

Towards the Understanding of One Historical Information

Summary

One of the chronicles named "Istoriani da azmani šaravandedtani" ('History and Glory of the Sovereigns'), contained in the Old-Georgian historical composition "Kartlis tskhovreba" ('Life of Georgia'), writes the following about the King of Georgia Giorgi III (1154-1184): *twit mere dažda sixarulad da gausweneblad da nadirobad. Odesme, žamsa zamtrisasa, gardavidis lixt-imerits da miuciis zywad pontosa, moiciis da moinadiris alanta kweqana, romel ars apxazeti, odesme gurgenis zywadmde* (Kartlis tskhovreba, II, Tbilisi, 1959, p. 15). The King devoted himself to gaiety, pastime and hunting. Sometimes in winters he went to Western Georgia and reached the Black Sea, went hunting to the country of the Alans, which is Abkhazia, and sometimes he reached the Caspian Sea.

Because of the fact that the country of the Alans and Abkhazia have been identified in this information, it might be doubted: isn't an author or a later, copyist mistaken here? But in all the manuscripts of 'Kartlis tskhovreba' his information has been maintained without a change, which leads us to the supposition that the copyists of the late middle ages did not see any contrast with the real fact, i.e. since the 2nd half of the 12th century (since the reign of Giorgi III) for the Georgians ethnic Abkhazia was not on the territory of present Abkhazia, not on the shores on the Black Sea, but eastward from the Sea, in the depth of Land, where in the middle ages the Country of the Alans, having the political semantics, was situated. The Country of the Alans have never existed to the South of the Caucasus Range, it was always situated in North Caucasia in the basins of the Terek and the Quban, where both the Alans and the Abkhazo-Adyghean (Circassian) tribes lived in neighbourhood. In the analyzed information the term 'Alan' might designate not the ancestors of the Ossetes, but the Qarachais living on the banks of the Quban, as the Megrelians referred to the Qarachais as the Alans even in the beginning of the 20th century (I. Qipshidze).

Dwelling of the ancestors of the contemporary Abkhazians in the North Caucasus is proved by the latin maps of 1654 compiled by Jacopo Gastaldi in 1561 (see here). In J. Gastaldi's map the region of Abkhazia (Abcvas regi[one]) and the city of Acva are depicted on the Qubani bank, and the 1654 map bears the French note on the great wall at the Caucasus Range: *Muraille de soixant milles pour arre[te]r les incursions de Abbassas.*

"The wall of sixty, thousand miles [length] to beat off the Abbassas' aggressions'. There is Latin inscription at one end of this wall, in the North Caucasus: *Abkaschi hodie Abbassa .*

"Abkhaz alias Abbassa, and at the other end, again the North Caucasus, there is an inscription: Alani, and on the territory of contemporary Abkhazia, on the right bank of the river Kodori there is a French inscription: *Pays des Abassas ou Abcassas 'Country of the Abbassas alias the Abkhazians'.* On the basis of these data it is supposable that the Abkhazians had lived in the Quban basin since the 2nd half of the 12th century to 1561, but by 1654 they had already occupied the greater part of the territory of contemporary Abkhazia up to the river Kodori, but a part of the Abkhazians still lived in the North Caucasus in neighbourhood with the Alans alias the Qarachais.