

The interrelationship between the Transcaucasian and Anatolian populations by the data of the greek and latin literary sources

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In the "Geography" of Strabo there is a story about the migration of peoples from Asia Minor to the Caucasus, according to which mythical Amazons, together with Gargareans, went away from the Temiscyra and resettled in the eastern part of the Caucasus, in the Keraunian mountains, above Albania, where they met Eobeans and Thracians who migrated also to the Caucasus from the west (XI, V, 1-49).

If Strabo's indication about the penetration of the above-mentioned tribes to the Caucasus would be an isolated one, it could be considered as totally legendary, but also other authors of the Classical times frequently mention the migration of peoples to the Caucasus from south-west, mainly tribes of Pelasgian provenance.

We cannot say anything about the Thracians mentioned by Strabo in connection with the Caucasus, but for the archaeologists, ethnographers, linguists and anthropologists firm and multilateral ties between the ancient populations of Anatolia and the Caucasus existed without any doubt.

Many characteristics of the various aspects of life of the Ancient Near East still exist among the population of the Caucasus, who at the same time was genetically connected with the earliest inhabitants of the Near East and the Aegean. Except well-known parallels detected among the materials of Çatal Höyük and the Caucasian ethnographical data, attention can be also paid to the man's sculpture of cultic character, discovered by H.Hauptmann in Nevali Çori (South-East Anatolia). The sculpture has a big protuberance at the middle of its breast¹ which is difficult to understand, but which becomes understandable by comparing it with the western Georgian (Colchian) mythological image of Ocho-Kochi, who instead of hair on his breast, has a protuberance in the form of a pointed bone or a stone-axe. He throws himself on the people passing by, whom he kills, by embracing them².

The territorial proximity of Anatolia and Transcaucasia seems to have been also a precondition of the ethnical similarity of both regions.

It is mentioned by scholars as a fact that in the Byzantine historiography, Cappadocians - inhabitants of Central Anatolia - were the same as the Moschs or Meschs, a tribe of Kartvelian (i.e. Georgian) origin.

Much earlier, in the 6th century BC, Hecataeus of Miletus wrote that the Moschs are a Colchian tribe who lived near Matienians (fr. 188). The definition of the Moschs as a Colchian tribe is a remarkable fact because at that time, as we

know by Herodotus, they were included together with other Pontic tribes in the same Achaemenian satrapy, while the Colchians were in reality independent from Iranians (cf. Hdt., III, 94, 97). On the other hand, the information by Hecataeus on the conjunction with another fragment of the same author about the location of the Matienians town Hiope in the neighbourhood of Gordies and about the Paphlagonian type of the clothes of the population of this town (fr. 189), makes obvious that in the above-mentioned Matienians western Matienians were implied who lived near the Phrygians of the city of Gordion and near the Paphlagonians. Because of it, it is possible to localize the Moschs in Cappadocia.

As to the information of Georgian chronicles, the name of the father of Haos and Karllos, the ancestors of Armenians and Georgians, was Targamos. This name is derived from the biblical "Togarma", and it is thought to be connected with the designation of the Cappadocian town Til-Garimu, known from Assyrian inscriptions, which, on its hand, has its origin in the name of the former Hittite region - Tegarama. According to Georgian chronicles, the main protector of Georgians, St. George, and the person who brought them Christianity, St. Nino, were of Cappadocian origin.

By the Georgian tradition, the name of the Mosch-Meschs is connected with the name of the Iberian capital - Mtskheta. In any case, there can be little doubt that the population who settled in Mtskheta were the bearers of the Hittite-Anatolian cultural traditions. According to the scholars, the old Georgian gods of Mtskheta like Armazi, Zadeni, Gatsi and Ga correspond to the Anatolian deities: Arma, Santa, Atis and Kibela³.

As to some Georgian archaeologists, the active settlement of a new population, probably the Meschs, the bearers of the Hittite-Asia Minor traditions in the north, in Mtskheta, had already begun in the second part of the fourth century BC, and this fact caused the spread of a new type of culture in Eastern Georgia which was quite different from the local Late Bronze - Early Iron age traditions⁴.

It is remarkable that Josephus Flavius, the Jewish-Roman historian of the first century AD, considered the Moschs, as well as the Iberians, as being of Anatolian origin. In his commentary to the biblical "Meshech" he wrote that the Mosocheans were derived from Meshech and that they afterwards received the name of "Cappadocians", though from the designation of their capital "Mazaca", it is obvious that the name of all their tribes was the same. In the text of Eustates, Archbishop of Antiochia, of the first half of the fourth century, as well as in the "Chronography" of the Byzantine writer Leon the Grammatikus, the name of this tribe is identical with the name of the ancient Georgian tribe of Meshs - Μεσχινοι. The Georgian tribe of the Meschs lived in the Classical and Medieval times in the Moschian mountains - between Erzurum, Kars and Batumi.

By the information of Leo Allazius in the commentary to Josephus Flavius' above-mentioned fragment, the Meschians were a people known by the old authors as Moschikoi or Mosynoeci. At first they lived in the Pontic littoral and afterwards they had become Cappadocians, but finally they once again were forced to move to the north. It is known that Leo Allazius was acquainted with many books which are now lost.

In connection with Allazius' information it is perhaps worthwhile to recollect the Middle Assyrian inscription of Tiglath-Pileser I. By this inscription in ca. 1164 BC, the land of Alzi, alias Enzi/Enzite, as same as Sophene, on the lower stream of the Murat (Eastern Euphrates), and the land of Kadmuhi, in the valley of the upper Tigris, were occupied by Mushki⁵.

This circumstance makes it possible to establish cultural attribution of Mushki; the territory where Alzi was located, 20-25 years ago was thoroughly studied by Keban dam expedition. In the opinion of archaeologists the Early Iron age pottery discovered there, in the Elaziğ region, and which must be attributed to Mushki, has no connection at all with the western Anatolian homeland of the Phrygians and reveals traits typical of the Transcaucasian (East Georgian, Armenian), North-Eastern Anatolian and North-Western Iranian materials⁶.

It is interesting that the East Georgian mountaineers are known to their Daghestanian neighbours as Mosok/Masek/Mosoch⁷.

We must take into account that the ethnonym "Moschi" of the Greek sources from the phonetical point of view corresponds to the Assyrian-Urartian "Mushki"⁸. At the same time, as to the linguists, the form "Mosx/Musx" represents a West Georgian (Colchian or Megrel-Lazian) equivalent of the East Georgian ethnonym "Meschi"⁹.

In the opinion of some authors, Moschs also lived in the territory of Northern Colchis - in Abkhazia¹⁰. Such a location of the Moschs mainly goes back to Strabo who defined their settlement in the north-eastern Black Sea littoral, between the Cercetae and Colchians, because of the data by the historians of Mithridatic wars (XI, II, 14). On the other hand, by the information of "Periplus" of Pseudo-Scylax, in the same territory of the north-eastern Black Sea littoral the following tribes lived from the north-west to the south-east: Cercetae, Toretes, Achaiae, Heniochoi, Coraxes, Colles, Melanchlaenies, Gelonies and Colchians (73-81).

It can be easily noticed that instead of the Moschs of Strabo in the Pseudo-Scylaxes "Periplus", several tribes are mentioned - Toretes, Achaeans, Heniocheans, Coraxes, Melanchlaenies and Gelonies. In one of these tribes it is possible to detect Strabo's Moschs. By the same fragment of Strabo we are also informed that above the Cercetae, Moschs and Colchians, the Pteriophagi (i.e. the lice-eaters) and Soanes lived. On the other hand, Flavius Arrian informs us in his

“Periplus” that the Scythian tribe of “lice-eaters” at earlier times lived west of Pitius and that this tribe was mentioned by Herodotus in the description of the “Land of Scythians” (18). Herodotus, for his part, considers the tribe of Budini as “lice-eaters”, who, in his opinion, were erroneously taken by the Greeks as Gelonies (IV, 103).

In the light of Herodotus and Flavius Arriens data, it is obvious that the Gelonies, mentioned by Pseudo-Scylax as neighbours of the Melanchlaenies and Colchians, correspond to Strabo’s Pteriophages (or “lice-eaters”) who lived above the Cercetae, Moschs and Colchians (i.e. in the mountains). This coincidence makes possible to identify also their neighbours, the Melanchlaenies with the Moschs.

By the data of Hecataeus (fr. 154), Herodotus (IV, 107) and after them other Classical writers, the Melanchlaenies got this name because they had “black coats”. In Greek *μελας, μαλλαινα, μελαν* means “black”, “of the black colour”. The same meaning in the Svanian language of the Kartvelian linguistic family has the word “meshkhe”. The hissing consonant (sh) in Greek is transmitted as the sibilant (s).

Consequently, we have no reason to speak about the residence of the Moschs/Meschs as being in the territory of Abkhazia. As for the ethnonym “Moschi”, used by Strabo, following the historians of Mithridatic wars, it gives us the possibility to localize the Svanian-speaking tribes (Strabo’s “Soanes”) in the neighbourhood of the Melanchlaeni whose name was probably preserved in Strabo’s “Geography” in the Svanian form.

A similar phenomenon - a wrong use of an ethnonym, we have presumably also in Xenophons “Anabasis”. There in the final part only such countries and tribes were enumerated which, in accordance with the basic text, were on the route of Greeks. Among others there is mentioned an ethnonym “Hesperitae” (VII, VIII, 25).

The problem of settlement of Hesperitae is a crucial one, because on the base of their location, by some scholars, in Speri (Ispir), on the upper flow of Chorokhi (Choruh), the Achaemenian empire is thought to be spread there at the beginning of 4th century BC¹¹.

I think the fact must be taken into consideration that at the time of the identification of the Hesperitae and the definition of their location, Tiribas, mentioned in the final part of the “Anabasis” as a governor of the Phasianoi and Hesperitae, in accordance with the basic text, was the satrap of Western Armenia (IV, IV, 4). Thus in the final part of the “Anabasis”, the main function of Tiribas - that of a ruler of Western Armenia - was changed to the task of a ruler of the Phasianoi and Hesperitae and instead of Armenians, subjects of Tiribas whose country was situated on the route of Xenophons Greek companions, are mentioned Hesperitae.

Consequently, the question is inevitable: Was the population of Western Armenia, mentioned in the basic part of “Anabasis”, implied under the name of “Hesperitae” of the final part of the same text?

The validity of such an assumption can be reinforced by the fact that the Greek word *εσπερα* *mea* is “west” and *εσπεριος* / *εσπερος* - “western”. It is important to notice that Strabo used the term “Hesperitae of Lybia” to designate Western Lybians (XIV, I, 39). Therefore it seems quite possible that the term of the final part of the “Anabasis”, “Hesperitae” or “inhabitants of west” was used for the designation of Western Armenians, and this fact was apparently dictated by the wish to detach them from the Armenians who lived in the satrapy of East Armenia and the territory of which the Greeks passed, until they reached the land of the satrapy of Western Armenia (cf. IV, III, 1, 3, 4, 20; IV, IV, 1-4). In a similar way for the distinguishing of the Chalybes, living at the Black Sea littoral from the Chalybes of the East Anatolian highlands, the ethnonym “Coites” was used (cf. III, V, 17; IV, III, 3; IV, IV, 4). Therefore we can approve that the final part of the “Anabasis” from the point of view of its contents is by no means contradictory to the main basic part.

Consequently, we must exclude any possibility to consider the West Armenian “Hesperitae” of Xenophons “Anabasis” as a Kartvelian tribe or as a population of Speri, of the upper flow of Chorokhi.

Another example of a wrong use of the ethnonyms we can find in Flavius Arrians “Campaign of Alexander”.

According to Flavius Arrian, in 329-328 BC, the king of the Central Asian Chorasmeans, Pharasmanes, escorted by 1500 horsemen, appeared before Alexander the Great who stayed at that time on the bank of the Central Asian river Oxus (modern Amu-Daria); he told Alexander that he lived in neighbourhood of the Colchians and Amazons and offered to accompany him and to get the supply for his campaign if Alexander wished to conquer the tribes who lived in the region extended to the Pontus Euxinus (i.e. Black Sea). Alexander replied to the king of the Chorasmeans that he had no time now to begin a campaign to Pontus, but after the conquest of Asia and his return through the Hellespontus and Propontida to Greece, he would break profoundly into Pontus with the help of all his forces, both marine and military ones and only then he would accept Pharasmanes’ help (XV, IV, 14, 15).

The historiographical literature contains quite a competent remark, namely that it is incredible that the author of “Peripluses of the Black Sea”, Flavius Arrian, thought the residence of Colchians to be in Central Asia, in the neighbourhood of Chorasmeans and not in the environment of Trapezunt on the Black Sea. This error appeared obviously in the Greek manuscripts: it is difficult to imagine the king of Central Asian Chorasmeans to be mentioned in the original text together with the Colchians¹².

That the text by Arrian concerns the Pontic region and not Central Asia, beside the fact that it refers to Colchians, Amazons and Pontus Euxinus, can to some degree be stated by Alexander the Great's words, that he would go towards the Pontus after his return to Greece through the Hellespontus and Propontidis (i.e. after his return from Central Asia) using land - as well as marine forces. This last remark makes clear that he was not about to return to Central Asia.

If, on the one hand, the king of Chorasmeans, Pharasmanes, mentioned by Arrian, expected Alexander's help against his neighbours - the Colchians and Amazons - on the other hand, by the information of Georgian and Armenian chronicles, Alexander the Great installed his follower as a ruler after his arrival in Kartli (Iberia). According to the Georgian chronicle of the 9th century, "The Christening of Kartli", Alexander's follower, Azo, was the son of the king of Arian-Kartli and he took his compatriots and idols Gatsi and Ga to Kartli.

Arseni Beri, the author of metaphrastic reduction of "The life of St. Nino" and tutor of the Georgian king David, the Restorer, explained this information in the following way: "We, Georgians, are descendants of the newcomers from Arian-Kartli, we speak their language and all the kings of Kartli are descendants of their kings".

By the generally accepted opinion Arian-Kartli must be searched south-west of modern Georgia, in the northeastern part of modern Turkey.

Georgian annals are not the only ones to connect the emergence of the statehood in Central Transcaucasia with the name of Alexander the Great. According to Moses Khorenatsi, an Armenian historian of the 5th century, Alexander took with him Mihrdat, one of the satraps of Darius and left him as a prince over the captives from among the Iberian people, whom Nebukhadnezzar had taken as prisoners and settled on the right side of the Pontus Sea after having attacked the land of the Lybians and Iberians.

There is no doubt that in fact above-mentioned Mihrdates represents a member of the Pontic dynasty of the Mithridatians. The information concerning the resettlement of the population from Africa (Lybia) and the Iberian peninsula (Western Iberia) by the Babylonian king Nebukhadnezzar II, of the early 6th century BC, was ascribed to the historian Megasthenes already at the Classical times. It is worthwhile to remark that Megasthenes lived in the late 4th - early 3rd centuries BC; thus the information about the migration of Georgians to the Caucasus, if such event really took place, must be dated earlier than the period of the reign of Alexander the Great.

Although Plinius (IV, 39) and Solinus (IX, 19) mentioned the supremacy of the Macedonians in Iberia, it is known that Alexander never marched towards the Caucasus. In connection with this topic it is interesting to recall the fact mentioned

by Strabo, that Alexander sent Menon with an army to the Sispiridis (XI, XIV, 9), which by some investigators is identified with the region of Speri (modern Ispir)¹³.

I think exactly in the north-eastern parts of Anatolia not only Arian-Kartli mentioned in the Georgian chronicles should be searched, but also the country of Pharasmanes, the enemy of the Colchians and Amazons. The name of this country presumably was mixed up with the designation of the country in Central Asia - "Chorasmii".

In connection with the problem concerned, we must pay attention to Strabo's information that by Artaxias (the Armenian king Artashes I) and Zariadr (the Armenian military leader Zareh) Armenian lands were enlarged by cutting off from Iberians beside the Gogarene, the slopes of Pariadres mountains and Chorzene (XI, XIV, 5). This event can be dated to the 2nd century BC.

Chorzene, apparently included the old Georgian provinces Tao-Klarjeti and Kola-Artaani and was located in the area, the central part of which is the mountainous ridge of Arsiani (modern Yalnizçam Dağlari), mentioned as the mountain of Chorzianni in the "Life of St. Grigoli of Khantza" by Giorgi Merchule of the 10th century.

So we can assume that in Flavius Arrian's "Campaign of Alexander" under the name of the Chorasmians king Pharasmanes the ruler of the Iberian province of Chorzene should be detected, and that the information by the Georgian chronicles about the son of the king of Arian-Kartli, Azo, who became king in Mtskheta (Kartli) because of the help of Alexander the Great, with the information by Flavius Arrian in a certain way is connected.

It is worthwhile to say that the name "Azo" reveals a similarity with the name of the king of Dayaeni (i.e. Urartian Diaukhi), Asia, mentioned in the inscription of the Assyrian king, Shalmanasar III, which was dated to 844 BC. The land of Dayaene/Diaukhi was located to the north of the source of Kara-su (Western Euphrates) in the territory which is known from Georgian and Armenian literary sources as Tao or Taik.

An additional data may be provided by the name of the royal city of Diaukhi - Šašilu¹⁵ which possibly was situated on the place of the Medieval Georgian village of Sasire (immediately west from the castles of Tortumi and Okale), on the upper flow of Tortumis-tskali (Tortum-çai), ca. 15 km north-west of the source of Euphrates (Dumlu-su). It must be taken into account that by the Assyrian cuneiform inscription which was taken over in Urartian, it is impossible to distinguish from each other the sounds š and s, l and r, u and o¹⁶. Such a location of Šašilu seems quite reasonable if we will correlate the fact mentioned in the above inscription of Shalmanasar III that he erected his statue in the anonymous city of Asia when the latter came to him to the source of Euphrates and "fell before his

feet” with the information of the Urartian king Menua that nearly after half a century of this fact he destroyed the royal city of Diaukhi, mentioned by the name “Šašilu”.

It was assumed that the anthroponym “Azo” of the Georgian chronicles had the meaning of a personification of the country of Azzi, of the Hittite times¹⁷, situated by the opinion of some scholars in the territory of later Diaukhi.

Anyway, by the correlation of the data of the Greek and Roman authors with earlier Hittite and Assyrian epigraphical sources, it is possible to deduce that some Transcaucasian tribes of the Classical times were evidently descendents of the population who lived formerly in the regions situated more to the south-west - in the inner parts of Eastern and Central Anatolia.

Apparently “rising tides” and “ebb tides” of the populations of the Transcaucasia and the southern Black Sea littoral, in connection with the inner regions of Anatolia, had been conditioned by the political situation of the latter.

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NOTES

1. Hauptmann 1993, 66, Fig. 26.
2. Cf. Haussig 1986, 44.
3. Tsereteli 1935, 45-50.
4. Lordkipanidze 1989, 312.
5. Cf. Budge/King 1902, 35.
6. Burney/Lang 1971, 98, 161; Sevin 1991, 96 f.
7. Uslar 1889, 22.
8. Cf. Diakonov 1981, 15; Tsereteli 1954, 111-118.
9. Topuria 1970, 118-122.
10. E.g. Melikishvili 1959, 87 f.
11. Melikishvili 1959, 117 f., 232 f., 267 f.; Adontz 1908, 83; Lehmann-Haupt 1931, 790.
12. Kaukhchishvili 1976.
13. E.g. Lasserre 1975, 175.
14. Diakonov 1951, 299.
15. Melikishvili 1960, 157-160, 234 f., 247.
16. Melikishvili 1960, 46.
17. Kapantsyan 1975, 342 f.

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