[13]

Allocation of the "common Mohammedan capital of nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate" in 1889

The draft prepared by the commission for the transformation of the administration of the Kuban and Terek oblasts, incorporating amendments proposed by Dondukov, was reviewed by the ministries over the course of three years. Following successive approvals and revisions, the project was examined and endorsed by the State Council on November 28, 1887, and subsequently ratified by Emperor Alexander III on March 21, 1888.

The "Statute on the Administration of the Kuban and Terek Oblasts and the Black Sea District" addressed the Karanogai Pristavstvo as follows: "II. The Karanogai Pristavstvo shall be transferred from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast, with the aliens inhabiting it retaining, for the time being, the benefits granted to them for military service"; "XIII. The capital of the Karanogai people, after separating it from the general Mohammedan capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate, shall be incorporated into the special funds of the Ministry of War, with all income derived from the monetary collection of duties levied on the Karanogai people pursuant to Article 572 of the Statute on the Administration of Alien People being converted into this capital, excluding the amount allocated to the state treasury for the maintenance of the administration of the Terek Oblast"; and "XIV. The Minister of War is permitted to submit for the consideration of the State Council: a) in agreement with the Minister of State Domains – proposals regarding the portion of the total Muslim capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate to be allocated to the capital of the Karanogai people proper" [12].

11 Memorandum on Nomadic Aliens of the Stavropol Governate, Cconstituting the Karanogai Pristavstvo // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, l. 329.
12 Ibid.
13 Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 26, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 184–184v.

As evident from the text of the statute, the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast necessitated the allocation, from the "total Muslim capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate," of the portion attributable directly to the Karanogais. This capital had been established in 1852 by order of the Governor-General of the Caucasus, Prince M. S. Vorontsov. According to information furnished to the Minister of War by the Ministry of State Domains, the capital had been augmented over time from the following sources: "a) 68,896 rubles 64¼ kopecks, contributed by the Kalauso-Dzhemboyluk Nogais who emigrated to Turkey, from 1848 to 1860, in lieu of their in-kind duty, which entailed the annual transportation of government provisions from the Podpolnaya pier on the Caspian Sea, in the amount of 7,280 quarters; b) the balance of 17,000 rubles due annually in the form of runs, for the transportation of 40,000 quarters of provisions for the Karanogai, Yedisan, Edishkul, and Dzhemboyluk Nogais; c) the remainder of the fee collected from all Stavropol Muslim aliens for the maintenance of the administration; d) interest on the capital as it was invested in government securities, and other minor sources."[14]

Since all the nomads of the Stavropol Governorate had contributed to the formation of the capital, the representative of the Ministry of State Domains, State Secretary V. I. Veshnyakov, proposed apportioning it between the Karanogais relocating to the Terek Oblast and the Edishkul and Yedisan Nogais remaining in the Stavropol Governorate, in proportion to the number of male souls recorded in the 1886 family lists. According to these lists, there were 15,569 Karanogais, 9,724 Turkmens, and 9,451 Yedisan, Edishkul, and Dzhemboyluk Nogais. At that time, the Mohammedan public capital totaled only 282,430 rubles 37 kopecks (of which 16,917 rubles 70 kopecks were in cash, 167,950 rubles in interest-bearing securities, and 97,562 rubles 67 kopecks in loans and debts). Consequently, it was resolved to allocate to the Karanogai people from the total capital the sum of 126,632 rubles 2 kopecks.[15] On November 12, 1888, these calculations were approved by the Ministry of War[16]; they were subsequently reviewed by the State Council on February 16, 1889, and ratified by the emperor on March 22, 1889.[17]

The issue of the administrative boundary between the Karanogai and Achikulak pristavstvos, 1889–1907

The incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast also engendered a significant problem concerning the demarcation of pastures between the Karanogai and Achikulak pristavstvos. The first to draw attention to this issue was Stavropol Governor K. L. Zisserman in January 1884. He maintained that the Edishkul people, following the separation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo, should encounter no restrictions in their nomadic migrations, "remaining within the territory of the Stavropol Governorate and, if they migrate to the Terek Oblast, submitting to whatever police supervision is established there, without any payment of duties for the grazing of their livestock."[18]

However, Zisserman's proposal was not endorsed by the Terek authorities. In December 1889, the acting ataman of the Terek Cossack Host, A. M. Smekalov, wrote to the Stavropol governor, N. E. Nikiforaki, underscoring that the system of "free roaming on the lands of other peoples," which had prevailed until 1888, was no longer viable under the new conditions. "At the present time," he observed, "with the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo and the Karanogai people to the Terek Oblast, such difficulties arise in both governance and land use that they prompt urgent requests from the Karanogais and local administration for an immediate end to the joint roaming of the Turkmens and Yedysans with the Karanogais."[19] The ataman insisted that a plan for delineating the boundary between the governorate and the oblast be drafted without delay.

In March 1892, the Commander-in-Chief of the Civil Administration and acting ataman of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts, S. A. Sheremetev, convened a "mixed commission to delimit the territory of the Stavropol

14 On the transfer to the Ministry of War of the portion of the Mohammedan capital of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate allotted to the Karanogais // RGIA. F. 1152, inv. 11, file 55, ll. 14–14v.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid.
17 Copy of the Highest Decree on the Implementation of the Opinion of the State Council dated March 22, 1889 // RGIA. F. 1152, inv. 11, file 55, ll. 10–12v.
18 Journal of the Commission for the Administrative Transformation of the Caucasian Cossack Hosts. January 26, 1884 // RGIA. F. 1149, inv. 10, file 88, ll. 162v–163.
19 Letter from the Head of the Terek Oblast and Acting Ataman, Lieutenant General A. M. Smekalov, to the Stavropol Governor. December 18, 1889 // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, ll. 22–22v.

Governorate and the Terek Oblast." The instructions he issued to the commission specified that "the commission's main task is to establish the border between the Stavropol Governorate and Terek Oblast in order to halt their joint nomadic migrations." The commander urged the commission to "induce the nomads to reach a voluntary agreement,"[20] an objective that proved unattainable in practice. The commission's deliberations were severely hampered by inaccurate maps and the intricate land relations prevailing in the Nogai Steppe. Consequently, in 1892, an acute conflict erupted between the authorities of the Stavropol Governorate and the Terek Oblast, precipitated by an attempt to demarcate the border directly on the ground, as the 1885 map proved unreliable in depicting old and new settlements – key landmarks for delineating the administrative boundary.[21]

Finally, in May 1897, the commission succeeded in drafting a plan for land distribution: 1,032,994 desiatines to the Karanogai Pristavstvo; 545,974 desiatines to the Achikulak pristavstvo; and 614,832 desiatines to the Turkmen pristavstvo. However, the chief bailiff of the nomadic peoples of the Stavropol Governorate, Lieutenant Colonel M. E. Konevsky, raised vehement objections to the plan in a special memorandum. He argued: "The population of the pristavstvos in question – Achikulak, Turkmen, and the former Karanogai – possesses, as indicated in the data submitted to the commission, 8,322 camels, 30,715 horses, 71,921 heads of cattle, and 257,957 sheep. In total, the Achikulak, Turkmen, and Karanogai collectively hold 368,915 head of large and small livestock, which necessitate an adequate number of watering places, particularly in the locations where nomads seek shelter for them during winter. In my view, the commission should regard these fundamental needs of the nomadic stockbreeder as one of the core economic principles guiding the distribution of lands among the individual districts of all three pristavstvos, given that nomads derive their livelihood exclusively from one form of economy – livestock husbandry. Yet, as evident from the minutes of May 10, the commission, neglecting the foregoing considerations, adopted an entirely arbitrary metric for land allocation, based on the ratio of one territory's area to a unit area of another, and incorporated into its calculations the total number of aliens and Kalmyks residing in the Terek Oblast, thereby arriving at an erroneous conclusion that could engender an untenable living situation for the nomads."[22]

Ultimately, neither the commission operating from 1892 to 1898 nor the 1903 commission succeeded in reaching a decision on the equitable distribution of land between the two pristavstvos. The reasons for this impasse were articulated with precision in a special memorandum by Stavropol Governor B. M. Yanushkevich in 1907: "The fact is that the lands utilized by the nomadic Turkmens, Edishkuls, and Karanogais, despite their vast extent, cannot, when considered in isolation by district, furnish sufficient forage and watering places for the livestock of these tribes, which represents their sole means of subsistence. … In view of this, both the alien and provincial administrations of the Stavropol Governorate have, over the past 10–15 years, maintained the view that the establishment of any artificial border to delimit the nomadic ranges of one or another alien tribe is exceedingly perilous and cannot be justified by administrative convenience."[23]

Secondary literature asserts that the administrative boundary issue was ultimately resolved in 1909 [9]. However, no legislative enactments confirming a resolution in that year or thereafter have been identified. It may be presumed that the boundary was established de facto, predicated on prevailing economic practices. Yet, no archival administrative acts substantiating this have thus far been located.

Consequences of the incorporation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast

Justifying the need for the reform, Prince A. M. Dondukov-Korsakov argued that incorporating the Karanogai Pristavstvo into the Terek Oblast would curtail criminality among the nomads. In reality, the opposite

20 Instructions for the Mixed Commission on the Delimitation of the Territory of the Stavropol Governorate and Terek Oblast and the Distribution of Lands among the Nomadic Muslim Aliens Inhabiting the Limits of the Aforesaid Governorate and Oblast // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, l. 42.

21 Report from the Administration of the Kizlyar District of the Terek Oblast to the Topographer of the Caucasian Military-Topographical Department, Major General A. Kalusovsky // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, l. 57v.

22 Opinion of the Member of the Commission, Chief Bailiff of the Nomadic Peoples of the Stavropol Governorate, Lieutenant Colonel M. E. Konevsky, on the Minutes of the Mixed Commission Held on May 9, 10, and 11, 1897 // GASK. F. 249, inv. 2, file 1078, ll. 142–143.

23 Memorandum of Stavropol Governor B. M. Yanushkevich on the Administrative Affiliation of the Karanogai Pristavstvo. May 23, 1907 // GASK. F. 101, inv. 4, file 3212, ll. 11v–13.

occurred. Following the reform, conflicts intensified not only between the Terek Cossacks and the Karanogais but also among the nomads themselves – the Karanogais, Yedisan and Edishkul Nogais, and Turkmens. Governor B. M. Yanushkevich explicitly highlighted this development: "The nomadic Turkmens, Nogais, and Karanogais – who had coexisted in complete harmony for two and a half centuries, bound inextricably by tribe, religion, morals, age-old customs, and even kinship…, and who regarded the steppes as a domain of common and unimpeded use – began, after the administrative secession of the Karanogais, frequently to displace one another from their shared nomadic ranges, resorting to wholly arbitrary interpretations of rights predicated on nothing deeper than the disputants' affiliation with different provinces. On this basis, interminable disputes erupted, accompanied by the seizure of livestock from one another, the grazing of hayfields, and so forth…"[24]

Among the negative consequences of transferring the Karanogai Pristavstvo to the Terek Oblast, Yanushkevich identified not only the escalation of conflicts but also the evident stagnation in the socio-economic development of the Karanogai people during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. "Without precise official data on the state of the Karanogai people's social economy," the governor observed, "and relying solely on the oral accounts of neighboring Nogais, it must be acknowledged that it has not achieved the same progress as that observed in the Mohammedan steppes of the Stavropol Governorate."[25] F. I. Kapelgorodsky likewise remarked on this: "The separation of the Karanogai from the Stavropol Governorate initially brought only detriment to the Karanogai people. After all, the Stavropol Governorate maintained its own specialized administration for aliens. In addition to administrative officials, there were agronomists, livestock specialists, foresters, veterinarians, hydraulic engineers, and statisticians. Life took its course. The Stavropol nomads gradually settled on the land, with active support from the administration. Artesian wells were dug in Nogai settlements, schools were built, and sand stabilization was undertaken. Fine buildings were erected at the alien camps, medical and veterinary clinics were established, breeding nurseries were set up, and gardens and parks were planted. The Karanogai had not known or experienced anything like this for a long time" [8].

Thus, it must be acknowledged that the transfer of the Karanogai Pristavstvo from the Stavropol Governorate to the Terek Oblast constituted an error on the part of the authorities. This administrative reform formed part of a broader reorganization of the governance of the Kuban and Terek oblasts, whose principal objective was to preserve the Cossacks as a distinct military estate, while safeguarding their economic, administrative, and political interests. At the same time, the interests of the Karanogai people were largely disregarded. The primary adverse consequence of this reform was the artificial fragmentation and disruption of the integrated economic complex of the Nogai Steppe, which had hitherto been shared among all the nomadic peoples of the region. This development, in turn, precipitated, on the one hand, heightened conflicts among the nomads and, on the other, marked stagnation in the socio-economic development of the Karanogai people.

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24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.

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Research paper

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SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE NORTHEAST CAUCASUS IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Abstract. This article examines the socioeconomic development of the peoples of the Northeast Caucasus during the first half of the nineteenth century. Employing a comparative historical method, the study highlights both commonalities and regional specificities in economic organization and social stratification. The analysis demonstrates that while the regional economy was fundamentally agrarian, distinct zonal specializations emerged: livestock farming dominated the mountainous regions, whereas arable agriculture prevailed in the plains. Artisanal production reached varying degrees of sophistication, particularly in wool processing—yielding cloth, carpets, rugs, felt, and saddlebags—and metallurgy, with highlanders renowned for manufacturing bladed weapons and firearms. Commercial activity evolved primarily through barter, characterized by the exchange of agricultural surplus for handcrafted goods. Key trading centers included Terek for Dagestani populations and Vladikavkaz for the Ingush. In Dagestan, commercial expansion was further supported by road construction and the establishment of exchange houses, with Derbent playing a pivotal role as a maritime trade link to Astrakhan. The analysis further delineates the heterogeneous social structures of the region. In Dagestan, established feudal relations created a hierarchy comprising rulers (*shamkhals*, *khans*), free uzdens, dependent peasantry, and slaves. In contrast, Chechen and Ingush societies were characterized by the disintegration of traditional clan systems, consisting primarily of free community members with a limited slave population. The study also addresses the consequences of Tsarist military expansion, which subjected the local population to intensified oppression through land confiscation, the destruction of settlements and agriculture, and economic blockades. These punitive measures severely disrupted regional economic development and precipitated armed resistance. The article concludes that while the peoples of the Northeast Caucasus shared a common economic foundation in agriculture and handicrafts, their social trajectories diverged significantly, ranging from the feudal stratification of Dagestan to the transforming tribal structures of the Chechens and Ingush.

Keywords: economy; social stratification; feudal oppression; arrival of tsarist troops; punitive expeditions

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Исследовательская статья

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СОЦИАЛЬНО-ЭКОНОМИЧЕСКОЕ ПОЛОЖЕНИЕ СЕВЕРО-ВОСТОЧНОГО КАВКАЗА В ПЕРВОЙ ПОЛОВИНЕ XIX в.

Аннотация. В статье рассматривается социально-экономическое развитие народов Северо-Восточного Кавказа в первой половине XIX в. Цель статьи – показать общее и особенное в развитии их экономики и социальной стратификации. Для этого нами использовался сравнительно исторический метод исследования, анализировался уровень экономического и социального развития народов Северо-Восточного Кавказа. Отмечается, что основой экономики у всех указанных народов было сельское хозяйство. В горных районах развивалось животноводство, на равнине – земледелие. В разной степени получили развитие кустарные промыслы и ремесло, население обрабатывало шерсть, изготавливая из нее сукно, ковры, паласы, войлоки, переметные сумы, бурки. Заметное место занимала металлообработка, горцы производили холодное и огнестрельное оружие. Развитие получила торговля, она носила меновой характер, продукцию сельского хозяйства меняли на ремесленные изделия. Крупным торговым центром для дагестанцев был Терский городок, для ингушей – Владикавказ. В Дагестане развитию торговли способствовало строительство дорог, открытие меновых дворов. Большую роль в торговле играл Дербент, морским сообщением связанный с Астраханью. В статье показана социальная структура народов Северо-Восточного Кавказа. Сделан вывод о том, что она отличалась у разных этносов. Так, в Дагестане развивались феодальные отношения, были феодальные правители: шамхалы, ханы и т.д., были свободные уздени и зависимое крестьянство, а также рабы. У чеченцев и ингушей шло разложение родового строя, население представляло собой свободных общинников, было небольшое количество рабов. Отмечается, что с приходом царских войск, население стало испытывать на себе дополнительный гнет: войска захватывали их земли, сжигали или разрушали аулы, вытаптывали посевы, вырубали сады, осуществляли экономическую блокаду гор, что отрицательно сказывалось на развитии экономики народов Северо-Восточного Кавказа и вызывало их вооруженное сопротивление. Сделан вывод о том, что в развитии экономики народов Северо-Восточного Кавказа много общего: они занимались сельским хозяйством и кустарными промыслами. Социальная стратификация была разной: в Дагестане развивались феодальные отношения, у чеченцев и ингушей шло разложение родового строя.

Ключевые слова: экономика; социальная стратификация; феодальный гнет; приход царских войск; карательные экспедиции

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The first half of the nineteenth century was a pivotal period in the history of the peoples of the Northeast Caucasus. Under the Treaty of Gulistan (1813), Dagestan and Transcaucasia were formally annexed to the Russian Empire. In practice, however, effective control was established only later, after Russia's victory in the protracted and costly Caucasian War.

The Northeast Caucasus had long drawn the interest of Russian and European travelers. One early visitor was J. G. Herber, who toured the Eastern Caucasus in the first third of the eighteenth century.

Sources produced during the first half of the nineteenth century are of particular value. As Russia prepared to annex the Northeast Caucasus, systematic study of the region and its inhabitants became a priority. Before launching military operations, the imperial command required detailed intelligence on local routes, their suitability for troop movements, and the potential scale of armed resistance from the male population. Such information was gathered primarily by Russian officers [1, p. 5].

Data gathered during the first half of the nineteenth century on the peoples of the Northeast Caucasus remain an essential source for studying their economic and social development. Among the early nineteenth-century authors who provided valuable evidence are A. M. Butskovsky [2], N. F. Rtishchev [3], S. Bronevsky [4], N. F. Grabovsky [5], and U. Laudaev [6].

These works contain detailed information on the natural, climatic, and geographical conditions of the Northeast Caucasus and their influence on economic activities and social relations.

Later historians and ethnographers relied heavily on these contemporary accounts when examining nineteenth-century socio-economic change in the region. Notable examples include studies by Kh.-M. O. Khashaev [7; 8], I. R. Nakhshunov [9], R. M. Magomedov [10], B. G. Alieva [11, p. 182], M. Z. O. Osmanov [12, p. 59], and A. I. Khasbulatova [13]. The socio-economic development of the Northeast Caucasus in the first half of the nineteenth century has also been addressed in several works [14; 15; 16].

Natural, climatic, and geographical conditions profoundly shape the character and tempo of a people's development, affecting economic activities, political organization, cultural practices, social structure, and demographic patterns. The Northeast Caucasus is a region of sharp environmental contrasts, dominated by mountainous terrain, with many peaks permanently covered by snow and glaciers.

Along the Caspian coast of Dagestan stretches a narrow lowland, in places only 2–3 km wide (e.g., near Derbent). This narrow corridor was blocked in the sixth century by the Sasanian ruler Khosrow I Anushirvan, who built a major defensive complex; its walls extended from the Naryn-Kala fortress on the hillside down to the sea.

Much of Dagestan lies on the northeastern slopes and spurs of the Greater Caucasus range. The territory can be divided into four main zones: the coastal lowland; the foothill zone; Inner Mountain Dagestan; and High Mountain Dagestan. The principal rivers – the Sulak in the north and the Samur in the south – played a crucial role in the economic life of the local population.

During the period under review, the Chechens, like the peoples of Dagestan, inhabited both mountainous and plain areas. In the mountains, Chechen territory occupied the eastern sector of the North Caucasus.

Chechnya, too, can be divided into four zones: plain, foothill, mountain, and high-mountain.

The Chechens bordered the Kabardians, Ossetians, various Dagestani peoples, and Georgians. Conditions were most severe in the high mountains, where rocky peaks remained snow-covered for much of the year.

The Ingush faced similarly difficult circumstances. As N. F. Grabovsky observed, the Ingush possessed less arable land than other peoples of the Terek region, their territory consisting largely of barren rocky ridges [5, p. 35].

These harsh mountain conditions and acute shortage of cultivable land prompted large-scale out-migration beginning in the eighteenth century. Both Ingush and Chechens moved downhill to the more fertile lowlands and plains, a process that significantly altered their way of life and socio-economic organization.

Conditions in Dagestan differed in some way. Its peoples had long adapted to difficult environmental constraints by constructing terraced fields and practicing transhumant pastoralism. Highland communities also exploited the terrain for defense: auls were typically sited on steep cliffs or narrow ridges, rendering them natural fortresses largely inaccessible to outsiders.

Natural and climatic conditions likewise influenced the character and outlook of the region's inhabitants, producing distinct traits among highlanders and plains-dwellers alike.

Centuries of rigorous mountain life fostered qualities of diligence, endurance, and patience among highland populations. Survival in such an environment demanded exceptional physical and psychological resilience.

In addition to natural and climatic conditions, geographical location strongly influenced the socio-economic development of the Northeast Caucasus peoples. The region, including Dagestan, lies along the Caspian Corridor – a narrow coastal route on the western shore of the Caspian Sea. This corridor, used by early human migrations from Western Asia into southeastern Europe, later served as a major transit artery and attracted successive waves of conquerors, among them Roman legions, Sasanian Persia, Arab armies, Mongol-Tatar forces, and the troops of Nadir Shah.

Thus, environmental conditions and strategic geography profoundly shaped the historical trajectory and economic systems of the Northeast Caucasus over centuries.

The foundation of economic life was agriculture, comprising two primary branches: crop cultivation and animal husbandry.

Dagestan ethnographers note that nineteenth-century farming practices in the region, especially in the mountains, retained techniques developed in antiquity. In highland Dagestan, animal husbandry – mainly sheep breeding – was dominant, though small-scale crop cultivation persisted. In the lowlands, by contrast, arable farming predominated, together with the raising of draft cattle [12, p. 59].

Even in mountainous areas where livestock rearing prevailed, households sought to maintain at least a modest plot of arable land; its possession remained a marker of family prosperity [17, p. 234].

Thus, both crop cultivation and animal husbandry were practiced throughout Dagestan, though in varying proportions.

In the first half of the nineteenth century, the area devoted to grain production in the Dagestan plains and foothills expanded steadily through forest clearance and the construction of irrigation systems. The principal crops were winter wheat, barley, millet, maize, and rice.

In southern Dagestan, the Shamkhalate of Tarki, and Zasulak Kumykia, madder was also cultivated. Its roots yielded a red dye used for cotton textiles and wool yarn in carpet production.

Rising demand from Russia's expanding cotton industry increased the market for natural dyes, and Dagestani madder successfully competed with the traditional Dutch product. Russian manufacturers prized its quality. Because madder was highly profitable, it progressively displaced grain crops, orchards, and vineyards. Its cultivation generated substantial income for landowners and seasonal employment for labourers from mountain villages, who worked here from spring until autumn harvest.

The tsarist administration promoted horticulture and viticulture in Dagestan. In the southern coastal zone, grapevines of Crimean and French varieties were introduced. In the mountainous interior, fruit growing expanded along river valleys.

Major centers of mountain-valley horticulture included the Lezgin villages of Akhty and Kasumkent; the Dargin villages of Khadzhalmakhi, Kuppa, and other settlements of the Tsudakhar Union; the village of Kaitag; the Avar villages of Igali, Gidatl, Arakani, Botlikh, and Agvali; as well as numerous Tabasaran and Kumyk communities.

Residents of foothill and valley villages exchanged fruit for grain produced in the lowlands. Fruit was transported by donkeys to regional markets such as Karabudakhkent, Gubden, Nizhny Dzhengutai, and Kakashura. During the first half of the nineteenth century, fruit trade remained confined to the internal Dagestan market.

Vegetable gardening also developed during this period, though primarily for household consumption.

Dagestan's distinctive natural and climatic conditions gave rise to a characteristic form of transhumant pastoralism. In summer, sheep were grazed on highland pastures; in winter, they were driven to the plains. This long-established practice required coordinated effort. Owners of small herds therefore formed collective units known as *kosh*. Members jointly constructed sheep pens, paid rental fees for pasture and sheds, and stockpiled fodder against severe weather. Shepherds, whose work was both arduous and vital, enjoyed high social esteem.

The Chechens, like other Northeast Caucasian peoples, practiced agriculture despite limited arable land. To expand cultivable area, they cleared the abundant forests covering their territory – a labour-intensive process that preceded plowing and sowing.

In the mountainous parts of Dagestan, highlanders traditionally constructed terraces on steep slopes. Soil was carried up from river valleys and spread in thin layers over prepared surfaces. These terraces, built and maintained across generations, were carefully cleared of stones and reinforced with stone retaining walls to prevent erosion by rainwater.

Horticulture was a significant traditional occupation among the Chechens, with fruit sales providing an important source of cash income. Recognizing this, Russian commanders deliberately targeted orchards during military campaigns, destroying them alongside settlements in order to undermine Chechen economic resilience [16, p. 395].

Animal husbandry also played a central role in the Chechen economy. Cattle supplied milk, oxen served as draft animals for transport and ploughing, and sheep were raised both in the mountains and on the plains. Horse breeding existed but remained limited; the forested Chechen lowlands offered little open pasture suitable for large herds. Consequently, most horses were purchased from Kabarda [18, p. 43].

In the nineteenth century, economic specialization emerged in Chechnya: sheep herding predominated in the mountains, while the plains combined arable farming, horticulture, and sheep raising.

Throughout the Northeast Caucasus, handicrafts and cottage industries were well developed to varying degrees during this period. The Ingush specialized in woollen textiles, the Chechens in metalworking. Some products met household needs; others were sold at local markets. The relocation of Chechen and Ingush populations to the plains increased agricultural productivity and stimulated craft production, which in turn promoted trade. As N. F. Grabovsky observed, “the principal trading centre for the Ingush was Vladikavkaz” [19, p. 32]. Other important markets included the settlement of Terek, the fortresses of Kizlyar and Mozdok, and large Chechen villages such as Gudermes, Dargo, and Chechen-Aul, as well as nearby Cossack settlements. Commerce between highlanders and the Russian population along the Terek grew steadily and proved mutually beneficial. This trade, however, was repeatedly disrupted by restrictive Russian policies. Traders were required to obtain special permits, without which commerce was forbidden. From the late eighteenth century onward, such controls tightened, especially for the Chechens. Both highlanders and Russian settlers suffered economic losses as a result. Repeated Chechen petitions to the Caucasian administration for unrestricted duty-free trade with Russians went unheeded [16, p. 400].

Despite these restrictions, signs of rapprochement between Russians and Chechens became evident from the early nineteenth century [20, p. 93].

In Dagestan, trade expanded with the construction of roads and the establishment of designated exchange (barter) yards. The Amiradzhiyurt yard was especially significant for highlanders, attracting around 3,000 Dagestan and Jewish traders annually. They brought agricultural produce and handicrafts and purchased manufactured goods such as cotton textiles, mirrors, glassware, paper, soap, and tea.

Derbent, with its maritime links to Astrakhan, served as a major commercial hub. Its importance grew further after 1848, when the “Kavkaz i Merkuryi” company began regular steamship services along the Caspian and Volga. Large quantities of madder were shipped from Derbent to Astrakhan and onward to the Makaryev Fair in Nizhny Novgorod for purchase by Russian cotton-mill owners. Other exports included wine, nuts, and handicrafts. In return, factory-made goods – glassware, porcelain, metal products, tea, sugar, and more – flowed from Astrakhan to Derbent.

In the mountainous and foothill zones, trade centred on weekly bazaars in major villages such as Akhty, Kumukh, and Khunzakh. Highlanders exchanged agricultural produce and handicrafts for Russian manufactured goods, timber, and other commodities. Dargin districts hosted the greatest number of such bazaars. Precise figures for the total number of bazaars in Dagestan during the first half of the nineteenth century are unavailable.

In Dagestan during this period, society was divided into two main classes: feudal lords and peasants. The feudal class comprised titled rulers – the Shamkhal of Tarki, the princes of Zasulak Kumykia, the khans of Avar,

Kazikumukh, Mekhtuli, and Kyura, the utsmiy of Kaitag, the rulers of Tabasaran, the sultans of Tsakhur and Utamysh, the ruler of the Derbent domain – and the independent Kumyk *biys* who headed separate *biyliks*. Within the broader feudal estate were ranked groups such as *beks*, *chanka-beks*, *karachi-beks*, *chanka*, *sala-uzdens* (or high-ranking uzdens), and the Muslim clergy [21].

The peasant class was stratified into free uzdens, dependent *uzdens*, *rayats*, *chagars*, and patriarchal slaves.

In highland Dagestan, the most numerous peasant group consisted of uzdens. Unlike in the lowlands, mountain uzdens were not subdivided into ranked categories; they were formally equal and personally free [14, p. 61].

In the lowland and foothill zones, the peasantry exhibited greater differentiation and varying degrees of dependence on feudal lords. Categories included *dogherek-uzdeni* (ordinary uzdens), *azat-uzdens* (freedmen), and *chagars* (serfs). At the bottom of the social hierarchy stood a small number of slaves captured during raids on neighbouring territories. Slave trading persisted in Dagestan at the beginning of the nineteenth century but declined sharply after Russian annexation in the first quarter of the century.

The social structures of other Northeast Caucasian peoples differed from that of Dagestan, and nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars have offered divergent interpretations.

Many contemporary sources describe Chechen society as stratified into free uzdens, dependent *lai* and *yasirs*, and clergy, with the uzdens occupying the dominant position. A. P. Berger, however, maintained that the Chechens constituted a single class of free persons – uzdens – among whom neither feudal privileges nor relations of dependence existed [22, p. 71].

E. A. Borchashvili offered a contrasting interpretation. He argued that feudal forms of exploitation had already emerged in Chechen society by the early nineteenth century, subjecting formerly free peasants to new dependencies. Although these peasants continued to call themselves uzdens, they were only partially free members of their communities [20, p. 157].

During the period under review, the Muslim clergy exercised noticeable influence over many aspects of social life among both Chechens and Ingush, though this influence remained weaker than in Dagestan or Kabarda.

This relative weakness can be attributed to the late adoption of Islam in Chechnya (sixteenth to eighteenth centuries) compared with Dagestan and to the still-limited degree of social stratification. The breakdown of the tribal system remained incomplete.

At the bottom of the Chechen social hierarchy, as in Dagestan, stood slaves. These were typically foreigners captured during raids on neighbouring territories and regarded as the most valuable form of war booty. Slaves were divided into two categories: long-term captives (lais), over whom owners exercised full control, and recent captives (yasirs), who were treated better because they or their families might still pay ransom.

Eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century sources indicate that the Ingush had no hereditary princes. Instead, they elected elders from prominent families to govern their societies. As I. A. Gildenshtedt observed during his visit to the Northeast Caucasus in the 1770s, the Ingush possessed no formal nobility, yet they typically chose elders and judges from a few wealthy and respected families. Governance and adjudication followed ancient customary law [25, p. 83].

Thus, when Russia began its rapid advance into the North Caucasus from the second half of the eighteenth century with the aim of conquest, it encountered peoples whose economies centered on agriculture and animal husbandry and who stood at different stages of social development. Some were evolving feudal relations; others were still undergoing the dissolution of the tribal system.

In Dagestan at this time, uzden and rayat communities were actively resisting feudal obligations. Under these conditions, Russian imperial policy consistently supported the feudal lords, viewing them as essential social allies. By upholding their privileges, the tsarist administration strengthened feudal authority and intensified peasant exploitation. This pattern extended across Dagestan, including highland areas where social stratification had previously been less marked. There, feudal lords increasingly encroached upon the rights of free community members.

Russian expansion in the North Caucasus thus reinforced the position of the feudal class. As I. I. Pokrovsky has shown, tsarist policy deliberately instrumentalised Dagestani feudal lords. It preserved the peasantry's

economic dependence while stripping the lords themselves of political autonomy. Unlike certain other Caucasian elites, Dagestani feudal rulers were not granted equivalence with the Russian nobility. The sole exception was the pro-Russian Shamkhal of Tarki, whose house had maintained long-standing ties with the empire and who received noble status for services rendered during the establishment of Russian rule [26, p. 201].

Before the arrival of Russian forces, highlanders had already resisted exploitation by local feudal lords. Russian conquest made their situation markedly worse. Crops and orchards were destroyed, homes demolished, and land confiscated. Communities were compelled to supply transport and labour for the tsarist army and to construct roads that facilitated deeper military penetration into the mountains. Under A. P. Ermolov, a comprehensive trade and economic blockade was imposed on highland territories: livestock could no longer be driven to kutans, seasonal labour migration was prohibited, and the sale of local products was banned. These measures aimed to force submission but failed to achieve it.

The peasantry therefore suffered simultaneous feudal oppression from local lords and national-colonial oppression from the Russian regime.

Having examined the socio-economic conditions in the Northeast Caucasus during the first half of the nineteenth century, the following conclusions may be drawn:

1. The principal occupations of all peoples in the region – Dagestanis, Chechens, and Ingush – were agriculture, animal husbandry, and handicrafts. Harsh natural and climatic conditions prompted large-scale Chechen and Ingush migration from the mountains to the lowlands beginning in the early eighteenth century.

2. Levels of social stratification varied significantly across the region. Dagestan exhibited well-developed feudal relations, with a ruling stratum of shamkhals, khans, beks, and other lords, and a peasantry divided into free uzdens and dependent rayats. Among Chechens and Ingush, by contrast, the tribal system was still in the process of dissolution; the majority of the population consisted of free community members, with only incipient signs of class differentiation. This, then, was the socio-economic landscape that Russia encountered upon its advance into the Northeast Caucasus.

3. To compel submission, tsarist authorities confiscated land, destroyed crops and orchards, demolished homes, and imposed a stringent trade and economic blockade on highland areas. These measures severely affected the population yet failed to break resistance; the highlanders continued their struggle for independence.

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Research paper

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CONTRACTUAL RELATIONS IN A DAGESTANI AUL: THE JOURNAL OF THE UNCHUKATL RURAL COURT (1898–1900)

Abstract. This article provides a comprehensive source study and textual analysis of a unique historical document: the journal (*defter*) of the rural court of the Dagestani village of Unchukatl, covering the period from November 1898 to May 1900. Containing 520 entries, this manuscript is an invaluable source for microhistory, allowing for a detailed reconstruction of the legal, economic, and social aspects of daily life in a Dagestani aul at the turn of the 20th century. The study includes a statistical analysis of the thematic distribution of transactions and a detailed examination of key document categories. It was found that debt obligations constitute more than half of all records (55.9%), indicating a high level of economic monetization and developed credit relations. A significant share of interest-bearing loans and transactions involving collateral (primarily land) points to the formation of a merchant-lender stratum in the village. Of particular interest are cases where creditors included not only private individuals but also the entire rural community (jama'at) and even the mosque, a practice explained by specific interpretations of Sharia law regarding paper currency. One of the most significant findings is the active participation of women in economic life; they acted as full-fledged legal subjects-creditors, buyers, and sellers-challenging stereotypes of their economic isolation. The article also analyzes contracts of sale, employment, marriage registration, wills, and recognition of property rights. The presence of Russian-language entries made by representatives of the imperial administration demonstrates the deep integration of the aul into the legal space of the Russian Empire and the interaction of traditional norms with imperial legislation.

Keywords: Dagestan; rural court; daftar; legal culture; adat; sharia; socio-economic relations; debt obligations; book culture

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ДОГОВОРНЫЕ ОТНОШЕНИЯ В ДАГЕСТАНСКОМ АУЛЕ: ЖУРНАЛ УНЧУКАТЛИНСКОГО СЕЛЬСКОГО СУДА (1898–1900 гг.)

Аннотация. Статья посвящена комплексному источниковедческому и текстологическому анализу уникального исторического документа – журнала (*дафтара*) сельского суда дагестанского селения Унчукатль за период с ноября 1898 по май 1900 г. Этот манускрипт, содержащий 520 записей, является ценнейшим источником по микроистории, позволяющим детально реконструировать правовые, экономические и социальные аспекты повседневной жизни дагестанского аула на рубеже XIX–XX веков. В ходе исследования проведен статистический анализ тематического распределения сделок и детально изучены ключевые категории документов. Установлено, что более половины всех записей (55,9%) составляют долговые обязательства, что свидетельствует о высоком уровне монетизации экономики и развитых кредитных отношениях. Значительная доля процентных займов и сделок с залогом (преимущественно земли) указывает на формирование в селе торгово-ростовщической прослойки. Особый интерес представляют случаи, когда кредиторами выступали не только частные лица, но и вся сельская община (*джама'ат*) и даже мечеть, что объясняется особенностями интерпретации норм шариата в отношении бумажных денег. Одним из важнейших выводов исследования является фиксация активного участия женщин в хозяйственной жизни: они выступали полноправными субъектами правоотношений в качестве кредиторов, покупателей и продавцов, что ставит под сомнение стереотипы об их экономической изолированности. В статье также анализируются договоры купли-продажи, найма, регистрации браков, завещания и признания прав собственности. Присутствие записей на русском языке, сделанных представителями имперской администрации, демонстрирует глубокую интеграцию аула в правовое пространство Российской империи и взаимодействие традиционных норм с имперским законодательством.

Ключевые слова: Дагестан; сельский суд; дафтар; правовая культура; адат; шариат; социально-экономические отношения; долговые обязательства; книжная культура

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Introduction

Studies of the legal culture of Dagestan in the late 19th and early 20th centuries are quite numerous. The study of the adat codes began already in the second half of the 19th century by A.N. Komarov [1], M.M. Kovalevsky, F.I. Leontovich, and others, and continued during the Soviet period and into the modern period. A significant contribution to the study of the adats of the peoples of Dagestan was made by H.M. Khashaev [2], A.O. Omarov [3], M.A. Aglarov [4], V.O. Bobrovnikov [5; 6], T.M. Aitberov [7] and others. In the last two decades, the study of Dagestan's legal documents has been associated with the study of individual legal discourses, issues of controversy between *alims*, collections of adats, as well as the study of private and business correspondence of Dagestanis [8].

This article provides a comprehensive source study and textual analysis of a unique historical document: the journal (*defter*) of the rural court of the Dagestani village of Unchukatl of Kazikumukh district[1], covering the period from November 1898 to May 1900[2]. It is one of the most complete surviving legal monuments of the turn of the 19th–20th centuries (similar monuments, in incomplete form, are also kept in the Collection of Oriental Manuscripts of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography of Dagestan of the Russian Academy of Sciences), and, accordingly, they have practically not been introduced into scientific use. Special court journals (*defters*) were compiled in Arabic which became the official language of private and business correspondence and legal proceedings in such a multilingual region as Dagestan after its Islamization and Russian Imperial authorities decided to keep its use in the new conditions[3]. The study of these *defters* will provide a much more complete picture of law enforcement practice in Dagestan during the imperial period.

As is known, until 1917 in the Dagestan region there was a system of military-people's government which had a special procedure for legal proceedings. In rural societies, courts of primary instance functioned, which were required to have special court books in which verdicts and contractual acts were to be recorded. The tsarist administration in the Caucasus tried to strictly control law enforcement practices in the region. There are many archival documents in which officials of the Caucasian administration complained about the negligence of rural judges (*qadi*) in maintaining registers.

To better understand the nature and content of the legal relations in the manuscript, brief information should be provided about Unchukatl itself, which is now part of the Laksky district of the Republic of Dagestan. In 1869, according to the population census, there were 151 courtyards in the village[4]. According to some sources, a *madrasa* was opened in Unchukatl in 1911, and a secular school in 1913[5]. The inhabitants of Unchukatl included many famous *alims* and scribes, such as Hajji Mirza b. 'Abd-Allah al-Humchukati, who was a disciple of Muhammad al-Kuduki and Muhammad al-Ubri, Muhammad al-Humchukati al-Gumuki (scribe), and others [for more information, see: 9; 10]. Natives of Unchukatl have long been known for their entrepreneurial spirit and active trade activities.

The manuscript, which covers fifteen months of the life of a Dagestan village at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, is a valuable source for studying legal, economic and social relations in a rural community already under the influence of the Russian Empire, while at the same time preserving elements of the traditional way of life. He is also a vivid example of the external influence on the development of Dagestan's book culture. After the incorporation of this region into the legal space of the Russian Empire, a new tradition of codification of various legal acts emerged in the form of a special collection – *defter*.

Due to the absence of direct written records detailing the daily life of Dagestan villages during the imperial era, this *defter* from Unchukatl serves as a unique source of information that enables us to reconstruct the mechanisms of local legal proceedings, identify the primary types of business transactions, analyze

1 In 2024, Gadis Abdullayevich Gadzhiev, a judge of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation (1991-2023), donated the manuscript to the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography, through our colleague, Dr. Sci, Head the Dep. of Archaeology M.S. Gadzhiev, for which the authors express their deep gratitude. In turn, Gadis Abdullayevich received it from the famous jeweler and collector Alil Shamilevich Akhmedov.

2 Fund of the IHAE DFRC RAS, f. 14, inv. 1, no 3126.

3 In 1860 it was decided by Russian authorities to preserve the judicial system familiar to the residents of the Dagestan region, based on the legal dualism of adat and sharia law, with the gradual addition of elements of imperial legislation.

4 It is known that for their participation in the uprising of 1877, many Unchukatl residents were sent into exile, where many of them died; thus, it can be assumed that by the period under study (1898-1900) the number of houses was less.

5 See: https://web.archive.org/web/20131208143649/http://unchukatl.ru/history2.php (accessed: 15.09.2025)

the participation of different population groups in economic activities, and determine the specifics of debt obligations, sales and purchases, employment, and family relations. Moreover, this *defter* indicates the level of education and literacy in the village.

The purpose of this work is a comprehensive analysis of the structure and content of the defter of the village court of Unchukatl. A combined approach was applied to the processing and primary classification of 520 documents contained in the manuscript. Statistical calculation and thematic distribution of transactions were performed using modern neural network models, which significantly accelerated data processing. All the quantitative results obtained were carefully verified manually by the authors to ensure maximum accuracy.

The analysis includes: a source description of the manuscript, a textual study of key documents, as well as a statistical analysis of the thematic distribution of transactions and a critical assessment of the socio-economic processes reflected in these records. Special attention is paid to identifying the features of law enforcement practice, the interaction of traditional norms and external influences, as well as the role of women in legal relations. The presented data, along with detailed tables and their interpretation, are intended to expand our understanding of the history of Dagestan and the specifics of the functioning of rural communities on the periphery of the Russian Empire at the end of the 19th century.

Source analysis of the manuscript

The manuscript is a book with a 17.5×22 cm hard cardboard binding. The top cover of the binding has an inscription in Arabic:

دفتر معاملات محكمة قرية همچقط
من نيابر ١٨٩٨ إلى ٣٠ ماي ١٩٠٠

which translated as “The Journal of transactions [conducted by] the village court of Unchukatl. From November 1898 to May 30, 1900”. The defter is written in Arabic, in a sweeping *naskh*. The paper stamped “Sergeev Factory [grade] No. 7”. The manuscript has 224 pages. The numbering of the folios has its own peculiarities: it starts from no. 102 and continues in descending order to no. 4. Then follows a new pagination, also in descending order, from no. 18 to no. 6. Several of the last and first pages at the beginning are missing, presumably containing no text. In addition, 4 folios of text were torn out between fol. no. 4 and fol. with a new pagination no. 18, which leads to the loss of documents for 1900 under numbers 26–46.

The folios of the manuscript with the new pagination are distinguished by a more yellow shade of paper and, obviously, were included in the *defter* later, since they were not laced together with the main part. There is a wax seal with minor damage in the upper left corner of the binding. On the first page, in the lower right corner, there is the same seal, but completely preserved. It bears the following inscription: “the seal of the administration of the Kazikumukhsky district”. The seal is applied to the knot of the thread with which the manuscript block is sewn, which confirms its official status. The same page contains the text in Russian: “In the entire book, numbered, laced and stamped with a government seal, there are only one hundred and two folios (102 fol.) of November 18, 1898. The village of Kumukh. For the Executing Chief of the Kazikumukhsky District. His Assistant, Captain Patskhveriya.”[6]

Some additional entries in Russian are present in the manuscript, recording the results of clerical work:

- On fol. 12 (verso), at the end of the last document, dated 1898, it is stated: “From November 1 to December 28, 1898, 50 deals were received. The executive of the Vitskhinsky Naib[7]” with a subsequent signature.
- On fol. 96 (recto), between the documents dated December 24, 1899 and January 1, 1900, there is an entry: “In 1899, only 381 deals were received. The executive of the Vitskhinsky Naib” and a signature.
- On the first page (fol. no. 100, recto) of the new pagination, there is also an entry in Russian: “Eighteen folios have been stitched here on February 22, 1400 – The executive of the Vitskh. Distr.” with the signature.

6 Alexandr Dmitrievich Patskhveriya (Patskhverov), born in 1860 from the hereditary nobility of Tiflis. He was appointed assistant chief of the Kazikumukh district in 1898. In 1901, he was appointed Assistant Chief of the Darginsky district.
7 Unchukatl was a part of the Vitskhin naibity of the Kazikumukh district.

The manuscript contains a total of 520 documents. The numbering of the documents begins with no. 354 and ends with no. 404 for 1898. This is followed by the mentioned Russian text on fol. no. 12. The documents for the following year begin with the new numbering no. 1 and end with no. 381 by the end of 1899, followed by the Russian text. For 1900, the numbering of documents begins again with No. 1 and ends with no. 113. As already noted, the absence of 4 fols. leads to a gap in the numbering of documents for 1900 (no. 26-46).

Thus, despite minor losses, the manuscript is a unique and well-preserved document that reveals the daily life and socio-economic relations of a Dagestani village for fifteen months. It should be emphasized that 15 months is a relatively short period, but the intensity of records (520 documents) compensates for this time limit, presenting a diverse and dense cross-section of the socio-economic life of the Dagestan village.

Each document ends with a date according to the Julian calendar, the signature of the court, which stands for أهل محكمة همچقط "members of the court of Unchukatl", and six round official seals: five purple seals belong to rural judges (in Russian: : «1[8] СУДЬЯ УНЧУГАТЛ. СЕЛЬ. СУДА КАЗИКУМУХ. ОК. Д. ОБ.»), and one black seal with the legend in Russian: «УНЧУГАТЛИНСК. СЕЛЬСК. СУДА КАЗИКУМ. ОК.». It should be noted that according to the "Regulations on Rural Societies" the number of judges in rural courts of Dagestan should have been odd. The seals are often followed by the original signatures of the persons involved in the transactions, as well as the witnesses. The handwriting of most of these signatures is uneven, which indicates that their owners lack writing skills and "drawing" their names in Arabic (Fig. 1).

The majority of documents mention the names of two witnesses, who are always men, as required by Sharia law. It is noteworthy that at least half of all the actors in the documents are women, which indicates the wide involvement of women in the social and economic life of the village during this period.

The documents reflect a wide range of legal relationships between the residents of the village of Unchukatl, as well as between them and neighboring communities: debt relations, purchase and sale, hiring, rent, wills/*waqf*, inheritance, marriage and much more. The subjects of the documents are summarized in Table 1, with absolute and relative values.

Thematic distribution of documents

The analysis of 520 documents of the defter allows us to identify the following main thematic categories, presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic distribution of documents of the journal of the village court of Unchukatl (1898-1900)

Subject of the document	Number of documents	Percentage share (%)
Debt documents	291	55.96
Purchase and sale	136	26.15
Hiring	34	6.54
Marriage registration	21	4.04
Wills/Waqf	15	2.88
Recognition of the rights	15	2.88
Other (exchange, lease, renunciation of inheritance, fines, dispute resolution, etc.)	8	1.54
Total	520	100.00

Comment to Table 1: As can be seen from the table, more than half of all documents (55.96%) relate to debt relations, which underlines their widespread occurrence in rural economic life. Purchase and sale take the second place, accounting for more than a quarter of all transactions (26.15%). Documents related to hiring, marriage, wills, and recognition of the rig-hts are presented in much smaller volumes, but they are also important for understanding the daily life of the community. The "Other" category includes various, less

8 The numbers change according to the judge's ordinal number.

common types of documents, such as exchanges, leases, renunciation of inheritance, dispute resolution, and fixing fines.

Detailed analysis of debt documents

As can be seen from Table 1, more than half of the documents of the *defter* relate to debt relations, which indicates their extremely important role in the economic activity of Unchukatl.

Table 2. Detailing debt documents

Type of debt document	Number of documents	The share of all debt documents (%)	Percentage of all documents (%)
Total debt documents	**291**	**100.00**	**55.96**
Debts (without specifying interest/ collateral)	123	42.27	23.65
Interest-bearing debts	63	21.65	12.12
Secured debts	50	17.18	9.62
Secured interest-bearing debts	33	11.34	6.35
Repayment of debts (including through relatives/*naibs*)	16	5.50	3.08
Surety for a debt/debtor	4	1.37	0.77
Debt recognition	2	0.69	0.38

Comment to Table 2: Most of the debt documents (over 42%) do not contain explicit references to interest or collateral, which may indicate the prevalence of interest-free loans, possibly based on personal or community ties. However, a significant proportion of interest-bearing loans (21.65%) and secured loans (17.18%), as well as their combinations (11.34%), indicate a developed lending system in which elements of usury and collateral were present. Repayment of debts was recorded separately, sometimes through intermediaries (*naibs* or relatives), as well as surety.

An interesting fact is that debt relations often occur between close family members, which indicates a complex domestic household economy. So, one of the documents says:

وأنا معم بن محمد الهمچقطي مدين لابنتي فطم ابنة معم المذكور ستين منات والتزمت آدائها إليها متى طلبت والشهود
على ذلك قربان محمد ابن محاد وأستارباك بن مرزى الحياكي ولتصديقه رسمنا هذا في 19 نيابر سنة 1898
أهل محكمة همچقط

"Ma'ama, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, owes his daughter Fatima, the daughter of mentioned Ma'ama, sixty rubles (manat). He undertakes to repay the debt when she demands it. Witnesses: Qurban Muhammad, the son of Mahad, and Ustarbak, the son of Mirza al-Chayaki[9]. To confirm it we issued this on January 19th, 1898. Members of the court of Unchukatl". Another entry says: "We, four sisters: Patimat, Muminat, Hafsat and Maryam, the daughters of Hasil 'Ali al-Humchukati, lend our sister Aminat, the daughter of said Hasil 'Ali, 30 rubles. She undertakes to return them at the end of this year...." (f. 4r-5v).

One third of debt transactions (32.99%, if we sum up interest-bearing and долги под процент с залогом interest-bearing debts with collateral from the total number of debt documents) are related to interest. A relatively large proportion of usury in debt relations is associated not only with Dagestan's involvement in the Russian economy and commodity-money relations during this period, but also, perhaps, reflects the crisis in the economic system of the Dagestan village. In most cases, the percentage is assigned 12 kopecks

9 Chayakh is an abolished village in the Lak district of the Republic of Dagestan.

for each ruble, less often 2 dirhams (?) for each ruble. In most cases, the creditors are the same residents of the community, which indicates the formation of a trade and usury stratum during this period.

However, in some cases, the lender (whether loans with or without interest) is the entire village community represented by its specific representative. For example, one document states: “Muhammad, the son of ‘Abdulkadir al-Humchukati, owes the community (*jama‘at*) of Unchukatl forty rubles, with a profit of 8 kopecks for each ruble during the year. He undertakes to return them to the hands of another representative (*vakil*) [of the community] Muhammad, the son of Musa al-Humchukati, at the end of the year. Witnesses: ‘Ali, the son of Muhammad, and Ustarbak, the son of Mirza. To confirm it we issued this on July 25, 1899” (f. 38v).

Interestingly, the *defter* records cases where even a rural mosque acts as a lender, while in one case it is a question of an interest-bearing loan (Fig. 1):

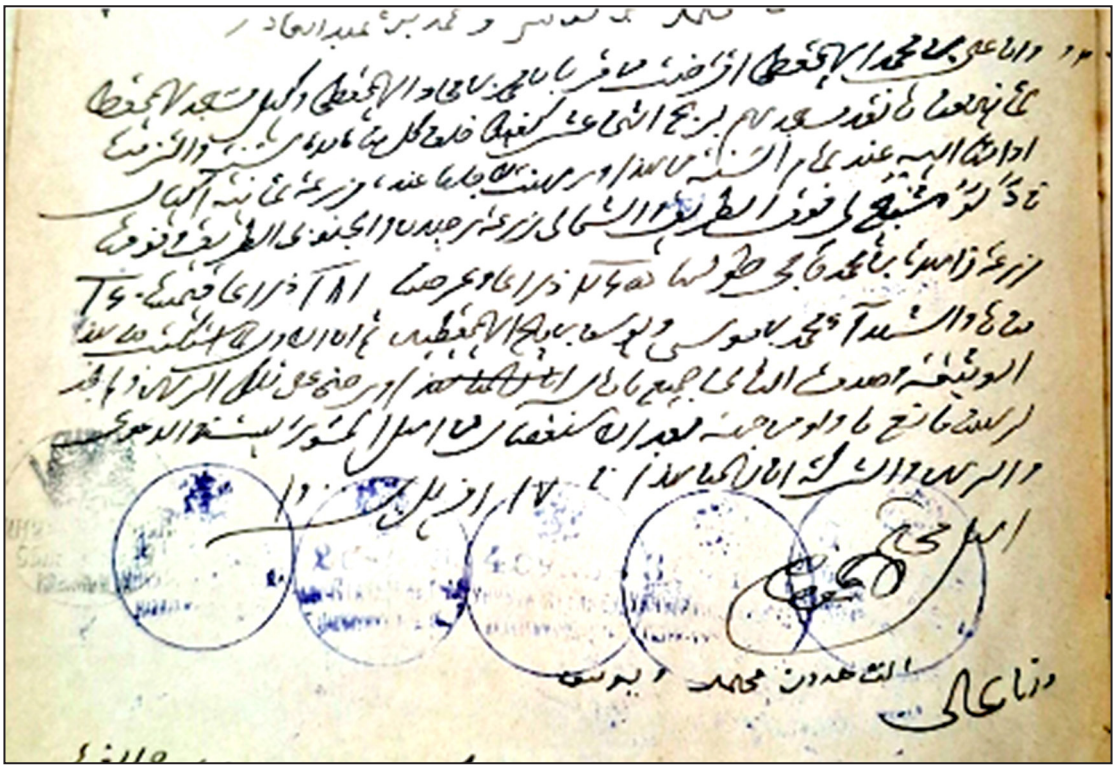

Fig. 1.

“I am ‘Ali, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, from Qurban Muhammad, the son of Mahad al-Humchukati, the representative of the Unchukatl mosque, borrowed eighty rubles from the cash of their mosque with a profit of twelve kopecks for each ruble during the year. I promise to return it to him at the end of this year. To do this, I'm laying my land in the amount of eight measures…” (f. 108v). This attitude towards an interest-bearing loan from the mosque may be explained by the fact that at the beginning of the appearance of paper money (banknotes), Dagestani theologians, like the scholars of the Shafi'i legal system in the Middle East, did not recognize cash as Sharia-recognized cash (naqd shar'i). As a result, the prohibition on usury imposed by Islam could have been avoided in this way[10].

It should also be noted that the widespread occurrence of interest-bearing debt relations, which often occurred between close relatives, was probably due to the fact that residents of the village of Unchukatl were actively engaged in trading activities, which were accompanied by the attraction of additional capital, including by borrowing funds from close relatives. The villagers used this opportunity to make a profit from lending to various trade transactions.

Collateral as a form of security is found in 28.52% (summing up debts with collateral and interest-bearing debts from all debt) of debts for both interest-bearing and interest-free. In the vast majority of cases, the

10 Only money made of gold and silver, but not paper money (banknotes), was considered to be recognized by Sharia (naqd shar‘iya). See [11, p. 185].

collateral is a cultivated area (*mazra‘a*). Less often, a house or part of a house, gardens and pastures (*mar‘a*) are mortgaged. The size of the sown area was determined using the number of grain measures that could be sown on it, as indicated in the previous document. The size of the pasture was determined by the amount of donkey loads, i.e., bales of hay obtained from this pasture. The collateral acreage was described in detail: its location was indicated with reference to the neighbor's land on four sides, and the size and cost of the plot were also described.

An example of such a detailed description of the collateral is given in the document, where the debt relationship occurs between a father and a son:

وأنا محمد بن أحمد الكماشي اقترضت ابني مَعًّا بن محمد المذكور اثنى وأربعين منات والتزمت أدائها إليه عند تمام السنة من هذا ورهنت لأجلها عنده مزرعة ثلثة أكيال ونصف كيل في شُنِخْ على حدها الغربي مزرعة پرحمد بن محمد والشرقي حجيو بن أحمد والشمالي ژحّي بن محمد والجنوبي براحمد طولها 150 ذراعا وعرضها 40 ذراعا قيمتها 35 مناة ومزرعة كيل أخرى في كُشْنِخْ على حدّها الغربي مزرعة ژحي بن محمد والشرقي والشمالي مزرعة پرحمد بن محمد والجنوبي مزرعة شنثر بن داود طولها 80 ذراعا وعرضها 20 ذراعا قيمتها 25 منات ومزرعة كيلين في موضع قربانُلْ يُخّخْ على الغربي مزرعة أبكر بن إسحاق والشرقي مزرعة أحمد بن عمر الكماشيين والشمالي مزرعة عمر بن علي الهمچقطي طولها 80 ذراعا وعرضها 20 ذراعا قيمتها 20 مناة والشهداء محمد بن أحمد ومحاد بن محمد الكماشيين ثم إن الأول لم استكتب من هذه الوثيقة وصدق الثاني جميع ما قاله ورضي على تلك الرهن ولم نجد لرهنها مانع ما ولو من جهة بعد الاستفصال من أهل المشورة ليست في الدعوى والرهن والشركة إنا رسمنا هذا في 28 إيون سنة 1899
أهل محكمة حمچقط

"I am Muhammad, the son of Ahmad al-Kamashi, borrowed 42 rubles from my son Ma'i, the son of the said Muhammad. I am obligated to pay it at the end of this year. To [secure] the debt, I pledge an acreage of three and a half measures (*kayl*) in [the area] Shunikh. To the west of it is the site of Pirahmad, the son of Muhammad, to the east is the site of Hajiyyav, the son of Ahmad, to the north is Tsakhkhai, the son of Muhammad, to the south is the site of Pirahmad. The length of the plot is 150 cubits, the width is 40 cubits. Its cost is 35 rubles. I am also laying out another plot of land in the size of one measure in [the area of] Kushnih. The area of Tsakhkhai, the son of Muhammad, is adjacent to the west, the area of Pirahmad, the son of Muhammad, to the east and north, and the area of Shansir (?), the son of Dawud, to the south. The length of the section is 80 cubits, the width is 20 cubits. Its cost is 25 rubles. There is also a plot of two grain measures in the Qurbanul Yukhakh area. The area of Abakar, the son of Iskhaq, is adjacent to the west, the area of Ahmad, the son of Umar, both al-Kamashi, is adjacent to the east, and the area of 'Umar, the son of 'Ali al-Humchukati is adjacent to the north. It is 80 cubits long, 20 cubits wide, and costs 20 rubles. The witnesses: Muhammad, the son of Ahmad, and Mahad, the son of Muhammad, are both al-Kamashi. Further, since the first one demanded to write this document, and the second one confirmed everything he said and agreed to this pledge, and we did not find any obstacles to this pledge after we studied the issue with the council members: the pledged property is not in dispute, it is not a pledge in another deal and has no co-owners – we issued it on July 28, 1899. Members of the Uncukatl Court" (f. 39r-40v).

As can be seen from the document, three land plots with a total value of 80 rubles act as collateral, while the debt is only 42 rubles. The need for collateral twice the value of the debt itself is not entirely clear, especially when it comes to close relatives. This may indicate the lender's desire to provide the maximum return guarantee, or the estimated cost, which could vary.

If the act of purchase and sale took place in debt, then the loan entry, as a rule, was recorded in the defter, and not the purchase and sale transaction. These documents include debts for the sale of various goods: sheep, horses, honey, millet, etc.

Debt repayment, debt recognition, sureties for a debt or a debtor are another type of debt documents that were recorded in this journal. Debt repayment documents often indicated that the debt was being repaid by a close relative of the borrower. Also, in some cases, such documents indicated that the debt was received through the Vitskhin *naib* Gasan Guzunov (1854-1940).

Purchase and sale

The purchase and sale take the second place in terms of the frequency of mentions in the Unchukatl *defter*.

Table 3. Detailing the purchase and sale documents

The object of purchase and sale	Number of documents	The share of all deeds of purchase and sale (%)	The share of all documents (%)
Total purchase and sale documents	**136**	**100.00**	**26.15**
Plots (cultivated, pastures)	61	44.85	11.73
Horses	42	30.88	8.08
Houses/Parts of houses/ Sheds	11	8.09	2.12
Storage compartments in the mill	7	5.15	1.35
Cows/Bulls	7	5.15	1.35
Shares in property (pastures, houses)	4	2.94	0.77
Donkeys/Mules	3	2.21	0.58
Gardens	1	0.74	0.19

Comment to Table 3: The main object of purchase and sale in the village of Unchukatl were land plots (44.85%), and that emphasizes the agrarian nature of the economy. Cattle are in second place, mainly horses (30.88%), which indicates their importance as working livestock and means of transportation. Real estate such as houses, sheds, and storage compartments in the mill were also actively sold, often in parts or shares.

The object being sold was also described in detail in the document. Here, for example, is how the sale of a warehouse compartment in a mill is recorded:

باع شيخ بن محمد الهمچقطي من جهته ووكيلا من شركائه محمد بن يوسف ومريم ابنة قنبده وفطمات ومؤمنات وآمنة وحفصات بنات حسل علي وفطم ابنة حسين الهمچقطيين مكدسهم المشتركة بينهم الكائنة في بيدرة قيّدار على حدّها الجنوبي مكدس عبد الفتاح والشمالي مكدس حجي بن محمد والشرقي موضع الجماعة والغربي البيدرة قدرها ذراعين مع نصيب البيدرة لعبد الفتاح بن قيدار حاجي الهمچقطي بسبعة عشر منات وأنه قبل ذلك ونقد الثمن تماما إلى يد الوكيل المذكور والشهداء على ذلك شيخ بن سليمان ومحمد بن علا الهمچقطيين ثم لما لم نجد لبيعها مانع ما ولو من جهة بعد الاستفصال من أهل المشورة ليست في الدعوى والرهن والشركة إنا رسمنا هذا في 10 دكابر سنة 1898

“Sheikh, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, carried out the sale on his part and, being authorized by the co-owners: Muhammad, the son of Yusuf, Maryam, the daughter of Qanbuddah, Patimat, Muminat, Aminat and Hafsat, the daughters of Hasil ‘Ali, and Fatima, the daughter of Hussein – all of them al-Humchukati – their compartment in the warehouse (*maqdis*), shared between them, and located in the Kayidar mill. The ‘Abdulfattah section is adjacent to the south, Haji’s, son of Muhammad, section is adjacent to the north, the community site is adjacent to the east, and the mill is adjacent to the west. Its size is two cubits, as well as a share in the mill. [He sold them to] ‘Abdulfattah, the son of Kayidarahaji al-Humchukati, for seventeen rubles. He accepted this and paid the amount in full into the hands of the said representative. The witnesses to this are Sheikh, the son of Suleiman, and Muhammad, the son of ‘Ali al-Humchukati. Then, in view of the fact that we did not find any obstacle to the sale, even after a thorough investigation with the members of the council: the object is not disputed by others, is not pledged and is not the property of [other] co-owners – we issued it on December 10, 1898” (f. 7v).

As in the case of real estate, the cattle being sold were described in detail. The most common asset was a horse. There are also mentions of selling cows, donkeys, bulls, etc. The external characteristics of the animal

being sold were described. In one case, when selling G. Guzunov's horse, the magazine even drew a picture of the mark on the animal (Fig. 2):

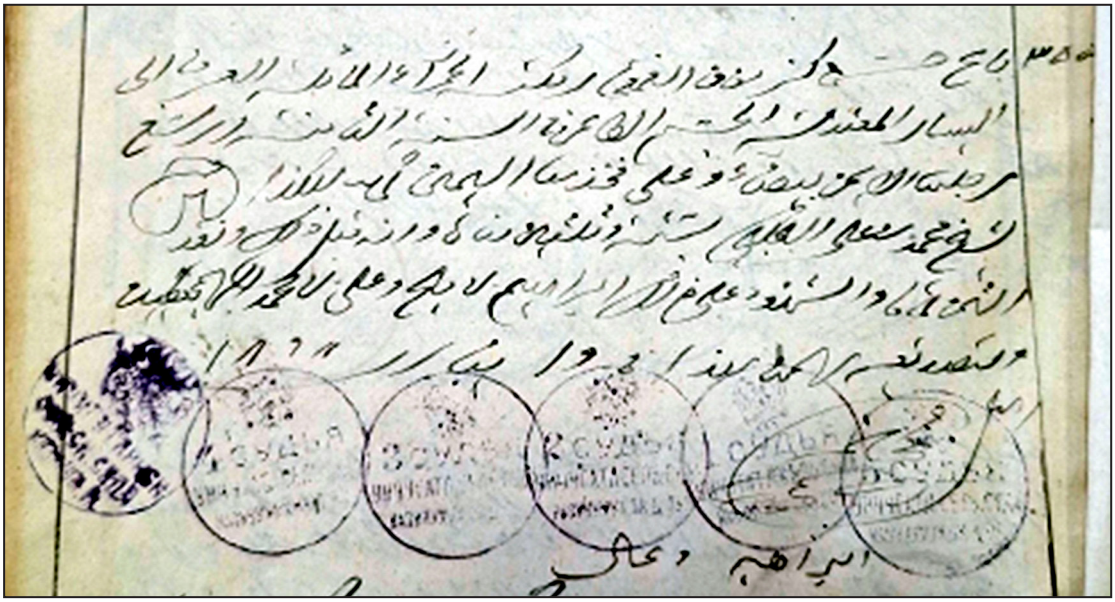

Fig. 2.

"Hasan Kuzunov al-Gumuki sold his red mare, whose mane lies to the left, of medium build, in the eighth year of life, the wrist of its right leg is white, and on its right thigh there is such a mark (here is a drawing. – *Auth.*), to Sheikhmuhammad, the son of 'Ali al-Bajali (?), for thirty-six rubles. He accepted it and paid in full. The witnesses: Ibrahim, the son of Pilha (?), and 'Ali, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati. To confirm it, we issued this on November 19th, 1898" (f. 2v).

As in the case of debt relations, purchase and sale agreements were sometimes concluded between close relatives – members of the same family, which is an interesting feature in the history of the Dagestan village, indicating internal redistribution of property. For example, one of the documents says that "Khuri, the daughter of Muhammad al-Humchukati, sold a plot of land measuring two measures of grain in [the area of] Aqah, on four sides of which are the pastures of Hasan, the son of 'Ali al-Humchukati, its length is 67 cubits, width is 45, to her son Iba, to the son of Wali al-Humchukati, for thirty rubles…". At the same time, it should not be excluded that such agreements between close relatives were fictitious, but in reality, in this way, property was redistributed in favor of specific heirs.

The same type of documents includes contracts of exchanges and leases, which occurred much less frequently and the objects of which were always land plots. In one case, the document is a sublease agreement for a pasture: "Musa, the son of Mata al-Humchukati, acknowledged in our presence that he had leased a pasture leased from Chuta, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, and located in [the area] Varran Sanu, which is called Karukh-Unutuli, to Murtaza'ali, the son of Muhammad al-Mukha, for thirteen rubles. And that he received only ten rubles for this payment, and the rest was left [in debt]…" (f. 97v).

Hiring

Hiring is the third most frequent category of documents, reflecting active labor relations in the community.

Table 4. Detailing the hiring documents

Type of hiring	Number of documents	Share of all hiring documents (%)	The share of all documents (%)
Total hiring documents	**34**	**100.00**	**6.54**

Hiring for agricultural work / general works	22	64.71	4.23
Hiring a shepherd	3	8.82	0.58
Hiring a bailiff/village executor	2	5.88	0.38
Hiring a shoemaker	1	2.94	0.19
Tailoring	1	2.94	0.19
The type of work is not specified	5	14.71	0.96

Comment to Table 4: The most common type of employment is hiring for agricultural or general works, which is expected for an agrarian society. The hiring of specialized workers such as shepherds, shoemakers, and even rural bailiffs is also recorded. It is important to note that hiring often meant working outside of one's native village, sometimes with transportation costs, which indicates labor migration.

Hiring contracts were usually concluded for a seasonal period for a particular job, and they indicated the amount of payment, which most often consisted of money and clothing, sometimes transportation costs to the workplace, and the period of work. Quite often, people from other villages were hired. At the same time, additional conditions could be imposed: if employee leaves work earlier than the agreed deadline, he would lose his payment. An example of such a contract is given in the document:

فإن علباك بن حج بدة الهمچقطي استأجر اربهن بن دبدان الدرقي ليعمل في بيته إلى أوسط خريف هذه السنة بأجرة خمسة وعشرين منات وحميع لباس سوى فروة وعباء وقلنسوة ثم إنه إن هرب من عنده قبل تمام المدة بلا عذر ما لا يكون له شيء ما من الأجرة وإن أخرجه بلا سبب تكون له تمام الأجرة وإن اربهن قبل ذلك والشهداء موسى بن معم ومحمد بن علا الهمچقطيين ولتصديقه رسمنا هذا في 22 فورال سنة 1900
أهل محكمة همچقط

"'Alibak, the son of Hadjibudda al-Humchukati, hired Irbahin, the son of Dabadan al-Daraki, to work in his house until the middle of autumn this year for twenty-five rubles and all clothes except a sheepskin coat, a cloak and a headdress. Further, if he runs away before the deadline, without any valid reason, then he is not entitled to anything from the payment. And if he ('Alibak) expels him for no reason, he will receive the full amount. Irbahin accepted it. Witnesses: Musa, the son of Ma'ama, and Muhammad, the son of 'Ali (?) al-Humchukati. To confirm it, we issued this on February 22, 1900" (f. 100v).

Another document contains a contract for the employment of a rural executor (or bailiff). The document helps to understand the specifics of the tasks and activities of a rural official. It says: "Musa, the son of Ma'ama al-Humchukati, a representative of the Unchukatl community, hired Ustarbak, the son of Mirza al-Chayaki, as a bailiff (*sharit*), i.e., *chavush* (جوش), in their village to manage bailiff affairs in the village, to deliver messages to Kamasha[11], also, to bring ... (اليطاف؟) to Kamasha and Gukkala, and to collect fines established for the sake of order from those whose cattle are driven to protected places. [He hired him] for forty rubles for a year. He accepted it. He handed him five rubles, the rest will be given to him at the end of each month for three rubles. Witnesses are Said, the son of Yusufhaji, and Hajimirza, the son of Hussein al-Humchukati. We have put seals to confirm this. April 26, 1899" (f. 26r). It is worth noting that both actors in the contract are quite often mentioned in this *defter* as witnesses or representatives of the community, which shows that mainly a person from his environment was appointed to this position.

Another document, where the same representative of the village enters into a contract of employment with a rural shepherd, explains the tasks of the shepherd: "Musa, the son of Ma'ama al-Humchukati, a representative of the village of Unchukatl, hired Muhammad, the son of Mahad al-Kurli (القرلي), as a shepherd of donkeys and calves of the village of Unchukatl for a fee equal to half a measure of grain from everyone who owns these cattle – individual residents of Unchukatl. He also gets food from the village. It starts from the beginning of spring to the middle of autumn. He accepted this and pledged to shepherd so that the community would be happy with him. Further, if he runs away before the deadline, he will receive nothing from the fee. He accepted this [condition]. Witnesses: Hajimirza, the son of Hussein, and Umma (Amir?), the son of Hajibudda al-Humchukati. To confirm it, we issued this on February 15, 1899" (f. 16v).

11 Kamasha now it is a village of the Laksky district of Republic of Dagestan.

In many cases, it is understood from the hiring documents that the place of work where the person is hired is not in the village, but in another place or locality. This was expressed in the words "... so that he would go with him...". An example of this is given in the document, which specifies exactly where the employee and employer will go: "Muhammad, the son of Isa al-Humchukati hired Muhammad, the son of Jabrayil al-Kanadi, to go to work with him and work with him until the beginning of summer for thirty-five rubles. The expenses for the journey from Anzhi to the place of residence and from the place of residence to Anzhi are borne by the employer. Muhammad accepted it. The employer, Muhammad, undertakes to bring him to his homeland before the expiration of ten days from next summer. Witnesses: 'Abdal, the son of Hajibudda, and Qayta, the son of 'Abdullah al-Humchukati. To confirm it we issued this on September 6, 1899" (f. 69v).

Testament/Waqf

Documents containing testaments and last wills (wasiya) are also found in the defter.

Table 5. Detailing documents on testaments and *waqf*

Document type	Number of documents	The share of all documents of subject (%)	The share of all documents (%)
Total wills/*waqfs*	**15**	**100.00**	**2.88**
Bequests to the community (jama'at)	9	60.00	1.73
Bequests to the son/ daughter	2	13.33	0.38
Bequests to the *qadi* of the mosque	2	13.33	0.38
The recipient is not specified	2	13.33	0.38

Comment to Table 5: Wills were connected to the death of the testator, and no more than a third of his property was bequeathed, as required by Sharia law. Most of the wills were addressed to the village community (60%), which indicates its exceptional importance in the socio-economic activities of the residents of Unchukatl. Sometimes the testator could specify exactly how the *jama'at* should spend the money, for example, on community needs or rituals.

Thus, one of the documents says:

وصت عيش ابنتة صالح الهمچقطي ثلثة وسبعون منات للجماعة الهمچقطية لأكلها على عادة القرية للمائدة وزُبِنِّنْ ولأجل قراءة القرآن في المقبرة ولذبح الثور يوم الموت ولنصب الحجر على قبرها ولختم القرآن عند الجنازة والشهداء على ذلك يوسف بن محمد وأميرخان المغرب ولتصديقه رسمنا هذا في 19 نيابر سنة 1898

"Aisha, the daughter of Salih al-Humchukati, bequeathed seventy-three rubles to the Unchukatl community (*jama'at*), so that they could spend them, according to the custom of the village, on arranging a table for thirty [people] (*zubinnin*)[12], on reading the Quran near her grave, slaughtering a bull on the day of her death, on installing a gravestone and for a full reading of the Quran near her body (*janaza*). Witnesses: Yusuf, the son of Muhammad, and Amirkhan, an exiled man. To confirm it we issued this on November 19th, 1898" (f. 4v). As for donations to the waqf, they are quite rare in the defter.

Recognition of rights

Documents on the recognition of rights cover the most diverse cases.

12 A term from the Lak language, meaning "thirty".

Table 7. Detailing documents on recognition of rights

Type of recognition of rights	Number of documents	Share of all documents on the subject (%)	Share of all documents (%)
Total marriage documents	21	100.00	4.04
Mahr/*sadaq* is indicated	21	100.00	4.04
The clothes are listed as part of *mahr*	12	57.14	2.31
The groom's debt to the bride is fixed (including after marriage)	4	19.05	0.77

Comment to Table 6: Marriage registration, of course, should have been recorded in such a *defter*. However, it is surprising that there is not a single document about the divorce in the manuscript. It is known that similar events were also reflected in other similar *defters*. Perhaps the divorces were registered elsewhere or did not require to be recorded in this *defter*.

All marriage documents indicated the fact of the marriage between the bride and groom, and almost always named the bride's trustee (*vali*), who married her off. All documents mention the amount of the marriage gift (*sadaq, mahr*) that the groom paid to the bride. At the same time, along with money, clothes for the bride were often used as a wedding gift. The mentioned clothes were necessarily valued in rubles, so that in the event of a divorce, the spouse could demand her right from her husband.

In some cases, immediately or sometime after the marriage was registered, the groom's debt to the bride was also recorded in the *defter*, which had to be paid before the end of the year. In one case, a document about the groom's debt to the bride was recorded a day after the marriage was registered. At the same time, the groom, apparently, managed to owe his new wife more money in one day in addition to the debt for the *mahr*:

فإن شيخ بن محمد الهمچقطي زوج موليته ابنته البكر ابيبَبَ ابنة شيخ المذكور بإذن صريح منها لعاليل بن جني الهمچقطي بصداق ثلثين منات وفيها 5 منات لقطع الإذن وثوبي حرير جيد مع خمارين إبرسيمين قيمتها 50 مناة وإن عاليل قبل ذلك وفق إيجابه والشهداء حج بده بن محمد وأسد الله بن جرين الهمچقطيين ولتصديقه رسمنا هذا في 25 إيون سنة 1899

"Sheikh, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, married his ward, his virgin daughter Abibaba, the daughter of aforementioned Sheikh, with her explicit consent, to ʻAlil, the son of Janai al-Humchukati, for a marriage gift of thirty rubles. Of these, 5 rubles for a permit [to marry this fiance?], as well as two pieces of high-quality silk with two silk shawls worth 50 rubles. ʻAlil accepted it according to his suggestion. The witnesses: Hajibudda, the son of Muhammad, and Asadullah, the son of Charin al-Humchukatiyayn. To confirm it we issued this on June 25, 1899" f. 39v). On the next page there is already a document about the duty of this groom to the bride:

"I am ʻAlil, the son of Janai al-Humchukati, and I owe my fiancée, Abibaba, the daughter of Sheikh al-Humchukati, one hundred rubles. I am obligated to pay it to her at the end of this year. The witnesses: Hajibudda, the son of Muhammad, and ʻAbdullah, the son of Shaʻban al-Humchukati. To confirm it we issued this on June 26, 1899" (f. 39r).

Recognition of rights

Documents on the recognition of rights cover the most diverse cases.

Table 7. Detailing documents on recognition of rights

Type of recognition of rights	Number of documents	Share of all documents on the subject (%)	Share of all documents (%)
Total documents on recognition of rights	15	100.00	2.88
Recognition of the right of passage	3	20.00	0.58

Recognition of the right to build	2	13.33	0.38
Recognition of ownership rights (to cattle, utensils, land)	5	33.33	0.96
Renunciation of inheritance	3	20.00	0.58
Debt recognition (not in debt documents)	1	6.67	0.19
Money embezzlement proceedings	1	6.67	0.19

Comment to Table 7: The rights, as a rule, were related to land disputes between neighbors, or represented the right to property or the right to use something. Documents on the recognition of property rights (to cattle, utensils, land) account for the largest share, which indicates the importance of a clear legal consolidation of ownership in a rural community. Separately, there are unique cases of refusal of inheritance.

An example of a document in which a resident recognizes the rights of a neighbor to pass through his property is as follows:

أقرّ لدينا زكريا بن إبراهيم الهمچقطي بأن لإبراهيم بن محمد الهمچقطي ممر للذهاب إلى داره من الموضع التي بنى فيها خلائه وأنه التزم إزالة تلك الخلاء من تلك الموضع لتخلية الممر له متى طلب بلا قول ولا دعوى ما بعد ولتصديقه رسمنا هذا في 19 نيابر سنة 1898

“Zakaria, the son of Ibrahim al-Humchukati, acknowledged in our presence that Ibrahim, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, could enter his house through the place where he built a latrine. He undertakes to demolish it from this place in order to make way for him when he demands it, and will not subsequently dispute this” (f. 4v).

Obviously, in many cases, the renunciation of their rights to something took place for a fee, but this fact, apparently, was not always recorded in the documents. The following document reports the amount of the fee for renunciation one's right:

“Qurban and ‘Ali, the sons of Muhammad al-Humchukati, give Muhammad, the son of Qurban al-Humchukati, the right to build a wall on top of the wall of their large house, to install pillars on it and to build a structure above it for fifteen rubles. They will no longer dispute or claim this. Muhammad accepted it and paid the full amount…” (f. 56v).

In some cases, the recognition of property rights occurred between close relatives. This can be explained by the likely fear that after the death of a person, this property will be disputed by other heirs. Here, for example, is a document in which a father recognizes his daughter's right to a cow:

“Hasan, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, admitted in our presence and demanded to write down that a small cow, black in color and 4 years old, worth 9 rubles, was the property of his daughter Patimat, the daughter of mentioned Hasan. And that he has no rights over her, she is her full property…” (f. 14v-14r).

Another interesting document informs about the recognition by the owner of the compartment in the warehouse inside the mill that the watchmen and employees of the mill have the right to pass through his warehouse:

“Muhammad, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, acknowledged in our presence that the watchmen (*shurata*) of the mill, Mudarris-Muhammad and Budda, the sons of Abdulkadir, as well as other watchmen from Unchukatl, have the right to pass through his warehouse, located in this mill from the warehouse of Ali, the son of Isbudda. This is so that the worker in this mill can go to the place to do the deed. But others don't have the right to do that” (f. 46r).

The refusal of the heir from the inheritance belongs to the same type. It includes three documents in the *defter* concerning the same person. It is about a certain Chalma, the son of Muhammad, because of whose escape to the Ottoman Empire, the authorities demanded to write a waiver of inheritance from his relatives: Haji, the son of Muhammad, and ‘Alil, the son of Iman‘ali. The first document is dated June 1, 1899, which states the following:

وانا حجي بن موسى الهمچقطي سلمت هذه الفدفسكة مستكتبة من محكمة همچقط بأني خرجت بالكلية من وارثية چلم بن محمد الهمچقطية الهارب إلى ولاية عثمانية ولا أطلب من تركته شيء ما ولا أكون مدّعيا مع أحد ما في خصوص ذلك قط ولتصديقه رسمنا هذا في 1 إيون سنة 1899

"I am Haji, the son of Musa al-Humchukati, and I handed over this signed document, asking the court of Unchukatl to write down that I completely withdraw from the circle of persons of the heirs of Chalma, the son of Muhammad al-Humchukati, who fled to the Ottoman state. I will not claim anything from his inheritance, and I will never argue with anyone about it" (f. 32r).

On August 27 of the same year, 'Alil, Iman'ali's son, signs exactly the same document (f. 64v). Six months later, on June 24, 1900, Hadji, Musa's son, signed such a document again (f. 98v). Apparently, we are talking about a man who fled abroad for some crime (or, perhaps, who had outstanding debts to the state), and whose property was subject to confiscation, in connection with which the authorities demanded that potential heirs sign a waiver of inheritance.

Conclusion

The source and textual analysis of the journal of the rural court (*defter*) of the village of Unchukatl for 1898–1900 made it possible to identify key aspects of the legal, economic and social life of the Dagestan village at the turn of the century. The manuscript, despite minor losses, is a unique source of microhistory, offering a detailed cross-section of everyday interactions that are rarely reflected in official statistics or large administrative reports but widely represented in epistolary monuments.

More than half (almost 56% of all records) of the records are various debt documents, which may indicate a high degree of monetization of the economy and the active development of credit relations. The presence of interest-bearing loans and secured loans, along with the formation of a trade and usury stratum, confirms the thesis of the region's involvement in the new economic realities. Special attention should be paid to cases where the creditors were a community or even a rural mosque. This was possible due to a certain interpretation of Sharia norms regarding paper money and indicates a certain flexibility of the legal and religious systems in their adaptation to new economic realities.

The active participation of women in business transactions – as creditors, sellers, buyers and heiresses – is one of the most significant results of the study of this *defter*, which calls into question the established ideas about the minimal role of women in the economic life of Dagestan. At the same time, the economic status and legal subjectivity of women require further research.

Purchase and sale documents (26% of records) demonstrate the predominance of transactions with land and cattle, which emphasizes the agrarian basis of the rural economy. Hiring (6.5%), including the hiring of shepherds, shoemakers, and even rural officials, reflects the differentiation of labor and the mobility of the population. The lack of divorce records in the presence of detailed marriage registration acts raises questions about the jurisdiction and practices of family relations in this court.

The fact that the *defter* includes records in Russian is particularly noteworthy, as it demonstrates the significant impact of the imperial administration on the administrative affairs of the rural community. The presence of documents such as the renunciation of the inheritance by a fugitive who sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire also suggests a similar influence of the tsarist government. The meticulous documentation of the objects of the transactions, including details about land plots, cattle, and even animal tags, suggests a commitment to legal precision and a desire to prevent future disputes.

In general, the *defter* of the village court of Unchukatl is a unique document that reflects the life of the Dagestan village at the end of the 19th century in all its complexity and dynamics. This is a valuable source for studying the imperial influence on Dagestani communities, their legal and socio-economic activities, especially for studying the role of various segments of the population, including women, in the daily life of the village.

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Research paper

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THE SCHOLARLY PERSONA IN DAGESTANI ARABIC BIOGRAPHICAL LITERATURE

Abstract. This article explores the construction of scholarly personas in 20th-century Arabic biographical and hagiographical literature from Dagestan. Drawing on the conceptual framework of persona as formulated by Mineke Bosch and further developed by Herman Paul, the study treats persona not as a fixed social role or stereotype, but as a culturally embedded repertoire of scholarly virtues, practices, and dispositions. Paul's tripartite model – micro, meso, and macro levels of scholarly identity – serves as a useful heuristic, though this article privileges the meso-level: the articulation of time– and place-specific ideals of scholarly subjectivity. However, the Dagestani case reveals that such models are often shaped less by institutional norms than by ethical preferences, such as the valorization of Sufi piety, legal expertise, or rational inquiry. Through close textual analysis of four key Arabic works – Nuzhat al-adhhān by Nadhīr al-Durgilī, Tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān by 'Alī Kayaev, Ṭabaqāt al-khwājagān by Shu'ayb al-Bāghinī, and Sirāj al-sa'ādāt by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī – the article demonstrates the plural and contested nature of scholarly ideals in Dagestani Islam. Al-Durgilī constructs a harmonized model of the ideal Muslim scholar, while Kayaev adopts a critical stance, selectively praising or censuring figures based on rationalist or ethical criteria. Sufi authors such as al-Bāghinī and al-Qaḥī frame scholarly legitimacy around spiritual charisma, ecstatic experience, and miracles. By juxtaposing these works, the article reveals how different genres (biography vs. hagiography), authorial intentions, and theological commitments shape the representation of scholarly identity. In doing so, it contributes to broader debates on Islamic intellectual history, the social production of religious authority, and the localization of Islamic scholarly ideals in the North Caucasus.

Keywords: scholarly persona; Islamic biographical literature; Dagestan; hagiography; intellectual history; Islamic manuscript culture

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Исследовательская статья

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РЕПРЕЗЕНТАЦИЯ УЧЁНОГО В ДАГЕСТАНСКОЙ АРАБОЯЗЫЧНОЙ БИОГРАФИЧЕСКОЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается формирование научных персон в арабоязычной биографической и агиографической литературе Дагестана XX в. Основываясь на концепции персоны, предложенной Минеке Бош и развитой Германом Полом, автор рассматривает научную персону не как фиксированную социальную роль или стереотип, а как культурно обусловленный репертуар научных добродетелей, практик и диспозиций. Трёхуровневая модель, предложенная Полом – микро-, мезо– и макроуровни научной идентичности, – используется в качестве аналитического инструмента, при этом основной акцент в статье сделан на мезоуровень, то есть на артикуляцию локальных и временно обусловленных моделей научной субъективности. При этом дагестанский материал показывает, что указанные модели формируются не столько в рамках институциональных норм, сколько под влиянием этических предпочтений – таких, как акцент на суфийской этике, правоведческой компетенции или рационалистическом подходе к знанию. Путём текстологического анализа четырёх ключевых сочинений – «Нузхат ал-азхан» Надзира ад-Дургили, «Тараджим ‘улама’ Дагистан» Али Каяева, «Табакат ал-хваджаган ан-Накшбандиййа» Шу‘айба ал-Багини и «Сирадж ас-са‘адат» Хасана ал-Кахи – в статье демонстрируется множественность и конкуренция представлений об идеале учёного в дагестанской исламской письменной традиции. Если у ад-Дургили образ учёного унифицирован и идеализирован, то Каяев придерживается критического подхода, избирательно одобряя или порицая персонажей на основании рационалистических и этических критериев. В суфийской литературе, представленной ал-Багини и ал-Кахи, легитимность научной персоны строится на духовной харизме, переживании экстатического опыта и чудотворствах (карамат). Сопоставительный анализ этих текстов позволяет выявить, каким образом жанровая специфика (биография vs. агиография), авторские интенции и теологические установки влияют на конструирование образа учёного. Тем самым статья вносит вклад в исследование исламской интеллектуальной истории, механизмов формирования религиозного авторитета и локальных моделей учёности в исламском обществе Северного Кавказа.

Ключевые слова: научная персона; исламская биографическая литература; Дагестан; агиография; интеллектуальная история; исламская рукописная культура

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Introduction: Scholarly Persona

The figure of the scholar has long held a central place in the Islamic intellectual tradition, not only as a transmitter of knowledge but also as a moral exemplar whose conduct embodies the ideals of piety, learning, and social responsibility. In the Dagestani context, biographical and hagiographical literature composed in Arabic reflects this enduring concern with scholarly character, not merely by recounting individual life stories but by articulating models of scholarly subjectivity – idealized templates of what it meant to be a scholar in specific historical and cultural settings.

To conceptualize these representations, this study draws on the notion of the scholarly persona as developed by Herman Paul and Mineke Bosch. Bosch defines persona as "a cultural identity that simultaneously shapes the individual in body and mind and creates a collective with shared and recognizable physiognomy" – a formation that occupies the space between individual biography and institutional roles [1, p. 15]. Persona should not be equated with stereotypes or social roles; rather, it denotes a shared way of thinking, judging, and conducting scholarly work.

Herman Paul further refines this concept within the context of intellectual history and the philosophy of science, distinguishing between three analytical levels: the micro-level, which pertains to the articulation of scholarly identity in individual texts; the macro-level, which encompasses widely accepted ideals of scholarly conduct; and the meso-level, where time– and place-specific models shape particular scholarly styles and competencies [3, p. 3; 4, pp. 3–6].[1] The present study aligns primarily with Paul's meso-level analysis, focusing on how Dagestani biographical writings construct and transmit distinct, culturally embedded models of scholarly behavior.

In contrast to Paul's emphasis on methodological and institutional norms, this article approaches persona through the lens of more abstract scholarly preferences, such as an emphasis on Sufi ethics, a commitment to legal reasoning, or a rationalist orientation in the natural sciences. From this perspective, persona refers to the repertoire of traits, skills, and moral dispositions that a scholar is expected to embody within a given cultural model. Accordingly, multiple personae may coexist within a single tradition, and the same behavioral model may cultivate divergent scholarly types.

Through a close reading of several 20th-century Dagestani Arabic biographical and hagiographical works – including *Nuzhat al-adhhān* by Nadhīr al-Durgilī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān* by 'Alī Kayaev, and *Ṭabaqāt al-khwājagān* by Shu'ayb al-Bāghinī – this article explores how different authors mobilize narrative, emotional tone, and evaluative commentary to craft images of the ideal Muslim scholar. While some authors, such as al-Durgilī, present a unified and idealized scholarly model across disciplines, others adopt a more discriminating approach, explicitly endorsing some scholars while critiquing others. In the case of Sufi hagiographies, the ideal scholarly persona is inseparable from sanctity and charismatic authority, manifest in miraculous acts (*karamāt*) and emotional intensity. This inquiry thus sheds light on the plural and often contested nature of the scholarly persona in Dagestan, a region whose Islamic intellectual history is shaped by local pedagogical practices, Sufi affiliations, and reformist impulses.

I suggest that biographical and hagiographic literature (*tarājim*, *ṭabaqāt*, *manāqib*) extends beyond mere descriptions of individual life stories. In the context of examining the Muslim subjectivity, biographical authors portray the ideal Muslim persona, or, in the case of following below Dagestani biographical and hagiographic literature, the ideal scholarly persona. In biographical works, authors craft a portrayal of the scholarly persona but through the accounts of others. In the subsequent discussion, I will explore several Arabic-written biographical dictionaries and hagiographic works of Dagestani scholars from the 20th century.

1 For more details about the scholarly persona, see: [5, pp. 135–154; 6, pp. 348–371; 2, pp. 33–54].

Harmonised model of the ideal Muslim scholar by Nadhīr al-Durgilī

The first one is Nadhīr al-Durgilī's *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān* which covers the biographies of over two hundred Dagestani scholars between the 11th and 20th centuries[2]. These biographies are arranged in chronological order, starting with 11th-century Derbend scholars and finishing with Nadhīr al-Durgilī's own contemporaries. Al-Durgilī evidently finished *Nuzhat al-adhhān* at some point after 1931, as transpires from a passage relating the biography of the Tatar scholar Bayazid Khayrullin [10, pp. 240–251], where al-Durgilī writes as follows: "*In 1319 [1901–02] Bayazīd Mullā b. Khairallāh came to Dagestan, where he settled down in the city of Anjī [Makhachkala] and became an imām and mu'adhdhin for the residents of Tatar and Kazan origin. As of this day, in 1349 [1930–31] he is still alive and resides in the city of Anjī with his family*".[3]

The draft of the work is held in Muḥammad-Said Saidov's archive at the Institute of History in Makhachkala. This draft is notable for including the biographies of several scholars which are not included in his main edited work, and for appending some strikingly critical comments about the individuals in question. For instance, regarding a scholar by the name of Ghazanūf al-Gubdānī (1871-1942) he writes as follows: "*He held fanatical beliefs and was hardened in his convictions… He never completed his education, or he would have become one of the pearls of his time*".[4] When describing the life of the above-mentioned Bayazid, Nadhīr writes: "*Bayazīd Mullā b. Khairallāh is not very skilled in Arabic, but he draws knowledge from the Tatar books written in his own language*".[5] In relation to his contemporary Abū Sufyān Akaev, Nadhīr al-Durgilī writes as follows: "*He wrote a book called Du'ā' majmū',which contains multiple lies, as many scholars know. The Tatar scholar Ismā'īl Gasprinsky wrote a negative review of this book and published it in his newspaper Terjimān: It would have been better if Abū Sufyān had never published his book*"[6]

In making such comments, al-Durgilī shows himself to be capable of sharp critical judgments. Strikingly, however, he omitted these entries from the main edited text of *Nuzhat al-adhhān*, where Nadhīr al-Durgilī is entirely positive about all the individuals under discussion. In this latter telling, nearly all the scholars were accomplished major Muslim scholars who penetrated into "the subtleties of sciences". This discrepancy in coverage and tone between his draft and edited text can be explained as follows.

Al-Durgilī used his drafts and biographical notes about Dagestani scholars as his supplementary materials. Since he was using these drafts for his own work on the main text, he allowed himself some critical comments about certain scholars. But his completed work was probably intended for a wide audience. In this context, scholarly biographies were more than just a source of information for his contemporaries and future scholars. The biographies of scholars cited in *Nuzhat al-adhhān* were evidently meant to serve as edifying exemplars that everyone who studied Islamic sciences should strive to emulate. Al-Durgilī clearly intended the *Nuzhat al-adhhān* to be a didactic message to all those who would read his book in the future. Towards this end, all the scholars whose biographies are included in *Nuzhat al-adhhān* are presented as ideal figures. Indeed, the biographies in *Nuzhat al-adhhān* serve to articulate distinct ideal scholarly persona reflecting a range of various models: legalists, a Sufis, linguists, scholars with an in-depth knowledge of logic, exact or occult sciences. Thus, in al-Durgilī's understanding, his completed work on the biographies of Dagestani scholars would serve both as a source of knowledge, including historical information, but also as an articulation of the image of an 'ideal Muslim' as personified by various scholars (lawyers, linguists, madrasa teachers and so on), each of whom is carefully disassociated from any of the negative characteristics that he mentions in his drafts. Any individuals towards whom in his drafts he is more generally critical, meanwhile, he omits from the final text.

It is evident that al-Durgilī in his work presents a broader concept of the 'ideal Muslim,' which transcends any particular scholarly category. In his perspective, the ideal Muslim is inherently a scholar, with specialization

2 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Nuzhat al-adhhān fī tarājim 'ulamā' Dāghistān*. Institute of History, Makhachkala, Muḥammad-Said Saidov's collection, Inv. 1, no. 95. The manuscript was translated into German and Russian, and published, see: [8, 9].
3 Nadhīr b. Muḥammad al-Durgilī, *Tarājim 'ulamā' al-dāghistāniyyīn*, fols. 35b–36a.
4 Ibid., fols. 55b–56a.
5 Ibid., fol. 35b.
6 Ibid., fol. 44a

in a specific domain of knowledge – be it law, linguistics, or poetry – being of secondary importance. The paramount criterion is the scholar's ability to deduce ethical and moral precepts from sacred texts, discerning between what conforms to *sharīʿa* law and what is prohibited, thereby fostering personal morality and adherence to Islamic principles.

Selectively Approach by ʿAlī Kayaev

Another work of biography that was produced at much the same time as al-Durgilī's *Nuzhat al-adhhān* was *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ Dāghistān*, by ʿAlī Kayaev. Three versions of this study have survived in Arabic, Lak and Azeri Turkic respectively, with the two latter ones written in Arabic characters. The Arabic and Lak versions of this work are housed within the collection now possessed by his grandson, Ilias Kayaev.[7] The Turkic version of his work is preserved at the Institute of History.[8]

In writing his book, he drew upon written sources, collected letters and amateur biographical essays, interviewed elders, and analysed the data he collected based on a critical approach to his collected sources. The structure of ʿAlī Kayaev's work is similar to that of al-Durgilī's. The biographies of Dagestani scholars are here arranged in chronological order.

In his work, ʿAlī Kayaev generally focuses on the positive qualities of the scholars whom he describes, but unlike the edited text of al-Durgilī's *Nuzhat al-adhhān* he also adds some critical comments about certain individuals. Thus, when recounting the lives of several Dagestani theologians and characterizing them as accomplished specialists in the fields of law, astronomy, mathematics, and logic, ʿAlī Kayaev writes as follows: "*Saʿīd al-Harakānī would occasionally drink alcohol and allowed rulers to use it until they were lightly inebriated, despite the fact that these rulers did not stop at this and reached extreme stages of intoxication in their use of alcoholic beverages… Although Shaytān-ʿAbdallāh al-Ṣughūrī reached great heights and perfection in astronomy and mathematics sciences, he was nevertheless fond of alcoholic beverages, did not have the willpower to restrain himself, and went so far in his craving for alcohol that he had to sell household utensils. He would then sink so low as to steal whatever came into his hands from his wife's belongings and to sell them in order to buy alcohol… ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm al-Tsuishī, like his teacher Saʿīd al-Harakānī, drank alcohol in moderation and issued a fatwā that allowed this. He made a habit of drinking alcohol before the start of lessons, then would anoint himself with fragrances and begin the lesson. He said that alcohol made him more active in teaching… Najm al-Dīn al-Ḥūtsī spent most of his time working with poetry and literature so that he reached considerable heights in this compared to his contemporaries. His poetry is very eloquent and demonstrates that he was greatly talented, indeed one of the best versifiers among numerous Dagestani poets. At the same time, he was engaged in literary and poetic plagiarism. I heard from many of those who read and analysed his poetry that Najm al-Dīn used to steal from the works of ancient poets, especially from the collection by the well-known al-Abyūrdī [d. 1113]. He selected whatever he liked, sometimes borrowing the text itself and sometimes its meaning, presenting them as his own compositions.*"[9]

This inclusion of negative material might seem to imply that ʿAlī Kayaev had a more censorious outlook than Nadhīr al-Durgilī, who as we saw above was careful to omit any such criticisms from his own final text.

Simultaneously, within Kayaev's work, there is a discernible inclination towards certain scholars whose biographies he portrays with a profound emotive touch. His narratives are most extensive and emotionally charged when he discusses scholars specializing in the natural sciences, such as mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine.[10] Concurrently, Kayaev provides a more detailed account of the biography of the afore-mentioned Muḥammad al-Quduqī, adorning him with commendatory epithets and conferring upon him the title of an 'eminent scholar,' a distinction rarely bestowed upon others. For instance, Kayaev writes: "*Al-Quduqī stood as an outstanding luminary in the sphere of rational and traditional sciences. Brilliant proficient in Arabic, Islamic jurisprudence, the theory of Islamic law, arithmetic, geometry, algebra,*

7 ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Hamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ Dāghistān*. Makhachkala, private collection of Ilias Kaiaev, nos. 9 (in Arabic), 188 (in Lak).
8 ʿAli b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Terājim-i ʿulemā-i Dāghistān* (in Turkic). Archive of the Institute of History, Makhachkala, *Fund* 25, *Inv*. 1, no. 1. This manuscript was translated into Turkish, see: [14].
9 ʿAli b. ʿAbd al-Ḥamīd al-Ghumuqī, *Tarājim ʿulamāʾ Dāghistān*, fols. 55a, 69a, 79b, 139a.
10 Ibid., fols. 4b–5a, 9a–11b, 17b, 34a–35b.

astronomy, philosophy, and logic, he was also a craftsman of scientific instruments like astrolabes and sine quadrants. Moreover, al-Quduqī assumed a pivotal role in orchestrating the dissemination of knowledge within his community. Scholars from diverse domains gravitated towards him, their numbers rivalling that which congregated around any other scholar of his era, with none in Dagestan attaining his scholarly eminence."[11]

Kayaev's interest to personality al-Quduqī can be explained by al-Quduqī's ideas concerning the theory of Islamic law, his critique of adherence to legal schools, and his endorsement of *ijtihād*, a parallel that Kayaev meticulously highlights in his work: "*The eminent scholar al-Quduqī, during his pilgrimage to Mecca, encountered shaykh Ṣāliḥ al-Yamanī, who had emancipated himself from the yoke of taqlīd, selectively adopting the rulings of four legal schools (madhhab) in harmony with fundamental principles while eschewing innovations. Al-Quduqī became his student and acquired a wealth of knowledge from him. Al-Quduqī was profoundly impressed by shaykh Ṣāliḥ's methodology, path, and ideas, which he embraced with fervor. Upon his return to Dagestan, al-Quduqī brought back several new books by his newfound mentor. Al-Quduqī initiated a call to action for scholars, encouraging them to embrace independent reasoning and the study of sciences, all the while grounding their analysis in the foundational sources – the Qur'ān and hadīths – scrutinizing them in light of shari'a principles, and selecting what aligned with these norms. Consequently, al-Quduqī became the first among Dagestani scholars to rouse himself from the dormancy of taqlīd and instruct his contemporaries to employ their intellect, encouraging intellectual freedom for the discernment of truth from falsehood. Regrettably, his call resonated with but a few, while the majority countered it with refutation and aversion, owing to their frail confidence in their own intellect and their exaggerated reverence for madhhab they ardently followed.*"[12]

In contrast to al-Durgilī, Kayaev displayed little inclination to present the biographies of all Muslim scholars as embodying the image of the 'ideal Muslim scholar.' Consequently, he reserved the prerogative to selectively designate those deserving of the status of an ideal scholarly persona and those who fell short.

I suggest that these differences between al-Durgilī's and Kayaev's works reflect the two men's differing priorities. Whereas al-Durgilī sought to present all those scholars whose lives he regarded as offering examples to be emulated by his readership, 'Alī Kayaev, by contrast, adopted a discerning approach in his biographical narratives. He delineated scholars who should not serve as examples, alongside those whom he deemed worthy of emulation. As a consequence, Kayaev's work encompasses two contrasting archetypes: ordinary scholars, symbolized by adherents of *taqlīd* who opposed al-Quduqī's notions of intellectual freedom and do not exemplify the 'ideal Muslim,' and the ideal scholarly persona, embodied by al-Quduqī, his disciples and scholars in the natural sciences. When narrating the biography of al-Quduqī, 'Alī Kayaev unmistakably conveys his endorsement of the concept of *ijtihād*, which involves the hermeneutical interpretation of the Qur'ān and Sunna.

In other words, unlike al-Durgilī, Kayaev posits that merely being a scholar is insufficient to aspire to the status of an 'ideal Muslim.' The emotional resonance in the portrayal of the biographies of scholars specializing in the natural sciences distinctly shapes the archetype of the ideal scholarly persona, with a pronounced emphasis on rationalism.

Critiquing *taqlīd* and prioritizing rationalism, both in the domain of Islamic jurisprudence and the natural sciences, forms the defining feature of Kayaev's representation of the ideal scholarly persona. Emphasis upon rationalism, accompanied by an advocacy for the hermeneutical comprehension of the Qur'ān and Sunna, aligns with the reformists model of Islam.

Scholarly Legitimacy in Hagiography: Charisma and Miracles

The biographical works discussed above all contain references to certain scholars being Sufis or shaykhs. But none of these above authors focuses specifically on Sufism. The earliest text that is specifically dedicated to the lives and miracles of Sufi shaykhs is the afore-mentioned treatise *Ṭabaqāt al-khʷajagān al-Naqshbandiyya*

11 Ibid., fol. 6a
12 Ibid.

by Shuʿayb al-Bāginī [15, pp. 149–160].[13] In this work, al-Bāginī recounts in chronological succession the biographies of shaykhs following the Naqshbandi chain of spiritual transmission within his branch (*silsila*). At the same time, he also notes the biographies of shaykhs and scholars who were somehow related to the Naqshbandi shaykhs mentioned in the text.

The third part of the book is original and contains al-Bāginī's biographical accounts of various shaykhs of his own branch who lived in the North Caucasus and Transcaucasia. Alongside these biographies, he also recounts certain historical events that took place in the North-East Caucasus, about which he freely expresses his opinions.

While recounting the biographies of the Dagestani Sufi shaykhs, Shuʿayb al-Bāginī was unable to avoid mentioning also those scholars who were not Sufis but still enjoyed considerable authority in Dagestan. Given that al-Bāginī's original purpose in producing the work was to compile the biographies of Naqshbandi shaykhs, the lives of these other Dagestani scholars who had nothing to do with Sufism were in a sense extraneous to the main logic of the text. Shuʿayb al-Bāginī found an ingenious way out: in the midst of his narrative, he abruptly introduces a unique categorization for scholars who, while not Sufis, held significant authority in Dagestan, and he bestows upon them the title of 'shaykhs among scholars'. He also wrote about those who were not affiliated with the Naqshbandi branch, as well as those who declared themselves to be shaykhs without having the authority to do so. He writes as follows: "*The rest of the Dagestani shaykhs are divided into three categories. The first are the shaykhs among scholars, who were not connected to Sufism but reached the knowledge of God through their deep study of sciences and strict adherence to the canons of Islam, the cleanliness of their bodies, thoughts, and asceticism. The second ones are those who did not possess deep religious knowledge but approached God because of their irrepressible love of God (jadhba). The third ones are those who pretend to be shaykhs (tashayyakha), but have no religious knowledge that could guide them in their everyday life, or a genuine shaykh to lead and guide them in the ṭarīqa. They are lost and lead many others astray; they are hypocrites, liars… and those who follow them are like those who worship idols.*"[14]

In the first category of scholars he includes such individuals as the afore-mentioned Muḥammad al-Quduqī, Abū Bakr al-ʿAymakī and others who were not Sufis.[15] In his second category, al-Bāginī lists the famous Qādiri shaykh Kunta-hājji as well as Dagestani Khalwati shaykhs who died before the author's lifetime. In his opinion, these shaykhs did not possess deep knowledge and were not linked by the chain of spiritual continuity (*silsila)* with the Naqshbandi branch, but were nevertheless holy because of their irrepressible love of God, their obedience, humility, asceticism, and impeccable conduct.[16] In the third category, meanwhile, comprising what he calls 'false shaykhs', he includes certain followers of shaykh Kunta-hājji, as well as a number of Dagestani Naqshbandi shaykhs from a parallel, rival branch.[17]

In constructing and organising the *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya*, Shuʿayb al-Bāginī draws on entirely different principles from those informing the biographical works by Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʿAlī Kayaev that we discussed above. He does not, for instance, distinguish between Dagestanis and scholars of other origins; the continuity of the Sufi branch is more important to him than the origins of certain scholars or shaykhs. For this reason, we see a very broad geography in his work, including the Sufi shaykhs of Central Asia, the Ottoman Empire, Shirvan, Azerbaijan, Iran, and the Volga-Ural region. As far as al-Bāginī is concerned, the location or origins of individual shaykhs or their affiliation with this or that legal school is irrelevant.

Another difference between Shuʿayb al-Bāginī's work and the other biographical works is its focus on emotions and even sensory perceptions. In this regard, his description of his own emotions following the death of his father is quite telling. Besides, in his work al-Bāginī describes instances of shyness when confronted by others, profound shock when witnessing the miracles (*karamāt*) performed by the shaykhs, the palpable hostility and anger directed towards the shaykhs by Dagestani imperial officials, the deep reverence accorded to the shaykhs, the sensory delight and warmth experienced during the practice of Sufi rituals, a profound fear of God resulting in tears, and numerous other sentiments.

The emotionally charged narrative is clearly more typical of the genre of hagiography, with its signifiers of how a reader is expected to respond to mystical demonstrations of divine will, than of the biographical works

13 Shuʿayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khʷajagān al-Nakshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*. Damascus: Dār al-nuʿmān lil-ʿulūm, 1996.
14 Shuʿayb b. Idrīs al-Bāginī, *Ṭabaqāt al-khʷajagān al-Naqshbandiyya wa sādāt al-mashā'ikh al-khālidiyya al-maḥmūdiyya*, 397
15 Ibid., 397–415
16 Ibid., 416–418.
17 Ibid., 419–421.

by Nadhīr al-Durgilī or ʻAlī Kayaev. For instance, al-Durgilī's various biographical accounts embedded into a historical narrative serve as straightforward examples of an 'ideal Muslim scholar', without any expressive embellishments. Al-Durgilī does not attempt to influence readers' emotions, and instead simply recounts the lives of the people whom he discusses, highlighting the shaykhs' achievements in certain subjects, and thereby conveying a sense of what any Muslim can achieve and should strive for. By investing his hagiography with emotional power, Shuʻayb al-Bāginī is thus choosing a very different course of action from these other two authors.

Another Dagestani hagiographical text that covers the biographies of Sufi shaykhs is *Sirāj al-saʻādāt fi siyar al-sādāt* by the afore-mentioned Ḥasan al-Qaḥī,[18] who was the successor of shaykh Shuʻayb al-Bāginī. The author completed his work on 2 Shaʻbān 1338 / 20 April 1920, approximately at the same when Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʻAlī Kayaev were writing their own biographical essays.

The *Sirāj al-saʻādāt* is in large part an abbreviated retelling of Shuʻayb al-Bāginī's *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Naqshbandiyya*. Therefore, al-Qaḥī's work can predominantly be viewed as a compilation. When describing the life of shaykh al-Bāginī, he repeats nearly verbatim the autobiographical material that al-Bāginī wrote down in *Ṭabaqāt al-khwajagān al-Nakshbandiyya*. Meanwhile, here we can see one scholar's autobiography, al-Bāginī, becoming a biography when narrated by another scholar, al-Qaḥī.

Unlike Shuʻayb al-Bāginī, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī chose to omit the biographies of all shaykhs unrelated to the specific spiritual lineage (*silsila*) to which he himself belonged. What further sets al-Qaḥī's work apart is the dedicated section that delves into the biographies of two shaykhs who personally granted him the *ijaza*, ʻAbd al-Raḥmān al-ʻAsawī (d. 1904) and Sayfallāh-qāḍī Bashlarov; this is a feature not found in al-Bāginī's work.

Although al-Qaḥī presumably had the opportunity of producing a full biography of his teacher Sayfallāh-qāḍī Bashlarov, since they were both in frequent correspondence and in personal communication [18, pp. 60–71; 19, pp. 171–175], he nevertheless offers only a very concise summary of Bashlarov's life. He omits to mention a range of factual biographical data about Bashlarov, such as his date of birth, his studies at different madrasas, his exile, or his career as a doctor, and gives only the bare minimum of information concerning Bashlarov's Sufi path. For the most part, Bashlarov's biography as told by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī consists of descriptions of miracles performed by shaykh Bashlarov himself. Drawing on letters from Bashlarov that he had collected and copied into a separate book,[19] Ḥasan al-Qaḥī tells the story of Bashlarov's miracles as recounted by Bashlarov himself.

Thus, Sayfallāh-qāḍī Bashlarov wrote to him in his letters that he had had dreams about God, angels, prophets, including Adam, Ibrāhīm, Nūḥ, Mūsā, ʻĪsā, and repeatedly Prophet Muḥammad, with the latter offering him a glass of milk, walking him home and praying with him in his dreams.[20] Ḥasan al-Qaḥī presents these dreams of Bashlarov as testimony to the shaykh's high level of sanctity, and proof that shaykh Bashlarov was following the way of legitimate *ṭarīqa*. At the same time, however, he relates some of Bashlarov's dreams as warnings for the reader not to stray from the path of righteousness, and as evidence of both the truth of their own branch of *ṭarīqa* and the error of alternative, rival branches. Let us consider, for instance, a dream described by Sayfallāh-qāḍī in his letter to Ḥasan al-Qaḥī: "*On the night between Saturday and Sunday of 17 October, I had a dream that I was performing the Friday prayer in the mosque with other people. While I was seated and recited 'al-Taḥiyya', people interrupted their Friday prayer without finishing it and arose. As for me, I did not interrupt it and continued to pray. At the end I heard: "May God accept [your prayers] for the sake of Sayfallāh's sanctity". After the prayer ended, I turned back to see what had made Muslims interrupt their prayer. Someone said: "Our shaykh Muḥammad-hājji al-Kikunī has come to the mosque, and this is why we arose, interrupting our prayer." Then I understood that these people were most ignorant in their religion, for they had interrupted a mandatory prayer for no reason. Then I saw Muḥammad-hājji sitting in the mosque, who greeted me warmly and embraced me. We spoke long together, and I made him understand that his disciples (murīds) had behaved inappropriately when they interrupted their prayer. He agreed with me.*"[21]

This passage is instructive for several reasons. Muḥammad-hājji al-Kikunī (1836-1913) [21, pp.21–36; 22, pp. 22–35], who appears in Bashlarov's dream, was a shaykh of a parallel Khālidiyya branch of the

18 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥī al-Dāghistānī, *Sirāj al-saʻādāt fi siyar al-sādāt*. Makhachkala: Dār al-risāla, 2012.
19 Mir Khālid Sayfallāh b. Ḥusayn al-Nitsubakrī, *Maktūbāt Khālid Saif Allāh ilā fuqarā' ahl Allāh*. Damascus: Dār al-nuʻmān lil-ʻulūm, 1998.
20 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥī al-Dāghistānī, *Sirāj al-saʻādāt fi siyar al-sādāt*, 196.
21 Ibid., 217.

Naqshbandiyya brotherhood, whose legitimacy was questioned by both Shuʻayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī himself who belonged to the other, Maḥmūdiyya branch of the same brotherhood [23, pp. 43–56]. In Bashlarov's recounting of the dream as reported by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, the fact that shaykh al-Kikunī's disciples interrupted a mandatory prayer is evidence that al-Kikunī's branch is illegitimate. The fact that Bashlarov pointed out how inappropriate it was for shaykh al-Kikunī to interrupt the prayer and that the latter agreed with Bashlarov's argument also indicates that al-Kikunī essentially acknowledged his own illegitimacy. As for the warm reception given by al-Kikunī to Bashlarov, as well as his prayer to God to accept their prayer for the sake of shaykh Bashlarov's sanctity, this detail serves to communicate to readers that shaykh Bashlarov stood at a far higher spiritual and moral level than al-Kikunī. Thus the account of this dream, like those of all the dreams described by Bashlarov and recounted by Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, serves to demonstrate to the readers the image of an ideal shaykh, who is so true of heart that he is able to commune with God, angels, prophets, and most Islamic authorities.

Thus, the hagiographic works mostly focus on one scholarly persona: that of an ideal Sufi shaykh, whose legitimacy and righteousness are founded on the miracles or special metaphysical abilities demonstrated by a shaykh as a result of his special sanctity and/or his adherence to that particular *ṭarīqa* which the author in question regards as authoritative and legitimate.

The hagiographic works by Shuʻayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī articulate their vision of an ideal Sufi persona by drawing the readers' attention to the performance of miracles. The miracles performed by shaykhs and described in hagiographic works serve in these hagiographic narratives as manifestations of divine grace and favour; indeed, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī explicitly states that a shaykh's performance of miracles is a direction reflection of his sanctity.[22] The various miracles described by Shuʻayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī in their works are quite typologically diverse, and include clairvoyance, the ability to become invisible, the ability to tame wild beasts, the ability to turn one material object into another, the ability to move through time and space, the ability to produce food during a bad harvest, and the power to heal the sick.

Thus, in the hagiographic works by Dagestani shaykhs, miracles served to express the image of an ideal Muslim, who has acquired the ability of making supernatural things happen (moving through time and space, turning one object into another) as a result of his struggle against his inner vices and his impeccable obedience to his instructors' requests. In the Sufi hagiographic works by Dagestani Sufis, the shaykhs serve as an example of what they believed to be an 'ideal Muslim.'

When we compare biographical and hagiographic works, we can also point out their authors' different views when it comes to the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in the most general sense. Thus, Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʻAlī Kayaev considered it necessary to add to their biographical works the names of scholars who had become accomplished in the learning of various fields of knowledge: linguistics, law, logic, rhetoric, medicine, natural sciences. Shuʻayb al-Bāginī included in his *Ṭabaqāt al-khʷajagān* the biographies not just of Sufi shaykhs, but also of those scholars who reached high degrees of the knowledge of God due to their profound expertise in various subjects. As for Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, he dedicated his work to the description of just the lives of shaykhs of his own branch (*silsila*), and spoke of the negative experience of those who followed the Sufi way but simultaneously studied other subjects as well.

Conclusion

The analysis of extant works dedicated to the biographies of Dagestani scholars and Sufi shaykhs allows us to draw the following conclusions. While all these works were written in a genre which the European Orientalist and Muslim traditions would define as 'biography', the approaches selected by the authors operating within this genre are somewhat different. Nadhīr al-Durgilī, constructed his text on the chronological principle and included the biographies of all the scholars representing different areas of knowledge. Nadhīr al-Durgilī's work omits mention of any unpleasant episodes in the lives of these scholars, whom he presents as having attained profound knowledge in various different areas of study. ʻAlī Kayaev, despite using a structure similar to that employed by Nadhīr al-Durgilī, nevertheless also includes critical notes with regard to certain scholars. Shuʻayb al-Bāginī structures his work around his main Sufi branch, describing the lives of Sufi shaykhs along the chain

22 Ḥasan b. Muḥammad al-Qaḥī al-Dāghistānī, *Sirāj al-saʻādāt fi siyar al-sādāt*, 194.

of Naqshbandi continuity. At the same time, he deviates from the main topic somewhat in his work as he also provides information about shaykhs from other brotherhoods or even non-Sufi scholars. With reference primarily to the work by Shuʿayb al-Bāginī, Ḥasan al-Qaḥī rejects everything that is not directly related to the chain of Naqshbandi shaykhs with which he aligned himself. But while the works by Nadhīr al-Durgilī and ʿAlī Kayaev contain hardly any description of supernatural deeds performed by shaykhs, the works by al-Bāginī and al-Qaḥī primarily focus on these miracles.

It is quite clear that all of these authors had their own purposes and notions of their own potential audiences who they address in their text. For Nadhīr al-Durgilī, Shuʿayb al-Bāginī, and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī, the purpose of their work is to evoke for their readers the image of an ideal scholarly persona. Whereas Nadhīr al-Durgilī presents as ideal exemplars those who attain mastery in a wide range of sciences, Shuʿayb al-Bāginī and Ḥasan al-Qaḥī identify such exemplars only among practitioners of Sufism. At the same time, it is obvious to Shuʿayb al-Bāginī that the 'proper' image or Muslim persona can exist in other *ṭarīqa*s as well, and can even be demonstrated by those scholars who reached the degree of knowledge of God because of their profound knowledge. In this respect, his notion of an ideal scholarly persona is close to the view of Nadhīr al-Durgilī. However, Shuʿayb al-Bāginī excludes from this image all those who claim to belong to a certain brotherhood without possessing a true spiritual bond and permission to teach obtained directly from their shaykh. Ḥasan al-Qaḥī is more categorical in his own work and excludes anyone who had no relation to his particular branch of *ṭarīqa*.

As for ʿAlī Kayaev, it appears that he did not set out to portray an image of an ideal scholarly persona. Instead, he attempted to depict the biography of various scholars, highlighting both their positive and negative qualities. In his narrative Kayaev tried to focus more clearly on his own brand of historical objectivity: he is critical of his sources and compares spoken testimonies about scholars collected by him with the extant written evidence.

At the same time, one distinctive aspect of Kayaev's work reveals his personal preferences and demonstrates his concept of the ideal scholarly personas. Thus, Kayaev offers more comprehensive and detailed biographies of scholars specialising in the natural sciences, while reducing the coverage and, at times, omitting the biographies of certain scholars who were Sufi shaykhs or engaged in occult practices. Furthermore, it becomes evident that he permits himself to express emotions, often speaking with enthusiasm, as is the case with his portrayal of Muḥammad al-Quduqī. This suggests that despite Kayaev's primary aim of delivering an unbiased narrative, factual and historical account, nevertheless, he inadvertently and contextually identifies individuals who epitomise ideal scholarly personas – those who adhered to rationalistic principles.

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Research paper

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CHARITABLE SOCIETIES OF MUSLIM TATARS AS INSTRUMENTS OF SOCIAL MOBILITY: ORENBURG MOHAMMEDAN SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY DISTRICT AND THE NORTH CAUCASUS, EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY

Abstract. This study examines the mechanisms by which Muslims in Russia were integrated into the all-Russian state, educational, and cultural elite, thereby contributing to the consolidation of Russian statehood. Its primary aim is to assess the role of Muslim Tatar charitable societies under the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly (OMSA) and similar organizations in the North Caucasus during the early twentieth century as social mobility that facilitated the emergence of a modern Russian elite drawn from Russia's Muslim populations. The specific objectives are to examine the educational systems and scholarship programs operated by these charitable societies and to evaluate their impact through the subsequent careers of beneficiaries in politics, education, literature, the humanities, and healthcare. Geographically, the analysis focuses on Orenburg province within the OMSA jurisdiction and, for the North Caucasus, on societies active in the territories of present-day Dagestan, Kabardino-Balkaria, and North Ossetia–Alania. Key institutions considered include those in Vladikavkaz, Temir-Khan-Shura (now Buinaksk), and Orenburg, which established schools to prepare Muslim children for entry into state secondary educational institutions. The article employs comparative-historical and problem-chronological methods, together with synchronous and diachronic analysis, periodization, and classification. The principal findings demonstrate that graduates and scholarship recipients of these societies included prominent public figures (among them at least three members of the All-Russian Constituent Assembly and one key minister of the Mountain Republic), as well as figures in education, literature, the humanities, and healthcare among the Muslim peoples of the North Caucasus, Tatars, and Bashkirs. Thus, early twentieth-century Muslim charitable societies in the Omsk region and the North Caucasus played a critical role in forming a modern Russian elite from among Russia's Muslim communities.

Keywords: Muslim charitable societies; Society for the Dissemination of Education and Technical Information among the Highlanders of the Tersk region; Society for the Education of Muslim Natives of the Dagestan region; Orenburg Society for the Care of Muslim Students; Akhmad-bai Khusainov's Waqf Board of Trustees

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Исследовательская статья

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ОПЫТ СОЗДАНИЯ СОЦИАЛЬНЫХ «ЛИФТОВ» БЛАГОТВОРИТЕЛЬНЫМИ ОБЩЕСТВАМИ МУСУЛЬМАН-ТАТАР ОКРУГА ОРЕНБУРГСКОГО МАГОМЕТАНСКОГО ДУХОВНОГО СОБРАНИЯ И СЕВЕРНОГО КАВКАЗА В НАЧАЛЕ XX ВЕКА

Аннотация. Цель исследования заключается в анализе роли благотворительных обществ мусульман-татар округа Оренбургского магометанского духовного собрания (ОМДС) и Северного Кавказа в начале XX в. как социальных «лифтов» для формирования российской элиты Нового времени из числа представителей мусульманских народов России. Актуальность исследования состоит в изучении механизмов интеграции мусульман в России в общероссийскую государственную, образовательную и культурную элиту с целью упрочения основ российской государственности. Задачами исследования является анализ системы образования школ благотворительных обществ и их стипендиальных программ; результатов деятельности этих обществ на примерах обученных и финансово поддержанных ими деятелей в сферах политики, просвещения, литературы, гуманитарных наук и здравоохранения. Территориально в округе ОМДС мы сосредоточились преимущественно на анализе опыта Оренбургской губернии. Опыт Северного Кавказа мы исследуем на примере обществ, действовавших на территории современных республик Дагестан, Кабардино-Балкария и Северная Осетия-Алания. Благотворительные общества Владикавказа, Темир-Хан-Шуры (ныне Буйнакска) и Оренбурга создали школы для детей по подготовке их для поступления в правительственные средние учебные заведения. Статья основана на использовании сравнительно-исторического, проблемно-хронологического методов, методов синхронного и диахронного анализа, периодизации, классификации. Основные результаты исследования показывают, что выпускники школ и участники стипендиальных программ благотворительных обществ включали в себя общественных деятелей (минимум трех членов Всероссийского Учредительного собрания и одного из ключевых министров Горской республики), деятелей просвещения, литературы, гуманитарных наук, здравоохранения среди мусульманских народов Северного Кавказа, татар и башкир. Таким образом, благотворительные общества мусульман ОМДС и Северного Кавказа в начале XX в. действительно сыграли ключевую роль для формирования российской элиты Нового времени из числа представителей мусульманских народов России.

Ключевые слова: мусульманские благотворительные общества; «Общество по распространению образования и технических сведений среди горцев Терской области»; «Общество просвещения туземцев-мусульман Дагестанской области»; «Оренбургское Общество попечения об учащихся мусульманах»; Попечительский совет вакуфа Ахмад-бая Хусаинова

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Introduction

This article continues our comparative examination of Muslim institutions in the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly (OMSA) and the North Caucasus. In a previous study, we analyzed early twentieth-century projects for religious autonomy, most of which remained unrealized because they required approval either from central authorities or through a unified religious administration for the North Caucasus – processes that were inseparable from broader all-Russian developments [1].

Applying an institutional approach, the present study focuses on another widespread phenomenon among Russian Muslims – charitable societies. Research conducted during the compilation of regional dictionaries, and subsequently the eight-volume encyclopedic dictionary *Islam in the Russian Federation*, revealed that Muslim charitable societies under OMSA authority operated not only in the Volga-Ural region and the capitals but also in northwest Russia, central Russia, the southern regions (Rostov-on-Don and Astrakhan province), Siberia, and the Far East. Similarly, while preparing the dictionary *Islam in Crimea*, D.I. Abibullayeva – at our request – documented six Crimean Muslim charitable societies, the earliest of which was established in 1897 [2, pp. 18–21].

The North Caucasus emerged as the next region for examining this phenomenon. On 11 December 2023, during the XX Faizkhanov Readings, charitable societies of Russian Muslims became a central topic in the section devoted to the preparation of the encyclopedic dictionary *Islam in the Russian Federation*. In that forum, D.N. Denisov presented a report titled "Charitable Organizations of the Muslim Peoples of the North Caucasus in the Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries," which drew on a comparative analysis of the activities of Muslim Tatar societies under the OMSA and their counterparts in the North Caucasus. Earlier contributions include H.M. Donogo's study of the Society for the Education of Native Muslims of the Dagestan Region in Temir-Khan-Shura (present-day Buinaksk, Republic of Dagestan) [3, pp. 427–430] and A.K. Buzarov's examination of the Circassian Charitable Society in Ekaterinodar (present-day Krasnodar) [4, pp. 31–41].

The role of charitable societies in the personnel training

For the forthcoming first volume of the encyclopedic dictionary *Islam in the Russian Federation* (2026, in press), entries were prepared on Muslim charitable societies across the entire territory of the present-day Russian Federation, organized according to the regions listed in Article 65 of the Constitution of the Russian Federation. An entry was added to the section "Charitable societies of the Republic of Dagestan": "Society of education of the Kumyk people of the Khasavyurt district" [5, p. 265]; the section "Charitable societies of the Kabardino-Balkarian Republic" contains the entry "Charitable Society for the dissemination of education among Kabardians and highlanders of the Nalchik district" [6, pp. 266–267]; in the section "Charitable societies of the North Ossetian Republic" the following entries: "Muruvat Vladikavkaz Charitable Muslim Society" [7, p. 271], "Society for the Dissemination of education and technical information among the Highlanders of the Tersk region" (mixed religious composition) [8, pp. 271–273], "Khimmat" society for the benefit of poor Persian subjects in Vladikavkaz and the Tersk region" [9, p. 273], "Society for the Education of the Ingush people of the Nazran district of the Tersk region" [10, p. 273-274]; in the section "Charitable societies of the Chechen Republic" – an entry "Society for the dissemination of education among Chechens" [11, p. 275–276]; in the section "Charitable societies Stavropol Territory" – an entry "Stavropol Muslim Charitable Society" [12, p. 279].

These eight more entries have been added to one related to the Muslim charitable society in the North Caucasus Federal District (Krasnodar krai is a part of the Southern Federal District) in the consolidated version of the dictionary *Islam in the Russian Federation*, which reveal the activities of societies in 5 subjects of that district. The present article is therefore synthesizing in nature. It draws on materials from the regional volumes of the series *Islam in the Russian Federation* (2006–2024) and the summary entry on Muslim charitable societies in the first volume of the consolidated dictionary *Islam in the Russian Federation* (in press), supplemented by the entries on specific societies that follow it.

By 1914, 87 Muslim charitable societies were active across the Russian Empire, with additional ones established in subsequent years. These organizations varied considerably in geography, objectives, composition, and duration of operation; a comprehensive analysis of their activities would necessitate a dedicated monograph. In the course of preparing the regional volumes and the consolidated edition of the encyclopedic dictionary *Islam in the Russian Federation*, we compiled entries on the great majority of these societies, including nearly all stable urban ones.

The present article concentrates on two closely related aspects: (1) the educational programs designed to prepare students for entry into Russian secondary and higher educational institutions, and (2) the scholarship systems that supported such students. As an assessment of outcomes, we provide concise biographical information on individuals who benefited from this training. Accordingly, the study does not address the broader development of education under Muslim charitable societies but focuses specifically on preparation for state educational institutions and the subsequent achievements of these activities.

A key consideration is the focus on male students. In the Russian Empire, secondary and higher education remained segregated by gender until women gained the right to obtain state-recognized university diplomas in selected faculties from the 1915–1916 academic year and across all faculties from 1916–1917.

Charitable societies are generally regarded as secular institutions with no direct link to religious tradition. Nevertheless, as early as 1876, Shihab ad-Din Marjani, imam-khatib of the First Cathedral Mosque in Kazan, secured the adoption of the "Draft Rules for the Administration of the Madrasa Property of the Parish of the First Cathedral Mosque in Kazan" [13, pp. 27–32]. By doing so, Shihab Marjani directed a collegial body toward addressing Muslim educational needs.

From the perspective of Islamic doctrine, *zakat* – one of the five pillars of Islam – has traditionally been allocated to assist the poor. However, imperial Russian legislation did not recognize *waqf* endowments in the OMSA district [14, pp. 129–130]. Consequently, Muslim capital in this district was concentrated primarily in urban centers, and the financial stability of the community depended heavily on the prosperity of wealthy merchants (*bays*), who served as trustees (*mutawalli*) of the parishes [14, pp. 139–140].

Muslim charitable societies, which began to emerge in the late 19th century, were predominantly an urban phenomenon, as they aimed to support members of the *ummah* living in cities. Their objectives were defined primarily in their charters, which therefore serve as the main sources for this analysis. Initially, the emphasis was on financial support. This is evident in the 1897 charter of the Kasimov Muslim Charitable Society, which declared: "The society aims to provide funds for the improvement of the material and moral condition of poor Muslims of the city of Kasimov, without distinction of sex or age" (§ 1). Paragraph 2 detailed a broad range of activities: supplying clothing, food, and shelter; granting cash benefits in extreme cases; assisting the needy in finding employment or service; purchasing materials and tools for their work and facilitating the profitable sale of their products; providing medical care and hospital placement for poor patients at the society's expense; aiding in the burial of the deceased; placing the elderly and infirm in almshouses and minors in orphanages, shelters, craft schools, or educational institutions; and providing the means for the poor to return to their homeland. The sole provision touching on enlightenment, rather than formal education, was point (f): "the dissemination of moral books among the people" [15, pp. 3–4]. The 1898 charter of the Troitsk Muslim Charitable Society reproduces these provisions almost verbatim [16, p. 1].

The 1896 charter of the Astrakhan Trusteeship for Poor Tatars similarly mentions education only in passing: paragraph (e) authorizes the "organization of … craft schools, soup kitchens for the poor, etc., charitable institutions," while paragraph (f) provides for "assistance to the education of poor children, as well as improvement of the internal and external conditions of students in Tatar schools at mosques" [17, pp. 3–4]. Thus, in their original version, the charters of Muslim charitable societies focused almost exclusively on aiding the poor, thereby effectively narrowing the functional scope of *zakat*.

However, the possibility of directing zakat funds toward education had already been raised in the early 1890s. In 1892, while OMSA mufti Muhammadiyar Sultanov was absent, a meeting on school reform and education was held there. On its sidelines, the Orenburg bai Gani Khusainov managed to obtain a *fatwa* from the OMSA qadi Gabdurrashid Ibragimov permitting the allocation of *zakat* funds for educational purposes [18, p. 133].

The shift that made education a central statutory objective of Muslim charitable societies occurred during the Revolution of 1905–1907. The overall designation of some societies could remain unchanged. The 1908 charter of the Kasimov Muslim Society, for example, declares: "The Society aims to improve and develop the

cultural, legal, and economic life of Muslims and to disseminate modern education in the city of Kasimov and its district" (§ 1).

Section a) of § 2 then specifies:

"In pursuit of this aim, the Society:

a) promotes the improvement of existing schools, *maktabs*, and *madrasahs* in compliance with established laws; opens new general and vocational schools, training workshops, model farms, and enterprises for field, horticulture, and dairy farming;

b) publishes popular brochures and books of educational, pedagogical, agricultural, and legal content in the Tatar language, in compliance with existing general laws …" [19, pp. 3–4].

Thus, these societies increasingly aimed to raise educational levels and enhance opportunities for vertical social mobility. A common strategy in both the Volga-Ural region and the North Caucasus was the establishment of private Muslim schools specifically designed to prepare students for admission to state secondary educational institutions, which in turn served as gateways to university education and further social mobility. Prominent examples include the schools operated by the Society for the Dissemination of Education and Technical Knowledge among the Highlanders of the Tersk Region (Vladikavkaz, founded 1882), the Society for the Education of Native Muslims of the Dagestan Region (Temir-Khan-Shura, present-day Buinaksk, founded 1906), and the Orenburg Society for the Care of Muslim Students (founded 1912).

The Society for the Dissemination of Education and Technical Knowledge among the Highlanders of the Tersk Region had a mixed religious and ethnic composition. Although Ossetians held prominent positions in the Mountain Society, including Muslims of the same nationality (notably T.K. Dudarov, I.T. Kusov, E.B. Kusov, I.G. Tkhostov, D.T. Shanaev, and I.D. Shanaev), the leadership also included Dargins (M.M. Dalgat), Lezgins (Yu.D. Dagirov), Chechens (M.O. Omarov, A.M. Chermoev), Balkars (A.A. Urusbiev), and Kumyks (M. Osmanov, M.M. Sheikh-Ali). Through its activities, it had a substantial influence on the educational and cultural development of highlanders of diverse nationalities across the North Caucasus. As part of the empire-wide celebration of the centenary of Alexander Pushkin's birth in 1899, the society took the lead in fundraising and, between 1902 and 1903, constructed a two-storey brick dormitory on Krepostnaya St. (present-day Tsereteli St.) in Vladikavkaz at a cost of 25,000 rubles. Known as the Gorsko-Pushkin dormitory, it housed sixty boys – Ossetians, Ingush, Chechens, Kabardians, Balkars, and Kumyks – who were attending secondary and vocational institutions in the city [8, p. 271].

The Society for the Education of Native Muslims of the Dagestan Region in Temir-Khan-Shura purchased a house in 1906 for 3,500 rubles and established a school for preparing Muslims for admission to secondary institutions with a dormitory for twelve scholarship students: "one representative from each ethnic group inhabiting the Dagestan Region." Enrollment at the preparatory school rose from 13 in 1907 to 37 in 1909, 29 in 1910, 31 in 1911, and 54 in 1912. Subsequently, it was reorganized as a Russian-Muslim school with the status of a single-class elementary school under the Ministry of Public Education. Instruction in Russian covered the Russian language, arithmetic, geometry, Russian history, natural history, geography, and law of the Russian Empire. Kumyk ("local Tatar"), Arabic, and Islamic studies were taught in Kumyk. By 1913 the school had 91 pupils (62 boys and 29 girls). One of the teachers was the socio-political and religious figure M.-K.D. Dibirov, author of the first primers and textbooks in the Kumyk language [4, pp. 292–293].

According to its charter, the Orenburg Society for the Care of Muslim Students established a private preparatory school whose purpose was "to prepare Muslim children for admission to state educational institutions. The curriculum included Islamic studies, Russian language, arithmetic, the native (Tatar) language, and drawing" [20, pp. 3–4]. The society received donations from across the Russian Empire – Yekaterinburg, Omsk, Verny (present-day Almaty), Kokand, and elsewhere – indicating that it quickly transcended its original regional scope and assumed an all-Russian character [21, p. 280].

The second most important component for enabling access to state secondary and higher education was the provision of scholarships by charitable societies.

The Society for the Dissemination of Education and Technical Knowledge among the Highlanders of the Tersk Region provided benefits to needy highlander students attending state institutions, including the Vladikavkaz and Pyatigorsk gymnasiums, Vladikavkaz Vocational School, Tiflis Medical School, Moscow Higher Technical College, Tomsk Technological Institute, Don Polytechnic Institute, Tiflis Teachers' Institute, the commercial institutes of Moscow and Kiev, St. Petersburg Forestry Institute, Kharkov Veterinary Institute, and the universities of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Kiev, Kharkov, Derpt (Tartu), and Tomsk. The number of

beneficiaries rose from 16 in 1887 to 31 in 1896, 33 in 1905, 114 in 1906, 72 in 1907, 115 in 1908, 36 in 1909, 97 in 1910, and 67 in 1911. In total, between 1882 and 1913 the society expended 35,892 rubles on such scholarships [8, p. 272]. Note that these figures refer exclusively to students in state secondary and higher educational institutions.

The Charitable Society for the Dissemination of Education among Kabardians and Highlanders of Nalchik District, founded in 1907, awarded scholarships to needy Kabardians and Balkars attending state secondary and higher educational institutions, including Nalchik Real School, Mozdok City School, Chuguev Military School, St. Petersburg Polytechnic Institute, St. Petersburg University, etc. [6, p. 267]. These figures, too, refer exclusively to state institutions, including military ones.

The Society for the Education of Native Muslims of the Dagestan Region similarly provided scholarships to poor Dagestani students enrolled in state educational institutions [4, p. 293].

The Orenburg Society for the Care of Muslim Students granted scholarships, allowances, or interest-free loans to Muslims studying at primary, secondary, and higher state institutions across the Russian Empire (nearly all located in the territory of present-day Russia) [21, p. 280]. Additional income was directed to the Board of Trustees of the Akhmad-bai Khusainov's Waqf (brother of Gani-bay) in Orenburg, which funded 26 scholarships for Muslim youths pursuing secondary and higher education in Russia. Two scholarships were allocated for Hajj, but in fact were intended to support advanced study at Muslim institutions in the Middle East (see below) until the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 [22, pp. 290–291].

Beneficiaries of charitable society scholarships

In this section, we will try to summarize the results of Muslim charitable societies in the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly jurisdiction (primarily Orenburg province) and the North Caucasus on national education and the social mobility of Russian Muslims. Their success is measured by the subsequent career growth and societal contributions of scholarship recipients. Rather than organizing the analysis by ethnicity or region, we group individuals according to professional field: lawyers and public figures; educators and cultural figures; and medical professionals.

Regarding lawyers and public figures, we see a fairly large degree of difference between the Volga-Ural region and the Caucasus. Several factors account for this disparity: the North Caucasus lacked zemstvos; the absence of Tatar slobodas in cities with their well-developed economic and socio-political infrastructure of the modern period. For the prospects of legal careers of Russian Muslims in the region in the early twentieth century, a critical obstacle was "the underdeveloped judicial system in the Caucasian viceroyalty, which encompassed most of the North Caucasus" [23, p. 30]. Moreover, under the electoral law of 3 June 1907, the region's population, except Zakataly district, was excluded from elections to the State Duma of the Russian Empire.

In 1917, two fellows of the Orenburg Society for the Care of Muslim Students who had completed legal education were elected to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly: Shakir Zarifovich Mukhamediarov and Muhammad-Nazip (Najib) Latypovich Halfin [21, p. 280]. M.-N. Halfin served in 1917–1918 as a member of the executive committee of the Kazan Provincial Milli Shuro and was elected deputy of the Constituent Assembly from Kazan province on the Milli Shuro list. Sh. Mukhamediarov was elected from Samara province on a comparable list [24, pp. 283–285, 321].

Gabdul-Ahad Rizaetdinovich Fakhretdinov (1892–1938), son of the prominent alim, qadi of the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly (1890–1906), and later mufti and chairman of the Central Muslim Spiritual Administration (1921–1936), Riza ad-Din ibn Fakhr al-Din, received a scholarship from the Board of Trustees of the A. G. Khusainov's Waqf while attending the Orenburg Real School.[1] Gabdul-Ahad Fakhretdinov was elected to the All-Russian Constituent Assembly from Orenburg province on the list of the Bashkir Shuro (autonomists). Muhammad-Najib Kurbangaleev, a law student at Kharkov University, received a scholarship from the Troisk Society of Clerks. He served on the bureau of the Muslim Faction of the State Duma (1915–1917) and in 1918 became chairman of the Magarif Nazaraty (Department of Education) of the Milli Idare [25, p. 360].

1 The National Archive of the Republic of Bashkortostan. F. I-295, inv. 8, file 1316, ll. 2-29.

Muhamet-Kamil Gilmanovich Karimov (1891–1949), supported by the Board of Trustees of the A. G. Khusainov's Waqf, graduated from the Faculty of Law at Kazan University in 1913.[2] He subsequently worked as an assistant attorney in Orenburg, was elected to the Orenburg City Duma in 1916 and to the Millet Mejlis in 1917, and headed the Orenburg Provincial Milli Shuro in autumn 1917.

Galimzyan Sharafutdinovich Sharaf (1896–1950), another beneficiary of the Khusainov's Waqf board, completed the Kazan Real School in 1915.[3] In 1917–1918 he served as a deputy of the Millet Mejlis and chairman of the Board for the Implementation of the Ural-Volga State (KUVSH). During the Soviet period he worked as a linguist and teacher.

Vasilii-Gabdulla Ibragimovich Dzhabagiev (1882–1961), a scholarship holder of the Society for the Dissemination of Education and Technical Knowledge among the Highlanders of the Tersk Region, served as Chairman of the Ingush Executive Committee in 1917 and as Minister of Finance of the Mountainous Republic from 1917 to 1920. After graduating from the Vladikavkaz Real School, he studied at the Faculty of Agriculture of the Don Polytechnic Institute and later continued his education at the University of Jena (Germany), where he specialized in natural sciences, agriculture, and agricultural economics [25, pp. 113–114].

Beneficiaries of the Society for the Dissemination of Education and Technical Knowledge among the Highlanders of the Tersk Region included several prominent cultural and educational figures: the founder of modern Ingush poetry, T.D. Bekov (1873–1938); the educator and publisher A. A. Kanukov (1866–1918), who edited the first Ossetian journal *Zond* ("Knowledge") and authored the first Ossetian primer; the philologist, literary critic, and folklorist G. A. Dzagurov (1888–1979), who served as the first chairman of the Ossetian Historical-Philological Society, headed the archival service of North Ossetia, and directed the regional public education department; and the educator B. A. Alborov (1886–1968), who led public education in Vladikavkaz district, organized and directed the North Ossetian Research Institute of Humanitarian and Social Studies, and later became rector of the Gorsky Pedagogical Institute [8, p. 272].

Beneficiaries of the Charitable Society for the Dissemination of Education among Kabardians and Highlanders of Nalchik District included the founder of Kabardian drama, teacher, and linguist T. A. Sheretlokov (1884–1937), as well as the teacher and public figure B. L. Khuranov (1890–1928), who served as the first head of the public education department of the Kabardian and later Kabardino-Balkarian regional executive committees, developed the Latin-based Kabardian alphabet, and authored textbooks and a dictionary [6, pp. 266–267].

The range of Tatar and Bashkir scholarship holders was particularly broad, so here are the most illustrative examples that show concern of the Tatars of the Southern Urals for the training of the next generations of teachers. The Troitsk Muslim Charitable Society covered the tuition of M.-G. N. Mukhamedov (1886–1950) at the Ufa Teachers' Institute; in 1917–1918 he led the Ufa provincial branch of the Magarif Nazaraty (Department of Education) of the Milli Idare, and from 1918 to 1921 directed the three-year Ufa Muslim pedagogical courses before their reorganization into the Bashkir Pedagogical College [26, p. 4]. H. H. Zaini (1890–1968), supported by the Troitsk Society of Clerks while studying at the Istanbul Pedagogical Institute, later served as director of the Troitsk Tatar Pedagogical College (1922–1925) and dean of the Geography Faculty of the Ufa Pedagogical Institute (1934–1937) [27, p. 360]. M. Z. Safin (1893–1937), funded by the A. G. Khusainov's Waqf, graduated from the Kazan Teachers' Institute and subsequently headed the Muslim section of the Samara Provincial Department of Public Education (1918–1919), the preschool education department of the Bashkir People's Commissariat of Education (1920–1922), the publishing department of Bashkniga (1922–1924), and, in 1937, the biology and chemistry faculty of the Kazan Pedagogical Institute [28, p. 135].

In the context of Russia's underdeveloped healthcare system, aggravated by the First World War, the Civil War, famine, and epidemics, the training of medical personnel was critically important. Several scholarship recipients became key organizers of healthcare in national regions and republics. Fatykh Garifovich Mukhamedyarov (1884–1950), supported by the Board of Trustees of the A. G. Khusainov's Waqf, graduated from the Medical Faculty of Kazan University in 1917. He was among the founders of the Muslim Socialist Committee in Kazan and served as People's Commissar of Health of the Tatar ASSR from 1922 to 1927 [29, p. 306]. I. M. Abaev (1888–1933), a beneficiary of the Charitable Society for the Dissemination of Education among Kabardians and Highlanders of Nalchik District, headed the medical-sanitary department of the Nalchik District Revolutionary Committee and established the Soviet sanitary-epidemiological service in Kabardino-Balkaria [6, p. 267]. M. I. Tulatov (1869–1934), supported by the Society for the Dissemination of Education

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.

and Technical Knowledge among the Highlanders of the Tersk Region, became the first head of the Health Department of the Ingush Autonomous Oblast [8, p. 272].

A distinct group of beneficiaries from the A. G. Khusainov's Waqf pursued religious education and/or became prominent religious figures. The best-known example is Yakub Suleimanovich Shinkevich (1884–1966), who received a scholarship to the Faculty of Oriental Languages at St. Petersburg University but interrupted his studies in 1914 to serve at the front; he later became the first mufti of Poland (1925–1944) [30, pp. 181–202]. Two others received scholarships ostensibly for the Hajj but in reality – for studying at Middle Eastern madrasahs: the historian and publicist Gabdulbari Abdullovich Battal (1880/82–1969), who attended the Ghumdaniya madrasah in Medina (then Ottoman Empire) and al-Azhar University in Cairo [31, p. 49]; and the teacher-methodologist Zakir Nasyrovich Ayukhanov (1889–1961), one of the developers of the Cyrillic-based Bashkir alphabet, who studied at al-Azhar University from 1911 to 1914 [32, pp. 16–17].

Conclusion

The authors examined Muslim charitable societies of the Orenburg Mohammedan Spiritual Assembly (OMSA) district and in the North Caucasus. Earlier contributions to the encyclopedic series *Islam in the Russian Federation* expanded the documented North Caucasian societies from two to ten, enabling systematic comparison with their counterparts in the OMSA district.

This study has shown, through concrete examples, that charitable societies in both regions pursued common educational objectives. They established preparatory schools and provided scholarships for study at state-funded secondary and higher educational institutions across the Russian Empire. Graduates of these schools and beneficiaries of the charitable societies' scholarship programs – among the Muslim populations of the North Caucasus, Tatars, and Bashkirs – included public and political figures, educators, writers, scholars, and medical professionals. These individuals formed the core of the regional national elites in governance, culture, education, and science during the Revolution of 1917 and the early Soviet period.

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Research paper

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APPLICATION OF 3D TECHNOLOGIES IN REVEALING ANTROPOMORPHIC BAS-RELIEFS ON CHUMAKI GROUP OF DOLMENS, GREATER SOCHI

Abstract. This article presents the findings of a study on a bas-relief composition adorning the facade slab of a dolmen from the Chumaki dolmen group, situated in the Tsushvadzh River basin within the Lazarevsky district of Greater Sochi. The bas-relief depicts three anthropomorphic figures engaged in a dance. The two flanking figures are depicted in symmetrical, mirror-image poses, with one arm extended toward the central figure and the other bent at the elbow and lowered. The central figure has both arms hanging downward. This compositional motif bears resemblance to the bas-reliefs of the Kapibge-1 dolmen (Greater Sochi) and to the pecked images on the blocks of the dolmen courtyard in the village of Dzhubga. Analysis of the poses of these "twins" reveals parallels with petroglyphs and engravings on dolmens across the Caucasus, as well as with Bronze Age monuments spanning a broad region from Transcaucasia to Crimea – evidence suggesting the persistence of shared mythological narratives in antiquity. This discovery augments the inventory of dolmens in the Greater Sochi region featuring anthropomorphic and geometric motifs executed in bas-relief, potentially indicative of a distinctive stylistic "signature" associated with a local "school." Identification of the composition was enabled by digital technologies, including photogrammetry and subsequent 3D modeling that leverages shadow and highlight patterns under simulated oblique illumination via gradient procedural textures. Such methods enhance the visibility of bas-relief imagery and uncover poorly preserved elements. In turn, these techniques afford novel opportunities for revealing previously undetected motifs on well-documented monuments.

Keywords: dolmen; historical and cultural heritage; bas-relief petroglyphs; anthropomorphic images; photogrammetry; 3D modelling; Black Sea coast of the Caucasus; Tsuskhvadzh River; Chumaki dolmen group

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АНТРОПОМОРФНЫЕ БАРЕЛЬЕФЫ НА ДОЛЬМЕНЕ В ГРУППЕ «ЧУМАКИ», БОЛЬШОЙ СОЧИ: ПРИМЕНЕНИЕ 3-D ТЕХНОЛОГИЙ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ

Аннотация. В статье приведены результаты исследования барельефной сюжетной композиции, изображенной на фасадной плите составного дольмена группы «Чумаки», расположенного в бассейне р. Цусхвадж Лазаревского района Большого Сочи. Барельеф состоит из трех антропоморфных фигур, изображенных в танце. Центральная фигура изображена с опущенными руками. Два крайних персонажа изображены в зеркальных позах – одна рука каждой фигуры протянута в сторону центрального изображения, вторая согнута в локте и опущена вниз. Композиция сюжетно перекликается с барельефами дольмена Капибге-1 (Большой Сочи) и с изображениями на блоках двора дольмена в Джубге, выполненных в технике пикетажа. Анализ поз «близнецов» находит параллели с петроглифами как на дольменах Кавказа, так и в памятниках эпохи бронзы от Закавказья до Крыма, что может говорить о единых мифологических сюжетах, бытовавших в древности. Находка дополнила список дольменных памятников Большого Сочи с антропоморфными и геометрическими изображениями в барельефной технике, что, возможно, является характерным «почерком» местной «школы». Обнаружение изображений стало возможным благодаря применению цифровых технологий, включающих фотограмметрию и последующую 3-D обработку с использованием теневой и бликовой картины в косых лучах виртуальных источников света с применением градиентных процедурных карт. Это позволяет четче проявить барельефные изображения и выявить плохо сохранившиеся фрагменты. Применение этой технологии открывает новые возможности обнаружения изображений на давно известных памятниках.

Ключевые слова: дольмен; историко-культурное наследие; барельефные петроглифы; антропоморфные изображения; фотограмметрия; 3D-обработка; Черноморское побережье Кавказа; р. Цусхвадж; дольменная группа «Чумаки»

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Introduction

This research constitutes part of a state assignment (No. FGRW-2024-0002; state registration No. 124022000096-2) dedicated to documenting the archaeological monuments of Greater Sochi. The initiative suggests the systematic recording of sites, coupled with the establishment of an electronic database, register, catalog, and archaeological geographic information system (GIS) for the region. At the present stage, investigations focus on the most emblematic categories of archaeological objects in the area: dolmens and medieval Christian churches. The primary objective is to develop an information resource that addresses the requirements of heritage protection authorities, governmental bodies, scientific institutions, land users, and other stakeholders. This resource will enable security protocols, oversight mechanisms, and preventive measures against site degradation amid the region's accelerated urbanization; it will further promote scholarly analysis, public dissemination, and the incorporation of select monuments into historical and cultural tourism routes. As part of this initiative, conducted in collaboration with Sochi National Park, information on previously unknown or understudied historical and cultural heritage sites is progressively integrated into scholarly discourse. Notably, between 2021 and 2023, data were published on the dolmen macrocluster of the Mizegukh Ridge, situated in the interfluve of the Makopse, Neozhidannaya, and Ashe Rivers within Sochi National Park and comprising 34 structures [1–3]. In 2023, during the preparation of cataloging materials for sites in the vicinity, a distinctive ensemble of zoomorphic and anthropomorphic bas-relief motifs was identified on a trough-shaped dolmen of the Kapibge-1 group, portraying mythological motifs that include driven-deer hunts and the dance of three paired figures [4] (Fig. 1).

The newly discovered bas-reliefs substantially supplement the limited corpus of dolmen culture artifacts bearing zoomorphic and anthropomorphic imagery. Such motifs were first documented in 2006 by the West Caucasus Expedition of the Institute of the History of Material Culture, Russian Academy of Sciences (IHMC RAS), under the leadership of V. A. Trifonov, on the enclosing blocks of a dolmen courtyard located on the grounds of the "Dzhubga Rest House." On the lower frieze block, six figures aligned in a row were identified, depicting an ancient mythological narrative; on another courtyard block, two mirror-symmetrical anthropomorphic "twins" were observed. The reverse side of this same block features a headless anthropomorphic figure, with one hand on the hip and the other extended forward [5, pp. 115–118, fig. 4].

The second object, designated dolmen A from the Schize IV group, features on one of its slabs an image of "dancing figures" identified in 2007 by the North Caucasus Expedition of the Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Sciences [6, p. 296].

The bas-relief images on the facade of the DK155 dolmen from the Kapibge-1 group, discovered in 2023, supplement this series. A fundamental distinction of this composition lies in its execution via bas-relief technique, incorporating numerous details, whereas all preceding images were incised and rendered in schematic form.

A major practical consequence of this discovery was the widespread public response, which precipitated the monument's designation for protection and its inclusion in the Unified State Register of Objects of Cultural Heritage.

This discovery prompted a reevaluation of the design principles for dolmen main facades and the techniques employed in rendering images. It necessitated the development of a methodology for detecting partially lost shallow bas-reliefs, as well as a revision of the protocols for site inspection and documentation. Accordingly, a mandatory provision was incorporated into these protocols, stipulating a thorough examination of the dolmen's representational surfaces – primarily the main facade plane – under oblique illumination from a high-powered lamp, to identify remnants of anthropogenic relief and thereby determine the need for further detailed investigation. This technique enabled the identification of eroded zones bearing stripes and zigzags on several monuments in Greater Sochi, indicating that the decorative ornamentation of dolmens' representational surfaces was not an exceptional feature but a recurrent practice. The omission of such motifs from scholarly descriptions of dolmens stems exclusively from their severe degradation due to surface erosion. These revelations open new prospects for investigating dolmen rock art and the Bronze Age mythologies of Caucasian peoples.

The developed technique for image identification yielded further results in January 2025, with the discovery of another bas-relief composition on the facade slab of a previously documented dolmen from the Chumaki group in the Tsushvadzh River basin. This ensemble depicts three anthropomorphic figures engaged in a dance.

Materials and methods

To identify and study rock art in classical archeology, various contact-based methods have been employed since the 20th century, including pigment rubbing and casting. These techniques entail direct intervention on the study object and can accelerate surface degradation, thereby inflicting irreparable damage on the monu-

ment [7, 8]. Consequently, non-contact technologies such as laser scanning and photogrammetry have gained increasing prominence in recent years [9]. Photogrammetry, in particular, offers a significant advantage for field investigations, as it requires no sophisticated or costly equipment; moreover, provided that requisite imaging protocols are adhered to, it yields results comparable in quality to those of laser scanning.

This technology constitutes an integral component of our cataloging efforts for archaeological sites in the region, primarily employed to generate high-quality illustrations [10, 11]. Adapting this approach, informed by experiences with photogrammetry and 3D scanning in the investigation of petroglyphs across Northern, Central, and Eastern Eurasia [12–14], facilitated the development of a specialized methodology for surface analysis tailored to dolmen monuments.

The essence of the method entails an initial assessment of surface topography under oblique illumination from a high-powered lamp. Upon identification of decorative treatment traces within the shadow patterns, a comprehensive survey of the area is performed using a high-resolution camera positioned at a close range (approximately 40 cm) perpendicular to the target surface, with 60–80% overlap between frames. To maintain a consistent standoff distance from the surface and the prescribed imaging angle, the camera is mounted on a short monopod fitted with a rest, oriented toward the subject. By sliding the rest along the surface, the operator controls the imaging direction and the extent of overlap among adjacent frames. A typical image series encompasses 200–400 frames, depending on the size of the area under examination.

Further processing of the acquired material encompasses several stages:

- generation of a final 3D surface model, comprising 3–5 million polygons, via Agisoft Metashape, followed by an initial examination of the object with textures disabled and utilizing a height map;
- importation of the model into the 3DsMax three-dimensional editor; scaling of the object; configuration of artificial light sources; selection of a material (uniform texture) with defined optical properties to produce the requisite shadow and highlight patterns; and analysis of these patterns through iterative adjustments to the light source position and ray incidence angle;
- attachment of a gradient procedural map to the object; fine-tuning of its parameters to yield a scaled elevation map; derivation of a composite shadow and highlight image; and scrutiny of erosion-damaged areas for residual traces of imagery;
- interpretation and vectorization of the images.

This methodology facilitates the enhanced visualization of bas-relief motifs and the detection of poorly preserved elements.

Results and discussion

The ongoing documentation of archeological sites has facilitated the establishment of a register and an archaeological GIS, which, as of early 2025, comprises 417 dolmens across Sochi territory. As part of catalog development in 2024, the Tsushvadzh River basin was investigated.

The Tsushvadzh River basin ranks third in dolmen abundance among Greater Sochi regions, surpassed only by the Ashe and Psezuapse River valleys. It contains 67 monuments (16% of Greater Sochi's total dolmens), organized into 12 dolmen groups and 7 isolated structures, which form three macroclusters: Vinogradnoye Gorge, the middle Tsushvadzh reaches, and the Solonitsky Ridge area. Each macrocluster is distinguished by unique local attributes and typological distributions of construction variants [15, pp. 38–49] (Fig. 2).

The Vinogradnoye macrocluster was documented in 2024 [16], while fieldwork along the middle reaches of the Tsushvadzh River was conducted during 2024–2025 to acquire supplementary data. In January 2025, during an extended survey of the Chumaki group monuments in collaboration with a team of volunteers, local historian V. V. Snytko identified a prominent cross-shaped protuberance on the facade of the ruined composite dolmen DS350, which incorporates a courtyard. Preliminary examination under lamp illumination revealed a bas-relief composition depicting three anthropomorphic figures in a dancing configuration above the porthole.

The ruins of dolmen DS350 are situated 110 m east of the compact cluster comprising DP84, DP85, and DS86. The monument was first documented by M. I. Kudin and N. V. Kondryakov in 2008. It is in a dilapidated condition, with two chamber slabs, the facade slab, and a pre-portal courtyard partially preserved; additional elements may remain interred beneath the soil. The dolmen is erected on a platform of fractured stone, enclosed on three sides by a crepida of large sandstone blocks, which is most intact along the southeastern flank adjacent to the courtyard. On the western side, the crepida boundaries incorporate a low, mound-like elevation measuring 2.5 × 3 m, positioned 2 m from the dolmen (Fig. 3). The structure is oriented with its facade at an azimuth of 171°, facing downslope toward the summit of Mount Serentkh.

The facade slab is substantially tilted toward the courtyard, and is accessible for examination solely from the frontal side. It protrudes from the ground to a height of 70 cm, with a width of 78 cm along the upper edge,

expanding to 1 m at ground level. The slab exhibits a lenticular cross-section, achieving a maximum thickness of 20 cm at the upper edge level; it tapers to 12 cm toward the lateral edges, terminating on both sides in a 7–8 cm wide rib that projects 3.5 cm.

Situated 50 cm below the slab's top edge is a porthole measuring 33 cm in diameter, with its lower portion embedded in the soil. The porthole lacks sharply defined margins; rather, a gradual transition occurs along the perimeter from the facade plane into the opening.

The chamber's bounding walls comprise a fragment of the eastern slab and two slabs on the western side, featuring grooves for securing the facade slab.

The capstone is fractured into multiple fragments. The area immediately anterior to the facade is partially enclosed by a modest courtyard, measuring 0.9 m in length and 0.95–0.83 m in width, narrowing toward the front. In 2008, the anterior boundary of the courtyard was sealed by a stone block, which is presently situated along the western perimeter of the courtyard. Approximately 1.2 m from the southern edge of the courtyard, the earthen embankment is delimited by crepida blocks.

A bas-relief composition portraying three anthropomorphic figures engaged in a dance adorns the anterior surface of the facade slab, positioned 23 cm above the upper edge of the porthole (Fig. 4).

The central figure measures 18 cm in height, while the flanking figures attain 19 cm (eastern) and 18.5 cm (western). The bas-relief reaches a maximum elevation of 23 mm. All figures feature short legs, elongated torsos, and rounded heads. Within the grasp of the outermost figures, facing inward, remnants of three-dimensional objects – potentially cups or headdresses – are discernible, although their identification is precluded by the bas-relief's poor preservation. Beneath these figures, the surface is smoothed and exhibits pecked marks. The composition measures 41.5 cm in width and occupies an area of approximately 0.08 m².

The two flanking figures are depicted in mirror-image poses: one arm extends toward the central figure and the other bent at the elbow and lowered. In contrast, the central figure has both arms lowered, with contours discernible only up to the elbows; below this, they are effaced by erosion. Three-dimensional image processing revealed that the line of the left arm at elbow level integrates with an indeterminate eroded feature, thereby leaving unresolved the orientation of the forearm – whether it extended symmetrically to the right, toward the waist, or diverged downward (Fig. 5).

Compositional analysis suggests that the scene may represent a dance involving two male figures and a female, paralleling the extant traditions of indigenous Caucasian peoples, in which the woman serves as the focal point of the choreographic narrative. The mirror-symmetrical postures of the flanking figures – one arm extended laterally toward the center, the other bent at the elbow and lowered to the waist – align with recurrent motifs in paired anthropomorphic imagery across the Caucasus and contiguous regions, dating from the Early Bronze Age onward [4] (Fig. 6).

In addition to paired motifs, solitary headless figures adopting the same characteristic "mirror" or "twin" posture – one hand on the hip, the other extended laterally – appear at dolmen sites, including the Dzhubga dolmen courtyard [5, p. 118] (Fig. 6.2) and the megalithic tomb from mound no. 28, burial no. 1, near Novosvobodnaya village in the Klady tract [17, p. 206] (Fig. 6.1). On occasion, twin figures integrate into a triadic composition, oriented toward a third, central element:

1. Tree: motifs on a vessel of the Maikop-Novosvobodnaya cultural community from the Pshish River [18, p. 70, fig. 4.1]; petroglyphs in the Geghama Mountains (Armenia) [19, fig. 16].

2. Deer: motifs in the Geghama Mountains (Armenia) [19, pp. 67–68, fig. 18] (Fig. 6.11).

3. Human: dolmen slab A of the Shize IV group [6, p. 296, fig. 2] (Fig. 6.10) and the composition under discussion from the Chumaki dolmen group (Fig. 6.12).

Interpretations of the narrative and semantic content of this composition remain provisional, informed by the symbolism of analogous configurations featuring symmetrically disposed anthropomorphic figures across diverse regions and ancient cultures.

A. Golan, in his analysis of these motifs, convincingly demonstrated that the central figure in such triadic compositions is invariably linked to the Great Goddess, even when supplanted by her symbolic equivalents: the world axis/center, the Tree of Life, or a column [20, p. 160].

Without dwelling on the detailed analysis of the semantics of the imagery, the bas-relief's placement within the monument's architectural schema allows for certain conclusions. The dancing twin figures, depicted on the principal facade wall that partitions the dolmen chamber (the domain of the dead) from the living world, demarcate the liminal boundary between realms. A defining attribute of twin myths across cultures is their association with distinct ontological spheres [21, p. 67]. This suggests that these images, positioned in the liminal zone above the porthole, likely served as psychopomps and apotropaics.

It is noteworthy that anthropomorphic imagery on dolmen monuments was rendered through a variety of techniques, including polychrome painting (Novosvobodnaya), engraving (Dzhubga Dolmen, Shize IV), and bas-relief (Kapibge-1, Chumaki).

A. Golan observed the extraordinary persistence of the triadic composition, comprising a central female figure flanked by two males, and its attendant sacred symbolism [20, p. 159]. This motif's permanence manifests in fine details as well, particularly the postures of the mirrored male figures, which recur even in artifacts separated by millennia. Such exemplars include the bronze figurines of the Dioscuri recovered from a shipwreck off Haifa [22, pp. 46–47, fig. 13c] and the bas-relief depictions of twins on the dolmen-like mausoleum along the Kyafar River [23, p. 130, ill. 16].

Thus, the similarity of anthropomorphic motifs across Bronze Age monuments from Transcaucasia to Crimea lends further credence to V. A. Trifonov's hypothesis that, during this era, the mountainous Crimea and the Caucasus likely constituted a unified cultural province [5, p. 124].

Conclusion

In conclusion, it's worth asking: how common are these kinds of imagery, and what are the chances of finding more dolmens with decorative ornamentation?

An analysis of the discovery contexts for the bas-relief images on the Kapibge-1 and Chumaki dolmen groups indicates that, in both cases, the structures had been long documented, yet the images went unnoticed due to their faint visibility, shallow relief, and additional concealment by lichen encrustations. Both compositions were revealed through deliberate examination of the facade surface topography under oblique illumination from a high-powered lamp. Thus, the apparent rarity of such artifacts may partly stem from the historical lack of systematic investigative protocols.

Within the ongoing cataloging of dolmen monuments in Greater Sochi, the inspection of surfaces under oblique illumination from a lamp has become a mandatory component of the site evaluation protocol. At the first indication of potential decorative elements, photogrammetric surveying is undertaken, followed by 3D processing. The application of these advanced digital technologies permits the analysis of even subtle topographic irregularities and the detection of areas with nearly lost imagery. This methodology has already disclosed several sites bearing traces of ornamentation, including bas-reliefs, thereby suggesting that such embellishments were a widespread feature of dolmen visual arts during the period.

Another contributing factor to the scarcity of discovered imagery is surface erosion. It is crucial to recognize that the sandstone composing the majority of Greater Sochi dolmens possesses heterogeneous surface and internal microstructures. Upon completion of facade preparation, image application, and final abrasion, oxidative processes generate a crystallized, resilient patina – a thin outer layer – superimposed on a more friable underlying structure. Moisture infiltration through microcracks in this exterior "crust," intensified by repeated freeze-thaw cycles, precipitates delamination of the surface layer, thereby effacing the monument's decorative motifs. In the instance of the bas-reliefs on dolmen DK155 of the Kapibge-1 group, the imagery was safeguarded by the capstone's projection, whereas on dolmen DS350 of the Chumaki group, preservation resulted from the facade slab's acute forward tilt.

Erosion processes can be evaluated using monuments with precisely documented dates of surface exposure. For instance, in the Verhnaya Mamedka dolmen group within the Psezuapse River basin, the lower facade portion was cleared of landslide overburden in 2004, enabling quantification of atmospheric erosion impacts on both exposed and subterranean surfaces (Fig. 7).

Thus, discoveries of decorative imagery may be anticipated beneath the overhanging capstones of intact dolmens, on ruined monuments where facade slabs lie face-down, or within burial mound structures. Given that only 20–30% of dolmens persist in relatively preserved states to the present day [24, p. 4], it is these dilapidated monuments that hold the greatest potential for new findings. The systematic examination of such sites, deemed architecturally banal and unviable for further study, assumes heightened significance amid emerging technologies. Deployment of the devised identification and 3D processing opens up substantial opportunities for exploring decorative motifs and mythological narratives prevalent during the Bronze Age.

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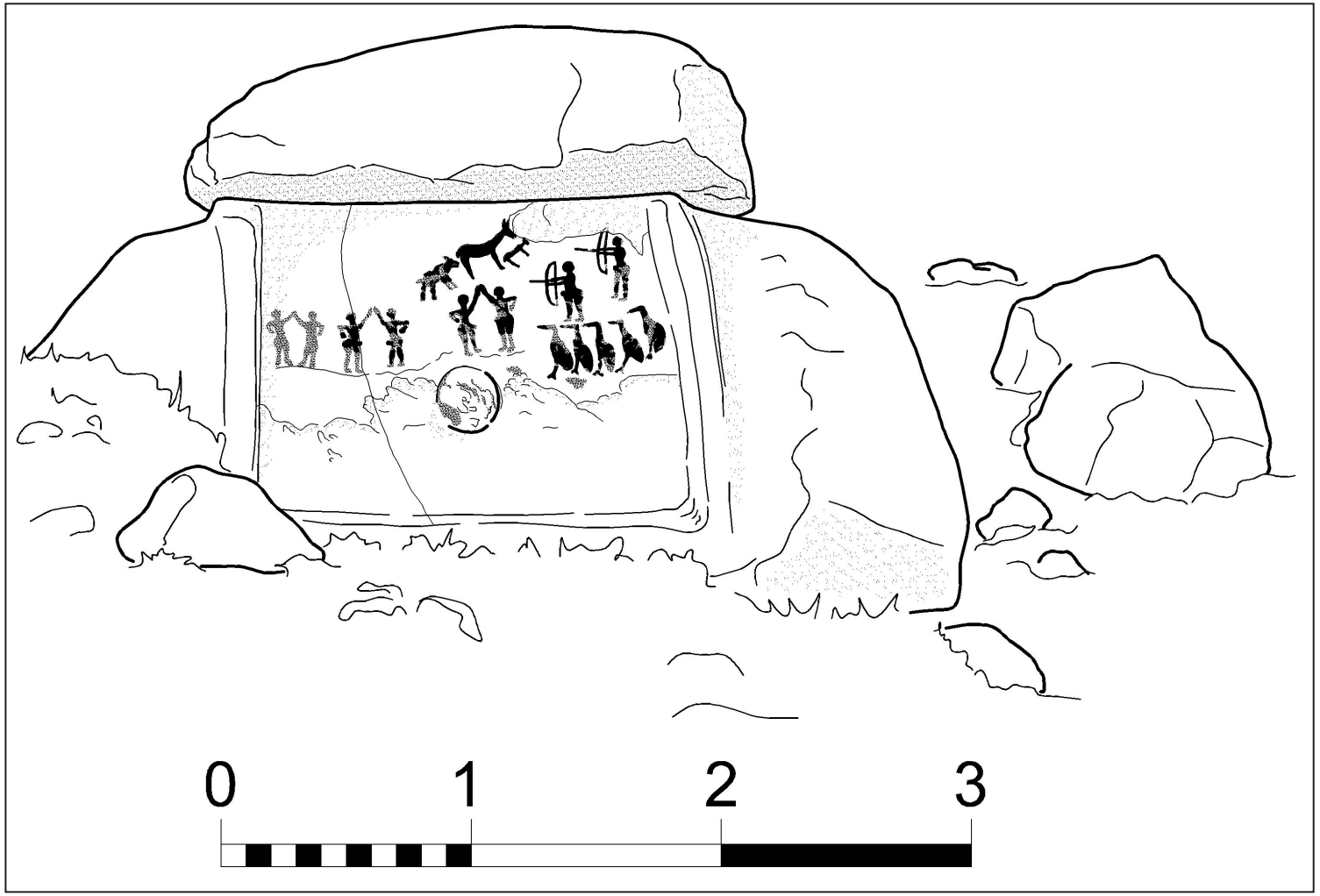

Fig. 1. Facade of the Kapibge-1 group dolmen featuring a bas-relief composition

Рис. 1. Фасад дольмена группы Капибге-1 с барельефной композицией

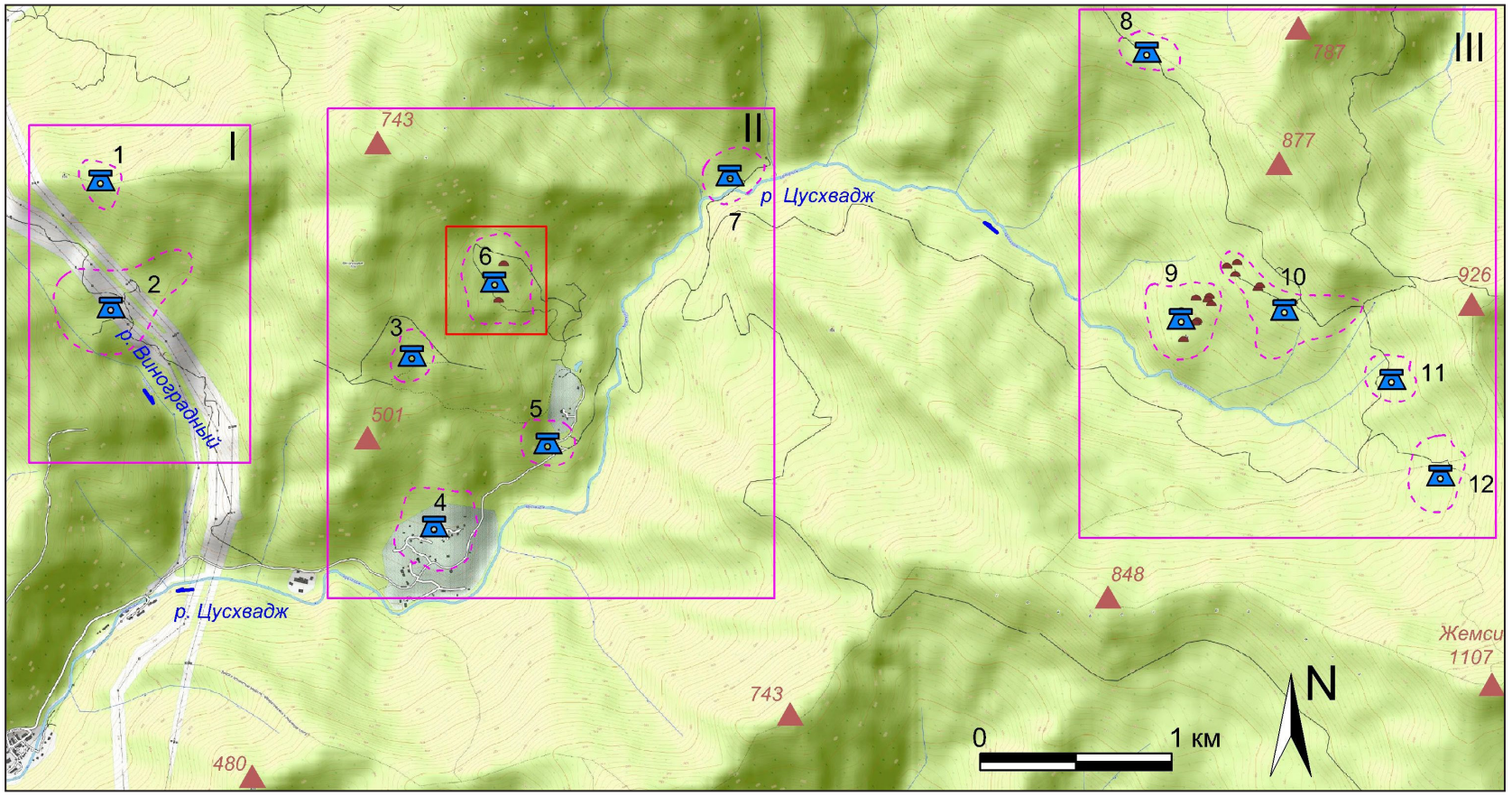

Fig. 2. Map of dolmen monuments in the Tsushvadzh river valley.
Dolmen macroclusters: I – Vinogradnoe Gorge; II – middle reaches of the Tsushvadzh River; III – Solonitsky Ridge.
Dolmen groups: 1 – *Landishi*; 2 – *Vinogradnoe*; 3 – *Bianki*; 4 – *Pervyi Dachnyi*; 5 – isolated *Vtoroyi Dachnyi*; 6 – *Chumaki*; 7 – *Paseka Kotenko*; 8 – isolated *Solonitsky Ridge*; 9 – *Group 14*; 10 – *Solonitsky Ridge* – 1, 2, 3, 4; 11 – isolated *Doroga*; 12 – *Gazoprovod*

Рис. 2. Карта дольменных памятников бассейна реки Цусхвадж.
Дольменные макроансамбли: I – Виноградное ущелье; II – среднее течение р. Цусхвадж; III – Солоницкий хребет. Дольменные группы: 1 – «Ландыши»; 2 – «Виноградное»; 3 – «Бианки»; 4 – «1-й дачный»; 5 – одиночный «2-й дачный»; 6 – «Чумаки»; 7 –«Пасека Котенко»; 8 – одиночный «Солоницкий хребет»; 9 – «группа 14»; 10 – группы «Солоницкий хребет – 1, 2, 3, 4»; 11 – одиночный «Дорога»; 12 – «Газопровод»

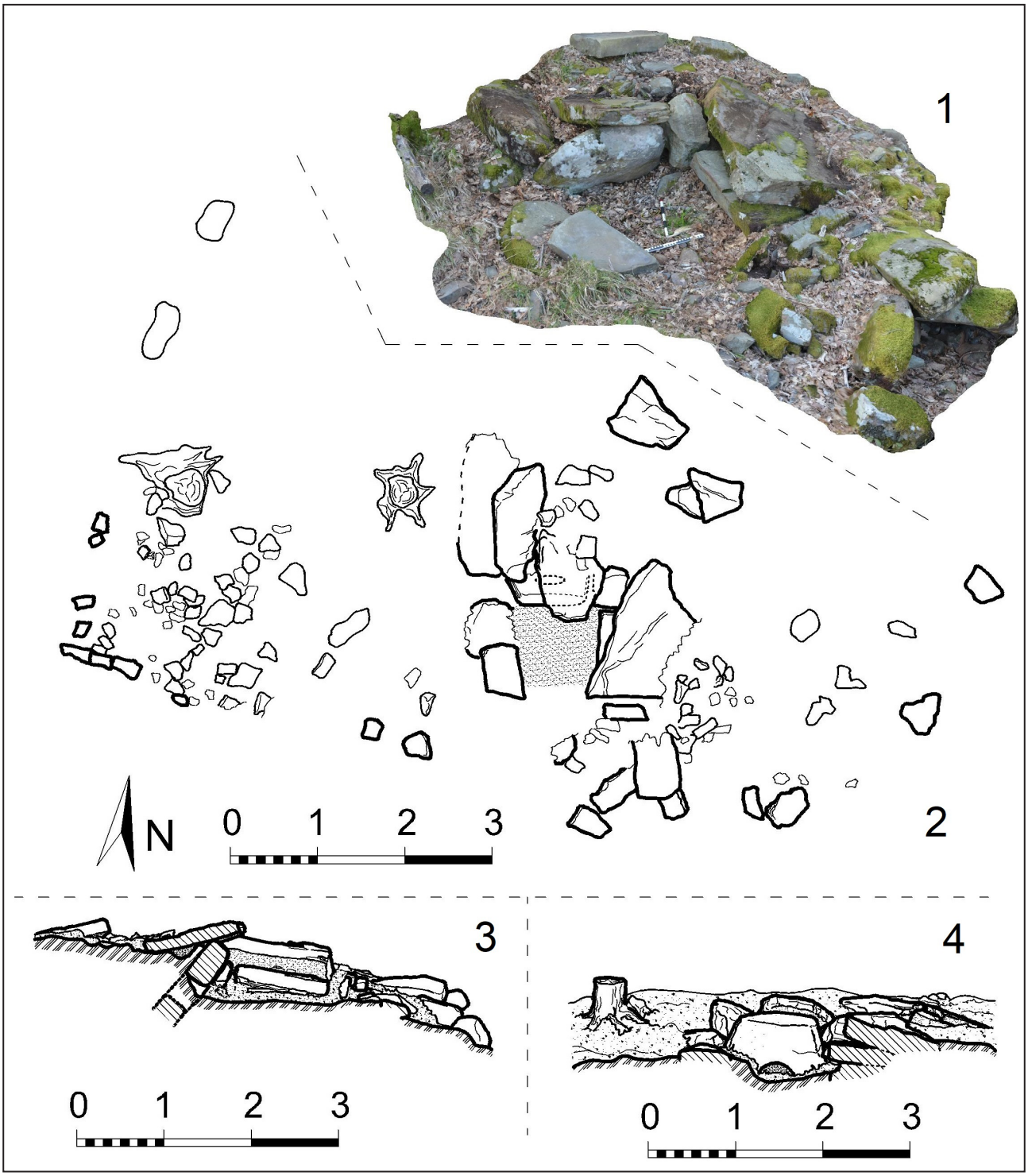

Fig. 3. Composite dolmen DS155 of the Chumaki dolmen group. 1 – general view; 2 – site plan; 3 – longitudinal section; 4 – facade projection.

Рис. 3. Составной дольмен DS350 дольменной группы «Чумаки».
1 – общий вид; 2 – план памятника; 3 – продольный разрез; 4 – фасадная проекция

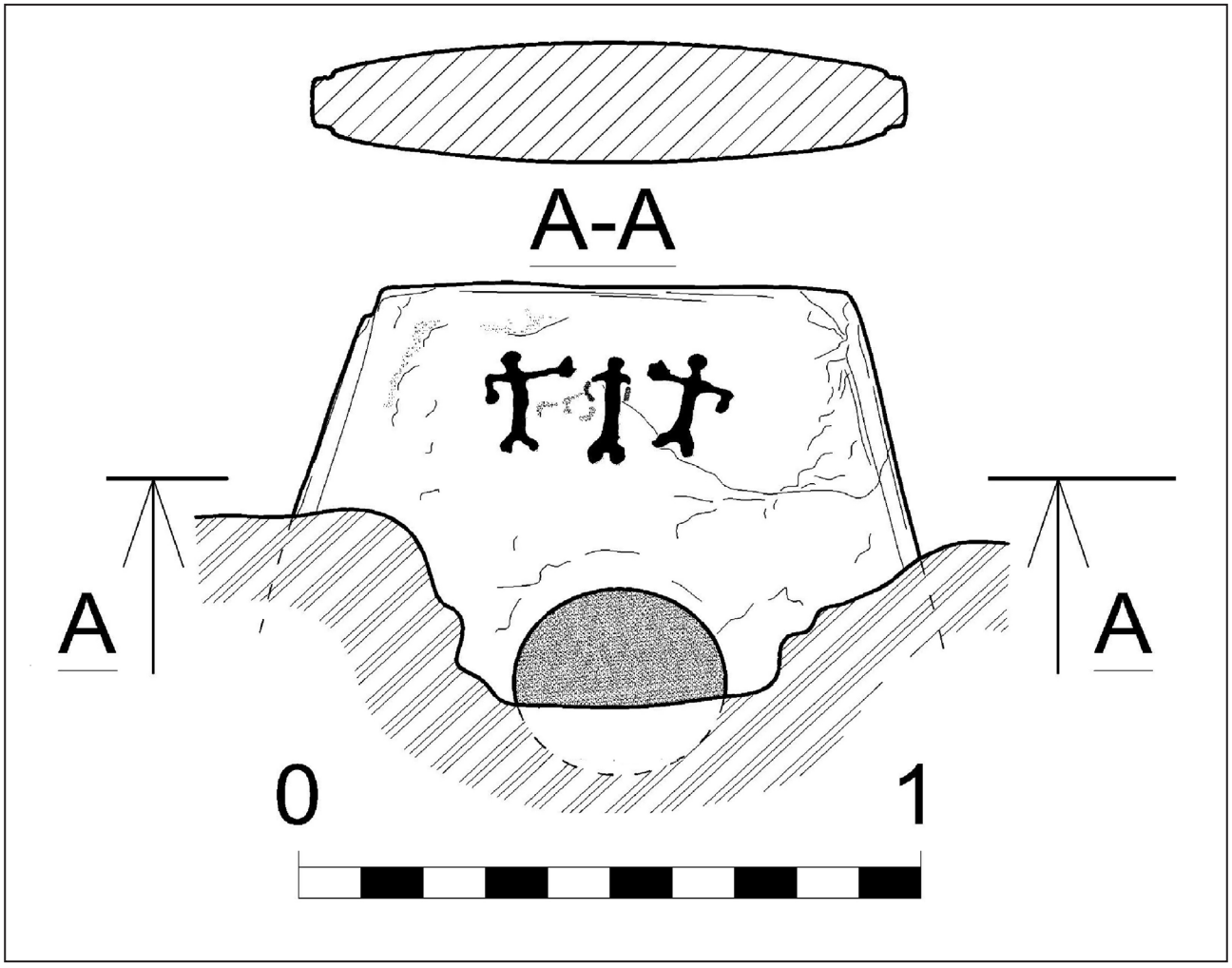

Fig. 4. Composite dolmen DS350 of the Chumaki dolmen group. General view of the facade with a bas-relief composition

Рис. 4. Составной дольмен DS350 дольменной группы «Чумаки». Общий вид фасада с барельефной композицией

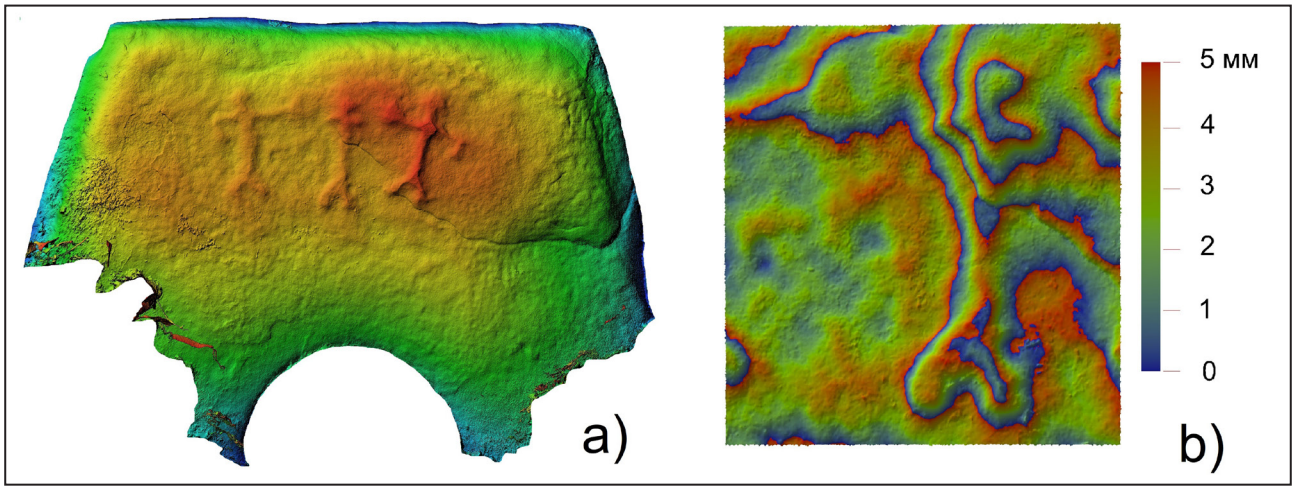

Fig. 5. 3D processing of the bas–relief composition on the facade slab of the DS350 dolmen.
a – processing via height map, b – processing via procedural gradient map.

Рис. 5. 3-D обработка барельефной композиции на фасадной плите дольмена DS350. a – обработка при помощи карты высот, b – обработка с помощью процедурной градиентной карты

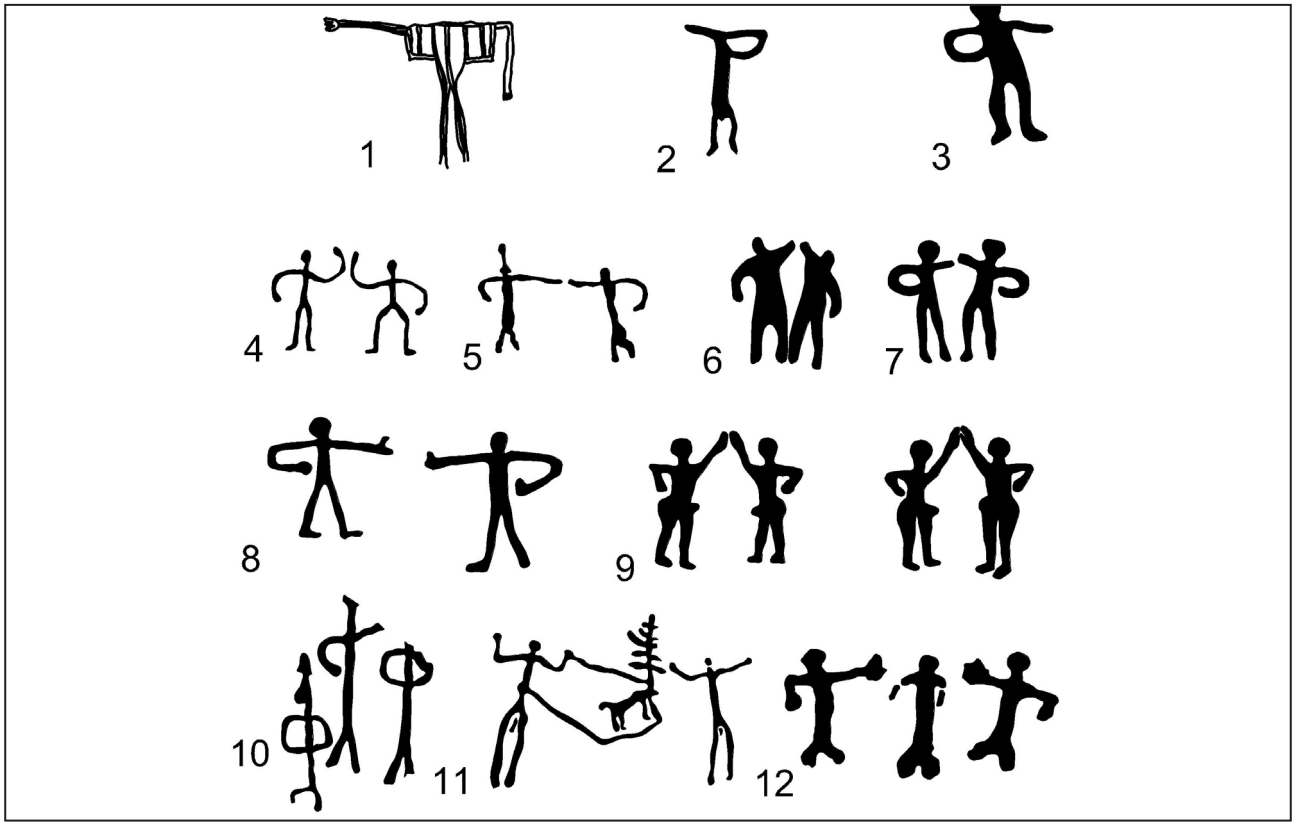

Fig. 6. Compositional and stylistic analogies in the poses of anthropomorphic figures from Bronze Age monuments spanning the South Caucasus to Crimea: 1–3 – solitary figures, 4–9 – paired figures, 10–12 – paired figures with a central element: 1 – tomb No. 28 from the Klady tract polychrome painting [17, p. 206]; 2, 3 – blocks of the dolmen courtyard in Dzhubga, engraving [5, p. 118]; 4, 5 – rock carvings, Gegham Mountains, engraving [19, p. 68, fig. 1.5]; 6, 7 – anthropomorphic steles, Ak-Chokrak, Verkhorechye, mountainous Crimea, bas-reliefs [5, p. 121, Fig. 5.2, 5.3.]; 8 – frieze of the courtyard block of the dolmen in Dzhubga, engraving [5, p. 117, fig. 4]; 9 – facade of the dolmen of the Kapibge-1 group, bas-relief [4, p. 351, Fig. 5], block of dolmen A of the Schize IV group, engraving [6, p. 296, fig. 2]; 11 – rock carvings, Gegham Mountains, engraving [19, p. 68, fig. 16], facade slab of the composite dolmen of the Chumaki group, bas-relief

Рис. 6. Композиционные и стилистические аналогии в позах антропоморфных фигур с различных памятников эпохи бронзы от Закавказья до Крыма: 1–3 – одиночные фигуры, 4–9 – парные фигуры, 10–12 – парные фигуры с центральным элементом: 1 – гробница №28 из урочища Клады, полихромная роспись [17, с. 206]; 2, 3 – блоки дворика дольмена в Джубге, гравировка [5, с. 118]; 4, 5 – наскальные изображения, Гегамские горы, гравировка [19, с. 68, рис. 1, 5], 6, 7 – антропоморфные стелы, Ак-Чокрак, Верхоречье, горный Крым, барельефы [5, с. 121, рис. 5, 2, 5, 3.], 8 – фриз блока дворика дольмена в Джубге, гравировка [5, с. 117, рис. 4], 9 – фасад дольмена группы Капибге-1, барельеф [4, с. 351, рис. 5], блок дольмена А группы Шизе IV, гравировка [6, с. 296, рис. 2], 11 – наскальные изображения, Гегамские горы, гравировка [19, с. 68, рис. 16], фасадная плита составного дольмена группы Чумаки, барельеф

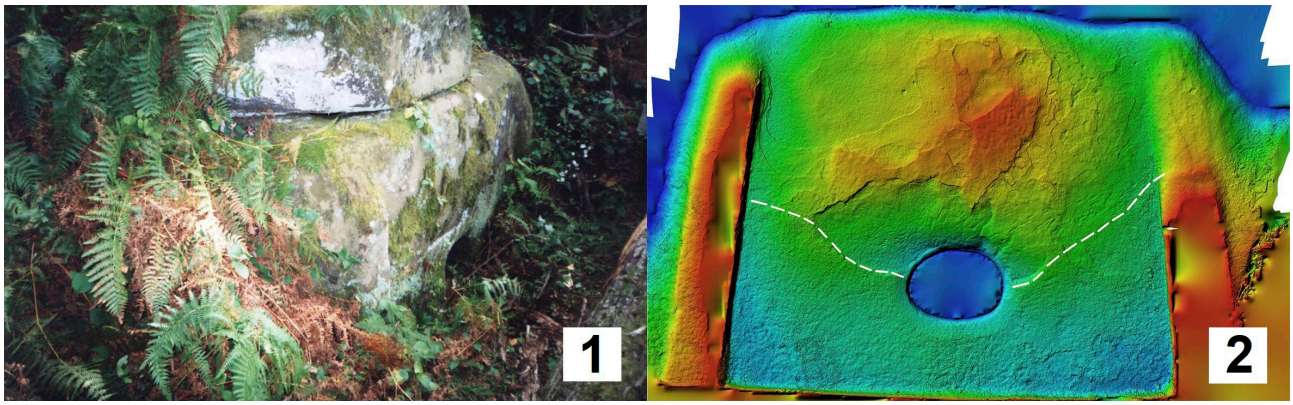

Fig. 7. Erosion patterns on exposed and buried sections of the facade of the Verkhnyaya Mamedka dolmen (Kuapse River valley, Sochi): 1 – ground level prior to clearance (photograph from 2003); 2 – contrast in the condition of erosion-affected surfaces (above the dotted line) and those preserved subsurface (below the dotted line)

Рис. 7. Эрозия открытых и закрытых участков поверхности фасада дольмена группы «Верхняя Мамедка» (долина р. Куапсе, г. Сочи): 1 – уровень земли до расчистки (фото 2003 г.); 2 – различие состояния поверхностей, подверженной эрозии (над пунктиром) и законсервированной под землей (под пунктиром)

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JAR VESSELS FROM THE KURA-ARAXES SITES IN DAGESTAN: A TYPOLOGICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL STUDY

Abstract. This article presents a typological and technological analysis of jar vessels from Early Bronze Age sites in Dagestan associated with the Kura-Araxes cultural-historical community. The jars are classified according to key morphological features: body shape, rim form, and the presence of handles. This classification yields six types, with Type II further divided into two subtypes (A and B). Analogies and parallels for these jars are drawn not only from regions of the Caucasus adjacent to Dagestan but also from more distant areas, including Eastern and Central Anatolia and Northwestern Iran, where Kura-Araxes sites have produced similar vessels. Applying the technical and technological analysis method developed by A.A. Bobrinsky, we obtained data on the recipes (compositions) of the molding pastes used for these jar vessels. Vessels from sites in Mountainous Dagestan were produced using a single primary recipe: clay + chamotte + organic solution. In contrast, vessels from Primorsky Dagestan employed two recipes: clay + chamotte + manure (77.8%) and clay + chamotte + organic solution (22.2%). These findings enabled the reconstruction of pottery traditions in jar production, which proved to be distinct between the two regions. This distinction suggests the persistence in Mountainous Dagestan of an older, possibly Eneolithic, technological tradition in pottery-making, alongside influences from the Kura-Araxes potters of Primorsky Dagestan. The results of this study can contribute to investigations of Kura-Araxes pottery across the Caucasus and the Middle East.

Keywords: Kuro-Araxes cultural and historical community; Early Bronze Age; Mountainous Dagestan; Primorsky Dagestan; pottery; technical and technological analysis.

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Исследовательская статья

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БАНОЧНЫЕ СОСУДЫ КУРО-АРАКСКИХ ПАМЯТНИКОВ ДАГЕСТАНА: ТИПОЛОГИЯ И ТЕХНОЛОГИЯ

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются проблемы типологического и технико-технологического анализа баночных сосудов из памятников раннего бронзового века Дагестана, относящихся к куро-аракской культурно-исторической общности. Типология баночных сосудов осуществлена по их показательным морфологическим признакам – форма тулова, венчика, наличие ручек. В результате анализа сосудов выделяется шесть типов, среди которых в типе II представлены два подтипа (А, Б). В исследовании приводятся аналогии и параллели сосудам баночного типа не только сопредельных с Дагестаном регионов Кавказа, но более отдаленных регионов (Восточная и Центральная Анатолия, Северо-Западный Иран), где также представлены памятники куро-аракской культурно-исторической общности с сосудами подобного типа. Применение методики технико-технологического анализа баночных сосудов, разработанной А.А. Бобринским, позволило получить информацию о применявшихся рецептах (составах) формовочных масс. Рассматриваемые сосуды из памятников Горного Дагестана изготавливали по одному основному рецепту составления формовочной массы: глина + шамот + органический раствор. Для сосудов Приморского Дагестана зафиксировано использование двух рецептов составления формовочной массы: глина + шамот + навоз (77,8%); глина + шамот + органический раствор (22,2%). В ходе проведенного исследования удалось реконструировать гончарные традиции производства баночных сосудов. Они оказались различными. Это говорит об определенном различии, либо о существовании в Горном Дагестане более древней, возможно энеолитической, гончарной технологической традиции в условиях смешения с традициями куро-аракских гончаров Приморского Дагестана. Результаты исследования могут быть использованы при изучении керамики куро-аракской общности Кавказа и Ближнего Востока.

Ключевые слова: куро-аракская культурно-историческая общность; ранний бронзовый век; Горный Дагестан; Приморский Дагестан; керамика; технико-технологический анализ

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Introduction

Among the diverse ceramic forms represented at Early Bronze Age sites of the Kura-Araxes cultural-historical community in Dagestan, jars[1] hold a prominent position and became a traditional form from this period onward. Morphologically, these are wide-mouthed, open vessels with a broad, flat base and straight vertical walls that gradually flare toward the rim. Less commonly, the walls may slightly taper or exhibit mild convexity in the mid-body. These vessels typically feature handles of various types.

The earliest examples of jars of various forms in Dagestan date to early agricultural sites, including the Chokh Neolithic settlement and the Eneolithic settlements of Ginchi and Chinna [1, p. 16, 27, fig. 3, *13*, 6, *18*; 2, pp. 69, 75, 117, fig. 13, *5*, *11*, 15, *16*, *19*, 19, *8*]. A similar pattern is observed in the South Caucasus, where jar vessels first appear at Neolithic–Eneolithic sites (e.g., Shorsu, Kultepe, Aknashen-Khatunarkh) [3, fig. 9, *3, 1*, *4*, *6*, *12–14*; 4, p. 140, fig. 5, *8–9*; 5, p. 31–32, fig. 3, 4, *4*, *8*, *11*, *14*, *15*; 5, *2*, *6*]. These findings indicate that jars represent one of the archaic clay vessel forms in the Caucasus, alongside bowls and pot-shaped vessels.

This study is based on materials from both settlement and burial sites located in various physical-geographical and natural-climatic zones of Dagestan (Fig. 1). The settlements include Velikent II, Galgalatli, Geme-Tyube II, Kabaz-kutan II, Mekegi, Sigitma, Chirkey, and Sharakun. The burial sites comprise Velikentsky I (catacomb 8), Velikentsky II (catacomb 1), Velikentsky III (catacomb 1), Gonobsky, Karabudakhkentsky II, and Shchebokha burial grounds. These sites have yielded a substantial number of jar-shaped vessels in various sizes, both complete and fragmentary. Certain small vessels (height <10 cm, rim diameter <10 cm) with handles are classified here as mugs and are excluded from the present analysis.

Typology

The typology of the jars examined here is based on key morphological features: body and rim shape, as well as the presence and placement of handles.

Type I comprises single-handled vessels with straight vertical walls and a smoothly curved, often indistinct rim. These vessels exhibit nearly equal diameters at the mouth and base (occasionally with the mouth slightly wider), resulting in a low cylindrical form. The ratio of base diameter to mouth diameter relative to height is 1:0.9–1. Jars of this type are rare, represented primarily in the early Velikent catacombs (approximately 10 specimens) (Fig. 2, *2–4*). In Mountainous Dagestan (Mekegi village) only one example occurs, featuring an indistinct, smoothly curved rim and a single ribbon handle positioned just below the rim (Fig. 2, *1*).

Type II comprises vessels with a body that gradually widens toward the mouth and features a distinct, sometimes unprofiled rim. The smooth flaring typically begins at the base, though in some smaller specimens (e.g., from the Sharakun settlement; Fig. 3, *9*), it starts midway up the body, producing a trumpet-like form. Here, the mouth diameter exceeds the base diameter (ratio 1:1.2–1.4). This type is the most numerous and widespread among the jar-type vessels studied and represents the classic form characteristic of Early Bronze Age sites in Dagestan. It includes both large vessels (h >20 cm) and smaller ones (h = 10–15 cm), equipped with one or two handles of varying types. Two subtypes are distinguished.

Subtype A – vessels with a profiled, short, everted rim and typically one (rarely two) ribbon handles terminating in tendrils. These handles are usually attached at the rim or slightly below it. Comparable vessels are characteristic of sites in the plains and foothills of Dagestan, including the Velikent I burial ground

1 For brevity, jar-shaped vessels in most cases are simply referred to as “jars” throughout this paper.

(catacomb 8) (Fig. 2, *5–8*), the Geme-Tyube II settlement (2, fig. 22, *10*, *13*), and the Karabudakhkent II burial ground (6, fig. 8).

Subtype B – vessels with an indistinct, everted rim. Both taller two-handled vessels (h 18–20 cm) and shorter single-handled examples occur at sites in Mountainous Dagestan (Galgalatli and Mekegi settlements; Shchebokha burial ground) and Primorsky Dagestan (Velikentsky I burial ground, catacomb 8) (Fig. 3, *1–3*, *5–6*, *8*). The Galgalatli settlement also yielded low jars with pseudo-handles in the form of horizontal projections positioned just below the rim (Fig. 3, *4*, *7*).

Type III comprises vessels with a slightly convex mid-body (Fig. 4). All known examples of this type originate from the early Velikent catacombs and vary in size. One representative specimen is a squat, two-handled jar with an everted, obliquely cut rim; a narrow groove encircles the exterior at the base of the rim (Fig. 4, 5). Similar grooves appear on the outer surfaces of the whisker-shaped ribbon handles. A rounded vessel fragment with a slightly incurved rim from the Sigitma settlement (Fig. 4, 6) shows some resemblance to this type.

Type IV comprises rare jars with a slightly concave mid-body and a pronounced everted rim. Vessels of this form occur at the Velikent II and Kabaz-kutan II settlements (Fig. 5). One complete example features a pseudo-handle in the form of a rounded cylindrical appliqué on the upper body (Fig. 5, 1). Fragments from Kabaz-kutan II and Geme-Tyube II settlements exhibit similar handles [7, fig. 6, *5–6*; 2, fig. 22, *13*]. Close parallels exist at the Chirkey settlement of Tad-Shob, including a large single-handled wide-mouthed vessel (rim d = 15 cm) with a broad, flat, protruding base and strongly everted rim, creating a distinct mid-body concavity; its body is decorated with a multi-row incised zigzag band [8, fig. 10, *2*]. Similar jars have also been recovered from the Treli settlement in Georgia [9, pp. 67–68, fig. 95, *3*].

The last two types come from catacomb 8 of the Velikent burial ground I, in which about 500 ceramic vessels of various shapes and sizes were found. Among them, over 60 samples, both intact and fragmented, are classified as jar vessels.

Type V comprises a small (h = 9.5 cm), squat jar with a wide, flat base (d = 9.3 cm), tapering walls, and a smoothly everted rim (d = 8 cm), producing an S-shaped profile (Fig. 5, *7*). The vessel features pseudo-handles in the form of opposed horn-shaped appliqués, each with a small vertical perforation for braids.

Type VI comprises a jar (h = 12 cm) with a near-cylindrical body, shoulders tapering toward the mouth, and a short, sharply incurved rim (rim d = 10 cm; base d = 9.5 cm) (Fig. 5, *8*). It is equipped with pseudo-handles imitating hemispherical lugs, each with a narrow horizontal perforation.

Analogies and parallels

The closest analogies and parallels to the jars from Dagestan occur at Kura-Araxes sites in the South Caucasus.

Notable examples come from the multi-layered settlement of Kültepe in Nakhichevan, where Early Bronze Age layers have yielded gray- and black-burnished cylindrical jars equipped with hemispherical handles positioned mid-body [10, p. 132, pl. XXI, *2*]. Close parallels to Type I vessels appear in materials from the Dashlytepe and Osmanbozu burial mounds [9, fig. 60, *6*; 11, p. 77, pl. XXIX, *7*].

In burial sites of Northwestern Azerbaijan, both small single-handled and two-handled jars with flaring walls occur; these are, for some reason, referred to as “ladles” [11, p. 76, fig. XXIX, *1–4*]. Vessels of similar form from the Armavir-blur and Zaglik settlements were interpreted by B.A. Kuftin as mugs [12, pp. 91–92, pl. XX, *2*, *4*, fig. 50], except for one low, wide-mouthed handled vessel from Aligryh village, which he described as a “clay ladle (or bowl with a handle)”[2] [12, p. 99, pl. XX, *1*, fig. 54a]. R.M. Munchaev classified vessels of this

2 At the same time, T.I. Akhundov continued to classify similarly shaped jar vessels as ladles.

form, in various sizes, as jar-shaped pots and mugs [6, pp. 164–165, fig. 5, *6–7*, *9*, *7*, *1*, 8; 13, p. 87, pl. VIII, *8–13*]. Small two-handled jars also appear in the Kvemo-Kartli region of Georgia[3] (Samshvilde settlement) [9, fig. 60, *4*].

The aforementioned mugs and jars from South Caucasian sites exhibit close parallels to certain Dagestan examples of Type II jars. Similarly, in the North-Eastern Caucasus, various jars occur at settlement sites (Lugovoe, Serzhen-Yurt) and are divided into two main forms: conical and cylindrical [13, pp. 108, 110, pl. XXVII, *1, 2*, fig. 32; 14, p. 358, fig. 77, *4*].

Further parallels appear in materials from settlement of Yanik Tepe near Lake Urmia (northwestern Iran), which yielded several jar forms. The most characteristic is a two-handled jar with a prominent, everted, thickened rim and a body that bulges toward the base [9, fig. 58, *2*]. Similar vessels occur in adjacent areas, on the southeastern slopes of the Lesser Caucasus [15, p. 84, pl. 54, *4*]. These differ from the Velikent Type III jars primarily in the lower placement of the maximum body expansion. Among the jars from Yanik Tepe, one squat example stands out: it features a wide, protruding base, a strongly everted widely flaring rim, and a mid-body concavity that imparts an arcuate profile [16, fig. 36, *9*; 17, fig. 25, *9*]. The vessel's surface bears geometric painted decoration. This specimen closely resembles a cup from the Chirkey settlement [8, fig. 10, *2*] in morphology. Overall, these comparisons demonstrate that jars of varying sizes are widely distributed across regions occupied by the Kura-Araxes community.

During the Early Bronze Age, jars extended beyond the core area of the Kura-Araxes cultural-historical community. For instance, the Shah Tepe necropolis in northeastern Iran has yielded small jars (h = 7.5–10.7 cm, max. 14.2 cm) decorated with alternating bands of hatched, latticed, and zigzag motifs. Some of these show morphological similarities to the Kura-Araxes jars examined here, including two-handled vessels with cylindrical bodies, jars with walls flaring toward the rim, and so-called "arc-shaped profile" vessels [18, p. 150–151, 154–155, 158, 160–161, 163, 188–189, fig. 203, no. *950*, p. 204, no. *818*, p. 205, no. *822*, p. 210, no. *541*, p. 211, no. *505*, p. 212, no. *427*, p. 225, no. *1695–1696*, p. 226, no. *1075*, p. 227, no. *1032*, p. 228, no. *1031*, p. 233, no. *987*, p. 245, no. *1626*, p. 246, no. *1629*, p. 255, no. *1433*, p. 364–365, 367–368].

Question of jars' ornamentation

Ornamentation on the jars examined from Dagestan sites (and more broadly within the Kura-Araxes cultural-historical community) is rare, occurring on only a few specimens. When present, it is consistent, consisting of incised zigzag chevron bands encircling the lower body. Examples include two vessels from catacomb 8 of the Velikent I burial ground – a jar-like mug and a Type III jar (Fig. 4, *2*), as well as the aforementioned Type III jar from the Chirkey settlement (Tad-Shob), which bears two rows of similar chevron bands around the mid-body [8, fig. 10, *2*]. A comparable chevron ornament decorating the thickened lower body appears on a jar from the Gyuzelova settlement in northeastern Anatolia [9, pp. 67–68, fig. 59, *8*]. In body shape (with mid-body constriction), this vessel is typologically close to Type IV jars from Velikent II.

It should also be noted that incised chevron bands are typical of other ceramic forms as well and occur widely at Kura-Araxes sites [9, fig. 115].

The jars examined here also occasionally bear relief decoration, including appliqués. Notable among these is a raised ridge imitating a snake on a Type III jar from catacomb 8 of the Velikent I burial ground (Fig. 4, *1*). Similar serpentine appliqué appears on a bulging-bodied pot from the contemporaneous catacomb 1 of the Velikent II burial ground [19, fig. 44, *1*]. To our knowledge, this motif is not documented on Kura-Araxes

3 Jars are also represented in sufficient numbers at other significant Kura-Araxes sites in the region. The Ilto settlement is also worth mentioning, where similar vessels of various sizes are the primary form of pottery [26, p. 51].

pottery outside Dagestan. At the Shah Tepe necropolis (in a layer dating to the late Early Bronze Age), an ovoid vessel was found bearing a relief depiction of a slithering snake across its body [18, p. 205, fig. 409]. This example differs from the Dagestan specimens in its more naturalistic rendering. Representations of a slithering or sinuous snakes on ceramic vessels are also known from Central Asian Bronze Age sites (Altyn Depe, Ak Depe) [20, p. 151].

In the post-Kura-Araxes period, specifically in the late Velikent catacombs, bronze ornaments (pins, anchor-shaped pendants, etc.) consistently feature stylized snake motifs [21, p. 13, 15, 17, fig. 3, 5, *1–7, 13*, 6, *2, 10–12*, 7, *1–3, 8–22, 24, 27*; 22, fig. 16, *29*]. However, this motif, bearing both decorative and religious-ideological significance, is entirely absent from ceramic vessels in the same burial contexts. In later periods (Early Iron Age, Albano-Sarmatian, and early medieval times), vessels with snake decoration reappear in Dagestan. The earliest evidence for stylized snake images on pottery, including jars, comes from Neolithic sites in the South Caucasus (Kültepe I and Dangreuli Gora settlements) [23, pp. 31–32, fig. 5, *6*].

Another form of appliqué decoration is a trident with downward-pointing ends, positioned on the upper body of a jar from the Gonobsky burial ground. Analogous relief tridents occur at other Kura-Araxes sites in the plains and foothills of Dagestan, including the Sigitma settlement and Karabudakhkent II burial ground [8, fig. 14, *22*, 6; fig. 5, *1–2*]. These appliqués appear to represent stylized bull horns or bucrania (though classically depicted as bidents). At the Early Bronze Age settlement of Sugyut in coastal southern Dagestan, variations of bucrania are present, with trident ends oriented both upward and downward. Similar relief appliqués are also known outside Dagestan, at sites such as Samshvilde and Serker Tepe [9, fig. 38, *3*; 24, pl. XIII, *6,* XV, *6*], etc. This article does not explore these religious-ideological elements of ceramic decoration in detail, as they warrant separate study. In summary, stylized representations of snakes and bull horns (bucrania) are among the motifs reflecting early agricultural cults widespread in Bronze Age cultures.

Regarding vessel decoration, circular or ring-shaped appliqués also occur, notably on a two-handled Type III jar with a mid-body bulge from catacomb 8 of the Velikent I burial ground (Fig. 4, *3*). On this vessel, the ring-shaped appliqués are positioned near the rim, in the spaces between the handles. Similar rounded appliqués appear at the Sugyut settlement in southern Dagestan and at Serker Tepe in northeastern Azerbaijan [24, pl. XIII, *5*].

On the question of functional purpose

As noted earlier, jar-shaped vessels are distinguished based on size and proportions as mugs and jugs. In Dagestan archaeological literature, jars of various sizes (often including mug-like forms) have traditionally been categorized as tableware. This classification raises a valid question about the actual function of these jars. V.M. Kotovich assigned similar vessels from Middle Bronze Age layers at Verkhnegunibsky settlement to kitchenware, citing soot traces on some fragments [25, p. 153]. In contrast, O.A. Abibullaev concluded that morphologically comparable vessels likely served for food storage, based on grain remains recovered inside one example [10, p. 71]. This interpretation is supported by the recovery of relatively large jars (h >20 cm) with wide mouths (d >20 cm) that exhibit no traces of exposure to fire. Such vessels were likely used for short-term storage of bulk or other foodstuffs rather than for consumption or cooking. It should be noted that these jars are considerably smaller than large stationary pithoi designed for long-term storage of dozens of liters. With reasonable confidence, the larger jars with tall vertical walls can be classified as container pottery.

In this context, the stylized snake appliqué on one specimen is highly symbolic, probably functioning as an amulet to protect the contents. Further evidence for the storage function of these jars comes from a two-handled example from Yanik Tepe, illustrated in publications with a disc-shaped lid placed over the mouth – a feature typical of ceramic food-storage containers [16, fig. 36, *16*; 17, fig. 25, *16*; 26, pl. 9, *14*].

The largest known jar within the Kura-Araxes cultural-historical community comes from the Bet Yerah (Khirbet Kerak) settlement and measures 50 cm in height [27, p. 263, fig. *5e*]. Among the Dagestani specimens, the tallest reaches approximately 30 cm and originates from catacomb 8 of the Velikent I burial ground (currently housed in the Archaeological Collections of the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, Dagestan Federal Research Centre, Russian Academy of Sciences).

Sites of the Middle Bronze Age Ginchin culture yield several jar types of varying sizes, some of which perpetuate Early Bronze Age traditions from Mountainous Dagestan (Galgalatli settlement) [28, pp. 99–100, figs. 91, *1, 10, 11*; 8, fig. 17, *3–5, 12*]. Elongated jars with tall walls and coated surfaces from monuments of this culture in southeastern Chechnya appear to belong to the category of storage pottery [28, p. 100, fig. 91, *3, 4*].

The Middle Bronze Age catacombs of Primorsky Dagestan (late Velikent catacombs) contain pottery conventionally classified as jars but differing markedly from the typical Early Bronze Age jar-like forms of the preceding period.[4] Nevertheless, these same burials yielded several jar-like mugs similar to those of the earlier era [22, pp. 64–65, figs. 10, *8*, 13, *11*], suggesting continuity in certain pottery traditions.

In this context, comparative technical and technological analysis of pottery production between these two periods is highly relevant, as they represent key stages in the regional history of ceramic manufacture.

Results of the technical and technological analysis

The primary focus of this study is jars from Kura-Araxes sites dating to the mid-4th to mid-3rd millennia BC. The pottery was examined using the technical and technological analysis methodology developed by A.A. Bobrinsky [29; 30, pp. 5–106; 31]. Microscopic examination was performed with a Sunshine SZM45T binocular microscope.

Two series of samples were selected for analysis: complete vessels and large fragments of jars. The first series comprises vessels from Mountainous Dagestan sites: three from the Galgalatli settlement, one from the Mekegi settlement, two from the Sigitma settlement, and three from the Shchebokha burial ground. The second series includes vessels from Primorsky Dagestan sites: five from the Kabaz-kutan II settlement and four from the Velikentsky I burial ground.

Jars from Mountainous Dagestan sites were manufactured from highly ferruginous clay (100% of samples; Table 1) that was also highly sandy (77.8% of samples; Table 2). The paste included an artificial admixture of chamotte compositionally identical to the vessel fabric itself (Fig. 8, *1–2*), with average grain sizes of 1.5–2 mm and concentrations ranging from 1:3 to 1:5. Notably, chamotte in one jar from the Galgalatli settlement consists of highly ferruginous clay but incorporates inclusions of chamotte made from low-ferruginous clay (Fig. 8, *2*). Traces of burnishing on chamotte grains were observed in vessels from the Sigitma and Galgalatli settlements and the Shchebokha burial ground (Fig. 8, *1*). All examined vessels incorporated organic solution in the molding paste (100% of samples; Table 3). This is evidenced on fracture surfaces by amorphous, rounded voids or cracks measuring 0.7–1.2 mm to 4–5 mm. In areas adjacent to chamotte, the walls of these voids are coated with a colorless, matte film exhibiting a sheen (Fig. 8, *3–4*).

Fresh fractures on complete vessels and large fragments reveal that patch (additive, slab) method functioned as structural elements during manufacture (Fig. 6, *4–5*). Jars from the Mekegi, Galgalatli, and Shchebokha sites were produced using the capacity method, documented in four vessels. This technique involves separate construction of the base and body. Diagnostic features include marked wall deformation at the base junction and an additional fastening cord along the interior junction between body and base (Fig. 6, *4–5, 7–8*). Notably, in two instances from Galgalatli and Mekegi the separately formed bases are burnished on the exterior (Fig. 6, *7–8*).

4 They appear as small squat vessels without handles, featuring profiled walls and a pronounced, stepped neck [22, p. 67, figs. 10, *3*, 13, *5*]

Four mechanical surface treatment methods were identified: burnishing, hand smoothing, grass-bundle smoothing, and polishing (Table 4). Notably, different techniques were often applied sequentially to the same surface areas, including grass-bundle smoothing followed by burnishing; hand smoothing followed by burnishing with additional surface wetting; or burnishing followed by polishing (Fig. 6, *1–3*).

Several burnishing directions were recorded: vertical, angled vertical, horizontal, and horizontal-arcuate with frequent reorientation of the tool. The exterior surfaces were most commonly burnished (45.5%) or hand-smoothed (36.4%), whereas interior surfaces were more frequently burnished (54.5%) than smoothed (27.3%). It can be cautiously assumed that this phenomenon reflects acquired experience, demonstrating the importance of polishing the inner surface of a vessel to increase its moisture resistance.

One jar each from the Galgalatli settlement and the Shchebokha burial ground was coated on both exterior and interior surfaces with an additional clay layer up to 2 mm thick, subsequently smoothed (Shchebokha) or burnished (Galgalatli) (Fig. 8, *5–6*). These sites lie in close proximity within the same geomorphological zone, suggesting their inhabitants shared similar pottery skills.

Analysis of fracture color characteristics identified three firing types:

Type 1 – firing in oxidizing atmosphere at high temperature with moderate cooling duration; uniform calcination of walls to 1.5–2 mm on both surfaces, producing light brown and orange marginal zones; sharp boundary between the color layers, dark brown core of the fracture;

Type 2 – firing in reducing (oxygen-free) atmosphere; uniformly dark gray sherd in section;

Type 3 – firing resulting in mottled light brown, orange, or dark gray surfaces; calcination limited to patchy exterior zones up to 1–1.5 mm. This reflects uncontrolled fuel combustion with rapid, uneven temperature spikes typical of “focal” firing.

Notably, the latter two types occur only at the Galgalatli settlement.

Jars from Primorsky Dagestan sites were produced from highly ferruginous clays (100%; Table 1) with low (55.6%) or medium (44.4%) natural sand content (Table 2). The only recorded natural inclusion was a single oval reddish-brown iron ore particle up to 1 mm in size, observed in one vessel from the Velikentsky I burial ground (Fig. 9, 1). No natural inclusions larger than 0.3 mm occurred in the remaining vessels, indicating that the clay was preliminarily elutriated prior to use.

Chamotte was used as an artificial temper in 100% of the samples (Fig. 9, *2–4*; Table 3). Two varieties were identified: (1) chamotte sifted through a mesh to yield grains averaging 1.0–1.5 mm (Fig. 9, *3*); and (2) chamotte added directly after crushing, without size calibration (Fig. 9, *4*). Chamotte grains with burnished surfaces occur in pottery from the Kabaz-kutan II settlement and Velikentsky I burial ground, sites situated in relative proximity (Fig. 9, *2*). In most cases, the chamotte composition matches that of the vessel paste. The temper concentration is consistently 1:4.

The next natural temper was dung from small cattle, identified in 77.8% of the examined vessels (Fig. 9, *5*). On fresh fractures, it appears as characteristic hollow, rounded voids (0.2 × 1 mm) formed by the combustion of finely crushed vegetation, along with impressions exhibiting grooves 0.3–0.7 mm wide. Organic solution was used in 22.2% of the samples (Fig. 9, *6*).

All examined vessels were constructed using the patch method combined with the capacity method (Fig. 7, *1–6*). Special base molds were employed, onto which clay was applied externally. This interpretation aligns with an earlier technological study of Early Bronze Age pottery from the Novo-Gaptsakh settlement in Primorsky Dagestan [32, pp. 15–28].

Microscopic analysis of exterior and interior surfaces identified two primary surface treatment techniques: burnishing and hand smoothing. The exterior was burnished in 100% of cases. For interiors, hand smoothing predominated (55.5%), with burnishing applied in 45.5% of vessels. Vertical burnishing was most common on exteriors, occasionally supplemented by horizontal strokes, whereas interiors received only horizontal burnishing (Table 4).

Based on the surface and fracture colors of the examined vessels, two firing types can be distinguished:

Type 1 – reducing atmosphere with limited oxygen access to the surface; these vessels exhibit dark gray coloration on both surfaces and throughout the fracture;

Type 2 – uniform oxidizing firing (in a kiln); the surfaces are light brown, with orange marginal zones 2–3 mm thick and a dark gray core in the fracture.

Conclusions

Technical and technological analysis of jars from Mountainous and Primorsky Dagestan sites has revealed distinct differences in pottery production traditions among Early Bronze Age Kura-Araxes communities in these two geomorphological zones.

In Mountainous Dagestan, potters preferred highly sandy, highly ferruginous clays containing natural inclusions such as reddish-brown iron ore particles (0.5–0.7 mm), slate fragments (1.5–2.0 × 1 mm), and dense sand fractions up to 2–3 mm for jar production. In contrast, jars from Primorsky Dagestan were made from low- to moderately sandy, highly ferruginous clays that had undergone preliminary elutriation to remove natural impurities. These differences suggest distinct approaches to raw material selection among local potters, likely conditioned by the varying availability of clay sources in the lowland and mountainous zones.

Jars from Mountainous Dagestan sites were produced using a single primary paste recipe: clay + chamotte + organic solution. In contrast, two recipes were employed for jars from Primorsky Dagestan: clay + chamotte + manure (77.8%) and clay + chamotte + organic solution (22.2%) (Table 3).

Differences also appear in surface treatment techniques. Jars from Mountainous Dagestan exhibit greater variety, including hand smoothing, burnishing, grass-bundle smoothing, and polishing. Those from Primorsky Dagestan are characterized solely by hand smoothing and burnishing (Table 4).

The patchwork technique is attested in all examined vessels. Differences emerge in vessel forming methods: Mountainous Dagestan sites predominantly employed the capacity method, whereas Primorsky Dagestan sites used a base-capacity variant. Notably, capacity-based construction techniques exhibit the greatest consistency among pottery-making skills [29, pp. 124–130].

The Early Bronze Age jars examined here exhibit morphological similarities to 19th-century ethnographic wooden measuring containers from Mountainous Dagestan, known locally as *ratl*, *sakh*, *karsi*, and *mud* (Fig. 10, *1–3*). Comparative analysis reveals a notable correspondence in manufacturing technology between these Early Bronze Age jars from Mountainous Dagestan and the ethnographic wooden examples. The wooden vessels were produced by hollowing a tree trunk through carving or chiseling, followed by insertion of a separate base. This technique closely mirrors the capacity method documented in the region's ancient pottery. Researchers have frequently observed parallels in form, production techniques, and decoration between ethnographic and ancient ceramic and wooden artifacts. The vessel-construction method identified here appears particularly archaic.

In conclusion, technical and technological analysis has revealed distinct features in jar-making traditions, as well as clear differences between Early Bronze Age populations in Primorsky and Mountainous Dagestan. Based on a single pottery category – jars – these traditions proved divergent, suggesting either cultural distinctions or the persistence in Mountainous Dagestan of an older (possibly Eneolithic) or local pottery tradition that interacted with the Kura-Araxes practices of Primorsky Dagestan. At the same time, typological similarities between jars from the two geomorphological zones are evident.

Table 1. Sand content of raw plastic material

Traditions of raw plastic material selection for jar vessels				
Sand content	*Pottery from Mountainous Dagestan sites*		*Pottery from Primorsky Dagestan sites*	
	Number	%	Number	%
Low	1	11,1	5	55,6
Medium	1	11,1	4	44,4
High	7	77,8	–	–

Table 2. Ferruginous content of raw plastic material

Traditions of raw plastic material selection for jar vessels				
Ferruginous content	*Pottery from Mountainous Dagestan sites*		*Pottery from Primorsky Dagestan sites*	
	Number	%	Number	%
Low	–	–	–	–
Medium	–	–	–	–
High	9	100	9	100

Table 3. Composition of molding pastes

Recipes for molding pastes in jar vessel production	*Traditions of molding paste production for jar vessels*	
	Pottery from Mountainous Dagestan sites	*Pottery from Primorsky Dagestan sites*
Clay + chamotte + manure	–	7 / 77,8%
Clay + chamotte + organic solution	9 / 100%	2 / 22,2%
Total vessels	9 / 100%	9 / 100%

Table 4. Surface treatment techniques ratio

Surface treatment technique	*Pottery from Mountainous Dagestan sites*		*Pottery from Primorsky Dagestan sites*	
	Number	%	Number	%

Exterior surface	Hand smoothing	4	36,4	–	–
	Grass-bundle smoothing	1	9	–	–
	Burnishing	5	45,5	9	100
	Polishing	1	9	–	–
Interior surface	Hand smoothing	3	27,3	5	55,5
	Grass-bundle smoothing	1	9	–	–
	Burnishing	6	54,5	4	45,5
	Polishing	–	–	–	–

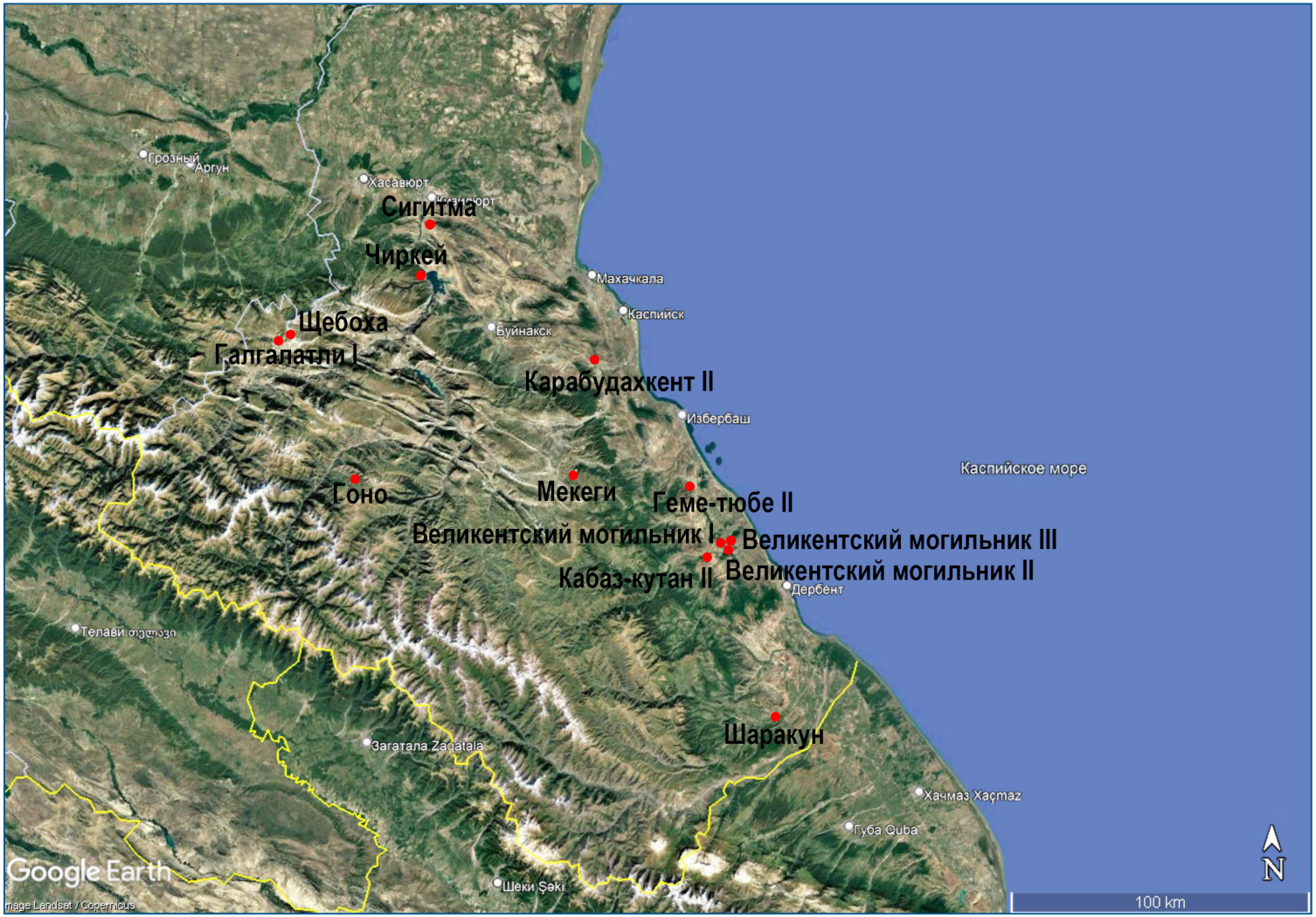

Fig. 1. Map of Dagestan showing Early Bronze Age sites

Рис. 1. Карта Дагестана с обозначением памятников эпохи ранней бронзы

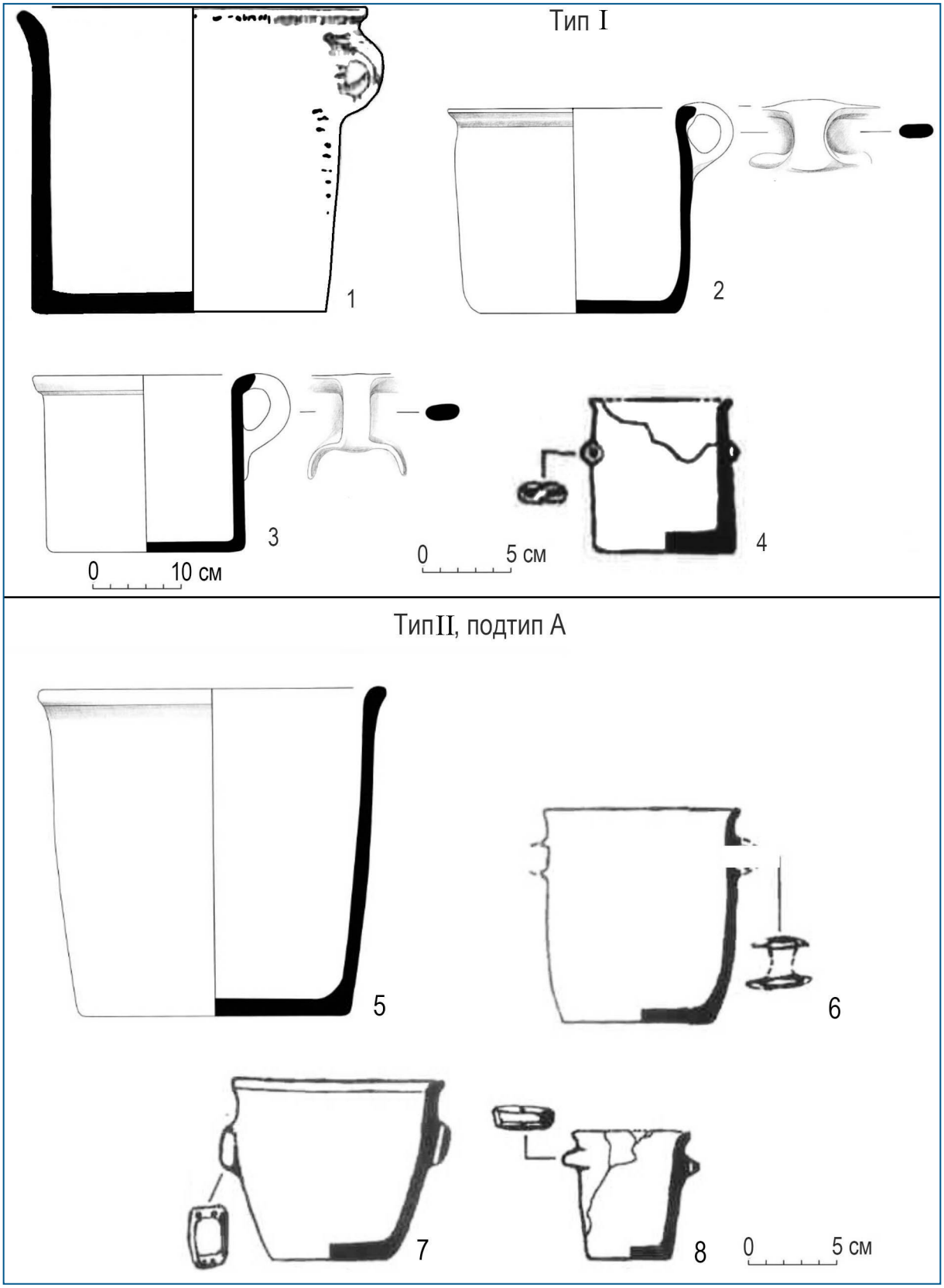

Fig. 2. Jars of Type I and Type II Subtype A: *1* – Mekegi settlement; *2–8* – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8

Рис. 2. Баночные сосуды типа I и типа II подтип А: *1* – поселение Мекеги; *2–8* – Великентский могильник I, к. 8

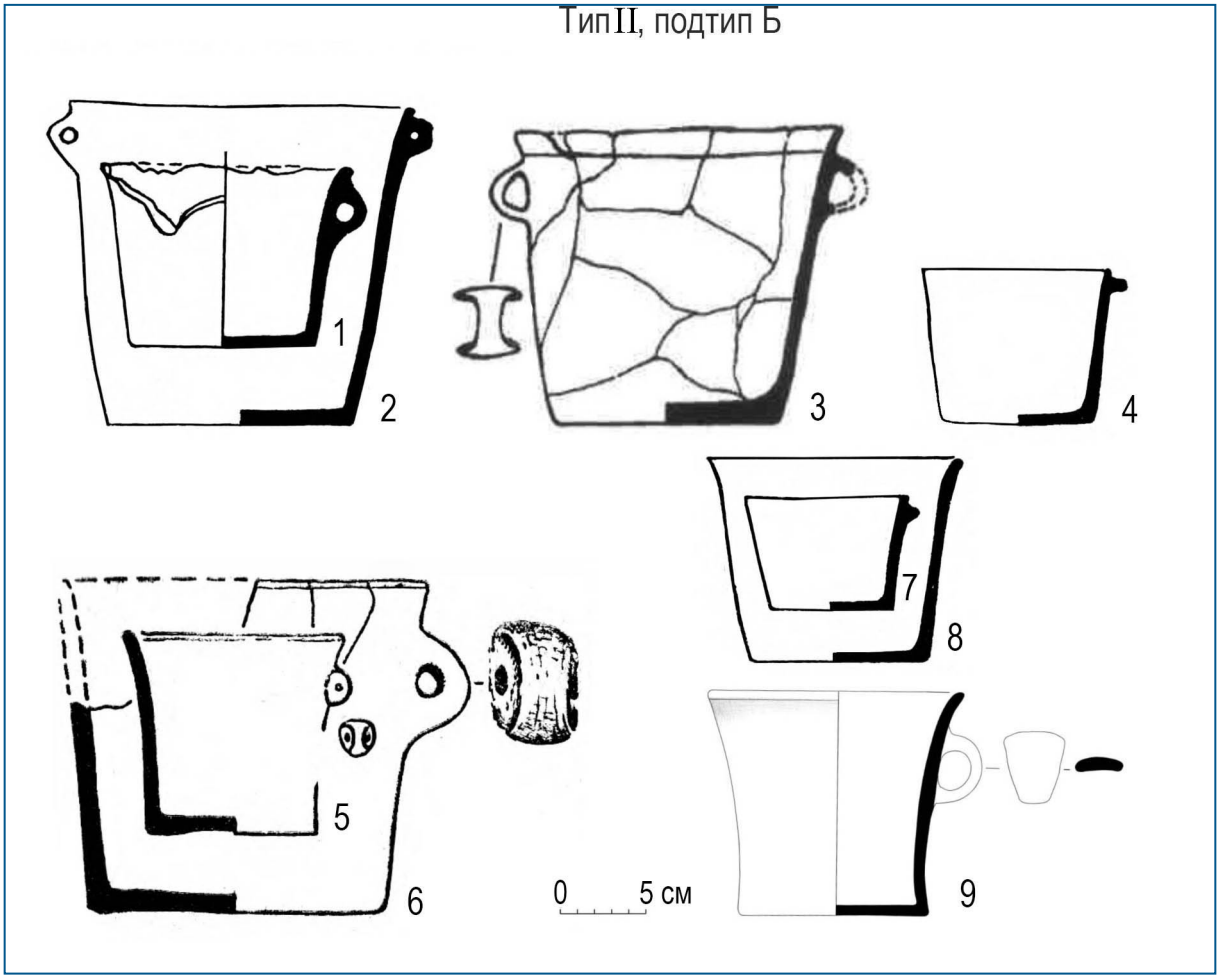

Fig. 3. Jars of Type II Subtype B: *1–2, 4, 7–8* – Galgalatli settlement; *3* – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8; *5–6* – Shchebokha burial ground; *9* – Sharakun settlement

Рис. 3. Баночные сосуды типа II подтипа В: *1–2, 4, 7–8* – поселение Галгалатли; *3* – Великентский могильник I, к. 8*;* *5–6* – могильник Щебоха; *9* –поселение Шаракун

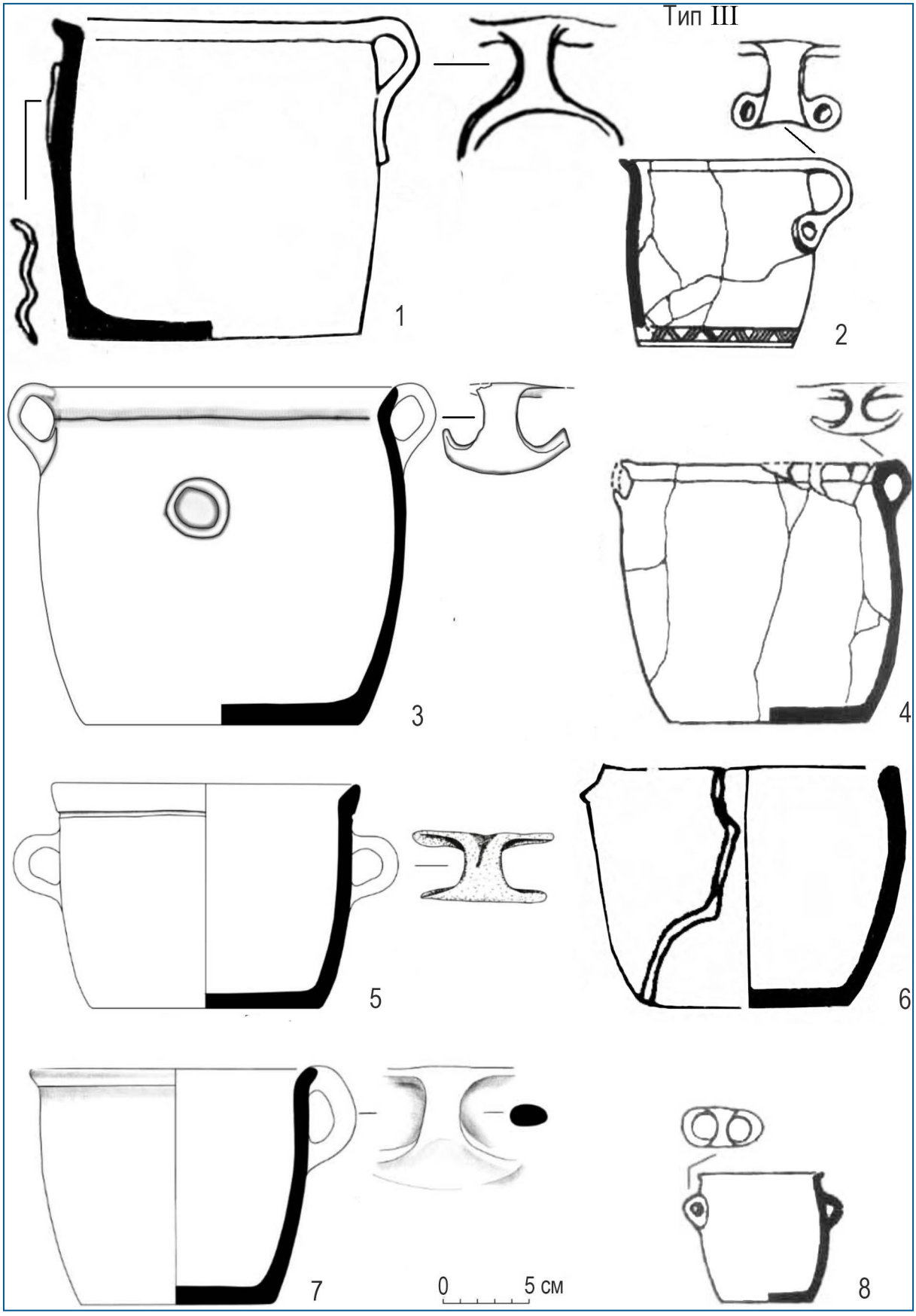

Fig. 4. Jars of Type III: *1–5, 7–8* – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8; *6* – Sigitma settlement

Рис. 4. Баночные сосуды тип III: *1–5, 7–8* – Великентский могильник I, к. 8; *6* – поселение Сигитма

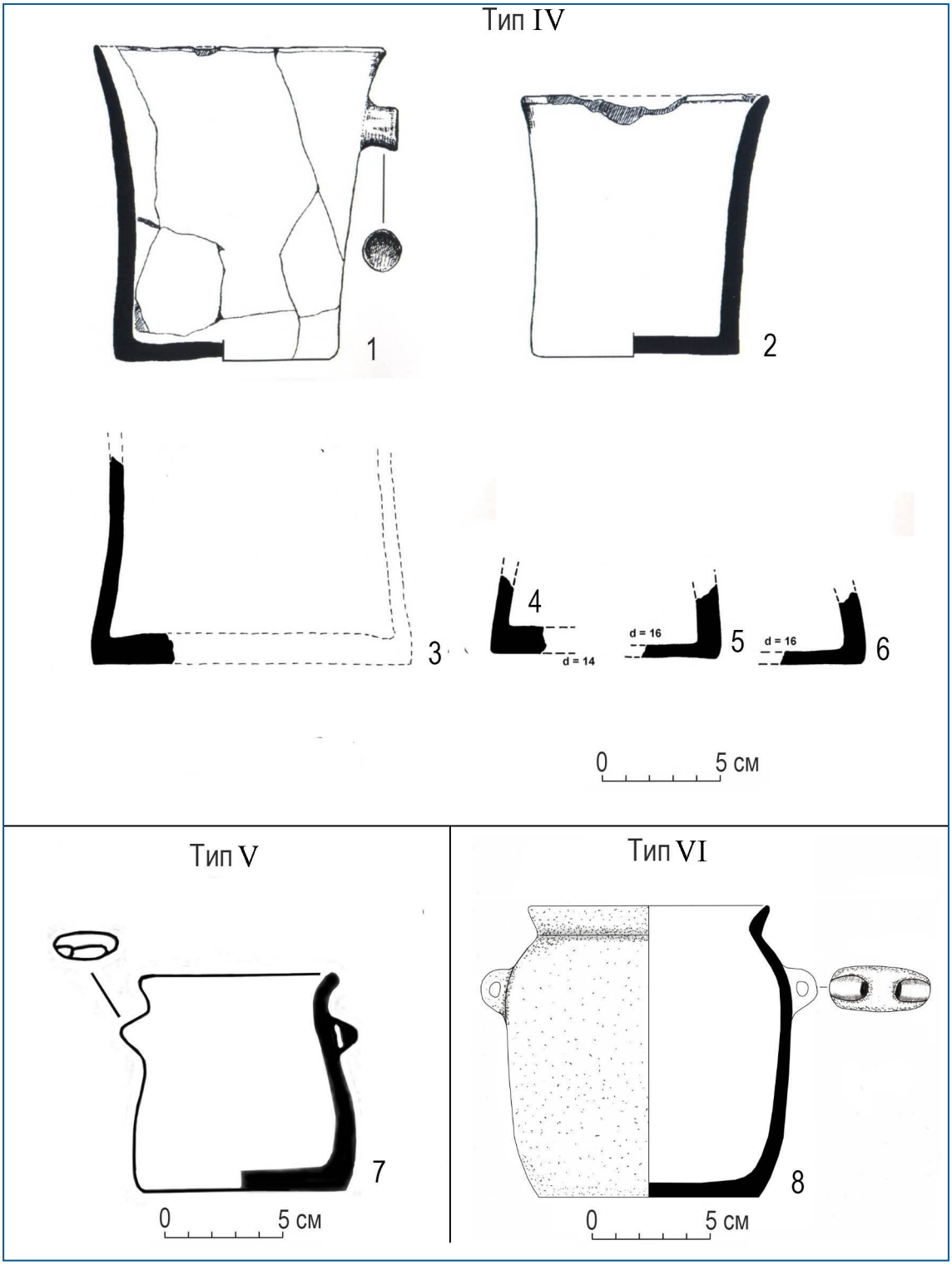

Fig. 5. Jars of Types IV, V, and VI: *1–2* – Velikent II settlement; *3–6* – Kabaz-kutan II settlement; *7–8* – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8

Рис. 5. Баночные сосуды Типа IV,V,VI: *1–2* – поселение Великент II; *3–6* –поселение Кабаз-Кутан II; *7–8* – Великентский могильник I, к. 8

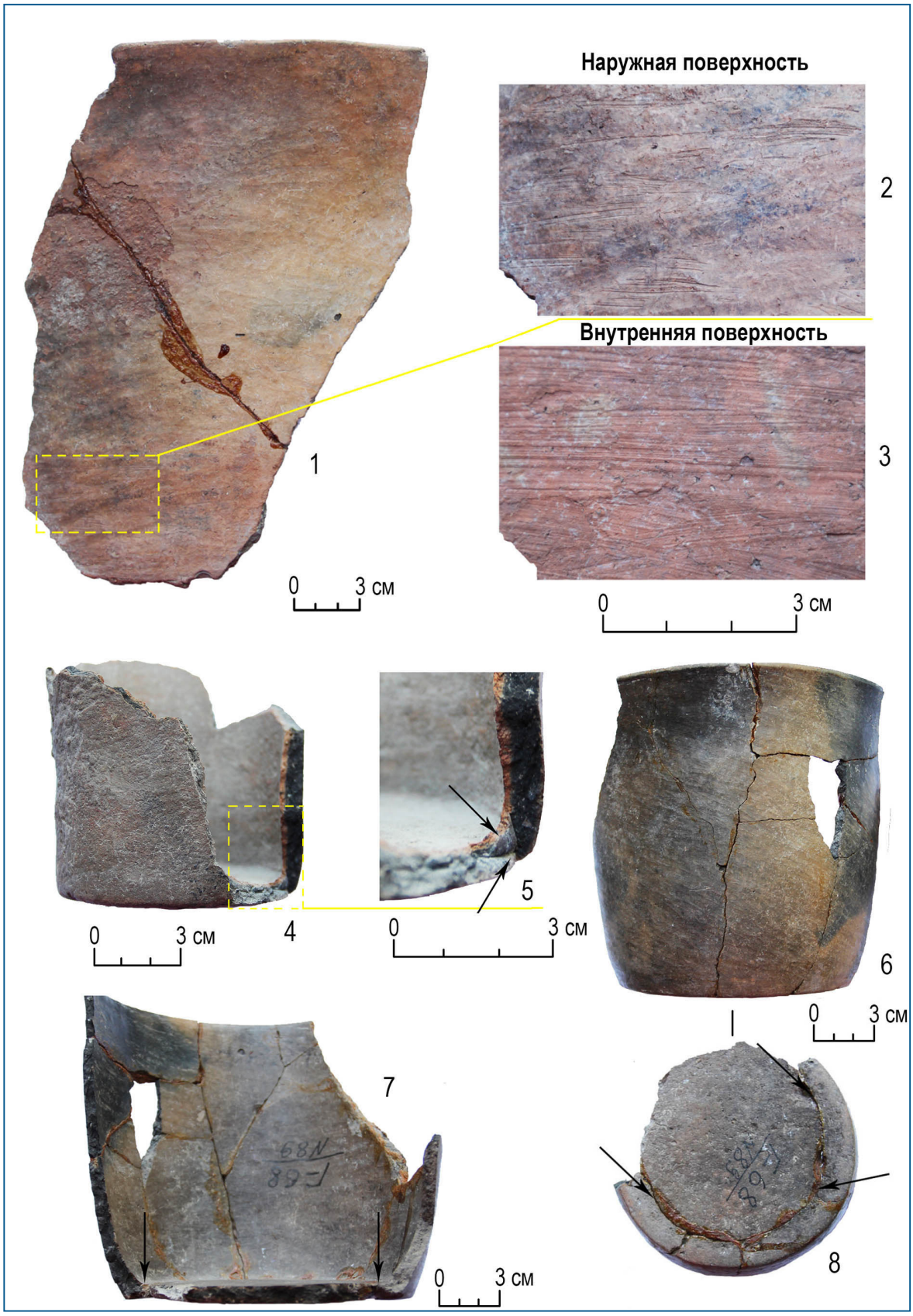

Fig. 6. Jars from Early Bronze Age sites in Mountainous Dagestan:
1–3, 6–8 – Galgalatli I settlement; *4–5* – Shchebokha burial ground

Рис. 6. Баночные сосуды из памятников раннего бронзового века Горного Дагестана:
1–3, 6–8 – поселение Галгалатли I; *4–5* – могильник Щебоха

Fig. 7. Jars from Early Bronze Age sites in Primorsky Dagestan:
1–6 – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8; *7* – Kabaz-kutan II settlement

Рис. 7. Баночные сосуды из памятников раннего бронзового века Приморского Дагестана:
1–6 – Великентский могильник I, к. 8; *7* – поселение Кабаз-кутан II

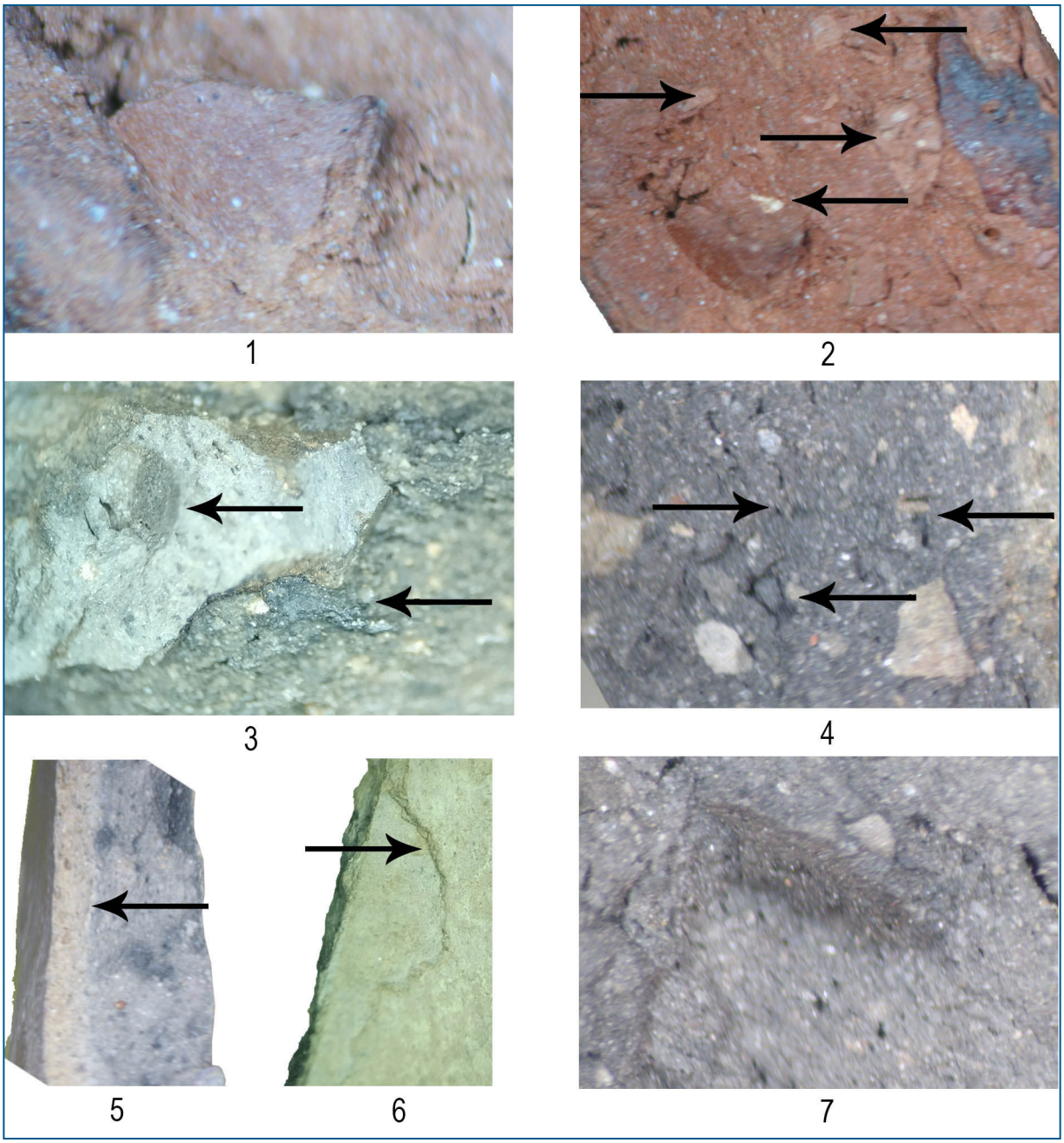

Fig. 8. Macro-photographs of artificial temper in the molding paste of jars from Early Bronze Age sites in Mountainous Dagestan:
1 – chamotte particle with burnishing, magnification ×30 – Shchebokha burial ground;
2 – chamotte particles (arrow indicates chamotte within chamotte made from low-ferruginous clay, magnification ×20) – Galgalatli settlement; *3–4, 7* – organic residues appearing as pores and voids, magnification ×30: 3 – Mekegi settlement, *4* – Sigitma settlement, *7* – Galgalatli settlement; *5–6* – application of an additional thin clay layer (slip) to the exterior surface, magnification ×10: *5* – Galgalatli settlement, *6* – Shchebokha burial ground

Рис. 8. Макрофотографии искусственных примесей в составе формовочноймассы баночных сосудов из памятников раннего бронзового века Горного Дагестана: *1* – частица шамота с лощением, увеличение (30Х) — могильник Щебоха;
2 – частицы шамота (стрелочкой указан шамот в шамоте из слабоожелезненной глины, увеличение 20Х) — поселение Галгалатли; *3–4, 7* – органические остатки в виде пор и пустот, увеличение (30Х), *3* — поселение Мекеги, *4* — поселение Сигитма, *7* — поселение Галгалатли; *5–6* – обмазывание внешней поверхности дополнительным слоем жидкой глины увеличение (10Х), *5* — поселение Галгалатли, *6* — могильник Щебоха

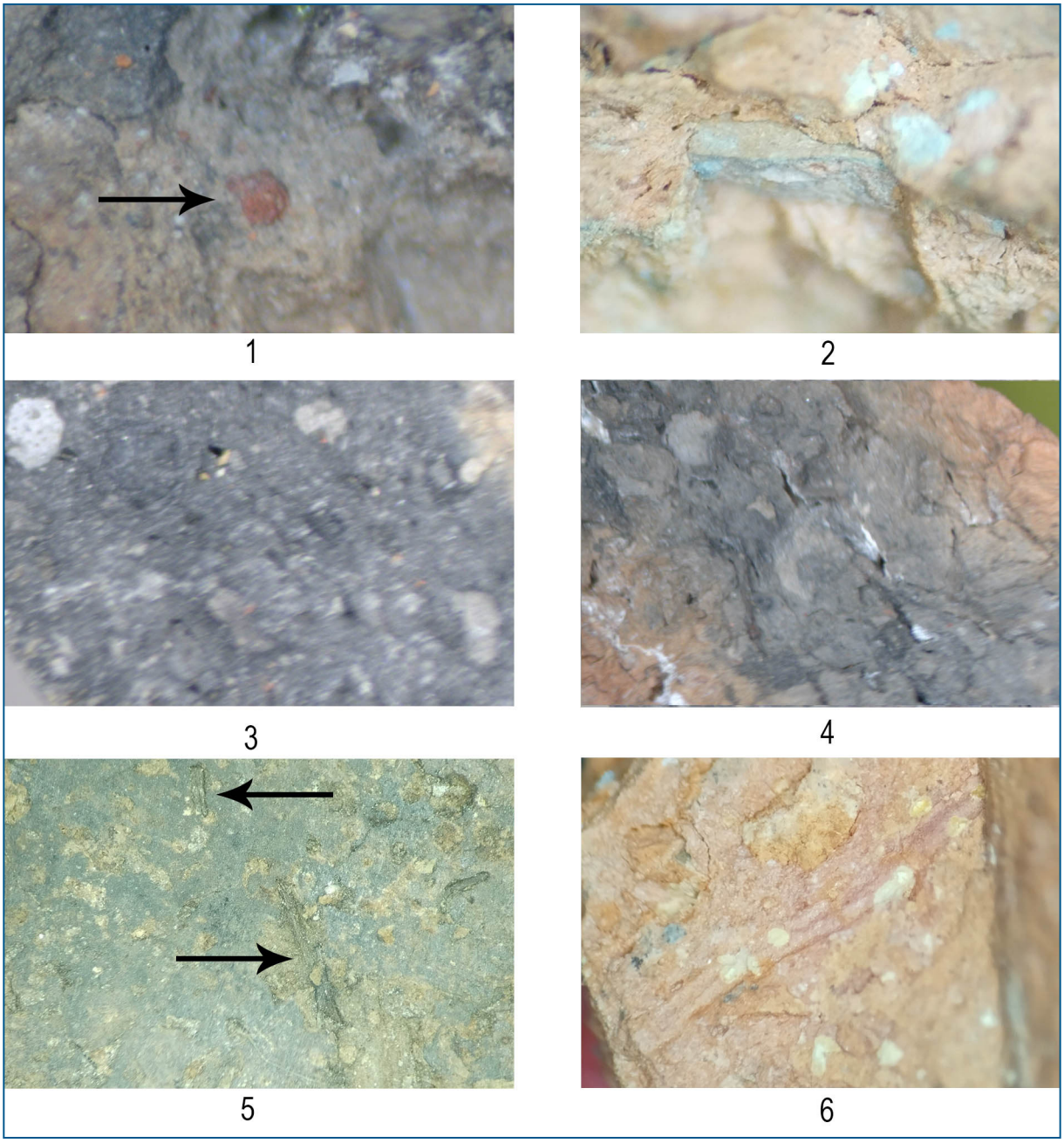

Fig. 9. Macro-photographs of temper in the molding paste of jars from Early Bronze Age sites in Primorsky Dagestan:
1 – natural inclusion of reddish-brown iron ore, magnification ×30 – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8;
2 – chamotte particle with burnishing, magnification ×30 – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8; *3* – sifted chamotte particles (upper size limit averaging 1.0–1.5 mm), magnification ×20 – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8; *4* – uncalibrated chamotte particles, magnification ×20 – Kabaz-kutan II settlement; *5* – traces of burnt-out organic material associated with small cattle dung, magnification ×30 – Velikent I burial ground, catacomb 8;
6 – traces of burnt-out plant remains, magnification ×30 – Kabaz-kutan II settlement

Рис. 9. Макрофотографии примесей в составе формовочной массы баночных сосудов из памятников раннего бронзового века Приморского Дагестана: *1* – естественное включение красно-бурого железняка, увеличение (30Х) – Великентский могильник I, к. 8; *2* – частица шамота с лощением, увеличение (30Х) – Великентский могильник I, к. 8; *3* – частицы шамота просеянные через сито с верхней градацией частиц со средним размером 1,0–1,5 мм, увеличение (20Х) – Великентский могильник I, к. 8; *4* – частицы шамота не калиброванные, увеличение (20Х), – поселение Кабаз-Кутан II; *5* – следы органических остатков после выгорания связанные с навозом МРС, увеличение (30Х) – Великентский могильник I, к. 8; *6* – следы растительных остатков после выгорания, увеличение (30Х) – Кабаз-Кутан II

Fig. 10. Ethnographic wooden jar vessels from Mountainous Dagestan:
1–3 – collections of the Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography, Dagestan Federal Research Centre, Russian Academy of Sciences

Рис. 10. Этнографические баночные сосуды Горного Дагестана, изготовленные из дерева:
1–3 – фонды хранилища Института истории, археологии и этнографии ДФИЦ

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Research paper

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DIACHRONIC CHANGES IN LONG-BONE DIMENSIONS AND RECONSTRUCTED STATURE FROM THE EARLY IRON AGE TO THE EARLY MEDIEVAL PERIOD: EVIDENCE FROM THE ZAYUKOVO-3 CEMETERY (KABARDINO-BALKARIA)

Abstract. This study investigates changes in skeletal long-bone dimensions in North Caucasus populations over a span of approximately 1,500 years (from 8th century BC to 7th century AD), using materials from the Zayukovo-3 polycultural cemetery (Kabardino-Balkaria Republic, Russia) as a case study. The research aims to reconstruct stature and assess morphological variability among individuals from three key cultural-chronological phases of the site: the Western Koban culture of the pre-Scythian period (8th–5th centuries BC), the Podkumok-Khumara cultural group of the Late Sarmatian period (1st–3rd centuries AD), and the Early Alanian period (5th–7th centuries AD). Methods employed include paleoanthropological analysis, reconstruction of fragmented skeletal remains, osteometric measurement, stature estimation, and statistical processing of the resulting data. The analysis revealed statistically significant differences and similarities among the compared groups. Males from the Koban and Alanian stages displayed morphological similarity, while female stature showed no significant difference between the Koban and Sarmatian samples. The Koban population exhibited pronounced sexual dimorphism in skeletal proportions. Sarmatian males had the lowest mean stature (163 cm) and were morphologically distinct from the other groups. Reconstructed stature was 169 cm for Koban males and 168 cm for Alanian males. These results align with recent paleogenetic studies suggesting biological continuity between Koban and Alanian populations. The findings underscore the value of osteometric analysis in paleoanthropological research and highlight the complex biological dynamics of ancient North Caucasus populations. They indicate both long-term continuity across certain archaeological cultures and the potential impact of external components during the Sarmatian period. These patterns warrant further verification through interdisciplinary studies.

Keywords: West Koban archeological culture; Late Sarmatian period (Podkumok-Khumara-type monuments); Alans; North Caucasus; Early Iron Age; Middle Ages; stature reconstruction; morphological variability; biological anthropology

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ДИНАМИКА ПРОДОЛЬНЫХ РАЗМЕРОВ СКЕЛЕТА ЧЕЛОВЕКА ОТ РАННЕГО ЖЕЛЕЗНОГО ВЕКА ДО РАННЕГО СРЕДНЕВЕКОВЬЯ НА ПРИМЕРЕ МАТЕРИАЛОВ МОГИЛЬНИКА ЗАЮКОВО-3 (КАБАРДИНО-БАЛКАРИЯ)

Аннотация. Работа посвящена исследованию динамики продольных размеров скелета у населения Северного Кавказа на протяжении полутора тысяч лет (с VIII в. до н.э. по VII в. н.э.) на примере материалов поликультурного могильника Заюково-3 (республика Кабардино-Балкария). Работа направлена на реконструкцию длины тела и анализ морфологической изменчивости представителей трёх ключевых культурно-хронологических этапов функционирования могильника: западной кобанской культуры (VIII–V вв. до н.э.) предскифского времени, культурной группы памятников типа Подкумок-Хумара позднесарматского времени (I–III вв. н.э.) и раннего аланского времени (V–VII вв. н.э.). Методы исследования включали палеоантропологический анализ, реставрацию фрагментированных костных останков, остеометрию, реконструкцию длины тела, а также статистическую обработку полученных данных. Основные результаты выявили статистически значимые различия и сходства между группами. Установлено морфологическое сходство между мужчинами кобанского и аланского этапов, а также отсутствие достоверных различий в длине тела у женщин кобанской и сарматской групп. При этом для кобанской общности характерен выраженный половой диморфизм в пропорциях скелета. Мужчины сарматского этапа оказались наиболее низкорослыми (163 см) и морфологически обособленными. Реконструированная длина тела у кобанских мужчин составила 169 см, у аланских – 168 см. Полученные данные находят отклик в современных палеогенетических исследованиях, указывая на возможную биологическую преемственность между кобанским и аланским населением. Выводы работы подтверждают важность остеометрического анализа как одного из ключевых инструментов современных палеоантропологических исследований. Результаты свидетельствуют о сложной динамике биологического субстрата древнего населения Северного Кавказа, где прослеживается как преемственность представителей различных археологических культур, так и возможное влияние инокультурных компонент (сарматское время). Обнаруженные закономерности требуют дальнейшего подтверждения в рамках междисциплинарных исследований.

Ключевые слова: Западная кобанская культура; позднесарматское время (памятники типа Подкумок-Хумара); аланы; Северный Кавказ; РЖВ; Средневековье; длина тела; морфологическая изменчивость; биологическая антропология

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Introduction

Human occupation of the North Caucasus spans several millennia. The Greater Caucasus Range has functioned both as a natural barrier and as a contact zone between sedentary and nomadic groups. Transitions from nomadic to semi-nomadic or fully sedentary ways of life repeatedly promoted population admixture across historical periods, contributing to the complex gene pool of the region's inhabitants. Processes of population replacement or mutual assimilation remain poorly understood and demand integrated investigation by bioarchaeologists, paleoanthropologists, and geneticists.

Due to the complex dynamics of population change in the North Caucasus, archaeological sites in the North Caucasus frequently comprise long-occupied settlements and stratified burial complexes. The sequential superposition of archaeological cultures within the same territory is especially characteristic of the Ciscaucasian steppes and the North Caucasian foothills. Despite extensive archeological research and numerous hypotheses proposed by leading Caucasian scholars, many questions persist, particularly, concerning the origins and cultural affiliations of the region's indigenous populations.

Most experts currently recognize the Koban cultural-historical community (hereafter CHC) as one of the indigenous populations of the North Caucasus [1]. The formative phase of this culture is dated to the mid-12th – mid-9th centuries BC, while its decline is linked to Scythian-Sarmatian influence during the second half of the 7th and early 4th centuries BC [2]. At the Zayukovo-3 cemetery, most Koban-culture burials belong to the 7th–5th centuries BC, corresponding to its final stage.

The CHC probably emerged from local variants of the North Caucasian substrate [3] of the Late Bronze Age [4] in the Kislovodsk area. Settlements dated to the 16th–10th centuries BC have been identified there; these are chronologically connected to later regional sites that yielded ceramics comparable to those of the early Koban culture [1].

The nature of interactions between the Koban CHC and Scythian-Sarmatian cultures remains debated. Some researchers regard close contacts as indisputable [5], whereas others argue that Koban monuments in the mountainous foothills show no direct connection with nomadic cultures [4].

The Scythian period in the North Caucasus ended with the arrival of Sarmatian nomadic tribes in the 3rd century BC [6]. Sarmatian expansion occurred in two main waves: the conquest of the Kuban lowland territories (4th century BC – 1st century AD) and the broader Sarmatization of the North Caucasus (3rd–1st centuries BC) [7]. In Sarmatian sites of the 2nd–1st centuries BC, burial structures reminiscent of Koban traditions (8th–4th centuries BC) [8] and similarities in ceramics are observable. At the same time, evidence exists of military conflicts between Kobans and Sarmatians [9].

Among Sarmatian-period communities in the North Caucasus, the Podkumok-Khumara cultural group is distinctive. It was distributed primarily in mountainous areas from the 1st century BC to the 4th century AD. The origin of this group is linked to migrations from the plains and foothills of the central and eastern North Caucasus [10]. Recent studies have noted morphological similarity between its bearers and Late Sarmatian populations [11]. Sarmatian dominance declined with the expansion of Alanian tribes at the end of the 4th century AD, leading to cultural assimilation and the formation of the Alanian culture in the central North Caucasus (5th–first half of the 8th century AD). Paleoanthropological data for populations associated with Podkumok-Khumara-type sites remain scarce, despite the fact that the period from the 3rd century BC to the 3rd century AD corresponds to the main phase of Sarmatian penetration into Ciscaucasia and the broader Caucasus region.

The Alanian tribes succeeded the Sarmatian period, although the process of Alanian ethnogenesis remains debated. Some researchers propose that certain Sarmatian tribes contributed to it [12]. Recent studies, including paleogenetic evidence, however, indicate that the Alanian CHC formed during the Middle to Late Sarmatian period on an autochthonous North Caucasian substrate, incorporating a Late Sarmatian genetic component through nomadic migrations [13, 14].

Population interactions merit particular attention during the most sensitive phases of cultural development – namely, at the stages of emergence and decline. Paleoanthropological methods enable the detection of morphological changes among representatives of various cultures.

Materials and methods

The skeletal material examined in this study derives from individuals interred at the Zayukovo-3 cemetery (Zayukovo village, Kabardino-Balkaria). Excavations are being conducted jointly by the State Historical Museum, Kabardino-Balkarian State University, and the Institute of Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, under the direction of archaeologists A.S. Kadieva and S.V. Demidenko. The cemetery was in use from the 8th century BC to the 7th century AD [15]. The site is characterized by complex stratigraphy, multiple occupational phases, and polycultural composition.

The present analysis focuses on the three cultural-historical communities most abundantly represented at the cemetery:

– Western Koban archaeological culture (8th–5th centuries BC);

– Podkumok-Khumara-type cultural group of monuments (hereafter Podkumok-Khumara-type CGM) of the Late Sarmatian period (1st–3rd centuries AD);

– Alanian archaeological culture (5th–7th centuries AD).

The paleoanthropological material is fragmented: earlier burials were frequently disturbed by subsequent interments and by ancient looting. To date, the complete skeletal assemblage recovered during excavations conducted between 2014 and 2022 has been restored and analyzed using a range of methods. The collection is currently housed in the Research Institute and Museum of Anthropology, Moscow State University.

Sex and age-at-death determinations were performed following standard anthropological protocols [16–19] (Table 1).

Table 1. Sex and age-at-death characteristics of the material

	Male	Female	Indeterminate
Western Koban	16	18	15
Podkumok-Khumara	17	23	7
Alans	19	13	5
Total	136		

This study utilized only the maximum lengths of the major limb bones: humerus (H1), ulna (U1), radius (R1), femur (F1), tibia (T1), and fibula (Fi1) [17, 20]. Cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling were performed using mean values of these lengths.

Stature was reconstructed for individuals from each chronological phase using established regression formulae. The most appropriate equation for each population was selected based on known stature distributions [21–23]. Depending on skeletal preservation, stature was estimated from one or more available long-bone lengths.

Differences in mean reconstructed stature between chronological groups were evaluated using Student's t-test. All statistical analyses were conducted with the STATISTICA software package (Excel module).

Results

Cluster analysis and multidimensional scaling revealed that males from the Koban and Alanian periods are morphologically most similar to each other. A comparable degree of similarity is evident between males and females of the Podkumok-Khumara-type CGM (Late Sarmatian period). Thus, similar morphological patterns are observed both within a single population (allowing for sexual dimorphism) and between two male groups

separated by more than 1,000 years and belonging to different occupational phases of the Zayukovo-3 cemetery. This pattern suggests morphological continuity in the male lineage across these periods. Confirmation of this hypothesis will require larger and more representative samples.

Sarmatian males are morphologically distant from both Koban and Alanian males (Fig. 1A). A marked separation is also evident between Koban males and females (Fig. 1B), which may reflect pronounced sexual dimorphism, different genesis of males and females within the Koban population, or the limited observations. In contrast, Sarmatian males and females cluster together, alongside Koban females. Alanian females form a relatively distinct group, a pattern clearly visible in the scatter plot.

Comparison of reconstructed statures among the three samples revealed significant differences between Koban and Sarmatian males ($p < 0.05$) and between Sarmatian and Alanian males ($p < 0.05$), but not between Koban and Alanian males (Fig. 2). Among females, no significant stature differences were observed between the Koban and Sarmatian samples (Fig. 2), whereas Alanian females differed significantly from both ($p < 0.05$).

Discussion

The earliest attempts to characterize the physical appearance of Koban CHC representatives using craniometric data were undertaken by V.P. Alekseev [24]. Subsequent work by M.M. Gerasimova and D.V. Pezhemsky [25] demonstrated that the Koban craniological type is predominantly dolichocranic, narrow-faced, with a prominently projecting nose and marked Europid morphology. Notably, similar cranial characteristics (sharply dolichocranic, narrow-faced Europid type with a narrow nose and high cranial vault) are observed in Early Alanian populations [26]. To date, evidence of continuity between Koban and Alanian populations is apparent at both morphological and genetic levels [27].

Osteometric data for the Koban CHC are considerably scarcer than craniometric data. Previous studies (Klin-Yar III) reported a mean male stature of 167.1 cm and a female stature of 154.3 cm (derived from a single individual) [28]. The present results from Zayukovo-3 (169 cm for males, 162 cm for females) diverge from these earlier estimates. Accordingly, Koban males at Zayukovo-3 fall within the tall stature category, whereas females are of medium stature. Multivariate analyses further indicate that Koban males and females differ markedly from one another in long-bone proportions. This pattern may reflect distinct genetic contributions to the male and female segments of the population and warrants further investigation.

The craniology of Sarmatian-period populations has been extensively studied. Most individuals associated with the Sarmatian archaeological culture exhibit a meso-brachycranial morphological type [29]. During the Middle Sarmatian period, however, a dolicho-mesocranial variant also appeared, which became predominant in the Late Sarmatian period [30].

Osteometric studies of Early Sarmatian populations that is associated with the cemeteries of the Lower Volga region are rare but report mean statures of 164.2 cm for males and 155.4 cm for females, describing them as medium-statured and robust [31]. These values closely match those obtained in the present study for the Late Sarmatian (Podkumok-Khumara-type CGM) series at Zayukovo-3 (163 cm for males, 155.6 cm for females). Likewise, the reduced sexual dimorphism noted in Early Sarmatian groups [31] is consistent with our findings. Our results also align closely with those reported by B.V. Fiershtein in the 1970s for Sarmatian series from the Lower Volga region, where she similarly characterized the population as medium-statured and stocky [32].

The population associated with the Podkumok-Khumara-type CGM corresponds to the Late Sarmatian phase (1st–3rd centuries AD) at the Zayukovo-3 cemetery. Paleoanthropological studies of this group remain scarce [33]. One rare example is a 4th-century AD burial from Levopodkumsky 1 (Kislovodsk Basin), where an individual attributed to this cultural group yielded a mesocranial skull of Europid morphology [33]. According to V.Yu. Malashev, the bearers of the Podkumok-Khumara-type CGM represent a Sarmatized autochthonous North Caucasian population that can be regarded as “pre-Alanian” [10]. At the same time, the proportions and

dimensions observed in the present study indicate a clear steppe component, as they closely resemble those documented for Sarmatian groups.

Sexual dimorphism in reconstructed stature is relatively weak in the Podkumok-Khumara-type CGM compared to the Koban group and is comparable to that observed in the Early Alanian sample. Multivariate analyses, however, reveal that Sarmatian females more closely resemble Sarmatian males in long-bone proportions than do females in the other two groups, suggesting greater genetic homogeneity. No analogous male–female similarity is evident in the other two groups. The Sarmatian group also exhibits the lowest mean stature among the others, which may be explained by several hypotheses, including the selective pressure of unfavorable environmental conditions.

Although the early centuries of the era coincided with the Roman Warm Period, a phase of relatively stable warmth and adequate humidity [34, 35], the 2nd–3rd centuries AD witnessed pronounced local climatic fluctuations toward cooling and aridization [36]. Given the comparable glacial dynamics of the North Caucasus and the Alps [34, 37], similar climatic instability likely affected the territory of Kabardino-Balkaria during the final centuries of the Early Iron Age. Analysis of bottom sediments from Lake Karakel (Western Caucasus) further reveals a sharp decline in bromine concentration from the second half of the 2nd to the 4th century AD, indicative of regional cooling [38]. Low temperatures are known to impair cartilage growth and reduce final limb length [39], which could explain the observed trends in morphological variability and the convergence of proportions between men and women during the Sarmatian period. Additionally, severe environmental stress (chronic malnutrition, excessive physical labour, or psycho-emotional strain) can accelerate skeletal maturation in females [40].

An alternative hypothesis for the reduced sexual dimorphism in the Sarmatian-period group invokes high levels of physical activity in both sexes [41]. Consistent with this interpretation, skeletal remains from the Sarmatian stage (both males and females) exhibit pronounced muscle attachment sites and frequent degenerative-dystrophic changes in the spine (particularly the lumbar region) and major joints (shoulder, hip, knee, and ankle). Many of these alterations are not age-related and appear disproportionate to expected wear patterns.

Osteometric results indicate that Early Alanian males were of medium stature. Their reconstructed stature values closely resemble those of Koban males and differ significantly from the Sarmatian-period population. Multivariate analysis failed to reveal close morphological similarity between Early Alanian males and females; in multidimensional space, Alanian females occupy a relatively distinct position (Fig. 1A). Nevertheless, the separation between Alanian males and females is considerably less pronounced than that observed between Koban males and females.

Despite extensive research on the Early Alanian archaeological culture and its bearers, osteometric data remain limited. A previous study of the Beslan cemetery (primarily 2nd–4th centuries AD) reported a mean male stature of 165 cm, with considerable individual variation (some males exceeding 190 cm), and approximately 155 cm for females [42]. The present study yielded higher values (168 cm for males, 162 cm for females). However, it is worth noting that the Beslan cemetery belongs primarily to the early stage of the Alanian culture (2nd–4th centuries AD), while the Alanian stage of functioning of the Zayukovo-3 cemetery corresponds mainly to the 5th–7th centuries AD. Consequently, the observed differences may be due to both chronological and territorial variability of the ancient Alanian population. It is noteworthy that ancient sources, including Ammianus Marcellinus in his *Res Gestae*, also described the Alans as notably tall [43].

Chronological trends in stature also merit brief consideration. Female stature exhibits a gradual increase from the Early Iron Age to the early medieval period. In contrast, male stature displays undulating patterns across periods, possibly reflecting episodic population replacement, particularly the influx of steppe-derived genetic components. At the same time, the well-documented influence of external factors on human growth and development [44] indicates that these epochal fluctuations in stature among ancient populations are likely linked to shifting social and environmental conditions.

Some of the trends identified from the current osteometric data may shift as sample sizes increase. Nevertheless, the observed pattern of biological continuity, evident not only between chronologically proximate

groups but also between cultural-historical communities separated by centuries, represents a major finding and a critical direction for future research at the Zayukovo-3 cemetery. This is particularly significant given the unresolved questions surrounding the origins of females from the Koban, Sarmatian, and Early Alanian phases, which will require further interdisciplinary investigation.

Conclusion

The present data reveal morphological similarities between individuals from the Western Koban and Early Alanian archaeological cultures at the Zayukovo-3 cemetery. This affinity may reflect not only shared genetic heritage but also comparable environmental conditions that favoured the development of similar adaptive morphological patterns.

In contrast, the Sarmatian (Podkumok-Khumara-type CGM) population is clearly distinct. Its characteristics point to a different genetic substrate compared with both the preceding and subsequent groups, most likely resulting from the incorporation of a nomadic steppe component. These interpretations remain provisional and require further testing through larger comparative samples, paleogenetic analyses, and additional paleoanthropological studies.

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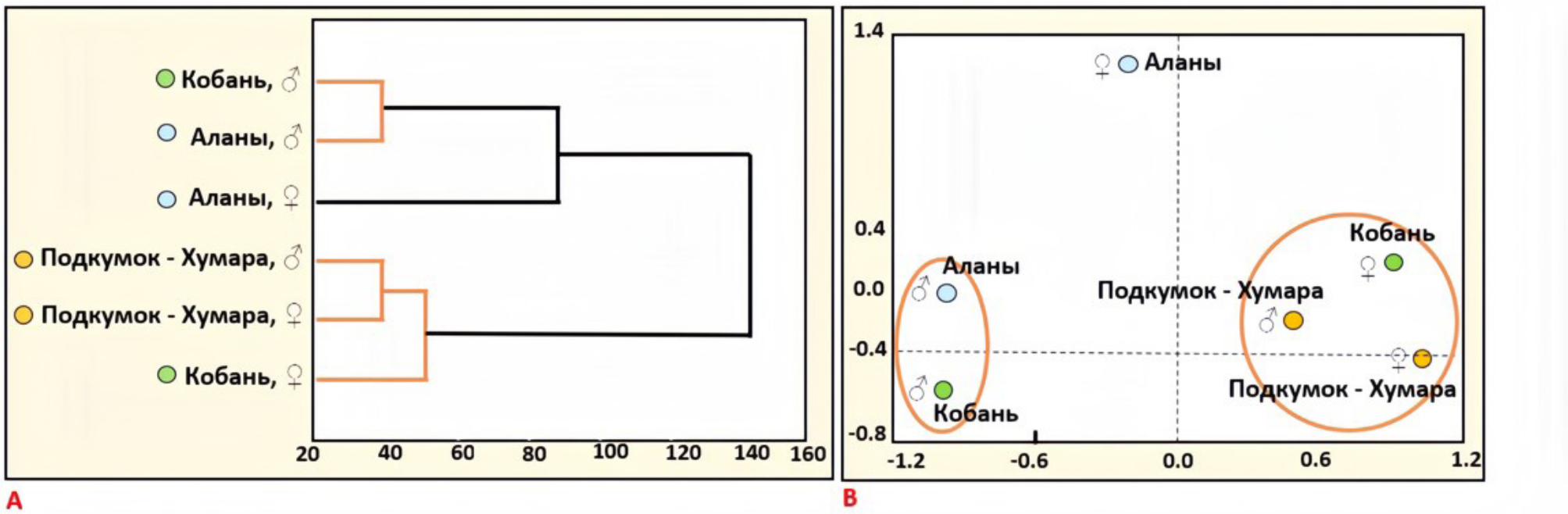
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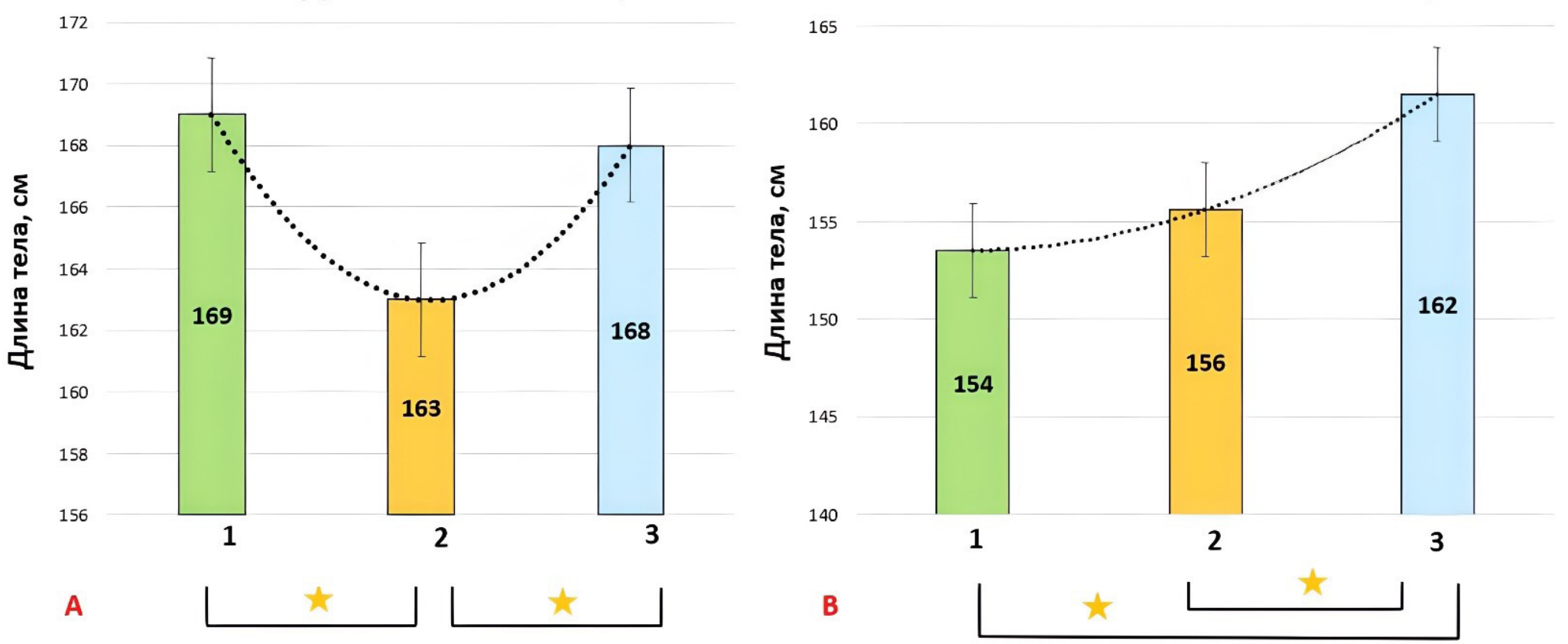
Реконструкция длины тела, ♂
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Реконструкция длины тела, ♀
Длина тела, см
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Исследовательская статья

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THE SEARCH FOR NATIONAL IDENTITY IN AZERBAIJAN DURING THE LATE 19th CENTURY

Abstract. Contemporary scholarship distinguishes various forms of identity – ethnic, national, religious, and others. Among these, the issue of "national identity" has attracted the widest discussion, since both the nation and nationalism are products of modern era in which national states are born and formed. For this reason, the history of national identity search in Azerbaijan and the formation of the Azerbaijani nation are of great relevance. Historical-comparative analyses conducted based on archival, source and literary materials reveal that until the 1870s, Azerbaijanis did not have a clear idea about the nation they belonged, the language they spoke, and the religion they had been carriers for centuries. The founding in 1875 of Hasan Bey Zardabi's newspaper *Ekinchi* – published under considerable hardship – together with later outlets such as *Ziya*, *Kashkul*, and *Kaspi*, introduced Enlightenment thought and stimulated the search for national identity. Led by a small group of Russian– and European-educated democratic intellectuals, this movement advocated the use of the native language and alphabet, the development of national education, and the establishment of a domestic press, thereby igniting an ethno-cultural revival in Azerbaijan. By the end of the nineteenth century, through the efforts of intellectuals such as M.Shahtakhtli, A.b. Huseynzadeh, A.b.Aghaoglu, M.A.Rasulzadeh, A.b.Topchubashi and others, this movement had evolved into a mature national ideology with clearly articulated political goals and objectives. Finally, first democratic republic established in the Turkic-Muslim East against the backdrop of political, ideological, and national upheavals that began in the Russian Empire at early twentieth century – the Azerbaijan People's Republic – can be considered the logical conclusion of the national identity search that began in the second half of the nineteenth century.

Keywords: primordialism; modernism; search for national identity; Yusif Akchura; *Ekinchi*

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Research paper

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ПОИСК НАЦИОНАЛЬНОЙ ИДЕНТИЧНОСТИ В АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНЕ ВО ВТОРОЙ ПОЛОВИНЕ XIX ВЕКА

Аннотация. В современном научном дискурсе идентичность определяется как этническая, национальная, религиозная, возрастная, гендерная, расовая, региональная, межкультурная и т. д. Однако среди них вопросы «национальной идентичности» обсуждаются более широко, что обусловлено прежде всего тем, что понятия «нация» и «национализм» являются именно продуктами современного мира – новой эпохи, в которой возникают и формируются национальные государства. В этом смысле история поиска национальной идентичности в Азербайджане и проблема формирования азербайджанской нации также представляют большую актуальность. Историко-сравнительный анализ, проведенный на основе архивных, источниковых и литературных материалов, показывает, что до 70-х годов XIX века азербайджанцы не имели четкого представления не только о своей нации и родном языке, но и о религии, которую исповедовали веками. Лишь с 1875 года начали публиковаться материалы с просветительскими идеями на страницах газеты «Экинчи» Гасанбека Зардаби, а позднее в таких периодических изданиях, как «Зия», «Кешкуль» и «Каспи». Поиски национальной идентичности, также проявилось в борьбе немногочисленной передовой интеллигенции, получившей образование в России и Европе, за родной язык, алфавит, просвещение и национальную печать, что привело к своеобразному оживлению в азербайджанской этнокультурной среде. К концу века эта тенденция приобрел уникальную динамику в деятельности Мухаммада Аги Шахтахтли, Али-бека Гусейнзаде, Ахмеда бека Агаоглу, Мамед Эмина Расулзаде, Али-мардан бека Топчубаши и других, и достигла уровня общенациональной идеологии, содержащей конкретные политические цели и задачи. Именно в свете этой идеологии и на фоне политических, национальных и идеологических потрясений начавшихся в Российской империи в начале XX века, поиски национальной идентичности достигли своего логического завершения в 1918 году с созданием первого демократического государства на тюрко-мусульманском Востоке – Азербайджанской Народной Республики.

Ключевые слова: примордиализм; модернизм; поиски национальной идентичности; Юсиф Ачкура; Экинчи (Пахарь)

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Introduction

In recent years, the term "identity" has been widely used in academic discourse, journalism, and daily life. Despite its etymological roots in ancient and medieval texts, where it simply meant "sameness" or "that one", the term acquired broader popularity and was transformed into a key social-scientific category only in the 1950s, largely due to the work of the American psychologist Erik Homburger Erikson. E. Erikson characterized identity as "a process that is 'localized' in the core of both individual and social culture, and determined the identity of both of them" and highlighted its features such as "individuality, identity or sameness and integrity, unity and synthesis, social solidarity and continuity" [1, p. 31].

Although ethnic, national, religious, and other forms of identity can be distinguished, national identity dominates discussions in modern Western academia. This focus arises mainly because the nation and nationalism are products of modernity – the era in which nation-states emerged and formed. Moreover, unlike ethnic identity, national identity is not considered primordial or innate. Its core components are generally understood to include individuals' attitudes toward the material and spiritual heritage accumulated over time, a commitment to advancing national interests, and the capacity to mobilize collectively in order to forge mutually beneficial relations with other national and ethnic groups.

When discussing national identity, it is essential first to clarify the content and core parameters of the category "nation" itself. In contemporary scholarship, approaches to this concept are generally divided into two major theoretical trends: *primordialism* and *modernism* (postmodernism). Drawning on the works of German idealists – particularly, J.H. Fichte (*Rechi k Nemetskoi Natsii*. St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2009) and J.G. Herder (*Idei k Filosofii Istorii Chelovechestva*. Moscow: Nauka, 1977), the proponents of the primordial theory regard the "nation" as an element of nature subject to natural laws, like "ethnos"; they consider it a "broad community of related people" united with blood, common customs, religion, language and a single territory. Primordialism, incorporating sociobiological and historical-evolutionary strands, provided the theoretical groundwork for a number of twentieth-century ethnological schools, notably S. M. Shirokogorov's and V. Muhlmann's teaching about ethnos, Yu. V. Bromley's dualistic theory, and L. N. Gumilev's passionarity theory of ethnogenesis.

Within the theory of modernism, which approaches the "nation" from a completely different perspective, at different times *functionalism*, *instrumentalism*, *constructivism*, and other currents emerged and developed. The works of scholars such as Ernest Gellner (*Natsii i Natsionalizm*. Moscow: Progress, 1991), Benedict Anderson (*Voobrazhaemye Soobshestva*. Moscow: Kuchkovo pole, 2016), Anthony D. Smith (*Natsionalizm i Modernizm*. Moscow: Praksis, 2004), Eric Hobsbawm (*Natsii I Natsionalizm s 1780*. St. Petersburg: Aleteiya, 1998), Geoffrey Hosking (*Rossiya: Narod i Imperiya*. Smolensk: Rusich, 2001), Miroslav Hroch (*Ot Natsionalnih Dvizheniy*... Moscow: Praksis, 2002), and others played a pivotal role in shaping modernist postmodernist approaches to the nation during the 1970s and 1980s. Thanks to the contribution of these authors, the dominance of the "primordial theory of the nation" was ended [2, p. 11].

Unlike the primordialists, the modernists see the "nation" as a historical or political phenomenon. According to the Czech historian M. Hroch, "nation" is an invention of the industrial era that emerged due to the strengthening of the state institution and the development of capitalism [3, p. 122]. British philosopher and anthropologist E. Gellner believes that "nations are the product of human beliefs, passions and tendencies. Ordinary groups of people (for example, the inhabitants of a certain territory or the speakers of a certain language) become a nation when the members of that group recognize the common rights and obligations of each other within the group of which they are members. No other extraneous quality that distinguishes this group from others, it is this mutual recognition that makes them a nation" [4, p. 35].

A. Smith, professor of the London School of Economics, proposes defining the "nation" primarily through the characteristic features that emerged during the era of nationalism. In his view, the nation can be understood as a product of both popular will and cultural tradition only when these specific historical conditions of the nationalist period are taken into account [5, p. 66].

The American scholar B. Anderson views "nation" as an imaginary community. He notes that "for even the members of the smallest nation will never know, meet, or even hear of the majority of the nation to which they belong. In everyone's mind, only the ideas about their own community will live" [6, p. 47].

The Russian ethnologist V.Tishkov, based on the "zero version" of the problem, rejects the idea that the "nation" is an ethnic unity and tries to explain the problem in the context of the "nation-state" [7, p. 3].

Mammad Amin Rasulzadeh, one of the founders and ideologues of the Azerbaijan People's Republic (ADR), notes that "... Peoples who have common languages, customs, homelands, etc. form a nation. However, the transformation of a nationality into a nation depends on the establishment of common consciousness and collective (human) will. And this comes into being only with the formation of the body that sees the task of 'public memory' ... from the viewpoint of nationality, 'Motherland' is a geographical concept. However, from the viewpoint of the nation, which has consciousness and will, 'Motherland' expresses a political meaning" [8, pp. 29–31]. From this quote, we can see that M.A. Rasulzadeh is a man of ideas with modernist views.

One of the most, if not the most, important attributes characterizing the phenomenon of "nation" is language. As the prominent ethnographer M. Magomedkhanov wrote, "Language is the bearer of the spirituality of the people, their historical and cultural experience... Language is also the soul of the people and lives as long as even one person speaks it. With the fall of language into oblivion, this soul turns into mythological concepts that completely disappear from the consciousness of the people due to assimilation" [9, p. 14].

We know that since the Middle Ages, the Azerbaijani language has played the role of a second mother tongue and a *lingua franca* not only for the peoples living in Azerbaijan, but also for all the peoples of the region, fulfilling a very important function as a communication, trade and literary language. There is enough evidence of this in written sources and literature. For example, the German traveler Adam Olearius, who visited Shamakhy in the 1630s, noted that the entire population here, including the khan himself, spoke the Turkish (Azerbaijani) language [10, p. 959].

The prominent Russian poet M.Lermontov, who was in exile in the Caucasus, writes "...I have begun to learn Tatar [Azerbaijani].[1] As important as it is to know French in Europe, it is just as necessary to know this language here [in the Caucasus] and in Asia in general" [11, pp. 523–524].

According to E.G. Weidenbaum, who traveled to the Caucasus in the 1880s, "the Azerbaijani Turks, often called 'Azerbaijani Tatars', constitute the main part of the population of Eastern Transcaucasia ... Its simplicity and ease of comprehension have made the Azerbaijani language an international language for the entire Eastern Transcaucasia" [12, p. 120].

August von Haxthausen wrote that "Armenians compose their songs not in Armenian, but in Tatar [Azerbaijani], since this language is the language of communication, trade and mutual intercourse between peoples in the south of the Caucasus. In this respect, it can be compared with French in Europe" [13, p. 52].

The prominent researcher of the life and culture of the peoples of the Caucasus, ethnographer G. Sergeyeva, notes that, "due to the critical importance of mastering the Azerbaijani language, mountaineers traditionally sent their children at an early age to live with Tatar [Azerbaijani] families. Proficiency in Tatar [Azerbaijani] had become one of the essential conditions for survival and success among the mountaineers" [14, p. 92].

The well-known ethnographer M. Magomedkhanov writes that "the Azerbaijani language was so widespread among the neighboring Tabasaran people that in some cases it even supplanted and eliminated their native language" [9, p. 42].

Similar ideas appear in the works of other Caucasian scholars as well [15; 16; 17]. From this perspective, the nineteenth-century Azerbaijani intelligentsia's attempts to establish a national press, alongside their struggle to preserve the purity of the Azerbaijani language by purging foreign elements and enriching its vocabulary, can likewise be interpreted as a concerted effort to forge and assert national identity.

It should also be noted that global processes such as democratization, economic integration, informational and cultural standardization currently prevalent all over the world are accompanied by profound transformations in national identity and, in effect, the errosion or "blurring" of cultural boundaries between nations. In particular, in Western Europe and North America, national identity is increasingly viewed and framed as a "problem that impedes progress," a phenomenon widely described in the scholarly literature as a "crisis of national identity."

1 Hereinafter, all material enclosed in square brackets constitutes the author's additions to the original text.

From the history of national identity search in Azerbaijan

In contemoprary scholarship, the forms of the transformation process of an ethnos into a nation are classified as centralization, unification, and national building. The first of these forms – centralization – was characteristic of European states such as Great Britain, France, Spain, and Portugal, where the main carrier of the process was the existing state apparatus. The unification model of nation-formation – achieved through wars and diplomatic efforts led predominantly by military elites and diplomats (as seen most clearly in the German and Italian cases) – was especially prevalent among peoples whose territories already possessed a high degree of cultural distinctiveness, above all in Central and Eastern Europe. The ethnologist A. Balayev, who argued that nation-building in nineteenth-century Azerbaijan, a colonial territory of the Russian Empire, took a form particularly suited to its socio-political and cultural conditions, observed that "in such cases, it is not statesmen or military leaders who come to the forefront, but active agitators – writers, poets, journalists, and the like – who devote their energies to studying the language, culture, social structure, and historical traits of the non-dominant group and strive to embed this knowledge in the consciousness of their compatriots." [2, pp. 134–135].

From this perspective, it becomes evident that, until the 1850s–1860s, Azerbaijanis possessed no well-defined conception of their ancestry, national identity, or native language. Even though religious identity predominated over nascent national sentiment, their grasp of the Islamic faith they professed was limited, with the notion of "being Muslim" rarely extending beyond a formal adherence to Sharia prescriptions. The brilliant composer Uzeyir Hajibeyli vividly captured this complex situation in one of his satirical feuilletons:

"... If you ask a non-Muslim Arab, 'Who are you?', he will reply: 'I am an Arab, my religion is Christianity, and my language is Arabic.' Ask a Persian the same question and he will answer: 'I am a Persian; my religion is Islam, and my language is Persian.' The same holds for a Russian, an Armenian, and so forth. But ask one of us: 'Who are you?' The answer will simply be: 'I am a Muslim.'

– What nationality are you?

– From the Muslim nation.

– What is your religion?

– From the Muslim religion.

– What language do you speak?

– Muslim language.

However, he is Turkish, his religion is Islam, and his language is Turkish. There is no Muslim nation, there is no Muslim language, and Muslim means a person who has adopted the religion of Islam. Religion and language are diferent things. Religion is different, nationality is different. There is no language in religion, and there is no nationality in religion" [18, 140–143].

Paradoxically, a similar situation prevailed not only among ordinary people but also in relatively educated families that produced prominent Turkic intellectuals and men of letters, such as Ahmet bey Ağaoğlu. In one of his autobiographical works, Ağaoğlu recounts the following about his father: "...My father lived a quiet life and died quietly. He was a deeply religious man. When asked 'Who are you?', he would reply: 'Thank God, I am a Muslim. I follow Imam Ali; my father was Mirza Ibrahim, and his father was Hasan Agha of the Qurdeli clan.' Yet it never occurred to him that he was a Turk" [19, p. 64].

In our view, one of the primary reasons for this bitter reality – and perhaps the most fundamental – was the weakness, or even absence, of secular education. For centuries, religious prejudices had branded secular learning as "unnecessary" and virtually "forbidden," causing the overwhelming majority of Muslim Azerbaijanis to remain alienated from it. As a result, ignorance, intellectual stagnation, and unquestioning obedience became, with only rare exceptions, the entrenched "traditional way of life" for a nation that possessed far greater potential.

In the nineteenth century, the situation was further aggravated by the fact that education – one of the primary vehicles for fostering national identity – fell under strict oversight by the tsarist government. The Russian Empire pursued an explicit policy of Russification and Christianisation in its national peripheries, and all educational matters were now shaped and "resolved" in accordance with these imperial objectives. This approach was bluntly articulated by D. A. Tolstoy, Minister of Education in the 1870s: "The ultimate goal of

educating all non-Russians inhabiting our fatherland must unquestionably be their Russification and fusion with the Russian people" [20, p. 23].

The renowned Russian orientalist, missionary, and educator N. I. Ilminsky, who advocated that non-Russian peoples should be taught in their native languages by native-speaking teachers, yet always in the spirit of Russian and Christian enlightenment, wrote: "A fanatical Tatar who has received no Russian education and does not know the Russian language is preferable to a civilised Tatar who has been educated in Russian. An aristocrat is worse still; a university graduate is even worse" [21, p. 175].

We think that these ideas, which so vividly expose the true nature of tsarist educational policy, require no further commentary.

When examining the ethnocultural landscape of nineteenth-century Azerbaijan, the figure of Mirza Fatali Akhundzadeh (1812–1878) cannot be overlooked. His literary and educational activities in the 1850s and 1860s, his struggle for a new alphabet, his open and sharp stance against religious fanaticism and ignorance, and his pivotal role in establishing a national theatre all represent the earliest embryonic stages of the quest for Azerbaijani national identity. It is true that some researchers demonstrate a slightly different position, based on the fact that the mentioned directions of Akhundzadeh's activity were not national-ideological, but only cultural in nature, which also causes certain disagreements around the problem in question. For example, the famous Tatar thinker Y. Akchura, who was one of the main figures of the Turkism ideology, admitted that M.F. Akhundzadeh had rendered great services to Turkism with his comedies written in Azerbaijani language and in European style, his selfless struggle for a new alphabet, and his participation in the creation of the first professional theater in the Turkic world; however, he sees him not a Turkist, but as a person striving towards the Turkist ideal. Y. Akchura observes that "... Yet I possess no substantial information concerning Mirza's [M.F. Akhundzadeh] ideas or discussions regarding Turkish nationalism. We know that he concerned himself with history, philosophy, and political science and that he published a philosophical treatise titled *Haqq al-Yaqin*. However, none of my sources reveal what positions Mirza took in that work" [22, pp. 32–33].

As the prominent Turkish literary scholar Yavuz Akpınar observes, "the revolutionary thinker [M.F. Akhundzadeh] has no real concept of 'nation.' He regards all Muslims as a single people. For him, there is no difference between an Iranian, an Azerbaijani, or a Turk. He appears either not to know, or not to care, that Anatolian Turks and Azerbaijani Turks share the same lineage. It is inconceivable that someone who spends his life as a translator of *Elsine-i Selase* would be ignorant of this fact. The more plausible explanation is that he considered it unimportant and therefore never raised the issue of 'nation'" [23, p. 54].

Unlike them, Ziya Goyalp, one of the greatest figures of political Turkism, recognizes M.F. Akhundzadeh as a genuine Turkist and highly values his contribution: "When Abdülhamid was attempting to halt this holy trend [Turkism] in Turkey, two great Turkists were emerging in Russia. The first of them is Mirza Fatali Akhundov, whose original comedies written in Azeri Turkish have been translated into all European languages. The second is Ismail Gasprinski [Ismail Gaspirali], who published the newspaper *Terjuman* in Crimea; his motto regarding Turkism was 'unity in language, thought, and action.' The *Terjuman* was read by Eastern, Western, and Northern Turks alike. The existence of this newspaper was living proof that all Turks were united in the same language" [24, pp. 6–7].

The reasons for the emergence of such disagreements vary. It appears that the political and cultural milieu of Tiflis, Akhundzadeh's position within the imperial administration, and the Tsarist regime's hostility toward both Turkism and Turks in general prevented him from openly expressing his national sentiments. Perhaps for these reasons, Akhundzadeh has traditionally been recognized and studied within academic and social spheres not as a Turkist or nationalist, but rather as an educator, writer, and philosopher.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, the formation of a new type of Azerbaijani culture, encompassing education, literature, and the press, marked the beginning of the search for national identity, acting, so to speak, as its "prelude." The organizer and driving force of this process, however strange it may seem, was the Azerbaijani intelligentsia, educated in Russia and Europe. This class had been created by the Russian government specifically to facilitate the colonial administration of the region. As the Russian historian and sociologist D. Furman observed, "the Azerbaijani intelligentsia, who assimilated the liberal values and ideas of European society through Russian culture, ultimately went far beyond the framework intended for them by colonial Russia" [25, p. 6].

Nevertheless, to formulate a definitive opinion on this topic, we find it necessary to re-examine the life and work of M.F. Akhundzadeh from a different perspective, aiming to uncover and study aspects of his

activity that may have remained obscured until now. Currently, the origin of the search for national identity in Azerbaijan is traditionally traced to 1875, marked by the publication of *Ekinchi* and the establishment of the national press.

National identity search and press

Thus, in 1875, the renowned intellectual and enlightener Hasan Bey Zardabi – along with his newspaper *Ekinchi*, and later publications such as *Ziya*, *Keshkul*, and *Kaspi* – achieved significant progress within the existing socio-political conditions. By disseminating ideas of enlightenment, they played a key role in helping the population, particularly Azerbaijanis, recognize their national identity and rights. *Ekinchi* laid the foundation for this enlightenment movement by regularly addressing critical issues such as alphabet, schooling, and general education. It provided a platform for these topics and urged the nation's leading figures and the national bourgeoisie to address them.[2] The very name of the newspaper, *Ekinchi* (The Ploughman), reflects the immense challenges Zardabi faced within the restrictive socio-cultural environment of Tsarist censorship. Zardabi described the strategy behind the name following a meeting with D.S. Staroselski, the military governor of Baku: "After I told him [Staroselski] about my problem, he advised me to name the newspaper *Ekinchi*. In other words, let it appear that only agriculture would be discussed in order to pass censorship. In this way, I submitted an application and received permission."[3]

Through *Ekinchi*, our great intellectual addressed young Azerbaijanis who had studied in Russia and Europe but chose not to return to their homeland, preferring instead to work abroad for a better life. He implored them to serve their people and nation, writing emotionally: "Oh, you young people who are studying the sciences! It is true that it is difficult to get along with our countrymen; they do not understand what you are talking about, they will consider your work inconsistent with Sharia, and will hurt you by calling you a *kafir*... Do not be greedy for worldly pleasures, but encourage your brothers to do good deeds. Let the poets mock you, the mullahs curse you, and the public cast stones at you. Work hard for the nation, and in the future, when the nation's eyes are opened, they will consider you martyrs and pray for you."[4]

However, the pages of *Ekinchi* sometimes included articles with socio-political content that criticized the difficult socio-economic situation, the illegal actions of Tsarist officials, and the colonial policies pursued by the Empire in the national borderlands. In order to divert the attention of the censors from such risky initiatives that were incompatible with the obligations undertaken by the newspaper, H. Zardabi employed veiled expressions and phrases whenever appropriate, and conveyed his ideas to the reader by changing time and place. For example, in the regular "Fresh News" section of the newspaper, one could often find articles with the following content: "The *Turkustan* newspaper writes that there were nomadic Kyrgyz under the rule of the Khogand [Kokand] Khanate; after Russia conquered Khogand, they settled in the Alay Mountains. Now that they have started a fight with Russia under the leadership of Abdullah Bey, General Skoblev has gone to disperse them. They say that Russia will also conquer the Alay Mountains." Or, "The *Kavgaz* newspaper writes that a community established to Christianize non-tribes in the Caucasus converted 450 people from Abkhazia and Ossetia to Christianity last year."[5]

A significant portion of *Ekinchi* was dedicated to promoting a new type of culture, encompassing fiction, art, language, pedagogy, textbooks, translation, book publishing, and library. In almost all issues of the newspaper, in order to raise the cultural level of the people, educate them and make their time meaningful, the newspaper advocated for the production of books in the mother tongue. It also called for foreign works to be translated into the native language and distributed to the population free of charge.[6]

H.b. Zardabi, who argued that literature, including oral folk traditions, should serve the unity and progress of the nation, lamented that some indigenous songs and examples of musical folklore were meaningless, and being far removed from these ideals. He noted: "Every tribe has songs that comment on the bad and good days of the nation's past; these songs are heard, and the nation becomes united. But those who hear our songs

2 *Əkinçi*, September 20, 1875, № 5
3 Azərbaycan Milli EA, M.Füzuli adına Əlyazmaları İnstifutu. H.Zərdabi arxivi, inv. l03, vərəq l
4 *Əkinçi*, June 11, 1876, № 11
5 *Əkinçi*, October 8, 1876, № 19
6 *Əkinçi*, March 29, 1876, № 6

must wonder who made them and why. Most of them, which the ignorant call for, have no meaning at all." The author sought to justify this concern with concrete and vivid examples.[7]

H.b. Zardabi viewed internal divisions among Muslims, particularly sectarian conflicts, as the primary obstacles hindering development and the strengthening of national consciousness and national unity. He wrote: "Half of the Muslims living in the Caucasus are Shia, and half are Sunni. Shias are tired of Sunnis, Sunnis are tired of Shias. No one listens to each other. How can the union be formed?!"[8]

It is worth noting that when dedicating space to such writings, H.b. Zardabi often cited examples from the lives of other peoples who, despite the oppression they suffered, retained their national and religious identities. He wrote with a sense of envy regarding nations that always strove for unity and development; in doing so, he effectively illuminated the path of progress and the future for his own people.[9]

Regrettably, due to the articles and opinions published in *Ekinchi*, reactionary circles – especially fanatical religious figures – launched harsh attacks against the newspaper and its founder, H.b. Zardabi. They threatened to kill him and angrily called him "godless" and "*urus* in a hat" [26, p. 293].

As a consequence of these mounting pressures and periodic warnings from Tsarist censors, *Ekinchi* ceased publication in 1877. Instead, on January 14, 1879, a new native-language publication emerged within the ethno-cultural landscape of Azerbaijan: the newspaper *Ziya* (renamed *Ziyayi-Qafgasiya* in December 1880), founded by the Unsuzadeh brothers, Said and Jalaladdin. Unlike *Ekinchi*, *Ziya's* ambiguous editorial stance often sparked discussion and controversy regarding the content it published. For instance, the publisher, S. Unsuzadeh, opposed alphabet reform initiatives, arguing that it was incorrect to attribute ignorance and backwardness to the complexity of the Arabic script. Noting that China and Japan had achieved progress without altering their writing systems, he suggested that the true solution lay in simplifying education and training methods rather than changing the alphabet [27, p. 721].

For this reason, both at that time and in later periods, allegations arose that he collaborated with the Tsarist authorities. For example, according to A. Zeynalzade, a researcher of Azerbaijani press history and the censorship activities of the Tsarist regime, "the censorship records allow us to conclude that the attitude of the Caucasian Censorship Committee toward the newspaper *Ziya (Ziyayi-Qafgasiya*) was moderate. The main reason for this was the fact that the editor belonged to the ecclesiastical class, was close to the Viceroy's administration, and the ideology he promoted in the newspaper was compatible with Tsarist policy" [28, p. 174].

Yusif Akchura emphasized that the Unsuzadeh brothers served the cause of Islam more than that of nationalism. Describing them not as proponents of Turkism, but of Islamic unity, which was more relevant at that time, he noted that their connection to Turkish nationalism was limited strictly to the fact that they printed the works of Ismayil bey Gaspirali in their printing house [22, pp. 47–48].

According to the well-known educator Omar Faig Nemanzadeh, Said Unsizadeh was constantly ridiculed, insulted and attacked by the public because of his overly liberal outlook. Yet, along with authors with a religious outlook in the newspapers *Ziya* and *Ziyayi-Qafgasiya*, bright intellectuals such as Hasan bey Zardabi, Seyyid Azim Shirvani, Najaf bey Vezirov, Jalal Unsuzadeh, S. Velibeyov, Adolf Berje, A.O. Chernyayevski and M. Shahtakhtli also wrote papers.[10]

Ziyayi-Qafgasiya operated for about five years before "closing" in June 1884 due to "economic difficulties" and a "lack of financial resources." However, prior to this, another publication belonging to Unsizadeh Press – the magazine *Keshkul* – had started to operate in Tiflis in January 1883. Issues such as the promotion of the ideas of national identity, criticism of the hypocritical clergy who exploited the common people under the guise of religion, the most important events in the world and the attitude of the Russian tsarism to those events[11] were more widely and fully reflected in this magazine. As noted by ethnologist A. Balayev, "*Keshkul* can be considered a pioneer in the search for national identity due to the wide scope of this type of writing on its pages" [2, p. 159].

7 *Əkinçi*, September 1, 1877, № 18
8 *Əkinçi*, January 18, 1877, № 16
9 *Əkinçi*, August 23, 1976, № 16
10 Azərbaycan Milli EA, M.Füzuli adına Əlyazmaları İnstitutu. Ö.F.Nemanzadə arxivi, N 4-5
11 Gürcüstan Respublikası MDTA, f.480, siyahı 1, iş 730, vərəq 2

Keshkul continued as a newspaper starting March 22, 1884, after publishing 12 issues as a magazine. It attempted to clarify such issues that prevented Azerbaijanis from realizing their national identity – why they are called "Tatars", the reasons that impede the development of national consciousness and national language, the difference between the concepts of "ummat" and "nation", etc.

For instance, in an 1891 issue, the newspaper published a short interview addressing the national identity of Azerbaijani Turks. The interview highlighted the fact that some Azerbaijanis do not even know the name of their country, repeatedly stating, "I am from Bijan." This confusion, combined with the difficulty of self-identifying as an "Azerbaijani Turk," "Azerbaijani," or "Ottoman Turk," stands as a vivid illustration of the ethno-cultural situation in the country at that time.[12]

However, it is well known within the scientific community that J. Unsuzadeh referred to the language of the population as both "Azerbaijani" and "Turkish" in a series of articles published in the newspaper, and in 1891, he even applied to the General Press Affairs Department in Tiflis for permission to publish a newspaper titled *Azerbaijan*. Indeed, the fact that *Keshkul* was subjected to harsher persecution by the Tsarist regime, and that many of its issues were confiscated at the request of the censors, was a direct result of such articles. It is no coincidence that during its publication, the paper often featured announcements stating that, "For reasons beyond our control, *Keshkul* was not published on time" [29, p. 178]. The presence of numerous uncensored or confiscated copies of *Keshkul* in the State Historical Archive of the Republic of Georgia serves as clear proof of this interference.

Finally, in November 1891, the publication of *Keshkul*, which had been in print for nearly ten years, ceased permanently. From that point until the beginning of the 20th century, no newspapers or magazines were permitted to be published in the Azerbaijani language. The prominent literary critic F. Kocherli noted with a heavy hearth that ten years had passed since "the last newspaper, *Keshkul*, was published, and during this period we were left without a newspaper."[13]

It is true that even after the closure of *Keshkul*, many national intellectuals attempted to publish newspapers in the Azerbaijani language. However, each time these attempts were hindered under various pretexts by the Head Department of Press Affairs of tsarist Russia and censorship. The response of M.P. Solovyov, Chief of the Main Administration for Press Affairs (1896–1899), to the prominent educator M. Shahtakhtinsky regarding his 1897 request to publish the newspaper *Tiflis* in Azerbaijani, is particularly telling: "I cannot give permission to publish a newspaper in the Tatar language. If you want, I will let you publish a newspaper in Russian. Let the Tatars take your example and learn Russian. You speak Russian very well... Why do people need newspapers? Let the intellectuals study in Russian, and let the ordinary Tatars [Azerbaijani] go and graze their flocks."[14]

M.P. Solovyov's official reply to M. Shahtakhtinsky read as follows: "The rapprochement of non-Russians and peoples of other faiths is possible only through the spread of education, and the instrument of this must be the Russian language. Otherwise, the establishment of an all-Muslim periodical press will not only fail to bring Muslims closer to Russian citizens, but will actually alienate them." [29, p. 12].

The lack of objectivity and sincerity in this opinion is evident from the fact that, at that time, countless newspapers and magazines were published in the languages of non-Turkish and non-Muslim peoples within the Russian Empire – including Georgian and Armenian – and that schools and educational institutions were operating in these languages. Consequently, it requires no further proof to demonstrate that the Tsarist policy of persecution, prohibition, and discrimination was selectively applied to Turkish-Muslim peoples.

During the years when *Ziya* (*Ziyayi-Qafgasiya*) was in circulation, specifically in 1881, another publication, the Russian-language newspaper *Kaspi*, began operations in Baku. Reportedly, Viktor Kuzmin, the newspaper's first editor and publisher, intended to print an Azerbaijani-language supplement to *Kaspi* titled *Chirag*, but the Caucasian Censorship Committee, as expected, denied the request.[15]

The newspaper's primary focus was on culture, education, and enlightenment. Prominent intellectuals of the time, including M. Mahmudbeyov, N. Narimanov, M.T. Sidqi, M. Shahtakhtinski, H.b. Zardabi, T. Bayramelibeyov, A. Mahmudbeyov, A. Agaoglu, N. Minasazov, E. Sultanov, R. Melikov, F. Kocherli, M. Mahmudbeyov, N. Nezirov, S.M. Ganizadeh, J. Hajibeyli, U. Hajibeyli, N. Vezirov and others frequently contributed articles to its pages. At the same time, specific issues of the publication featured serious writings on

12 *Kəşkül*, 1891, № 22
13 Şərqi-rus, 1903, May 9, № 17
14 Gürcüstan Respublikası MDTA, f.480, siyahı l, iş l358, vərəq 3
15 Gürcüstan Respublikası MDTA, f. 480, siyahı 1, iş 418, vərəq 3

topics such as women's freedom and rights, Islam's attitude toward education and science, alphabet reform, and the status of Muslims within the empire. During A.M. Topchubashov's tenure as editor of *Kaspi* (1898–1907), the publication of articles addressing national relations and national issues became an established tradition [30, pp. 57–62]. In this context, Muhammad Agha Shahtakhtinsky's article, "How to Call Transcaucasian Muslims?", published in an 1891 issue of the newspaper, is particularly noteworthy. He emphasized that the so-called "Muslim" population of the Transcaucasus region was, in terms of ethnic origin and language, neither Tatar nor Persian, but Turkic. He argued: "In everyday usage, it is inconvenient to express the name of the nation and its language with two words: for example, Azerbaijani Turkish or Aderbeidjani Turkish. Therefore, it would be appropriate to call Transcaucasian Muslims 'Azerbaijanis,' and the Transcaucasian Turkic language the 'Azerbaijani language' rather than the 'Tatar language'."[16]

Conclusion

Thus, based on the discussion above, we can trace the initial search for national identity and the awakening of national consciousness in Azerbaijan to the 1870s, coinciding with the establishment of the national press. However, since these efforts were not widespread and remained somewhat individual in nature, their immediate impact was limited. As A.Balayev noted, *"*H.b. Zardabi's views, as well as the coverage of national identity issues on the pages of the newspapers such as *Keshkul* and *Kaspi* during the 1890s, could not become a common and mass trend. This was because these views were not shared by the general populace, but rather by only a small fraction of the intelligentsia*"* [2, p. 179].

One of the main reasons for this was undoubtedly the weakness of secular education, or perhaps its absence. For centuries, the religious superstition promoted secular education as "unnecessary" and almost "haram" (forbidden by shariat/prohibited), which led to the vast majority of Azerbaijanis shun from school and education. Publicity, ignorance, unquestioning obedience to injustice and slavery had almost become the "traditional way of life" of a great nation. On the other hand, the situation was aggravated by the fact that education was under the control of Russian tsarism, which considered national awakening in the Muslim peripheries a "serious threat" to the empire.

Moreover, until roughly the 1880s, the Islamic religion and a pervasive Muslim worldview continued to constitute the primary basis for self-identification in colonial Azerbaijan. The prevailing belief was that Islam rejected the division of Muslims based on national characteristics, even viewing such distinctions as a "great sin." As researchers have noted, "Muslim doctrine recognizes not a national, but only a unified Islamic religion – the idea of the unity and brotherhood of all Muslims worldwide, regardless of nationality. Thus, in Islam, the concepts of 'religion' and 'nation' hold practically the same content and meaning." [31, p. 5].

However, towards the end of the 19th century, we witness that discussions on "Turkishness," "Azerbaijaniness," and "Muslimness" took on a broader scale. As the renowned Turkish historian Refik Turan noted, "despite the absolute dominance of those who accepted the idea of *Ummah* (unity of the Muslim community/coreligionist) in the middle of the century, we can say that towards the end of the century, the idea of 'Turkism' had gained greater acceptance among Azerbaijanis." [32, p. 434]. Ali Bey Huseynzadeh (1864–1940), Ahmed Bey Agaoglu, Alimardan Bey Topchubashov, and others – who would become known as the founders of political Turkism not only in Azerbaijan but throughout the entire Turkic world – made unparalleled contributions to this cause. Although their ideas crystallized into a formal ideology in the early 20th century, the first seeds began to srpout at the end of the 19th century. Thus, by the end of the century, A. Huseynzadeh was writing poems under the pseudonym "A. Turani," glorifying Turanism and Turkism. Similarly, after meeting the renowned sociologist Ernest Renan and the famous pan-Islamist J. Afghani in France, A. Agaoglu's views shifted significantly toward Turkism. Beginning in 1898, Alimardan Bey Topchubashov – as publisher and editor-in-chief of the Russian-language newspaper *Kaspi*, owned by the great philanthropist Haji Zeynalabdin Taghiyev – made significant contributions to the awakening of national identity. It was thanks to their efforts, alongside the emergence of national publications in the early 20th century such as *Shargi-Rus* (1903–1905), *Hummet* (1904–1905), *Heyat* (1905–1906), and *Fuyuzat* (1906–1907), that the concepts of Azerbaijanism, Turkism, and Turanism became the leading political ideologies defining the ethnic and socio-cultural landscape of Azerbaijan.

16 *Kaspi* (newspaper), 1891, № 93

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Research paper

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THE PROCESS OF SHAPING NEW URBAN CULTURE IN LENINAKAN DURING THE EARLY SOVIET PERIOD

Abstract. In the USSR, an entity largely isolated from the global sphere due to its distinctive formation and evolution as a multinational yet cohesive state, unique processes, unparalleled in their scope and vigor, unfolded, which outlined the novel paths for traditional cultural development. These dynamics manifested in different ways across rural and urban settlements, shaped by emergent political, ideological, socioeconomic, and cultural imperatives. Within the Armenian context, such transformations manifested most vividly and idiosyncratically in Leninakan, propelling the city by mid-century to become a major industrial hub not only in Soviet Armenia but across the broader USSR. This article aims to delineate the principal factors that profoundly shaped the city's emergent cultural complex, while demonstrating the interplay between Alexandropol's entrenched urban traditions and the evolving Soviet ethos of Leninakan, reflected in every facet of civic life. Although the traditional culture of Alexandropol has received considerable scholarly attention and documentation, the multifaceted cultural milieu of Soviet Leninakan demands deeper, more detailed approach, which constitutes the core ambition of this study. Employing historical, ethnographic, and ethnocultural methodologies, the research centers on comparative analysis framed within a systemic paradigm. The contemporary periodical press was widely used as a reliable source for studying the dynamics of historical and cultural processes and transformations. Particular attention was paid to the analysis of previously unpublished archival materials.

Keywords: Leninakan; tradition; sovietization; socialist ideology; industrialization; immigration; new urban culture

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Исследовательская статья

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ПРОЦЕСС ФОРМИРОВАНИЯ НОВОЙ ГОРОДСКОЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ В РАННЕСОВЕТСКОМ ЛЕНИНАКАНЕ

Аннотация. В почти изолированном от внешнего мира СССР, в силу специфики его становления и развития как многонационального, но при этом единого государства, происходили уникальные по содержанию и интенсивности процессы, которые определили особенные пути развития традиционной культуры. Они проявлялись по-разному в сельской и городской местностях, в зависимости от новых политико-идеологических, социально-экономических и культурных требований. В армянской действительности эти трансформации наиболее интересными и своеобразными способами отразились в Ленинакане, в результате чего уже в середине XX века город стал одним из важных промышленных центров не только Советской Армении, но и СССР. Цель данной статьи заключается в выявлении ключевых факторов, оказавших значительное влияние на формирование нового культурного комплекса города, а также в представлении взаимосвязи традиционной культуры Александрополя и культуры Советского Ленинакана, которые проявлялись во всех сферах повседневной жизни горожан. Если традиционная городская культура Александрополя в целом изучена и опубликована, то культурный комплекс советского Ленинакана, требует более глубокого и всестороннего изучения, что и является основной задачей данной работы. Исследование было проведено с использованием методологии историко-этнографических и этнокультурных исследований. В качестве основного метода применялся сравнительный анализ, который использовался в рамках системного подхода. Широко использовалась периодическая пресса того времени как надежный источник для изучения динамики исторических и культурных процессов и трансформаций. Особое внимание было уделено анализу ранее неопубликованных архивных материалов.

Ключевые слова: Ленинакан; традиция; советизация; социалистическая идеология; индустриализация; иммиграция; новая городская культура

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Modern Gyumri is a city in Armenia with a unique identity, the foundation and development of which are presented in numerous and diverse sources, both scientific and popular literature. Initially built as a city of strategic importance with a clear urban planning layout, it has continuously expanded and changed under the influence of various demographic, economic, cultural, and political factors.

Gyumri – Leninakan, the second-largest city in Armenia, was founded in 1837 by Nicholas I under the name Alexandropol. Its inhabitants were immigrants from the Western Armenian cities of Kars, Karin, and Bayazet. By the late 19th century, the city had become an importan t military-strategic center of the region and was considered the third most significant trade, craft, and cultural center of the South Caucasus, after Tiflis and Baku.

Local (Eastern and Western Armenian), Russian, and numerous Western European cultural traditions coexisted successfully, influencing urban planning, craftsmanship, and trade, but most notably shaping the social and humanitarian aspects of city life.

As a district center, Alexandropol assumed not only administrative and managerial functions but also served as an economic and cultural hub for surrounding settlements. The transformation of any settlement into an administrative center is clearly reflected in the socio-psychological and behavioral aspects of its population's value system. Many ethnocultural phenomena characteristic of Alexandropol are unique and result from the urbanization processes that took place there in the 19th and early 20th centuries [1].

The life of Alexandropol changed significantly after the establishment of Soviet rule in Armenia and the transition to a new state economic system. The city, known for its strong craft traditions, underwent a major restructuring, affecting not only its population but also its main occupations, economic and social relations, and overall way of life [2].

In 1924, it was named Leninakan in honor of Lenin, and after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it was renamed Gyumri in 1992. In terms of urban culture, the city is distinctly characterized by three historical developmental phases, each reflected in one of the three names given to it. Thus, a number of characteristic economic, cultural, and spatial-structural features of urban organization emerge in each period, which reflect both the state's policy approaches and the degree of participation of the urban population in these processes.

This article discusses the processes from the 1920s to the 1940s that had a significant impact on the formation of a new urban culture in Leninakan.

The establishment of Soviet Rule in Armenia in 1920 and the transition to a new state-run economic system brought significant changes to the life of Alexandropol, and, since 1924, to the life of Leninakan. In a city that had previously developed artisan traditions, major shifts began to occur, resulting in changes not only in the composition of the population and their primary occupations but also in economic and social relations, which in turn influenced other aspects of daily life. Archival materials and publications from the time contain rich information about these transitional, turbulent years, offering a chance to reconstruct the process of Alexandropol's shift from a traditional urban culture to the new, industrial, Soviet Leninakan.

Several books were written and published about Leninakan during the Soviet years, which, in line with the demands of socialist ideology, aimed to present its progress by contrasting it with pre-Soviet Alexandropol [2-6]. These works detailed the changes that occurred during the Soviet period, covering the city's industrial development, urban planning, and housing construction, efforts to improve the population's well-being, and cultural life. H. Gabrielyan only briefly addressed the ethnographic description of the people of Leninakan in the subsection "Lifestyle and Customs" in his book [6, pp. 21–33].

The sole study addressing this topic is K. Seghbosyan's work, which, grounded in extensive ethnological research, examines and elucidates the artisan traditions of Alexandropol and their embodiment in the everyday lives of Leninakan's residents [7]. With rich ethnographic, factual, and historical materials, this study remains unmatched to this day, despite the application of Soviet methodology and the adherence to socialist ideology in its presentation. The author, while thoroughly presenting the preservation of artisan traditions in Leninakan's reality, only briefly discusses the processes that form the foundation of the new circumstances and relationships.

This article aims to clarify this very issue and has been carried out using the methodology of historical-ethnography and ethno-cultural research. Various forms of comparative analysis have served as the primary method, employed within a systematic framework. In addition to relevant literature, the study places particular emphasis on periodical press materials of the time, considering them as reliable sources for examining the

dynamics of historical and cultural processes and transformations. Special attention is given to the analysis of previously unpublished archival materials.

Since the topic is vast, it is merely a brief analysis of the deep and multifaceted changes that had a significant impact on the formation of Leninakan's new urban culture. This was influenced by a number of factors, of which we highlighted the following:

The change in the composition of the population;

The new economic policy and the process of industrialization;

The policy aimed at eradication of illiteracy and promoting gender equality;

The spread of socialist ideology.

The change in the composition of the population

The culture of any city is shaped by, and best represented by its population. The changes in the population's composition inevitably led to changes in the city's character, creating the social environment in which the urban population forms and establishes its own patterns.

World War I and the Turkish invasions of 1918 and 1920 had disastrous consequences for the demographic picture of Alexandropol. The composition of the population changed significantly; the city lost its young, capable workforce, and both emigration to Tbilisi and the immigration of Western Armenians, including thousands of orphans, became widespread. According to the data from the 1897 All-Russian Census, the population of Alexandropol was 30,316 people, 95% of whom were Armenians [1, p. 13]. After the mentioned events, between 1914–1926, the population decreased by 10,410 people, or 19.7% respectively [8, pp. 126].

In 1920, 20,000 orphans were placed in the "Polygon," "Cossack Post," and "Severskyi" military units of the American Committee for Armenian Relief. The American government aimed to relocate the best students to the USA. The first group of orphans was relocated in 1922, but this process was halted later at the request of Alexander Myasnikyan, effectively stopping the relocation of children. To this day, it is unknown how many orphans were sent to the USA.

Notably, compared to 1920, the number of orphans decreased by 14,999, or by a factor of 3.6. On January 1, 1927, there were 5,501 orphans in the American Committee's orphanages in Leninakan, and by the following year, the number had decreased to 3,125 [9, pp. 5–6].

During World War I, Armenians who had fled from Sarighamish, Kaghzvan, Ardahan, Ardvin, and Batumi settled in Alexandropol. By the end of 1914, about 2,400 people had settled in the city. In the early months of 1915, another 360 Armenians from various parts of Western Armenia settled in the city [10, p. 66]. As a result of the Turkish invasions in 1918 and 1920, thousands of residents from the Kars region and the city of Kars arrived in Alexandropol.

Since 1921, Armenian repatriates from Constantinople, the Balkans, and the Near East joined the emigrants, and the issues of their settlement and accommodation were nearly insurmountable due to Armenia's harsh socio-economic conditions. By the end of 1921, a significant portion of the 3,000 Armenians who had fled from the countries of the Near East were settled in Alexandropol. In 1924–1925, more than 3,000 Armenians who had emigrated from Constantinople, the Near East, and Greece settled in Yerevan and Leninakan [8, p. 67].

In Leninakan, the refugees settled in the area near the railway station and in the "Barracks" neighborhood that had been established after the 1926 earthquake. By 1928, the local economic division's inventory records showed that more than half of the 400 residents of the Barracks were Armenian refugees who had immigrated from Kars, the Kars region, and Sivas. The remaining residents of the neighborhood came from various villages of the Leninakan region.

It is important to note that as a result of the repatriation that began in 1926–1927, three groups were formed in the city: those who had emigrated from Western Armenia after the 1915 genocide, known as the "refugees"; the diaspora Armenians, or "People of Constantinople"; and the native Armenians, or "locals" [9, p. 67].

The next stage of immigration spans from 1933 to 1936, during which about 73,300 people immigrated to the country. While the exact number of people who settled in Leninakan during these years is unknown, ethnographic sources suggest that the majority of the immigrants were French Armenians, with some also coming from the Balkans. These repatriates, joining the already established sub-ethnic group, were called

the "French" (as they were also referred to in Yerevan) and "newcomers," in contrast to the previous phase of repatriates.

The establishment of Soviet Rule had a generally positive impact on stabilizing the demographic situation of Alexandropol–Leninakan and promoting the subsequent growth of the population. This growth was mainly due to the immigration and repatriation of the rural population, which indicates that the opportunities for settlement and employment in Leninakan were greater compared to other regions of the republic. Among the repatriates, there was a significant number of artisans. Those who immigrated from France and Constantinople were predominantly intellectuals and skilled craftsmen. Many of them settled in the city center, while the outskirts were populated by rural immigrants from Syria, Iraq, and Iran, who needed land for agricultural work.

Between 1922 and 1931, the population of Leninakan was also supplemented by foreigners: Russians and Ukrainians (6,613), Turks (316), Kurds and Yazidis (146), and others (967) [8, pp. 128–129].

Alexandropol was a city with a traditional artisan-trade economy, and, according to the 1901 statistical data, its population was divided into the following classes: "The wealthy class consisted of the prominent families of the city, landowners, moneylenders, contractors, political service officers, doctors, and lawyers, if available. Among the wealthier group were the retailers, small textile owners, butchers owning their own shops and houses, and officers in military service."

The middle class encompassed craftsmen, large rural families, and civil servants earning an annual income of 300–400 rubles. Most priests also fell into this category. The lower class, by contrast, included owners of secondary crafts, lower-ranking civil servants, members of the working class, able-bodied men who were currently unemployed, and widows with adult children. It further comprised elderly individuals without descendants, the blind, the crippled, and the disabled who subsisted on public charity, as well as widows with young children.

According to 1901 statistical data, there were 127 rich families, 363 wealthy individuals, 1,448 middle-class individuals, 1,431 lower-class individuals, and 61 very poor persons. These figures underscore that the overwhelming majority of the population comprised craftsmen and low-ranking civil servants [11, pp. 261–263].

By 1920, as a result of the aforementioned processes, the number of wealthy and affluent people in the city had drastically decreased, while the number of poor people – including immigrants and orphans – had increased. The previously established class, socio-economic, and professional structure of the city had changed, and the main social classes of the population had been transformed.

Thus, the population of Alexandropol was clearly distinguished not only by ethnic and sub-ethnic affiliations but also by religious denominations and even occupations. This was reflected in the territorial division of the city (e.g., Russian, Sloboda, Greek, Catholic, Turkish, etc.).[1]

The migration processes mentioned above had a profound impact on the city's new culture, population behavior, ritual systems, and overall ethno-cultural environment. The identity of any city is best shaped and expressed by its population. The changes in the population's composition, therefore, inevitably led to changes in the city's character, while the other two factors – industrial development and social-professional composition – shaped the social environment in which the urban population forms and establishes its own patterns.

The new economic policy and the process of industrialization

The processes initiated in Leninakan, aimed at fostering new political, economic, and socio-cultural relations while promoting a socialist way of life, were carried out under difficult conditions resulting from the Turkish invasions of 1918 and 1920. The reconstruction and economic transformation of the city began in 1921, spearheaded by the newly established Executive Committee of the City Soviet. Their mission was not only to revive a broken and dormant economy but to rebuild it on a foundation of socialist ideals.

The first significant step in economic policy was the nationalization of private enterprises. Pre-Soviet Alexandropol had no large factories but was home to several small enterprises, including Dzitoghtsyans' and

1 *K. Kostanyan*. Gyumri and its cities. Archives of Museum of Literature and Art, Fund of K. Kostanyan. 22 page, p. 5.

Tzaghikyan's breweries, Tzatourian's soap factory, Heqimyan's mechanical enterprise, and a few printing houses. Archival records reveal that most of these were destroyed during the First World War, with much of their equipment looted. Among them, only Tzaghikyan's factory was partially spared. During the years of the First Republic, the original owners made no attempts to reclaim or restore their properties, and the government neglected these enterprises.

In 1922, the Leninakan Executive Committee initiated efforts to restore these businesses. By 1924, these enterprises had been placed under state accounting, albeit on an experimental basis. A final decision on the structure and management of trade and industrial enterprises came in 1925 after thorough deliberation. These enterprises were subsequently consolidated under the Trade and Industrial Department, later known as Arard. Before this restructuring, in 1924–1925, all enterprises managed by the Leninakan Executive Committee were placed under state accounting and consolidated into the Communal Trust.[2]

In 1927, the following factories and production enterprises operated under Industrial Trade, as reported by the *Banvor* newspaper:

Soap Factory: 12 workers, 3 employees; soap production of various qualities.

Tile Factory (Tomet Factory): 12 workers, 2 employees; tile manufacturing, mosaic works, bricks, concrete pipes, and various concrete products.

Brewery: 17 workers, 3 employees, 5 seasonal workers; "Table," "Export", and "Soft" beer production, which were consumed not only in Yerevan but throughout the country and also exported to Georgia.

Mechanical Factory: 47 workers, 4 employees; unable to produce independently but operated a main foundry (copper and cast iron) and focused on repairing local construction and agricultural machinery.

Printing House: 23 workers, 3 employees; printed the *Banvor* newspaper and handled orders for the State Publishing House and local institutions.

Electric Plant: 17 workers, 4 employees.

Brick and Tile Factory: under construction in Jajur.

Store: construction materials, with 5 employees.[3]

Under the New Economic Policy in the country, in addition to state enterprises, small private factories also operated. These were documented in the "Research of Small Industrial and Handicraft Economic Enterprises of the Rural Areas of Leninakan Regions in 1927." Among the listed artisans, the following were noted: one power station, one automobile workshop, two workshops for winnowing machines, one slaughterhouse, one tile factory, three lemonade factories, four bakeries, one musical instrument factory, two sausage factories, one brick factory, four olive presses, two water mills.[4]

The remaining industrial activity in the city was concentrated in workshops, which by 1923 numbered 270. These private workshops employed 521 people, while a large group of artisans who did not have their own workshops and consequently became unemployed. To provide work for these individuals, between 1925 and 1932, 16 artisan cooperatives were established under the cooperative policy. These cooperatives specialized in various crafts, including tailoring, shoemaking, horseshoe and nail making, cotton weaving, carpet weaving, metalworking, woodworking, construction materials, and more [2, p. 61].

The *Banvor* newspaper wrote about this in 1928 under the headline "Handicraft Collectives in Leninakan"[5]:

"To combat unemployment, with the support of the public administrative agency of Labor Commissariat resources, 8 collectives were opened and are operating in Leninakan, involving 149 previously unemployed artisans. The organized collectives fulfill orders more cheaply than private artisans and deliver higher quality and more timely work."

The organization of work for the unemployed was managed by the Labor Exchange, which placed advertisements in the Banvor newspaper, inviting specialists to present themselves. There was significant demand not only for artisans but also for employees and specialists in the service sector.[6]

As early as 1924, a textile factory was established in the city, rapidly emerging as one of the USSR's leading textile enterprises. In December 1927, the Soviet industrialization drive was formally launched; by 1928, Leninakan's hydroelectric station had opened to supply power for anticipated industrial facilities. This was

2 The National Archives of Armenia (henceforth NAA). F. 131, inv. 6, file 21, p. 11.
3 *Banvor* (Worker) Daily newspaper. 1927, 50(513); 1928, 126(691).
4 NAA, F. 131, inv. 7, file 120, p. 38.
5 *Banvor*, 1928, 119(683).
6 *Banvor*, 1929, 55(759).

followed by the establishment of several key factories: the fabric factory in 1930, the meat-preserving factory in 1934, and the bread factory (bakery) in 1936.

These developments marked significant progress in Leninakan's industrial sector. As a result, the working class became the dominant group within the population. For example, while in 1913 there were 560 workers in the city, by 1923, the number had increased to 2,593 [2, p. 54]. By 1930, 2,044 workers were employed at the Textile factory, and by 1935 [12, p.13], the Meat factory employed 1,200 workers [6, p. 15].

As noted at the time, "through socialist labor, life in the city has changed, the relationships among socialist classes have transformed, and petty trading has been overcome and destroyed. With the development of industry, the city itself has been improved and transformed" [6, p. 19].

The city had only just initiated its efforts toward improvement and reconstruction when the earthquake of October 22, 1926, devastated a substantial portion of Leninakan. Paradoxically, this catastrophe also had a major impact on the strategic planning for the city's development and the forging of its new identity. A few days after the earthquake, a slogan for the construction of the new city was proclaimed: "From the ruins of the old, medieval Alek-Pol,[7] a strong, industrial Leninakan must be built."[8]

Efforts to eliminate the consequences of the earthquake continued into the 1930s. Through the combined efforts of local, republican, and union authorities, the city's industrial potential and housing stock were restored. During this period, no t only were the destroyed industries rebuilt, but new ones were also established.

Additionally, the railway and station were restored and modernized, and a new water pipeline was constructed to provide the city with drinking water. New neighborhoods were founded, such as those around the textile factory, railway, and meat factory. Initially, these neighborhoods featured wooden or stone temporary buildings, widely known among the population as "barracks."

These neighborhoods were primarily populated by graduates of the Faculty of Philology and the Professional Technical School (PTU, known in Leninakan by the Russian abbreviation FZU). The majority of the residents were former orphans from Leninakan's orphanages and workers who had moved to the city from various rural villages in the region.

Each settlement had its own cultural house, medical center, club, bathhouse, and other facilities. Over the course of one and a half decades, Leninakan gradually transformed from a traditional artisan and trade city into a major industrial center within the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic.

In the 1930s, the State Architectural Workshop No. 3, led by architect M. Mazmanyan, developed a new urban plan for Leninakan. The city's construction continued according to this design until the 1940s. Between 1926 and 1940, the state invested significant funds into the city's reconstruction. This effort not only restored Leninakan but also revitalized, expanded, and transformed it [13, p. 141].

After sovietization, both the city's population and the nature of its occupations changed. Industrial enterprises replaced artisan workshops and craft businesses. From 1926 to 1939, Leninakan saw consistent growth in its economy, employment, and population, influenced in part by the socio-economic policies introduced by Soviet authorities.

One of the key aspects of these policies was aimed at eradicating illiteracy, promoting gender equality, and spreading socialist ideology. The Soviet authorities considered the "cultural uplift of the people" essential for ensuring the success of socialism. They believed that the creation of the new system could only be achieved through education. To this end, they focused on two main objectives: organizing school education for children and eradicating illiteracy among adults. The overarching goal of these efforts was "to raise the cultural level of the masses and educate them in the communist spirit." The eradication of illiteracy was viewed as a vital precondition for enabling the working-class population to actively participate in the political and cultural life of the republic.

The decision to eradicate illiteracy was adopted by the Armenian government in September 1921. Teachers, educated citizens, cultural-educational organizations, publishing houses, and especially the press were mobilized for this effort. As a result, illiteracy was completely eradicated in Leninakan by the 1930s.

Clubs, libraries, museums, and the press – particularly the *Banvor* newspaper – closely tied to factories and plants, played a significant role in spreading socialist ideology. This ideology emphasized the establishment of gender equality, the elevation of women's role, and their involvement in public and state life. To achieve these

7 Alek-Pol is a shortened version of the name Alexandropol.
8 *Banvor*, November 7, 1926.

goals, the Soviet state created the system of "women's departments," which functioned as executive bodies tasked with promoting gender equality and protecting women's rights [14, pp. 122–125].

The liberation of women was a complex process fraught with obstacles. For the people of Leninakan, who had grown up with traditional family and social values and had lived with gender stereotypes, women's work outside the home was considered dishonorable.[9] Public participation and a free lifestyle for women were not only discouraged but often forbidden, leading to conflicts both between spouses and between parents and children. The press frequently published literary and real-life stories criticizing and ridiculing such attitudes.

One notable example is an accusatory statement published in the Worker of Armenia magazine:

"Your Honor,

I got married five years ago. True, I have tried to adjust to my new life. I have always been a man of honor, enduring it, thinking maybe she'll respect her parents and feel ashamed. But as time goes on, things are only getting worse – she's going completely off track.

Now she's decided that I should learn typewriting so I can go out and work. How can I let my wife work while I stay home? What kind of man would that make me? I think her attitude is absolutely disgraceful. God forbid I let the reins go too far – she needs to be reined in. She's shortening her skirts up to her knees, baring her arms up to her elbows. Am I the head of this household or not?

No, if I get mad, I'll trample her like a rag, strike her, crush her – and who knows, something might happen. Then they'll take me and send me to Siberia. No, I'm also a man with such capabilities, and I'm asking you to annul our marriage before any misfortune occurs, before my reputation is destroyed. I haven't lost my head.

Your humble servant, Gevorg of Soloyans."[10]

Despite the population's conservatism and resistance, life began to follow its own course, shaped by the more liberated and unconstrained lifestyles of former orphans and Russians who had settled in the city. One of the most striking manifestations of this shift was the establishment of the first women's gymnastics groups, which were opened along the railway line. As described in contemporary accounts, "still living a patriarchal life, women stand next to men, demonstrating unique courage and achieving their first sports successes."

Since 1924, the industrial construction boom in Leninakan became a catalyst for invigorating and enriching the city's sports life. Sports facilities were established at the Textile factory, the "Khorartzar" club, and the Builders' club. By the eve of the 1926 earthquake, Leninakan boasted 390 athletes, including 50 women. According to statistics of the time, Leninakan ranked first in both the republic and the Caucasus in the number of female athletes [15, p. 416].

In 1937, with the adoption of the new Constitution of the Armenian SSR, it was officially declared: "Women have equal rights with men in all areas of political, economic, and cultural life." [16, p. 469]

The opportunity to exercise these rights was ensured through equal employment, remuneration, leisure, social security, and education systems for women. Additionally, the state provided care for mothers and children, support for large families and single mothers, and other forms of assistance. This policy significantly changed societal attitudes toward women.

In constructing a new socialist way of life, the spread of anti-religious and anti-church ideology was given significant importance. The main targets of the state's anti-religious policies were traditional Armenian religious holidays and rituals. Naturally, this persecution was primarily directed against churches and clergy, resulting in the closing of churches, the destruction of church property, and the execution or exile of clergymen. The Union of Fighting Atheists spearheaded many anti-religious efforts, including publishing the magazine *Atheist*.

In Shirak, anti-religious propaganda was actively promoted by the *Banvor* newspaper, which regularly published articles and satirical pieces condemning and mocking priests. At the same time, it promoted new socialist family rituals through stories praising socialist principles. These rituals were given titles such as "Red Baptism," "Red Betrothal," and "Burial Without a Priest."

In the absence of churches, state bodies established "Red Corners" at schools, libraries, and clubs to organize the population's ritual and cultural life. These "Red Corners" hosted lectures, speeches, educational programs, and celebratory events, all aimed at spreading socialist ideology.

9 See our research on gender stereotypes: https://doi.org/10.37708/bf.swu.v33i1.13

10 *Hayastani Ashkhatavoruhi* (Armenian Woman Worker) Magazine. 1928, 4, p. 18.

These cultural institutions, established during the first decades of the Soviet Union, were tasked with addressing political and socio-cultural goals. They focused on eradicating illiteracy, promoting and rooting new Soviet norms in society, and shaping new spiritual and cultural practices, among other objectives.

In addition to constructing typical buildings, it became common practice to transform religious structures into culture houses and museums. This was often seen as the best way to save churches from destruction. Transforming a church into a culture house also carried an ideological message of "recycling." A church, traditionally a spiritual and religious gathering place, served to unite various segments of the community, fostering communication and the formation of shared values and ideas. When repurposed as a culture house, the building continued to fulfill these functions, albeit with a completely different ideological content [17, p. 176–178].

With this purpose in mind, in 1930, the Shirak Regional Museum (later the Philharmonic) was established in the Church of St. Amenaprkich (Holy Savior) in Leninakan, and a planetarium was set up in the Church of St. Nicholas [18, pp. 451, 476].

These processes brought about significant changes in Leninakan's social life, resulting in a conflict between those adhering to old ways of life and those embracing new Soviet norms. This tension was largely resolved during the Second World War. The contradictory atmosphere in Leninakan during the 1920s and 1930s is vividly described in the magazine *Anastvats* (Atheist):

"Whoever says that Gyumri is a single, united city, don't believe them. The people of Gyumri and Leninakan differ from each other as much as the Chinese differ from the Germans. These two have nothing in common. One calls the other vulgar, ragged, "Tsarist times", foul-mouthed; the others retort, 'You are godless, against Christ; that's why earthquakes keep happening and destroying the city.'

The people of Leninakan clearly differ from the people of Gyumri. Today, they have abandoned all the heritage of their ancestors – God, religion, church services, Satan, priest, angel, saint, and Gospel – creating and building a new home, and live there.

The Bolsheviks, Komsomols (The All-Union Leninist Young Communist League), women's organizations, pioneers – all come from Leninakan. It is a Soviet city; it values education and a new way of life, attends clubs and reading halls, reads newspapers and the Atheist magazine instead of the Gospel. It builds factories, brings in electricity, establishes kolkhozes (collective farms), and constructs socialism.

Meanwhile, the people of Gyumri go to church Yot Verk (Seven Wounds), pray, give thanks to Saint Karapet (John the Baptist), and make offerings. The people of Leninakan hold meetings and talk about a new lifestyle, construction, industrialization, and the third loan, the men of Gyumri drink vodka, and the women visit each other's homes."[11]

Conclusion

The aforementioned processes brought about profound transformations in the everyday life and activities of the people of Leninakan. In particular:

Population Growth: A significant increase in population occurred due to both internal and external migration.

Ethnic Composition: The ethnic makeup of the urban population changed considerably, including shifts in sub-ethnic and other ethnic groups.

Social Class Structure: The class structure evolved, with the emergence of workers, service providers, and intellectuals, fundamentally different from the population of pre-Soviet Alexandropol.

Gender Relations: Gender roles underwent profound changes. Although difficult, traditional stereotypes about social roles, status, and the division of labor were gradually broken.

Communal Living: Multi-apartment residential buildings introduced a new way of life, along with changes in interior decoration, clothing, cuisine, and other cultural elements.

Education and Ideology: The policy of compulsory education, combined with the spread of socialist ideology and anti-religious propaganda, reshaped the population's worldview.

11 *Anastvats* (Atheist) Magazine. 1929, 9, pp. 18–19.

Cultural Institutions: To satisfy the spiritual needs of Leninakan's people, "Red Corners," clubs, libraries, and later culture houses and palaces were established in all state institutions. These venues replaced churches and served both educational and recreational purposes.

Between 1920 and 1940, on the foundation of Alexandropol's traditional artisan and commercial culture, a new Soviet socialist culture emerged in Leninakan. This culture was carried forward by newcomers who had settled in the city. Unburdened by the conservatism of the native people of Gyumri (as the Alexandropol residents came to call themselves after Sovietization), these newcomers quickly embraced economic and socio-cultural changes, adapted to the new circumstances, and became the bearers and propagators of the socialist way of life.

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Research paper

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MODERN LIFE-CYCLE RITUALS OF THE RUSSIANS OF THE KIZLYAR REGION: TRADITION AND INNOVATION

Abstract. The article explores the traditional and contemporary life-cycle rites of ethnic Russians in the Kizlyar region of Dagestan. It employs general scientific and specialized historical and ethnological methods, supplemented by ethnographic fieldwork conducted in villages across the Kizlyar and Tarumovsky districts. These rites were significantly reshaped by globalization and the sociocultural shifts that occurred between the second half of the 1980s and the first quarter of the 21st century. Initially, some of these processes detrimentally affected the economic activities and family life of ethnic Russians in Dagestan, resulting in a decline in their overall standard of living. However, the subsequent economic stabilization of the 2000s positively impacted both their economic and family spheres. This stabilization particularly fostered the widespread expansion of the wedding industry, which, in turn, led to a shortening of the duration and stages of the wedding ceremony and the loss of some traditional elements. Furthermore, Christianity has exerted a profound influence on these life-cycle rites, an influence evident across all their constituent elements. The influence of globalization is evident in several contemporary practices, such as the use of digital devices and social media for young men and women to meet, the increasingly common organization of professional photo sessions during the wedding procession, and the growing popularity of the "Tooth Fairy" ritual associated with the loss of a child's first tooth. Despite these global influences, traditional Slavic rituals remain integral to the family and everyday life-cycle rites of Russians in the Kizlyar region. These traditions are evident in the structured stages and specific content of the wedding ceremony, the composition of its participants, and in measures dedicated to preserving the life and health of both mother and child. Furthermore, a significant layer of beliefs and customs, including remnants of oneiromancy (divination by dreams) and ancestor worship, persists. A study of the life-cycle rituals among Dagestan's rural Russian population thus reveals the successful preservation of a substantial portion of their traditional culture. This enduring heritage plays a crucial role in maintaining their ethnic, national, cultural, and religious identity in the face of widespread globalization.

Keywords: Dagestan Russians; Kizlyar region; life-cycle rituals; sociocultural processes; globalization.

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Исследовательская статья

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СОВРЕМЕННЫЕ ОБРЯДЫ ЖИЗНЕННОГО ЦИКЛА РУССКИХ КИЗЛЯРЩИНЫ: ТРАДИЦИИ И ИННОВАЦИИ

Аннотация. В статье на основе общенаучных и специальных исторических и этнологических методов, а также собранного в селениях Кизлярского и Тарумовского районов Дагестана полевого этнографического материала, исследуются традиционные и современные обряды жизненного цикла у русских Кизлярщины. Большое влияние на них оказали глобализация и социокультурные процессы второй половины 80-х гг. XX в. – первой четверти XXI в. Некоторые из этих процессов негативно отразились на хозяйственных занятиях и семейном быте русских Дагестана и привели к падению их жизненного уровня. Стабилизация экономической жизни в 2000-е гг. благотворно отразилась на хозяйстве и семейном быте дагестанских русских. Она, в частности, привела к широкому распространению свадебной индустрии, что отразилось на сокращении сроков и этапов свадебного обряда, утере некоторых его традиционных элементов. Большое влияние на обряды жизненного цикла оказала христианская религия, которая ощущается во всех его элементах. Влияние глобализации ощущается в способах знакомства части юношей и девушек через гаджеты в социальных сетях, организации фотосессии по пути следования свадебного кортежа к месту свадьбы, популярности сказочного персонажа Зубная фея в связанных с выпадением первого молочного зуба обрядах. Несмотря на влияние глобализации, в семейно-бытовых обрядах русских Кизлярщины сохранились традиционные славянские ритуалы, которые проявляются в этапах и содержании свадебного обряда, составе его участников; в мерах, направленных на сохранение жизни и здоровья матери и её ребёнка; в остатках значительного пласта связанных с онейромантией и культом предков верованиях и обычаях. Изучение обрядов жизненного цикла сельского русского населения Дагестана показало, что они сумели сберечь значительный пласт своей традиционной культуры, что представляется важным в сохранении их этнической, национальной, культурной и религиозной идентичности в эпоху глобализации.

Ключевые слова: русские Дагестана; Кизлярщина; обряды жизненного цикла; социокультурные процессы; глобализация

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Introduction

Life-cycle rituals constitute a complex of rituals and customs associated with the pivotal moments of birth, marriage, and death. They have been variously interpreted by scholars: V. Turner famously termed them "life-changing" rites, as they accompany "turning-point" events that fundamentally alter an individual's established order of existence [1, p. 233]. S.A. Madyukova classified them as "transitional rites" [2, p. 117], while Mircea Eliade viewed them as an "initiation into a new sociocultural space" [3, p. 115].

The primary purpose of this article is to describe the traditional and emergent elements present in the contemporary family and everyday rituals of Russians in the Kizlyar region. The objective of this study is to examine the transformative influence of several factors on the elements of these rituals in the Kizlyar Russian ethnic contact zone. The chronological framework of this study mainly covers the late Soviet period and the modern era, though some contextual excursions into the pre-revolutionary period are also included.

The traditional family and everyday rituals of Dagestani Russians have previously been a subject of study by Russian ethnologists specializing in the Caucasus, notably M.Sh. Rizakhanova [4, pp. 91–123] and S.A. Luguev and M.Kh. Mansurov [5, pp. 548–552]. This current work builds upon that foundation, also drawing on our previous contribution to the study of the modern family and everyday rituals of Dagestan's urban Russian population [6, pp. 232–252].

It should be noted that a comprehensive study utilizing historical and ethnological methods to examine modern life-cycle rituals among ethnic Russians in the Kizlyar and Tarumovsky districts of Dagestan throughout the Soviet and modern periods has not yet been undertaken. Our present, smaller-scale study aims to fill this specific gap, which constitutes its scientific novelty.

This article is fundamentally based on ethnographic fieldwork gathered during the summers of 2023 and 2024. The fieldwork was conducted in the following villages: Alexandria, Averyanovka, Kardonovka, and Krasny Vostok in the Kizlyar district, and Talovka, Kalinovka, Koktyubey, and Novo-Georgievka in the Tarumovsky district of Dagestan. This gathered fieldwork is being introduced into scientific circulation for the first time.

The methodology employed in writing this article integrated general scientific and specialized methods of history and ethnology. The specific historical methods applied include:

Comparative-Historical Method: This allowed for the comparison of common and specific features between the traditional and emergent life-cycle rites of the Kizlyar region Russians, helping to identify the changes that have occurred and the dynamics of subsequent developments.

Historical-Genetic Method: This facilitated the establishment of cause-and-effect relationships underlying the transformations of elements within Russian family life throughout its historical development.

Historical-Systemic Method: This was used to study the life-cycle rites of Dagestani Russians – both past and present – as a holistic historical system. This was achieved by relating them to the family and everyday rites of the main Russian ethnic group (genesis) and those of the local lowland and mountain populations (morphology).

Retrospective Method: This enabled a focused examination of the history of Slavic family rituals to determine the reasons for the preservation or eventual loss of specific customs and rites.

Ethnological Method: field research, including both participant and detached observation, cross-cultural analysis, the study of relics, and the use of surveys and interviews with respondents.

The research materials generated by this study may prove useful to professionals in the ministries and departments of the Republic of Dagestan for implementing republican and federal programs focused on developing the traditional ethnic culture of Russians in Dagestan. Furthermore, these findings can serve as a resource for writing monographs and articles on the modern history and ethnography of Dagestani Russians.

Wedding rituals

Wedding rituals stand as one of the most persistent components of family life, serving as a reflection of traditions shaped across diverse historical eras [7, p. 10]. A wedding ceremony is not merely a single ritual act but a comprehensive complex of customs and rites performed by the family and kinship groups of the bride and groom upon their marriage [8, p. 36].

The establishment of a marital relationship begins with the meeting of young men and women, which, if successful, provides the foundation for starting a family. During the Soviet period, these initial meetings typically occurred at dances in social clubs, or through relationships forged during school, university studies, or professional internships.

In recent decades, however, while meetings still happen during studies at university or at work, an increasing number of young people connect through digital devices and social media.

When it comes to partner selection, Russian young men often prioritize marrying girls from their own village. This preference is encapsulated in a local saying, recorded in Talovka village: "In your own village, you'll get a half-fool; in a foreign village, you'll get a complete fool." Similar proverbs existed among other Dagestani Russians, such as: "You don't drink water off the wife's face — she just needs to know how to bake pies." [9, p. 198].

Young men and women intending to marry were traditionally expected to possess certain desirable qualities. A woman was valued for being beautiful, modest, hardworking, and respectful of her elders. A man was expected to have housing, a higher education, a profession, or a stable job, and crucially, the ability to support a family.

Marriage ages show some variation across villages: in the village of Averyanovka, men generally marry after the age of 25, and women between 21 and 23. In the village of Koktyubey, men marry earlier, at 20-24, and women at 19-21. In the village of Krasny Voskhod, men tend to marry between 26 and 30, and women at 20-22.

Historically and currently, interethnic marriages remain common in the villages of the Kizlyar and Tarumovsky districts.

If the initial meeting is successful and the match is approved by the respective family councils, the two parties begin preparations for the matchmaking and the wedding ceremony.

The traditional Russian wedding ritual in Dagestan historically consisted of a complex series of elements: betrothal, matchmaking (*svatovstvo*), the bride-viewing, the handshake (*rukobitie*), the week, the bathhouse ritual, the morning rites of the wedding day, the meeting of the wedding train (procession), the wedding celebration itself, the post-wedding rites at the groom's house, and the ritual actions of the second day [4, pp. 91–104]. Many of these elements, however, were lost during the Soviet and modern eras.

Pre-wedding ceremonies among the Russians of the Kizlyar region traditionally begin with matchmaking. Once a young man's choice of bride has been approved by his family council, his close relatives begin preparations for the matchmaking visit.

At the chosen girl's parents' home, the matchmakers are received and offered treats. The matchmakers formally state the purpose of their visit. The girl's parents then inquire about her desire to marry the young man. If she consents, the matchmakers and the girl's parents agree upon a tentative wedding date.

In the village of Alexandria, the young man, accompanied by his father, mother, and godparents, visits the girl's home. They carry with them a *karavai* placed on an embroidered towel, along with wine and sweets. Upon entering, they announce their intentions to the girl's parents with a formulaic phrase: "Your rose has blossomed, we are looking for a heifer, and we have a calf. You have a dove, we have a male dove." The guests are then seated and treated to a feast. Following this, the young man and woman are placed side-by-side and asked to confirm their consent to the marriage. If both agree, and their respective parents also consent, the girl cuts the *karavai* into four pieces: the first piece to the groom's mother, the second to his father, and the remaining two pieces to her own parents. A ring is then put on the bride's finger. After the parents confirm the wedding date, both parties share the wine that the groom's family brought.

A week after the matchmaking, on Thursday, the bride's parents visited the groom's parents' home, a ritual known as "to the threshold" in Averyanovka village or "to the viewing" in Krasny Voskhod village. They brought gifts for the groom, and on this day, the two families finalized the wedding date and determined the number of guests to be invited.

On Saturday, the groom's family would visit the bride's home to collect her dowry. In the late Soviet era, a dowry typically included an antique chest, a wardrobe, a sideboard, a dressing table, a metal bedstead, a bedspread with lace frills (Krasny Voskhod), and sometimes even livestock like a heifer and piglets (Kalinovka). In the modern day, the dowry more commonly consists of dishes, furniture, and bedding.

The period between matchmaking and the wedding could last from several months to a full year. Russians traditionally hold weddings in late summer or early autumn. In the past, there was a strong preference for marrying on Krasnaya Gorka – the first Sunday after Easter – which was believed to guarantee a happy family

life. Among the Eastern Slavs, this day was considered a "maiden's holiday," a time when grooms chose brides, matchmaking occurred, and weddings were celebrated [10, p. 223].

Following the pre-wedding ceremonies, the families begin their preparations for the wedding itself. Over the last thirty years, a typical Russian wedding in the region hosts between 50 and 150 guests. This represents an increase from the Soviet era, where, as in the village of Alexandria, the number was typically up to 50. Today, wealthy families, such as those in Novo-Georgievka, may invite up to 300 guests. In the village of Krasny Voskhod, however, the scale has remained consistent, with weddings historically and currently hosting between 150 and 200 guests.

Until the early 1990s, it was customary for both the bride and groom to hold separate bachelor and bachelorette parties on the eve of the wedding. Today, in some villages like Alexandria, only the bachelorette party, known as *vechorki*, continues to be observed at the bride's home.

For the wedding ceremony, the groom attire consists of a dark suit, a white shirt, and black shoes. He is accompanied by a best man, who is often distinguished by a flower in his buttonhole. The bride traditionally wears a wreath made of artificial wax flowers, with a veil attached to it. A dedicated wedding dress is purchased for the occasion and is afterward preserved in the home of the newlyweds.

On the morning of the wedding day, a cortege of prestigious foreign cars gathers at the groom's house. During the Soviet era and into the 1990s, the bride was typically collected in a Volga car adorned with balloons and colorful ribbons, often featuring a doll on the hood. Until the early 1990s, in the villages of Talovka and Novo-Georgievka, horse-drawn carriages were used, accompanied by village youth and an accordion player.

In the village of Averyanovka, a significant ritual occurs before the bride is given to the groom and his retinue. Her parents bless her with "bread and salt" and an icon. During this blessing, the bride kneels on a sheepskin coat that has been spread on the floor, turned wool-side out – a symbol of abundance among the Caucasian peoples [11, pp. 58–59].

For the past two decades, it has become customary for the bride and groom to take photographs at various locations along the procession route. For example, in the village of Kalinovka, newlyweds take souvenir photos in the Kizlyar city park, as well as in the village of Razdolye and at the 17th junction in Nikolaevka, known for its beautiful grove and alleys.

In the village of Krasny Voskhod, the wedding procession circles the city of Kizlyar with horns blaring, stopping for photo sessions at key sites. These include the city square near the Lenin monument and the park featuring the P.I. Bagration memorial and the monument to General V.Ya. Levashov.

Upon the arrival of the newlyweds' procession at the groom's parents' house, a bonfire is lit before the gate. In the village of Alexandria, the bride and groom are required to jump over this flame, a practice interpreted as a form of "ritual purification" [12, p. 336].

The groom's parents greet the couple at the gate, holding an embroidered towel with a *karavai* ("bread and salt") and an icon. After this welcome, the newlyweds are invited to the wedding feast. As they enter the wedding tent, they are showered with hops, rice, candy, and coins.

Historically, weddings spanned several days, often beginning on a Thursday ("a day dedicated to Perun" [13, pp. 47, 221], and concluding on Sunday. The official marriage registration at the registry office occurs either on the wedding day itself, as in Krasny Voskhod village, or the following day, as in Talovka village. The church wedding, or *venchanie*, is attended by the newlyweds, their friends, and witnesses. It is held on the second day of the festivities in Kalinovka village, or on a Saturday or Sunday in Krasny Voskhod village.

In the village of Koktyubey, the bride's parents blessed their daughter for marriage on a Friday, holding a *karavai* and an icon. The newlyweds then proceeded to the registry office to officially register their marriage. A feast known as "*na garnoy*" was held at the groom's house, during which a ritual of "breaking the chicken" took place, involving the consumption of boiled chicken. The guests drank wine and ate viburnum berries ("*zakusit kalinu*"), a practice intended to "reduce the bitterness in the relationship between the newlyweds." This ritual draws on the symbolism of the viburnum, an attribute of the Slavic goddess of love, beauty, and fertility, Lada [13, pp. 66–67]. Closer to midnight, the newlyweds departed for their wedding night. The following morning, the bride's wreath was ceremoniously removed and replaced with a headscarf, signifying her new status as a married woman.

A different sequence was observed in the village of Averyanovka, where the wedding celebration was held at the bride's house on Friday and at the groom's house on Saturday. On this second day, a ritual known as "looking for the heifer" took place. The bride's parents and matchmakers went to the groom's house, where

they were met by the groom's relatives, friends, and mummers ("gypsies"), or women and men swapping clothes. The groom's parents would hide the bride, and her parents had to search the entire house and yard for her. Upon finding their daughter, they asked, "Have you been treated well in this house?" Once she affirmed that she had, both families sat down to feast together. Afterwards, the entire party went to the "mother-in-law's for pancakes." At both the wedding and this subsequent gathering, guests shouted "Gorko!" and, after toasting the health and happiness of the newlyweds, would smash their glasses on the floor – a custom performed "for luck."

On Sunday, the tradition of "*na poklony*" ("for greetings") was observed. In the villages of Koktyubey and Novo-Georgievka, close relatives from both families gathered at the groom's house for a celebration accompanied by an accordion. It was customary to "let the festivities continue until morning." A fire of wood and dry reeds was lit in the groom's yard, and wedding guests jumped over it. The celebration concluded by dousing the fire with water (Koktyubey).

In Krasny Voskhod village, the wedding's first day was hosted at the groom's house. Guests presented the newlyweds with "*dary*" ("gifts") of money, dishes, and bed linens. Three obligatory toasts were made to the health of the couple. The celebration featured songs, ditties, and dancing to music from a tape recorder, accordion, and button accordion.

The morning after the wedding night involved a ritual verification of the bride's chastity. The matchmaker would ask the groom, "Is this your bride or someone else's? Should I tie red ribbons to the guests?" (Alexandria); "Was the bride honest?" (Krasny Voskhod). If the groom confirmed her virtue, the matchmaker, after the bride entered the main room, would smash a plate and a pumpkin on the floor. The bride would then kiss her mother-in-law, who would congratulate her and present her with an apron – a symbol that the bride was now the rightful mistress of the household (Alexandria). The ceremony concluded with the groom performing the ritual of "breaking the chicken." He tore the legs from a boiled chicken and presented them to his mother and mother-in-law, while giving the neck and head to his father and father-in-law. In Krasny Voskhod village, this act was accompanied by the groom thanking the bride's parents for her chastity.

On the second day of the wedding in Talovka, Kalinovka, and Novo-Georgievka, mummers – "bears" – would go "to look for a heifer" and subsequently "to the mother-in-law for pancakes." The mummers often pretended to be drunk (Novo-Georgievka). That same day, the village youth would steal and hide the bride and groom, seating the mummers in their place at the wedding table. To secure the couple's return, the youth would demand a ransom of drinks and snacks from the matchmakers and best men. After the ransom was paid, the bride and groom returned to the celebration, and the mummers were sent away (Novo-Georgievka).

On the second day of the wedding in Alexandria, the bride's relatives visited the groom's house, where they were received as guests and treated to a feast. Following this, a branch from a fruit tree – a symbolic analogue of the "world tree" [14, pp. 398–406] – was decorated with ribbons and sweets. The party then processed with this decorated branch through the entire village to the bride's house, where the festivities resumed. At the height of the celebration, a participant would proclaim, "The goose doesn't fit in the stove," signaling a collection of money for the purchase of the "goose." Everyone contributed to this collection, which was used to buy additional drinks and snacks.

In Koktyubey, the second day involved an evening visit to the mother-in-law's for the "first pancakes," followed by a return trip the next morning for the "second pancakes." The groom attended his "mother-in-law's pancakes" bearing a red apple, a symbol of fertility and eternal youth [15, p. 116]. At the bride's parents' home, the groom's party was received as guests and treated to a meal. While the groom's side sat at the table, the bride remained standing. The fare consisted of pancakes with honey, wine, and tea. After sampling the food, the guests departed.

In Alexandria, the third day of the wedding features the custom of "rinsing the spoons": wooden spoons tied with ribbons are dipped into a glass of wine and then passed around among the guests. The third day also involves a visit to the mother-in-law's, though the name of the event varies by locality. It is known as "for pancakes" in Kalinovka, "for pies" in Koktyubey, "to gather chickens" in Talovka, and "to catch chickens" in Krasny Voskhod. In Averyanovka and Kalinovka, the ritual is called "to shoot chickens." Here, mummers ("Gypsies"), accompanied by village youth and an accordion player, would wander through the village to catch chickens. These birds (symbols of fertility [16, p. 241]) were slaughtered, and the following day the bride used them to prepare a noodle soup.

Until 2016, weddings in Novo-Georgievka were held under tents in household courtyards or at the village community center. Tableware for the wedding feast was gathered from neighbors. Guests were seated at long

wooden tables on benches. A rug was affixed to the back of the newlyweds' chairs, featuring a cotton-wool inscription wishing "Happiness to the newlyweds!" alongside two crossed wedding rings.

It is noteworthy that until the 2000s, Russian weddings in the Kizlyar region featured mummers – women dressing as men and vice versa (*ritual transvestism*), as well as performers portraying "bears," "gypsies," and "drunks." In our view, the first two characters are the most archaic. The ritual of cross-dressing is also found among the mountain peoples of Dagestan, such as the Dargins-Tsudakhars [17, p. 15]. In world mythology, ritual transvestism symbolizes a "return to the original chaos," where wearing the clothing of the opposite sex signifies a symbolic return to the womb [18, p. 331]. The choice of the "bear" mask, representing an animal revered by the Slavs [19, pp. 128–130], is linked to fertility magic [20, p. 75; 21, p. 191]. Thus, the mummers at a wedding can be interpreted both as personifications of animals once revered and as priests of a fertility cult [22, p. 252].

For the past 10-12 years, weddings in the Kizlyar region have shifted to banquet halls, cafes, and restaurants in the city of Kizlyar and the village of Tarumovka. Where celebrations once lasted for several days, they are now often condensed into a single half-day. This compression of the wedding's timeline and the elimination of its distinct stages have stripped the occasion of its former unique charm and unbridled joy.

A professional, paid toastmaster is now typically hired to officiate the proceedings. This role was traditionally filled by a close, eloquent family friend. In Averyanovka and Krasny Voskhod, the groom's matchmaker once served as the toastmaster, whereas today a hired host commands a fee of approximately 10,000 rubles.

Musicians are now usually brought in from Kizlyar or the Armenian village of Karabagly. The instrumentation has also modernized; while musicians once played the Ionica polyphonic synthesizer, accordion, and drums, they now rely exclusively on electronic instruments.

Until the late 1990s, Russian weddings featured a repertoire of ritual, incantatory, praise, reproach, game, and lyrical songs, performed to the accompaniment of an accordion or bayan. This traditional music has been largely replaced by popular songs from contemporary Russian performers. The dances at weddings remain a mix of Russian folk dances, waltzes, tangos, lezginka, and shalakho.

If the last son in a family was marrying, signaling no further weddings were expected, a custom known as "driving a stake" was observed until the early 2000s in many Russian villages of the Kizlyar region. This ritual was referred to as "driving a wedge" in Koktyubey and "driving a chop" in Talovka. As the stake was driven into the ground before the house's gate, water or wine was poured over it, splashing the house and the parents. This act was performed with specific intentions: "to keep the marriage strong" and "to prevent return" (Averyanovka); "to keep the family strong" (Koktyubey); "to keep the young couple together" (Talovka); "to stay wherever you go" (Krasny Voskhod); and "to keep the chicks from returning to their nest" (Novo-Georgievka).

Until the early 1990s, another custom known as "tying stocks" was practiced. Women would tie up single men with stocks – two boards bound with a red ribbon – who would then have to pay a ransom in money or drinks to be released (Talovka, Koktyubey). In Alexandria, a variation of this practice occurs during Maslenitsa, where a piece of a board is attached to the newlyweds' clothing with a handkerchief. In return, the couple is expected to "set the table," providing drinks and treats.

Among the Kuban Cossacks, the practice of "tying the stocks" served as a form of public shaming for young men and women who had failed to marry within the past year [23, pp. 173–174]. S.A. Tokarev classified such customs of ridiculing unmarried individuals as erotic rituals, explaining them by the rural community's vested interest in increasing its population [24, p. 102].

Thus, a study of the wedding rituals of the Russians in the Kizlyar region reveals a complex fusion of traditional Slavic, Christian, and contemporary elements. Prior to the advent of the modern "wedding industry," these communities preserved the fundamental structure of a traditional Russian wedding, including its specific timing, sequential stages, participant roles, selection of traditional dishes and drinks, and its unique musical, song, and dance repertoire. The consistent presence of mummers is a key feature, with the ritual transvestism found among them – a practice also observed among the mountain peoples of Dagestan – being of particular note. Furthermore, the magic of fertility is clearly manifested in the numerous rituals and customs that accompany the wedding ceremony.

Numerous elements of rivalry between the bride's and groom's family groups, preserved during matchmaking and the wedding itself, are relics of ancient marriage forms and patterns of spousal locality.

The ritual donning of an apron or headscarf by the bride after the wedding night demonstrates, through these specific attributes, her change in status from a girl to a married woman and the new mistress of the household.

Among the newer elements of the Russian wedding is the practice of young people meeting through gadgets and social media. The rise in the age of marriage, compared to the Soviet period, is linked to evolving life attitudes, priorities, and perceptions of quality of life among modern youth. The composition of the dowry has become largely standardized, and the custom of holding photo sessions along the procession route to the wedding venue has emerged. In an era marked by the global transformation of family and marriage institutions, the value placed on the bride's chastity remains a significant attribute of family values for the Russians of the Kizlyar region.

Rites surrounding the birth of a child

Childbirth rites held significant importance within the life cycle rituals of the Russians of the Kizlyar region. The health of the expectant mother and her unborn child was a primary concern, governed by numerous taboos. A pregnant woman was forbidden from visiting a cemetery, as it was feared "the dead might harm her, causing a miscarriage and infertility" (Averyanovka, Talovka). She was prohibited from cutting or dyeing her hair, lest "the child be born with birthmarks and hairless" (Averyanovka). Other prohibitions included petting or kicking cats and dogs – "so the child would not be born with fur on its body" (Averyanovka, Krasny Voskhod) – and stealing knives or scissors, which was believed to cause the child to be "born circumcised" (Kalinovka). From pregnancy until a year after giving birth, women were forbidden to knit, sew, or cut anything on Sundays and church holidays, as "this could harm the child" (Koktyubey). If sewing was unavoidable, the woman had to hold the thread in her teeth "so as not to sew up the child's memory" (Krasny Voskhod).

Like other peoples of the North Caucasus, the Russians of Dagestan strongly desired the birth of a son, who was seen as the successor to the family line, the bearer of the family name, and a future helper to his father.

To celebrate the discharge of a newborn and mother from the maternity hospital, a celebration is held known as "*na kopytki*" (Alexandria, Averyanovka) or "*obmyvat kopytki*" (Krasny Voskhod, Kalinovka). The event is attended by close relatives, neighbors, and family friends, who present the child with gifts such as money, toys, and baby clothes. The stroller and crib are traditionally given by the baby's grandmothers.

Soon after the child's arrival home, a naming ceremony is conducted. This ritual "is the first official stage of the child's socialization – not only at the family level, but also at the level of society as a whole" [25, p. 202].

In Averyanovka and Krasny Voskhod, the child is named forty days after birth during baptism at Orthodox churches in Kizlyar, Bryansk, or Novy Biryuzyak. In Alexandria, infants are baptized one to two weeks after birth in churches in Kraynovka or Kizlyar, while in Kalinovka, the ceremony takes place at the church in Tarumovka.

For the past decade, newborns have been given exclusively Christian names.

For the first forty days after birth, the child is kept secluded; strangers are not permitted near the infant, who is hidden from view for fear of the evil eye. Following this period, "birthday ceremonies" are held where close relatives, godparents, and neighbors visit to "look at the child" and bring gifts.

Various protective measures are employed to shield the child from the evil eye. A pin is attached to its clothing, which is sometimes worn inside-out, and an Orthodox cross is placed around its neck. If a child becomes restless and whiny, it is interpreted as having been jinxed (Kardonovka). Countermeasures include washing the baby with baptismal water (Kalinovka) or having the mother wipe the child's face with the hem of her dress (Krasny Voskhod).

A common prohibition dictates that a child should not be shown in a mirror until their first birthday, as it is believed this will cause them to "not speak in time" (Koktyubey), become "fearful and whiny" (Alexandria), or be "restless and sleep poorly" (Krasny Voskhod).

To correct a reversed sleep schedule, where a child sleeps during the day and is awake at night, a specific ritual is performed. The child is brought to an open chicken coop or inside it while reciting incantations such as, "Chickens, take away my daytime sleep, give me nighttime sleep!" (Alexandria) or "Day to day, night to night!" (Averyanovka).

Special customs governed the emergence and loss of a child's first baby teeth. To encourage teething, a spoon was rubbed and tapped on the child's gums, a practice known as "*na zubok*" (tooth-tapping) in Alexandria and Krasny Voskhod, and "*tsokat lozhkoi*" (spoon-tapping) in Koktyubey. Upon the appearance of the first tooth,

the child's parents and grandparents would present them with a silver spoon, though "a wooden one was also acceptable" (Koktyubey).

Until the late 1990s, specific rituals accompanied the loss of a first baby tooth. In Koktyubey, the tooth was thrown behind the stove with the words, "Take the bad one, give me the bone one!" Elsewhere, the tooth was thrown over the roof while standing with one's back to the house (Krasny Voskhod), or tossed onto it with various incantations: "I throw a bone one, let it grow into gold!" (Alexandria, Kardonovka); "Little mouse, you have a bone tooth, give me a gold one!" (Krasny Voskhod, Kalinovka); "Take the bone one, give me a steel one!" (Talovka); "Little mouse, you have a tooth, make soup out of it! Give you a milk one, and give us a new bone tooth, as strong as oak!" (Averyanovka).

Since the late 1990s, the custom for a lost baby tooth has shifted. Instead of being thrown behind the stove or onto the roof, the tooth is now placed under the child's pillow. Overnight, the "Tooth Fairy" visits, and in the morning the child finds 500-1000 rubles left in exchange for the tooth.

The ritual cutting of a child's first, or "uterine," hair is a practice shared among the peoples of Dagestan, often timed to coincide with the 40th day after birth [26, p. 202]. The specific customs, however, vary by locality. In Alexandria, the local Orthodox priest performs the haircut during baptism; a lock of the cut hair is then rolled in wax and dropped into the baptismal font. On the child's first birthday, the head is shaved completely, and the hair is wrapped in a cloth and hidden under the roof "so that the hag [crow] doesn't make a nest out of it."

In Kalinovka, the uterine hair is shaved on the 40th day after birth. The shaved hair, along with the preserved umbilical cord and the identification tag from the maternity hospital, is kept in a box (Krasny Voskhod). In Averyanovka, Kardonovka, Koktyubey, and Talovka, the hair is cut on the child's first birthday. The hair and the maternity hospital tag are then stored in a secret place within the home. In Talovka, these items – the shaved hair, the umbilical cord, and even the mother's wedding dress – are kept in the cradle under the mattress, a practice believed to protect the baby from epilepsy.

A baby's first, or "uterine," nails are not cut with scissors; instead, the mother bites them off with her teeth. It is believed that failing to do so could cause the child to "become a thief" [12, p. 330].

To aid a child in learning to walk, a ritual is performed to sever the invisible fetters believed to bind its legs. Using a knife (Alexandria) or scissors, a symbolic cutting motion is made crosswise between the child's legs, a practice known as "*cutting the fetters*" [12, p. 330]. This ritual of "untying the fetters on a child's legs" was widespread throughout the North Caucasus [27, p. 72].

In some villages (Tarumovka, Talovka, Kalinovka), it is customary to celebrate a child's birthday every month until they reach one year of age.

Thus, the childbirth rites of the Russians of the Kizlyar region are also syncretic, representing a synthesis of old and new customs. Archaic elements include taboos for protecting the health of the mother and child and the use of amulets. Particularly notable are the traditional rites associated with key developmental milestones: naming, baptism, the emergence and loss of the first teeth, the first haircut, the trimming of the first nails, the first steps, and the celebration of monthly birthdays – all of which are linked to the magic of names and first occurrences. The influence of globalization is evident in the recent adoption of the Tooth Fairy, a figure from Western European folklore, into local modern practice.

Funerary rites and customs

The Slavic funeral rite encompassed a diverse complex of actions: cleansing the deceased, preparing the body for burial, the funeral itself, and subsequent commemorations. This ritual complex served a dual purpose: to facilitate the deceased's passage into the world of the dead and to help the bereaved cope with their loss [28, pp. 190, 192].

Guided by an Eastern Slavic culture of death that perceived "the world of the dead as parallel to the world of the living" [29, p. 262], the Russians of Dagestan observed numerous signs believed to foretell a person's impending death or serious illness. Many of these omens were associated with dreams [30, p. 196], reflecting a tradition of *oneiromancy*.

In Alexandria, specific dream symbols held distinct meanings: a live fish signified imminent illness, eggs foretold an unexpected guest, blood indicated a visit from blood relatives, and a dead person predicted rain. If a deceased person called out or asked for something in the dream, it was an omen of death. To prevent a bad dream from coming true, it was customary to tell no one about it. If one had a nightmare in the morning, the recommended practice was to look out the window and recite the incantation, "Wherever the night goes, there goes the dream," followed by Christian prayers.

In Talovka, a dream where a deceased close relative took you by the hand and led you away was interpreted as a sign of one's own death.

In Kalinovka, dreaming of a lost, bleeding tooth was an omen of a blood relative's death. Other signs, such as an itchy nose, visions of dirty water, or a naked person in a dream, also signified a dead person. A dream in which a deceased person invited you to accompany them was considered a dire omen, and one was strictly forbidden to answer if called in a dream.

In Krasny Vostok, specific dreams were interpreted as omens: flies foreshadowed a deceased person; losing a front tooth painfully and with blood foretold the death of a close relative, while simply losing a tooth signaled the death of an acquaintance; dirty water predicted gossip; and fish symbolized pregnancy. A dream in which a deceased relative led you away was a particularly bad omen. The dreamer was forbidden to follow or answer the call and was instead instructed to tell the apparition, "Go away!"

It is noteworthy that a prohibition against responding to a deceased person who calls one's name in a dream is found among many of the world's peoples [31, p. 76].

External physical signs also indicated the imminent death of a person who had been gravely ill for a long time. These included a suddenly sharpened nose (Talovka), a pale complexion (Krasny Vostok), and cold extremities (Kalinovka).

Further omens were associated with the moment of death itself. If a person died with their eyes open, it was believed that "there will be more deaths in this house." To prevent this, the eyes of the deceased were closed and coins were placed upon them.

Immediately after a person's death, in accordance with a custom widespread among the Eastern Slavs [32, p. 112], all mirrors in the house are covered. These "windows to the other world" [28, p. 191] are veiled "so that the departed soul, wandering between worlds, would not be reflected in them," as this reflection could lead to further deaths in the household (Averyanovka). The coverings are removed on the 40th day after the death.

A central belief holds that the soul of the deceased remains in the house for 40 days before departing for heaven. During this period, a glass of water or wine, topped with a piece of bread and salt, is placed in the room where the deceased lay, as "there is a belief that the soul drinks this water" [12, p. 344]. On the 40th day, the water is poured out (Alexandria) and the bread is crumbled and fed to the birds (Krasny Vostok).

Before the deceased is dressed and placed in the coffin, the body is washed. This task is performed by individuals of the same sex as the deceased. The water used for washing is disposed of in a place untouched by human feet, such as behind the toilet (Koktyubey), under an old tree (Krasny Vostok, Alexandria), or under the steps of a wooden porch (Averyanovka). It must never be poured onto a road, as it was believed this "would bring death to those who step on it" (Alexandria). Those who performed the washing are given new towels, cloth, headscarves, and soap, and are also invited to the commemorative feast on the 9th and 40th days.

A deceased woman is dressed in a dress, underwear, stockings, a headscarf, and slippers, while a man is attired in a shirt, suit, socks, and a cap, which is placed at the head of the coffin. This practice stems from the belief "that in the afterlife, a person appears in the very clothes in which he died" [12, p. 344]. The bed upon which the deceased lay is burned. Their personal belongings are distributed among relatives, neighbors, and the needy, or are donated to the church.

It is noteworthy that in the village of Bryansk, the custom of hiring professional mourners for funerals persists, a practice that "was common among Russians" [12, p. 355]. For their lamentations – which "are based on the assumption that the deceased can hear everything that is said to him" [12, p. 355] – they are given memorial packages of food intended for the deceased.

After the deceased is placed in the coffin, a paper crown – a ribbon with sacred symbols – is placed on their head [28, p. 191], a cross is placed around their neck ("a cross and a belt on the deceased are strictly obligatory" [12, p. 347]), and an icon is placed in their hands, though it is removed before burial. The deceased's jaw is tied with a bandage, and their hands and feet are bound with rope. Before the coffin is lowered into the grave, these bindings are untied and placed beside the body. These ropes are believed to possess healing properties for

sore legs if wrapped around the limbs. The soap used to wash the deceased is similarly thought to be endowed with power and is used to lather sore spots on the body. If someone felt a fear of the dead, they were advised to overcome it by approaching the coffin and holding the feet of the deceased.

The deceased, lying in the coffin, is covered with a church shroud or tulle before the lid is nailed shut. Prior to this, relatives and friends bid their final farewells ("it is believed that the dead person hears and sees everything until he is lowered into the grave" [29, p. 262]). During this farewell, it is customary to send greetings to relatives who have died previously.

The burial does not take place immediately after death; it is essential that the deceased "must definitely spend the night at home" (Krasny Voskhod, Kalinovka). A funeral service is held if the deceased was baptized.

Russians typically bury their dead on the third day after death, though in recent years this has sometimes occurred on the second day, or even on the same day if the person died during the hot season (Krasny Voskhod).

After the deceased is carried out of the house in the coffin, the floors are immediately washed – "so that there would be no new deceased."

The body is carried out of the house feet first, sometimes not through the door but through a window, to prevent the deceased from seeing the way back [28, p. 191]. The coffin is first brought into the yard and then carried to the cemetery through the gate, which is closed afterward. Those leaving the yard must exit not through the main gate but through a small wicket, adhering to the belief that this prevents further deaths in the household.

The deceased is carried to the cemetery in an open coffin, always positioned feet first to prevent them from seeing the way back [12, p. 348]. The coffin is carried and lowered into the grave using special church towels, which are afterward cut into equal pieces and distributed to the bearers (Talovka). Coins are placed in the coffin – in a corner, under the pillow, or at the foot – "so that the deceased can buy back land for himself in the next world." Belongings and objects the deceased cherished in life are also placed inside [29, p. 262].

Burials take place in Christian cemeteries. In Talovka, the cemetery is situated near the Muslim one, while the deceased from Averyanovka and Krasny Voskhod are interred in the city cemetery of Kizlyar.

Among Russians, close relatives traditionally do not carry the coffin or lower it into the grave; this duty falls to friends and neighbors of the deceased. The bearers are often identified by handkerchiefs tied to their left hands. After the funeral, they are given towels and soap as tokens.

The coffin is lowered into the grave with the deceased's feet facing east, "so that on the Day of Judgment, the deceased will rise from the grave facing the Lord" [28, p. 193]. During the burial, those present are expected not to stray from the graveside or approach the burial plots of other deceased relatives and acquaintances (Krasny Voskhod).

Among the Russians of the Kizlyar region, commemorative feasts are held immediately after the funeral, known as the "*goryachiy pomin*," and subsequently on the 9th and 40th days, at six months, and on the anniversary (Kardonovka). In some villages, commemorations are also observed on the 3rd year (Krasny Vostok, Averyanovka, Talovka, Kalinovka) and on the 6th and 9th years (Alexandria). This frequent observance is rooted in the belief that it is necessary "to ensure that the souls do not die of hunger and, on the other hand, that they do not take revenge on the living for not being fed" [33, p. 342].

The funeral meal traditionally includes *kutia* [12, p. 356], an agricultural ritual food [34, p. 80, 82], alongside other dishes such as borscht, chicken noodle soup, stewed meat, fried fish, boiled chicken, cold cuts, mashed potatoes, pies with various fillings, and *blini*, which "are a ritual food at funerals" [12, p. 143]. Compote and a thick, strong *kissel* are served as drinks. The deceased is also honored by drinking alcohol for the repose of their soul, typically involving "three prescribed glasses" of wine or vodka, followed by a fourth toast "for the health of loved ones," a practice frowned upon by priests.

In recent years, it has become common to hold these funeral feasts in cafes. During the meal, all dishes are eaten with a spoon, a custom observed "so as not to hurt the deceased" and "so as not to poke his body with a fork."

B.A. Rybakov linked funeral ceremonies to the cult of ancestors [35, p. 120].

After the earth on the grave has settled, a temporary wooden or iron cross is placed at the feet of the deceased. On the first anniversary of the death, this is replaced by a permanent stone cross.

Mourning is understood as an outward expression of grief for a lost loved one [36, p. 732]. In Kalinovka, mourning for the deceased lasts one year. Male relatives observe a 40-day period of not shaving. In the villages of Alexandria, Averyanovka, and Talovka, the mourning period is 40 days, during which men

refrain from shaving and women wear black clothing. A widow is permitted to remarry after this period if she wishes.

Thus, an analysis of the funeral and memorial rites of the Russians in the Kizlyar region confirms their syncretic nature. While Christian rituals predominate, they retain a significant portion of archaic Slavic rites and beliefs, alongside newer customs. Traditional elements include omens rooted in oneiromancy. Echoes of a funerary cult can be seen in the practice of sending greetings to previously deceased relatives during the farewell and in placing the deceased's cherished belongings in the coffin. A more recent development is the custom of holding the commemorative feast in a café.

It should be noted that the modern family and life-cycle rituals of the Russians in the Kizlyar region are not a closed or isolated phenomenon. With the exception of minor local peculiarities, the life-cycle rituals of the Russians of Dagestan align seamlessly with the broader cultural context of Russians across the North Caucasus – such as those in Stavropol [37, pp. 84–87] and Chechnya [38, pp. 65–60] – as well as with the core ethnic group in central Russia, for example, in Oryol [39, pp. 7–18] and Vladimir [40] regions.

Local peculiarities and subcultural elements were shaped by the influence of the surrounding lowland (Kumyks, Nogais) and mountain (Avars, Dargins, etc.) ethnic environment. The blending of Russian and North Caucasian marital traditions was observed as early as the beginning of the 20th century by G.A. Tkachev in his description of the wedding rites of the Greben Cossacks [41, p. 181].

Dagestan and the North Caucasus are characterized by centuries of cultural interaction and mutual influence among the mountain peoples, Russians, and Cossacks. This is evident in practices such as interethnic marriages, *kunachestvo* (formal friendship), *atalychestvo* (fosterage), and borrowings in economic activities, material culture, and spiritual life. This process of mutually conditioned cultural adaptation between the Russians, Terek Cossacks, and the indigenous population served as a vital resource for interethnic tolerance, the synthesis of diverse cultures, and the formation of a cohesive North Caucasian cultural world [42, p. 80].

Conclusion

Despite minor local variations, the wedding rituals of the ethnic Russian population of the Kizlyar region retained the principal features of a traditional Russian wedding until the mid-2000s. This continuity underscores the importance of marriage and life-cycle rituals within their system of values, the stability of intergenerational ties, and a historical memory that translates the distinct culture of this Dagestani Russian community into ethnographic reality.

The most significant transformations in the family and life-cycle rituals of this population occurred from the 1990s through the first decades of the 2000s, driven by global and sociocultural processes. The Russian wedding underwent the most substantial change, largely due to the introduction of new cultural traditions and the emerging "wedding industry." In contrast, birth and funeral ceremonies have proven more resilient to change. This disparity is explained by the nature of the rituals: unlike weddings, which often involve the entire community, ceremonies associated with childbirth, child-rearing, and death are more intimate, conservative, and typically confined to a small family circle. Funeral rites, while also social events, are further stabilized by the profound influence of the Christian church and its doctrines.

The persistence of traditional family and life-cycle rituals among the Dagestani Russians within a multi-ethnic environment offers hope for the preservation of their ethnic, cultural, and religious identity in an era of globalization. The lowland and mountain populations of the Kizlyar ethnocontact zone have exerted a discernible influence on the life-cycle rituals of the Terek Cossacks and local Russians. This interaction has formed a number of local subcultural elements in their family practices, distinguishing them from the marriage and family rituals of Russians in the core ethnic territories.

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CRITICISM AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Research paper

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BOOK REVIEW:
Vinogradov A.Yu. Essays on the architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus. Moscow: Publishing House of the Higher School of Economics, 2023. – 488 p., ill. + 32 p. with colour photos. ISBN 978-5-7598-2372-8, ISBN 978-5-7598-2408-4 (e-book).

Abstract. The new book, dedicated to the Christian architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus, will undoubtedly attract the attention of a wide range of specialists and everyone interested in the culture and architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus, and the entire Christian East. Despite the fact that a lot of monographic studies on the Christian architecture of the Caucasus and Byzantium have been published in recent years, this book is an original, large-scale and scientifically significant work on the Christian architecture of the Caucasus and Byzantium, which highlights little-researched and debatable problems and issues. The book, against a wide background (more than a thousand monuments of church architecture of the 5th-12th centuries were involved), considers a wide range of topical and problematic issues of Christian architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus.

Keywords: Byzantium, Caucasus, Christian architecture, temples, churches

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КРИТИКА И БИБЛИОГРАФИЯ

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Исследовательская статья

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РЕЦЕНЗИЯ НА КНИГУ:
Виноградов А.Ю. Очерки архитектуры Византии и Кавказа. М.: Изд. дом Высшей школы экономики, 2023. – 488 с., илл. + 32 с. цв. вкл., ISBN 978-5-7598-2372-8 (в пер.), ISBN 978-5-7598-2408-4 (e-book).

Аннотация. Новая книга, посвященная христианской архитектуре Византии и Кавказа, несомненно, привлечет внимание широкого круга специалистов и всех интересующихся культурой и архитектурой Византии и Кавказа, всего христианского Востока. Несмотря на то, что в последние годы было опубликовано немало монографических исследований, посвященных христианской архитектуре Кавказа и Византии, данное исследование представляет собой оригинальный, масштабный и научно значимый труд по христианскому зодчеству Кавказа и Византии, в котором освещаются малоисследованные и дискуссионные проблемы и вопросы. В книге на широком фоне (привлечено более тысячи памятников церковной архитектуры V–XII вв.) рассматривается обширный круг актуальных и проблемных вопросов христианского зодчества Византии и Кавказа.

Ключевые слова: Византия; Кавказ; христианская архитектура; храмы; церкви

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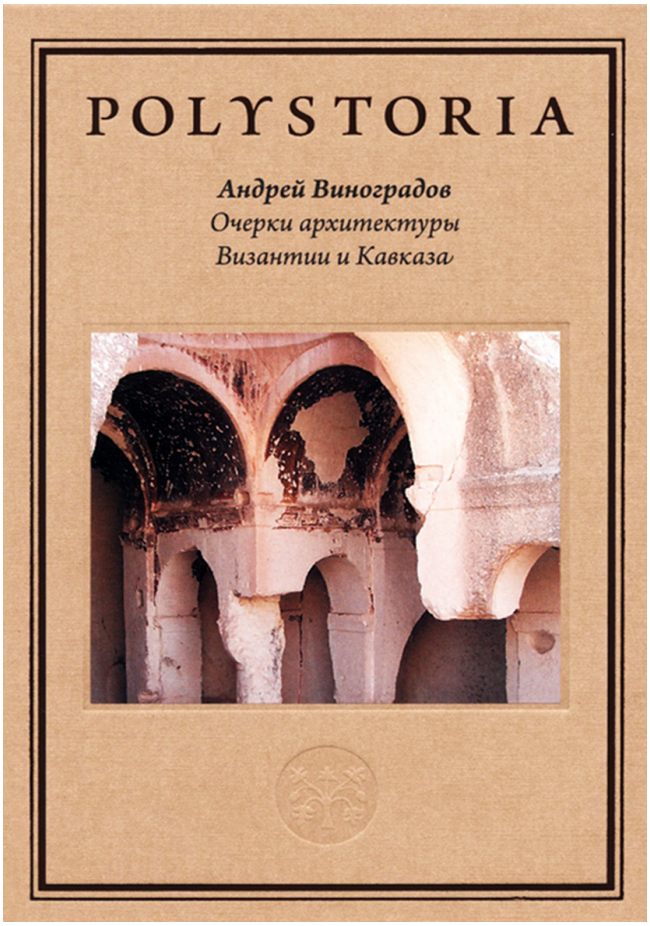

Since 2021, the Higher School of Economics has been publishing the notable *Polystoria* series, developed by the HSE Laboratory of Medieval Studies. The initial volumes have generated genuine interest among both specialists and a broader readership dedicated to the history and culture of the Middle Ages.

In 2023, the series released the monograph *Essays on the Architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus*, authored by the renowned Russian Byzantinist, archaeologist, and architectural historian, Andrei Yuryevich Vinogradov [1]. Although numerous monographs on the Christian architecture of the Caucasus have appeared in recent years – including works by Vinogradov himself, co-authored with D.S. Beletsky [2; 3] – this study stands out as an original, large-scale, and academically significant contribution. It highlights under-studied and contentious topics within the field.

Notably, comprehensive works on Byzantine architecture have been virtually absent from post-Soviet scholarship; the last major studies appeared inthe 1980s within general summaries of Byzantine culture (A.I. Komech [4], A.L. Yakobson [5]).

This gap in the literature largely underscores the novelty and relevance of the present volume. It is also worth noting that in 2022, the author published the detailed *Lectures on Byzantine Architecture*, which similarly focused on ecclesiastical architecture [6].

This monograph, covering a broad spectrum of issues in the history of church architecture in Byzantium and the South Caucasus (Georgia, Abkhazia, and Armenia), demonstrates the author's impeccable knowledge of architectural theory, encompassing the nature of architecture, its general principles, and the theory of composition. The author skillfully employs methods of structural and comparative analysis (including the study of proportions and graphic reconstruction) against the backdrop of the military-political and cultural-historical context to clarify numerous questions in the field. Of particular note is the author's first-hand familiarity with the material; he has studied most of the monuments *in situ*, especially those in the Caucasus, for which he relies not only on photographs but also on direct architectural measurements.

The book comprises a brief introduction and two main sections, each addressing current and under-researched topics in the Christian architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus. Each part is meticulously structured, with subdivisions dedicated to specific problems and themes. This review will not attempt to summarize the content of every chapter; such an endeavor would exceed the scope of this text. Instead, interested readers are encouraged to turn directly to the book, which offers a compelling and accessible read.

Drawing on a vast corpus of over one thousand monuments dating from the 5th to the 12th centuries, this work addresses a wide spectrum of critical issues of the Christian architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus. The author investigates the genesis and evolution of diverse spatial and structural typologies – ranging from common forms to rarer configurations such as cross-in-square churches, cross-in-square

triconchs, gate churches, and domed basilicas. Beyond typology, the analysis extends to layout, design techniques, construction methods, and materials, allowing for the identification of specific architectural styles, workshops, and regional traditions. The book further traces the complex web of mutual influences, emphasizing the impact of Constantinople on the Christian East. These issues are situated within a broad geographical and chronological framework, where historical dynamics and military-political events are shown to have shaped the developmental stages of the architecture. The sections detailing the resurgence of church architecture in Georgia, Abkhazia, and Armenia following the Arab conquests are particularly compelling, as are the analyses of Vaspurakan brickwork, the structures of David Kuropalates, and the churches of the Varzahan Monastery.

The dating and chronology of Christian architectural monuments constitute a central theme of the book, serving as a necessary foundation for addressing questions of origin, evolution, influence. The author approaches this task with meticulous care; however, given the limitations of the source material, certain questions inevitably require further research, and a number of the author's conclusions remain necessarily hypothetical. Nonetheless, even these more speculative observations are supported by a substantial and well-established body of evidence. Indeed, each section systematically examines the historiography, current debates, and available sources relevant to its topic, thereby clearly defining the research objectives.

This new monograph by A. Yu. Vinogradov is of high scholarly significance, addressing complex and contentious issues in the Christian architecture of Byzantium and the South Caucasus. The volume fills a critical gap in the study of the region and Western Asia more broadly. Future research in this field will be incomplete without reference to the propositions, conclusions, and hypotheses advanced here. The author has successfully met his objectives, demonstrating both methodological rigor and a profound knowledge of the subject matter.

The book contains some primarily technical errors and shortcomings that might have been avoided with more rigorous editing prior to publication. Although the volume is accompanied by an extensive and high-quality series of illustrations, comprising both photographs and drawings, issues regarding scale remain. In several instances, scale bars are absent, or the scaling of plans and sections for specific monuments is inconsistent. Examples include Fig. 2.4 (Church of Agios Nikolaos in Kyriakoseliya), Fig. 2.5 (Church of Agios Georgios Asclepius in Karella), Fig. 2.11 (Church of St. Michael in Ston), Fig. 2.12 (the church in Shirakavan), Fig. 7.1 (Church of Uchayak in Cappadocia, near Taburoğlu), Fig. 8.9 (the Fisandon Church), Fig. 8.17 (scale; the plan of the cruciform church in Thiel appears to be distorted), Fig. 9.4 (Samshvilde Zion), Fig. 10.3 (Kvelatsminda Church in Vachnadziani), Fig. 11.4 (Oshki Cathedral), Fig. 11.5 (Ishkhani Cathedral), and Fig. 11.7a (Church of St. George in Armazi), among others.

In my opinion, the title would have benefited from greater precision regarding the study's thematic focus – for instance, *Essays on the Christian (or Ecclesiastical) Architecture of Byzantium and the Caucasus*, given that the text does not address civil, defensive, or engineering architecture.

Furthermore, the monograph does not examine the Christian monuments of the Eastern Caucasus, Caucasian Albania. While the author likely had specific reasons for this omission, it should ideally have been addressed in the preface to clarify the geographical limitations of the study.

Finally, the monograph would have been strengthened by a brief concluding chapter that not only summarized the findings but also outlined future research directions and identified outstanding questions for the study of Christian architecture in the Caucasus and Byzantium.

These minor points, however, in no way diminish the profound scholarly significance of A.Yu. Vinogradov's monograph. The book is certain to capture the attention of a wide range of specialists and enthusiasts interested in the culture and architecture of Byzantium, the Caucasus, and the wider Christian East.

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