

Edge of Empires. A History of Georgia

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London: Reaktion Books, 2012, 479 pp, £35 hardback.

Rayfield (hereafter DR) began his *Slavonic Review* assessment of Ronald Suny's *The Making of the Georgian Nation* (Tauris, 1989; 2nd edition, Indiana University Press, 1994) thus: 'Any publisher commissioning a book of this title would expect by right a work that began with the connections of the Georgians with ancient Anatolia, the presumed Indo-Europeans and Semites of the upper Euphrates, as well as the autochthonous Caucasians, and then went on to deal with the Kartvelian peoples (the Svans, Laz, Mingrelians and Georgians), moving into recorded history to discuss the effects of Greeks, Iranians, Mongols, Turks, and Russians on Georgia's genetic stock, language, culture, sense of identity, finally examining the relationship of the nation to the state, its own and its oppressors' and protectors', concluding with an examination of the very disturbing resurgence of Georgian nationalism, even chauvinism, and some relevant predictions.' He went on to criticise Suny's devoting five times more space to the preceding century than to the previous two millennia and concluded: 'A book still needs to be written on the unfinished making of the Georgian nation; Suny's work gives us some leads and some material, but will be remembered only as a precursor.' And so, readers, approaching the book with their own perspectives, must judge how far in their eyes DR has succeeded in meeting both their expectations and the standards of his own template. Drawing on sources in a variety of languages, he has certainly rebalanced Suny's weighting, for the first 305 pages bring us to 1885, leaving only 95 pages to take the story up to (pre-election) 2012. One might have wished to see the evidence underpinning certain statements, along with not only wider discussion of, but also more painstaking research into, some topics, especially from more recent history. For post-Soviet Georgia, of course, readers can now consult Stephen Jones' *Georgia: a Political History since Independence* (Tauris, 2012), albeit with serious reservations about his treatment of the Abkhazian and South Ossetian issues, and, specifically for the latter, there is also *Discordant Neighbours: a Reassessment of the Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-South Ossetian Conflicts* (Brill, 2013) by the writer of this review.

Speaking (on p. 214) of the hundred years between 1650 and 1750, DR writes that the century ‘was a confusing vortex of internecine war, depositions and restorations, abduction, adultery, mutilation, murder and treachery. The only consolation for the student of Imeretian-Gurian-Mingrelian history is that it was even more terrible to endure than to read about in retrospect.’ Unfortunately (even for readers), wholesale slaughter, beheadings and blindings (whether committed by external forces or inflicted by Kartvelian on fellow Kartvelian) were by no means confined to those years, and the relentless laying bare of such a pageant of unremitting suffering leaves one wondering how the four Kartvelian peoples ever managed to survive to the present day. Since the land-mass whose history is here described has been fragmented more than it has been united (the historically Georgian-speaking provinces of T’ao, K’lardzheti and Shavsheti, together with the homeland of the vast majority of the Laz people, lie in modern-day Turkey), the narrative frequently has to switch from one region to another and then perhaps to a third or back to the first. In order that readers not lose the thread, sub-headings appropriately interspersed within each chapter would have facilitated orientation both in terms of place and year.

DR elected to reserve indication of Georgian’s glottalised consonants for the References (= end-notes), Select Bibliography and Index on the grounds that he did not wish to litter the text with apostrophes, though one might counter that the only thing wrong with an apostrophe is its misplacement. Sources are revealed only in the section headed ‘References’, whereas it is more user-friendly to gather them together in one holistic bibliography.

The work may be impressive in its range and can justifiably claim to be the most comprehensive survey of Georgian history on the market. However, a number of the author’s assertions require not merely comment but, more worryingly, actual challenge. As with Stephen Jones, DR’s Achilles’ Heel lies in north-west Transcaucasia. And the first point meriting examination concerns the (over-)importance assigned in these pages to the Svans in ancient times.

Part 1. Distant Past

Whilst one might allow the possibility that Svaneti(a) ‘two or three thousand years ago was more extensive than today’s landlocked highlands’ (p. 13), one has to question the

justification for asserting that it ‘then reached the coast’ (*ibid.*), or, more specifically, that: ‘a Svan king...may have controlled Dioscurias [one ancient name for the Abkhazian capital — GH] for a century before AD 50’ (p. 28), neither opinion being sourced to ancient testimony. In fact, the Svans as such are not mentioned in any surviving source until Strabo (64/63 B.C – c. 24 A.D.), who in Book XI (2.19) writes of his contemporary *Soánes* thus: ‘Among the tribes which come together at Dioscurias are the Phtheirophagi (Lice-eaters), who have received their name from their squalor and their filthiness. Near them are the Soanes, who are no less filthy, but superior to them in power, — indeed, one might almost say that they are foremost in courage and power. At any rate, they are masters of the peoples around, and hold possession of the heights of the Caucasus above Dioscurias’ (H. L. Jones’ translation for Loeb); Strabo had already briefly referred to ‘the Soanes, and other small tribes that live in the neighbourhood of the Caucasus’ (XI.2.14). The locality assigned to the *Soánes* nicely accords with the Svans’ modern territory and is not at variance with what the 11th-century Georgian chronicler Leont’i Mroveli wrote of the ‘country between the Egris-ts’q’ali [R. Ingur = Egry in Abkhaz, this being Abkhazia’s border with Georgia — GH] and the Rioni, from the sea to the mountain(s), in which lies Egrisi [Mingrelia — GH] and Svaneti’ (S. Q’aukhchishvili’s 1955 edition of the Georgian chronicles *Kartlis Tskhovreba I*, p. 24).

What peoples or tribes do earlier commentators name as residing along the relevant stretch of the Black Sea’s eastern littoral or, if one prefers, in and around the north of Colchis, a territory which the Abkhazia-born Mingrelian scholar Simon Dzhnanashia appositely described as ‘more a geographical than a political term, and even then with uncertain boundaries’ (‘The historical geography of the Black Sea coast’, probably written in the 1930s but only published posthumously in the 1988 volume VI of Dzhnanashia’s collected works, pp. 250-322, in Georgian), though Strabo deemed it to extend from Pitsunda (the most magnificent of Abkhazia’s resorts) in the north to Trebizond/Trabzon? Based on the little evidence available (e.g. fragments from Hekataeus of Miletus, c. 550 – c. 476 B.C. and his rough contemporary Skylax of Karyanda, or of Artemidorus of Ephesus, fl. c. 100 B.C., etc...), the Georgian historian Giorgi Melikishvili drew a map of tribal distribution and inserted it opposite p. 400 of his article on Colchis in the VI-IVth centuries B.C. (volume 1 of *Essays on Georgian History*,

1970, in Georgian): Colchians themselves are shewn occupying the coast of west Georgia (from today's border with Turkey upto some distance beyond the R. Ingur); to their north-west, from the R. K'odor to north of Pitsunda, reside the 'Heniokhoi'; north-westwards from today's Soch'i we find the 'Kerketai'; and finally from today's Tuapse there were the 'Achaean' — Strabo (XI.2.14) mentions sources suggesting a slightly different ordering and with one additional tribe, namely (this time from the north in a southerly direction): Achaeans, Zyg(o)i, Heniokhoi, and then the Kerketai.

Unsurprisingly, the identity behind these Greek terms has been much discussed. The 'Kerketai' have been judged to be the Circassians, though the Dutch Circassian scholar, Aert Kuipers, in his 1960 monograph on *Phoneme and Morpheme in Kabardian* questioned such a linkage. In the early Greek literary period (as, for instance, the Homeric poems) the ethnonym *Axaioi* was used to refer to (a tribe of) the Greeks themselves, much like *Hélle:nes*, which later became the Greeks' universal self-designation 'Hellenes'. And so, one wonders how, in the Caucasian context of the mid- to late 1st millennium B.C., it might have come to be applied to an indigenous people. In fact, the 4th-century Roman historian Ammianus Marcellinus (325/330–after 391 A.D.) even suggested that this people were descendants of Greek warriors at the time of the Trojan War blown off course into the Pontic Euxine (quoted from *Die Päkhy-Sprache* by Julius von Mészáros, 1934, p. 10). As for the *He:nioxoi*, this was another purely Greek lexeme meaning 'rein-holders, charioteers' (or, in connection with ships, 'helmsmen') and might thus have been selected to refer to a local people/assemblage of tribes famed in the area for their prowess at horsemanship (or seafaring, or both) — in Greek mythology, Castor and Pollux (Polydeuces), twin-sons of Zeus and known as the Dioscour(o)i (recall the ancient name of the Abkhazian capital!), were two of the Argonauts who voyaged with Jason to Colchis, Castor being famed for horsemanship, Pollux for sailing, the two being together the patron-gods of sailors (cf. *infra*).

As for the Greek *Zygoi*, is it legitimate to link them with the Abkhazian term /á.zaχ^w(a)/, now little-used for 'Circassian, Cherkess' (the more usual ethnonym in Abkhaz being /[a.]adəga/ (stress on the 2nd syllable), which latter is based on the Circassians' own self-designation /a:də□a/)? Bagrat Dzhnashia in his 1954 Abkhaz-Georgian dictionary gives the Georgian equivalent as /dzhik.i/, but the 8-volume

Georgian Academy dictionary does not recognise such a meaning, ascribing to the term the main sense of ‘leopard’. On the other hand, the dictionaries of Sulkhani Saba Orbeliani (1658-1725) and Davit Chubinashvili (1887) did know the word as the name of ‘a tribe living alongside the Abkhazians’, whilst DR’s own two-volume Georgian-English lexicon (2006) is slightly less specific in offering the definition ‘ancient Black Sea ethnos’. Dzhanaashia (like the 2-volume Abkhaz-Abkhaz-Russian dictionary of 1986) also quotes the interesting colloquial phrase /á.zaχ^wa.p□a/, which he renders into Georgian as /dzhik.et.is kar.i/ ‘wind of Dzhiketi(a)’ or /da.sa.vl.et.is kar.i/ ‘wind of the west’. We shall return to the ‘Dzhiks/Dzhigets’ below. Volume 11 of the Soviet Georgian encyclopaedia relates that speculation as to what local identity might lie behind the term *He:níoxoi* has produced a variety of suggestions: Laz/Ch’an-Mingrelians, Svans, or Abkhazians. Proof at this remove is simply impossible, but of the three suggestions, the second must be deemed the least convincing, given the nature of the overall evidence. But perhaps DR’s conviction finds support from classical authors later than Strabo.

For the first century A.D., Pliny Secundus (the Elder, 23-79 A.D.) mentions a *Gens Absilae*, whilst a century later Arrian (c. 86-160 A.D.) speaks of the *Apsilai* ‘Apsilians’ as (northern) neighbours to the Laz (Greek *Lazoi*), whilst above the Apsilians come the *Abaskoi* (aka *Abasgoi*), and then the *San(n)igai* (‘where Sebastopolis is situated’), who are separated from the *Zilkhoi* by the R. Akhais (identified with today’s Shakhe near Sochi); thereafter reside the still mysterious Achaeans. To complete Arrian’s sequence of coastal tribes along to the Trapezuntines, he lists as Colchian tribes from the Laz south(-west)wards: the Zydrites, the Heniokhs, the Makrones (most plausibly the Mingrelians, named in Georgian /me.gr.el.eb.i/ and in Mingrelian itself /ma.rg.al.ep.i/), a people whom Xenophon styled the Drils but whom Arrian took to be the Sans (Greek *Sánnoi*), though Strabo had already stated that the Sans were earlier called the Makrones (XII.3.18).

Procopius of Caesarea (c. 500 – c. 565 A.D.) in his history of the Gothic War speaks of the Trapezuntines having been described as having as neighbours either the Sans (*Sánnoi*) ‘who are now called Tzans (*Tzánnoi*)’ (VIII.1) or the Colchians ‘otherwise known as the Laz’ (*ibid.*). Procopius also introduces as neighbours to the Abazgians a people he calls the *Broúxoi*, which has plausibly been taken to be the first clear appearance in history of the Ubykhs, who call themselves *T^waxə*, where the labialised dental represents a trilled

dento-bilabial coarticulation [tp]. Reference to the Heniokhs in the vicinity of Trebizond is seen by those who see in the term a reference to the Laz/Ch'an-Mingrelians as confirmation of their view, reflecting the Laz-Mingrelian (or Zan) dialect-continuum that ran around the coast from Mingrelia into today's north-eastern Turkey prior to being split into Mingrelians (to the north) and Laz = Ch'ans (to the south) by westward-moving Georgians in historical times.

The Abkhazians call themselves *Apswa* (plural *Apswaa*), and there can be no equivocation about identifying them with the classical Ab/psilians, then located around today's Ochamchira (classical Gyenos) according to Arrian. The speakers of the most divergent Abkhaz dialect are today known as the Abazas/Abazinians, a community which started to move out of Abkhazia when the ancestors of the speakers of today's T'ap'anta dialect crossed the Klukhor Pass to take up residence in the North Caucasus (specifically in what is now called Karachay-Cherkessia) in the 14th century. At first glance, it would look to be perverse to doubt the equation of this group with the ancient Abazgians. But the modern-day self-designation *Abáza* is a borrowing from Kabardian *A:bá:za*, a collective Circassian ethnonym (cf. West Circassian *A:bá:dza*) for all Abkhazians (as pointed out by A. N. Genko in his 1955 *Abaza Language*, in Russian). And so, one must conclude that by the term *Abask/goi* the ancient writers will have been referring to some north(-eastern) group of Abkhaz speakers — interestingly, when the Englishman James Stanislaus Bell referred in his 1840 2-volume work *Journal of a Residence in Circassia during the years 1837, 1838 and 1839* to the Abkhazians, he called them 'Azras', /az□a/ being the Ubykh designation for an Abkhazian, and, for Bell, the term *Abaza* meant 'Ubykh'; see 'Survey of the Abkhazians and Abazas in Turkey' by V. A. Chirikba, whom I take this opportunity to thank for providing several observations and references included in this review, published in *Dzhiget Collection: Questions on the Ethno-Cultural History of Western Abkhazia or Dzhigetija*, 2012, in Russian, pp. 21-95, also at: www.academia.edu/570412/Survey_on_the_Abkhazians_and_Abazas_in_Turkey..

Presumably, the *Zilkhoi* are the same people earlier named *Zygoi*. But who are the San(n)igs? Again without argumentation, DR unequivocally equates them with the Svans (p. 33), but were they?

Early in the 3rd century, Hippolytus (170-235 A.D.) spoke of the ‘so-called’ Sannigs being identical with the Sans, but this is an aberration, for the two were regularly kept distinct (Stephanus of Byzantium in the 6th century was still clearly distinguishing between them), the Sannigai being located further north, as neighbours to the Abazgians, than the Sans. The default opinion in Georgia is that the Sannigai (like most/all these ancient coastal dwellers) were a ‘Georgian’, *recte* Kartvelian, people, but, according to the Soviet Georgian encyclopaedia, the Mingrelian expert on Laz, Simon Dzhikia, suggested that they should be equated with the Abkhazian Sadz tribe. Specifically, one can point to the local family-name *Tsan.ba*, the plural of which today is *Tsan.a:*, the long-a suffix deriving from *□a, where the reverse question-mark represents the voiced pharyngeal fricative, which could easily have motivated its rendition into Greek by gamma (the same element explaining the velar plosive in *Abask/goi* above, as has been proposed by Chirikba). The initial affricate (*ts-*) would naturally have been represented by sigma, only the fricative component of an initial affricate being readily perceived/articulated by speakers of languages lacking such initial affricates — for the full argument, including the pertinent observation that the toponym ‘Tsandrypsh’ lies in the heart of the said territory, see Z. V. Anchabadze *History and Culture of Ancient Abkhazia* 1964; Sh. D. Inal-Ipa *The Sadzians*, 1995; and V. A. Chirikba ‘On the etymology of the hydronyms Bzyp and Mdzymta’ published in *Abkhazology: Works of ABIGI*, 3, 2009, pp. 21-38 but also available at http://www.academia.edu/2356434/On_the_Etymology_of_the_Hydronyms_Bzyp_and_Mdzymta_ (all in Russian). This I personally find to be the most convincing equation, for, although, if Arrian is correct in placing Sebastopolis in their territory, their range must simply be assumed to have extended further south than that later occupied by the Sadz tribe, the fact that the Sannigai were consistently located on the coast to the north of the Apsil-Abazgians fits neatly with the range of the Sadz tribe prior to the mass-migration of the North West Caucasian peoples (Ubykhs in their entirety, most Circassians, and most Abkhazians, including all Sadz speakers) to Turkey at the close of the Caucasian War in 1864. The Sadzians (in Abkhaz /a.sádz.k^wa/), known in early 19th-century Russian sources as the Dzhiks/Dzhigets, were described as then residing along the stretch of coast from Pitsunda to Ubykhia (around Sochi), placing them to the north of the Bzyp Abkhazians. The

memoirs of the Russian G. Filipson, writing in 1885, not only bear witness to this connection but also explain why, with Russia's 1864 victory in the Great Caucasian War, the Sadz felt compelled to abandon their homeland. He recalled: 'Between Gagra and Ubykh territory live the Dzhigets, a small people of the Abkhazian race...The Dzhigets were under the powerful influence of the Ubykhs and, willingly or not, had to participate in all actions until the fort of the Holy Spirit was built in 1837 by the mouth of the R. Mdzymta' (quoted from *Materials on the History of Abkhazia, vol. I, 1803-39*, in Russian, being a collection of archival materials gathered by Abkhazian academician Georgij Dzidzari(j)a and published in 2008). From a report of 1835 by two Russian officers quoted in the same collection (p. 184) an unambiguous qualification is applied to the Dzhigets, viz. '/asadzk^wa/, as they call themselves'. Interestingly, Stephanus of Byzantium in his 6th-century list of peoples included mention of the *Sázoí* as living along the Pontus, though the entry was immediately followed by that for the *Sannígai!*

The confusion of which tribe or clan belonged to which later larger ethnos was by no means confined to the ancients. In the 17th century, the illustrious Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi, whose mother was Abkhazian, used the term 'Abaza language' for his examples of standard Abkhaz, whilst he used the term 'Sadz-Abaza' for what was in fact Ubykh. And in a recent article ('On the ethnic nomenclature of the population of Sadzian Abkhazia in the first half of the 19th century' in the aforementioned *Dzhiget Collection*, pp. 6-11) Temur Achugba demonstrates continuing confusion over the assignment of ethnic identity to denizens of the region — recall what was said of J. S. Bell's mid-19th-century usage above. This, in turn, could account for uncertainty within Abkhaz itself over the precise meaning of /á.zaχ^w(a)/ — a tribe living in, or to, the west of Abkhazian territory, which is where one historically found the small Ubykh and more numerous Circassian peoples, even if, in origin, it properly designated the purely Abkhazian Sadzian tribe, lost to Abkhazia after 1864. And so, DR's unquestioning equation of the Sannigs with the Svans must, at the very least, be open to grave doubt. Is there any other opening for the Svans along the coast?

Simon Dzhanchashia in his paper 'Tubal-Tabal, T'ibarene, Iberian' (pp. 1-74 in his *Collected Works III*, 1959, in Georgian) quotes a passage from Pliny the Elder's 'Natural History' (VI.14), where the territory between the R. Phasis (Rion) and Sebastopol is

being described: ‘Then another river Charistus, the Saltian tribe (*gens Saltiae*), whom older writers called the Lice-eaters, and other Sans (*Sanni*); the R. Khobi flowing from the Caucasus through the [territory of the] Svans (*per Suanos fluens*); then Rhoan, the region of Cegritice, the rivers Sigania, Tersi, Astelphus, Khrisoroas, the tribe of the Apsilians, the fortress Sebastopol’ (p. 7). Is this the proof that, in Pliny’s day, which is, of course, already later than the period of residence allotted to them by DR, Svans occupied coastal territory where the R. Khobi flows, somewhere alongside the Sans? [N.B. the Sigania has been identified with the Ingur/Egry, the Astelphus with the K’odor/K^w’ydry, and the Khrisoroas with the Kelasur/K^l’alash^wyr]. So unexpected was this possibility deemed that Dzhnashia assumed a corruption in the Latin text, suggesting that instead of *per Suanos fluens* one should read *per Sannos fluens* ‘flowing through (the territory of) the Sans’, which restores some order to Pliny’s account.

But there is one other source that needs to be included in the discussion. This is Ptolemy (90-c. 168 A.D.) who in his *Geography* (fasc. V) speaks of *Akhaiói*, *Kerkétai*, *He:niokhoi* and *Souannókolkhoi*. This led Mingrelian ethnographer Sergi Mak’alattia to indicate on the map he drew on the basis of Ptolemy’s data for the tribal distribution within Colchis and ranging up to the Sea of Azov in the 2nd century B.C. (viz. some two centuries before the time that Ptolemy was actually writing) and which he set opposite p. 36 of his *History and Ethnography of Mingrelia* (1941, in Georgian) the so-called Svano-Colchians holding most of the territory of modern-day Abkhazia from the R. Hippus (which, according to its position on Mak’alattia’s map, looks to be the K’odor/K^w’ydry rather than the Ingur/Egry) to the R. Corax (clearly occupying on Mak’alattia’s map the place of the R. Bzyp). Is this, then, the support needed for DR’s claim that Greek (or rather Graeco-Roman) geographers provide evidence for the Svans’ coastal residence (p. 13)? Hardly, for so contrary to the weight of all the other evidence is Ptolemy’s composite term that Dzhnashia persuasively argues that another scribal slip here could be masking the far more logical *Sannókolkhoi* ‘San-Colchians’.

Now, since Pliny, as noted, alluded to Sans in both the north and south of the general area of Colchis, we should, for the sake of completion, examine what lies behind this ethnonym too. But firstly what final argument does DR adduce in favour of viewing the Svans as a one-time maritime people? It is ‘the fact that the Svan language still has

idioms figuring masts and sails’ (p. 13). Whilst it would be distinctly odd for the language of a maritime people not to possess marine vocabulary, it hardly follows from the presence of the same in the language of a people living away from the coast that they must once have been coastal dwellers. With specific reference to the Svans, they are likely to have travelled since time immemorial out of their mountain-fastness for purposes of trade — Strabo himself, after all, spoke of the Romans needing 130 interpreters to conduct trade in Dioscurias, and the famous Georgian silent film *marili svanetistvis* ‘Salt for Svanetia’ testifies to the necessity of passage to the lowland for the acquisition of this precious commodity — and so they could quite easily have become acquainted with the items in question. But what are the Svan words and idioms in question? Readers are not told. However, the lexemes DR probably had in mind are *anz* (Lower Bal *ans*), cognate with Georgian *andza*, whose main modern meaning is ‘mast’, and *apr*, which is deemed to be a borrowing from Georgian *apra* ‘sail’ and thus has no entry in the 2000 Svan-Georgian lexicon; it is apparently not widely used but appears in the colloquialism *apr xar lispə* ‘X is disorientated’ (literally ‘sail X.has.it reversed’). Interestingly, in parts of western Georgia, *apra* has another meaning, namely ‘the central upright wooden plank in the wall of a traditional dwelling, with grooves on either side into which the horizontal planks are fitted’, and the identical lexeme has this meaning in Mingrelian. In fact, Nikolaj Marr suggested that the ultimate source of this word is not Georgian but Abkhaz, where /á.pra/ also means ‘sail’ and might be related to the verbal root /-pər-/ ‘fly’ (see Marr’s 1938 *On the Language and History of the Abkhazians*, in Russian, and V. A. Chirikba ‘Abkhaz loans in Megrelian’ published in *Iran and the Caucasus*, 10.1, 2006, pp. 25-76, but also available at: http://www.academia.edu/571278/Abkhaz_Loans_in_Megrelian). As for *andza*, an old meaning is ‘pointed pole, attachment to which served as a punishment’, and, perhaps significantly, it is only this latter sense which the Svan-Georgian dictionary illustrates with three examples, one of which is *anss dzhirk’ine* ‘I’ll suspend you on a pointed object’ (p. 52).

Kartvelian commentators (but not DR) who wish to establish a historical Svan presence on Abkhazian soil have argued that the forerunner of the toponym ‘Sukhum(i)’, namely ‘Tskhumi’, attested in the Georgian Chronicles, is to be derived from Svan *tskhwim(ra)* ‘hornbeam’ (cf. ‘Tskhumari’, the name of a village in Upper Svanetia). I

have in the past suggested that one does not need to look to Svan for an origin of this form of the toponym. A suburb on the eastern fringe of the Abkhazian capital (itself not known as Sukhum(i) but *Aq^w'a* in Abkhaz) has the name 'Th^wıbın' [tʰ^wə'bən]. One can postulate that the non-Kartvelian consonant-cluster at the start could have produced the affricate-fricative sequence [tsχ], whilst [bən] could well have been reduced to [m], the loss of the plosive causing the nasal to shift from alveolar to bilabial position, and the labialisation of the Abkhaz pharyngeal fricative combining with the following schwa to give Georgian [u]. Thus, the evidence for the Svans' maritime residence turns out to be highly tenuous, if indeed it can be said to exist at all. But there is still more to be said about the Svans and their language.

It was noted above in passing that in the Georgian tradition the Laz and Mingrelian languages are regarded as co-dialects of a language named Zan. Though this root has disappeared from both Laz and Mingrelian (assuming something that is unproven, namely that the item did once exist in them too), the Svan language preserves the following terms: *mə.zän* 'one Mingrelian', *zan.är* 'Mingrelians' and *zän* 'Mingrelia'. On the assumption that the root was indeed borrowed into Svan and not an independent Svan creation, it is reasonable to hypothesise that this set of lexemes will have entered the language before the historical dialect-continuum, constituted by the Laz-Mingrelians' Zan ancestors, was split by incoming Georgian speakers, after which the Laz (Ch'an) community became far removed from Svanetia, leaving the terms to apply exclusively to the Mingrelians and their territory. And would it not be churlish to deny a connection between the root of Svan's three terms and the Graeco-Roman ethnonyms *Sán(n)oi* and *Sanni* encountered above? Dzhanaşia addressed this question in his aforementioned 1959 article. He argued that, if the native term had begun with a voiced fricative, then, as Greek's letter zeta had developed precisely this phonetic realisation (from its original phonetic value of [zd]) some time in the 4th century B.C., this is how Greek (and later Roman) writers would have elected to represent the ethnonym. But since the Greeks chose sigma (= [s]), Dzhanaşia speculates that the original native articulation was probably this voiceless fricative. Later a differentiation is noticed, whereby Greek *Tzánnoi* is attested for designation of the people living to the south of the said geographical range, whereas this neologism is not applied to those further north. The

unusual initial complex in the Greek must have been an attempt to render a non-Greek sound, and the obvious native sound would be the voiceless ejective palato-alveolar affricate in word-initial position of one of the local terms for the Laz, namely the initial [tʃʰ] of *ch'an.i* 'Laz (person)', the Greek *Lazoi* representing the name by which this ethnic group soon became (and is still) more widely known, and from which the kingdom of *Laziké*: 'Lazica', which flourished over (at least part of the former) Colchis from the 1st to the 7th century A.D., took its name. Considering all of this, Dzhanashia postulated two sound-shifts: in the south of the range [san] became [tʃʰ'an], whilst in the north the development was [san] to [zan] to [ts'an], this last giving rise to the Abkhazian term *a.ts'án.kʷa*, who in Abkhazian folklore were a race of dwarfs living in the mountains prior to the arrival of the giant Narts of the Abkhazian (and, indeed, Circassian and Ossetic) national epic. According to this hypothesis, the Svan terms with which we began the discussion would have entered the language during the middle stage of the ethnonym's northern phonetic development, subsequently disappearing from Mingrelian and never having existed in this precise form in Laz.

The problem with Dzhanashia's ingenious proposal is that it is rather hard to imagine such totally unmotivated phonetic shifts as those of [s] to [z] and then [z] to [tsʰ], to say nothing of the quite exceptional [s] to [tʃʰ], all in *anlaut*. I would suggest that [zan] is actually original (consider such toponyms in Mingrelia as *Zana* and *Zanati*), but perhaps because it might not have been fully voiced in word-initial position, it might not have been perceived as sufficiently voiced to be captured in the Greek script by the letter zeta rather than sigma; a further consideration is that zeta was anyway far from being the commonest word-initial consonant in the ancient Greek language. Despite the parallel presence of the sequence [an] in the relevant terms, there is no proof that Abkhaz *a.ts'án* is connected to the ethnonym *zan*, which is presumed to have disappeared in favour of *ma.rg.al.i* in Mingrelian in the north, just as its replacement by *ch'an.i* in the south might have been coincidental and introduced from some sub-group of the southern Zans (or perhaps from some totally unrelated but neighbouring people?) — Procopius in his *De Bello Gothico* (VIII.1), whilst accepting that the Laz of his day (6th century A.D.) were to be identified with the former 'Colchians', described the *Tzánoi*, the contemporary designation of the *Sánnoi*, as living far removed from the sea, next to the Armenians.

Though the term *ch'an.i* has survived, it seems it was largely and quite swiftly superseded by *laz.i* (source of Greek *Lazoi*), possibly because of an unfortunate semantic association — in Mingrelian, the second meaning of *ch'an.i* is 'impotent'.

The need for the above-excursus on *zan* becomes clear in the context of DR's etymology of 'Laz', which he states 'derives from the Svan "la-zan" meaning "country of the Zan (Laz)"' (p. 14). This proposal is not further ascribed, but the speculation originated with Nikolaj Marr at the start of the 20th century. For example, in his article 'From a journey to Turkish Lazistan' (1910, p. 607, in Russian) he refers to his own suggestion of five years previously (in his edition and translation of the Arabic version of Agathangehos' *The Baptism of the Armenians, Georgians, Abkhazians and Alans* by St. Gregory, 1905, in Russian) whereby he saw the term 'as a hellenised form of the name of the country of the "Zan"s or of the very same Ch'ans. It is built with the aid of the prefix *la: la-z[ən]-i*. This formation is neither Ch'an nor Mingrelian: it is perhaps the remnant of some language of the Svan group of the Japhetic branch' — note the 'perhaps'. There are problems with this etymology, though. As noted, the Svan name of the country inhabited by the Zans (latterly the Mingrelians) is simply *zän*, totally free of affixation, just like the Svans' native term for their own country, namely *shwän*. Svan does possess a circumfix *lə...u* (or *lu...u*) which can wrap around roots used for peoples or their lands, so that we have *lə.zn.u* and *lu.shn.u*, but such derivatives are merely adjectives of place meaning 'Mingrelian' and 'Svan(ian)' (e.g. *lu.sh.nu anban* 'Svan alphabet'), respectively. And so, Svan provides no evidence of the specific derivational morphology presupposed in Marr's (or DR's) etymology. Even though Mak'alatia quoted this etymology in his 1941 history of Mingrelia, Marr himself had already rejected it in his 1923 work 'How does Japhetic Linguistics Live?' (p. 38, in Georgian), where he preferred to link 'Laz' with 'Pelagian'. Džhanashia (1959.27) rightly dismissed both etymologies. The origin of the said ethnonym is, in fact, uncertain.

There remains one further instance where DR overstates the historical role of the Svans, and the examination of this moves us to the reign of Emperor Justinian I in the 6th century. On p. 49, we read of the Svans revolting against the Byzantines in 555-6 and slaughtering their general Soterichus. Again no source is cited for these events. But if one turns to the text of the relevant historian, Agathias Scholasticus (c. 530-582/594 A.D.),

who chronicled the years 552-8, one will seek in vain for any mention of the Svans in these particular contexts. The people responsible were the *Misimianoí* ‘Missimians’. Who were they? Classicist Simon Q’aukhchishvili had argued, in harmony with DR (and a range of Georgian commentators), as early as 1936 that they were (a tribe of the) Svans. The reasoning was that the local source could have been *mə.shwän*, which is the Svans’ self-designation ‘one Svan’ (plural *shwan.är*). At first glance, this looks extremely plausible, but a careful reading of Agathias’ text reveals this equation to be quite unsustainable.

As a point of geographical reference, we are told (IV.16) that ‘the fort of *Tibéleos*’ lies on the border of the territories of the Missimians and the Apsilians. This toponym is universally agreed to be the Greek equivalent of the settlement known in Abkhaz as Ts’abal and in Georgian as Ts’ebelda, part way up Abkhazia’s K’odor Valley. But as for the affair of Soterichus, the crucial testimony is presented by Agathias at III.15.

Q’aukhchishvili incorporated Agathias’ materials in volume III of his bilingual Greek-Georgian series *Georgica* (1936). And, if one translates into English Q’aukhchishvili’s rendition of the Greek original, one ends up with the following: ‘Sot’erike went down into the country of the so-called Missimians, who are subjects, like the Apsilians, of the king of the Colchians, but they speak in a different language and also pursue different laws.’ This English translation (like the Georgian version) is rather ambiguous as to which two of the three peoples mentioned are being contrasted in terms of their languages and customs: Missimians and Apsilians, or Missimians and Colchians. Is the Greek original equally open to contradictory interpretations? In fact, the structure of the Greek does not leave interpretation open to the uncertainty produced by lax translations of the kind just presented. The reason is that Greek possesses a pair of clitics (*men...de*) whose role is to accompany and thereby indicate each component of a contrasting pair. The relative clause here has the Missimians as its head, and within the clause stand these helpful clitics, the former following the complement ‘subjects’ (*katé:kooi*), the latter coming after the noun for ‘language’ (the Dative singular form of *gló:tte*:). This makes the interpretation crystal clear: the Missimians, whilst they are subjects of the Colchians, differ from them in language and customs —I. G. Shtritter’s late-18th-century translation into Russian introduced an unwarranted plural to give ‘in languages and customs’ (see

Abkhazia's Holy Metropole's 2011-reprint *Avasgika, Apsilika, Misimianika*, in Russian). The phrase 'like the Apsilians' (*kathárou kai hoi Apsiloi*) is an appendage to the first qualifying remark about the Missimians and is to be understood as stating that both the Missimians and the Apsilians were subjects of the Colchians. Taking these observations together with a further passage at IV.15, namely that the Missimians killed the ambassadors sent to them by the Apsilians despite the fact that the Apsilians were a 'common [?related — GH] and neighbouring people' (*Apsilíous ge óntas homodiaítous kai agkhitérmonas*), we can confidently conclude that Agathias provides unchallengeable testimony to the cultural and linguistic relatedness of the Apsilians and the Missimians. It would be wrong to infer from the above that the Svans have no role to play in Agathias' narrative — he places them as neighbours to the Alans (ancestors of the Ossetes), but, significantly for our purposes and quite naturally in view of the cultural and linguistic affinities he ascribes to them, Agathias makes no attempt to link them with the Missimians, which simply underscores the correctness of the Missimian-Apsilian association. And since it is beyond dispute that the Apsilians were the ancestors of the Abkhazians, the Missimians must have been just a sub-division of this ethnic group. The Greek ethnonym was, thus, in all likelihood an attempt to render the Abkhazian surname (or clan-name) *Marshan*, for the Marshan nobility traditionally lived around Ts'abal.

Whilst it might appear that the preceding discussion has gnawed excessively at the bones of relatively minor topics, I have judged it essential to go into such detail in reviewing opinions relating to the tribes and their distribution along the eastern Black Sea coast for the millennium from c. 500 B.C. to the 6th century A.D. not because of abstract academic interest but because these matters impinge directly on the major modern issue that is the ongoing Georgian-Abkhazian conflict, a fact of which many readers of the book under review may be totally unaware. In view of this, one needs to tread very carefully in this sensitive area. When it comes to speculation about the regional identities that might lie behind a range of the ancient ethnonyms encountered above, it is impossible in every case to reach definitive conclusions, but one has to consider two alternatives:

- On the basis of the available evidence, should one suppose there to have been significant differences in the sequential ordering of clans, tribes and/or peoples

along the stretch of territory from Mingrelia northwards to the Kuban basin from that which obtained there prior to the mass-migrations of the North West Caucasian peoples to Ottoman lands at the close of the Caucasian War in 1864? Anyone believing this to be the case has to present the evidence in support of the arrival of this or that clan, tribe or people on this or that territory, stating whence they came and at what time.

Or

- Might one not reasonably assume that the ancient terms simply masked essentially the (sub-)ethnic sequential distribution attested for later centuries — viz. northern Zans = Mingrelians, Abkhazians (including the Sadz, ‘Missimians’ and ‘Abask/goi’), Ubykhs, and Circassians (with the Svans occupying the high valleys to the north(-east) of Mingrelia and Abkhazia)? Within this picture, the size of the territory belonging to this or that clan, tribe or people at different moments in history would have grown or diminished according as the power and influence of this or that clan, tribe or people waxed or waned.

It is generally accepted that the ancestors of the North West Caucasian peoples moved into their Caucasian homelands from the south along the coast of western Transcaucasia. Evidence for this is the consonantal sequence *-ps-*, from the proto-North West Caucasian root **psa/ə* ‘water’, in such hydronyms as *Akampsis/Apsaros*, ancient names for the R. Ch’orokhi (in Georgian = Turkish Çoruh), and the port of Supsa in Mingrelia. DR alludes to this when (p. 15) he writes: ‘Phasis may, like Apsari in the south, contain the Abkhaz root *-psa-*, “water”.’ This is but the first slip in the book in specific reference to the Abkhazians. Whilst the number of hydronyms containing reflexes of the root in Abkhazia is legion (e.g. *Ha□.psə*, *La□.psə*), to say nothing of North West Caucasian territory further north (e.g. the coastal town of Tuapse, analysable as West Circassian *tʷ’a:.psə* ‘two water(s)/river(s)’; in Ubykh ‘water’ is *bzə*), Abkhaz itself has replaced this root in the basic lexeme, with the result that today its word for ‘water’ is *a.dzə* (stress on schwa); apart from in the aforementioned hydronyms, Abkhaz also preserves the original root for water in such compounds as *a.ps.lə* (stress on schwa) ‘otter’ (literally ‘the.water.dog’) or *a.ps.tá* ‘gorge’ (literally ‘the.water.place’).

Part 2. Recent History

We can now move on to more modern times and discuss DR's remaining inaccuracies with reference to Abkhazia and Abkhazian themes, starting with a statement on demography. Without citing any source, DR gives (p. 300) for post-migration Abkhazia in 1864 population-figures of 38,000 Abkhazians vs 60,000 Mingrelians. Now, demographer Daniel Müller, who has spent years analysing the relevant data (see his article 'Demography' in *The Abkhazians: a Handbook*, from Curzon Press, 1999; along with Marc Junge, Müller is planning to publish a new investigation into the effect of Stalin's nationality-policy on Abkhazia in 1937-8), states that there is no reliable source for the area until the Family Lists of 1886, wherein the total population of 68,773 was composed of three leading ethnic groups individually numbering: 28,323 Abkhazians, 3,558 Mingrelians, and 30,640 'Samurzaq'anoans' (from the south-easternmost province of Samurzaq'an, essentially today's Gal District). The debate over just who the Samurzaq'anoans were could be said to be still a live issue today, but Müller concluded that there was greater reason to agree with the Abkhazian argument that (at least until their mingrelianisation had been finally achieved some time in the 20th century) the Samurzaq'anoans were correctly categorisable as Abkhazians. And so, DR's figures for 1864 must be deemed to be highly dubious.

The Abkhazian Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR) was recognised by Georgia's Revolutionary Committee on 21 May 1921 but was reduced to a mere Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic (ASSR) within the Georgian SSR on 21 February 1931. How, then, is it right to say 'at first Abkhazia was an "independent Soviet republic"; within months, at Stalin's insistence, Abkhazia reverted to autonomy within Georgia' (p. 339)?

In the sentence spanning pp. 378-9, namely 'Even reputable linguists like Tamaz Gamq[']relidze subscribed to absurd theories that "Abkhaz" originally denoted Georgian tribes and that today's Abkhaz, now called Apsua, were impostors, who had recently crossed the Caucasus', how will readers interpret the phrase 'now called Apsua'? Those in the know will realise that the meaning is that Georgians adhering to this nonsensical view call them by their self-designation of 'Apswa' (plural 'Aspwaa') not out of respect but disparagingly to underline their alleged non-'Abkhazianness'. But, given the current wording, will this be obvious to all?

Radical revision is called for on pages 382-84, where fundamental amendments need to be made.

The timeline is faulty when 'Abkhazian guerrillas' are seemingly said to have been repelling the Georgian army in Abkhazia within days of Eduard Shevardnadze's return from Moscow to Georgia in March 1992 (p. 382), for the war in Abkhazia did not start until 14 August.

Given the statement 'When Shevardnadze's interior minister went to Sukhumi to negotiate, he and his entourage were kidnapped' (p. 383), most readers would probably infer that the kidnappers were Abkhazian, whereas in fact they were Mingrelian supporters of the ousted president, Zviad Gamsakhurdia; the civil war between Zviadists and supporters of the junta (headed from March 1992 by Shevardnadze) that had toppled Gamsakhurdia at the start of the year was raging in Mingrelia at the time.

DR's and Abkhazian Jurij Anchabadze's accounts of the same events at the start of the war in Abkhazia should be compared. Here is DR (p. 383):

On 14 August the Abkhaz mobilized...[T]he Georgians sent marines to seize Gagra and cut off Abkhazia from Russia, and then besieged Sukhumi's parliament. They withdrew from Sukhumi when their hostages were released, but made General K[it]ovani military commander of the city. The Abkhaz president Ardzinba's government fled north to the Russian army base at Gudauta and called on the north Caucasian peoples to aid Abkhazia. The response was extraordinary.

Here is Anchabadze (from his article 'The Modern Period' in Curzon Press' 1999 *The Abkhazians: a Handbook*):

Already by the afternoon of August 14th the Georgian military had entered Sukhum, capturing the government buildings, the TV centre, and the main lines of communication. Vladislav Ardzinba, the Supreme Soviet and the government were forced to abandon Sukhum and decamp to Gudauta. On August 15th a naval landing-party disembarked in the Gagra region.

It should additionally be noted that the release of the hostages *by their Mingrelian captors* had no bearing on events in Abkhazia; Ardzinba at that time was Chairman of the Supreme Soviet and only became President in 1994; the legitimate Abkhazian authorities moved to Gudauta because the Gudauta Region was the only one of the administrative units of Abkhazia where Abkhazians formed an absolute majority of the population following the mass-migrations of the 1860s and 1870s and the mass-implantation of mainly Mingrelians during the years of the Stalin-Beria supremacy (1937-54); they installed themselves in the building of the Gudauta Regional Administration (not the

Russian military base). The response that DR finds so ‘extraordinary’, namely the influx of fighters from the North Caucasus (including Cossacks) to defend the Abkhazians was, in fact, entirely predictable, as the Confederation of Mountain Peoples’ of the Caucasus under its leader, Kabardian professor of sociology Musa Shanibov, had been aware of the potential need for such military assistance since the Confederation’s (or, as it was initially known, Assembly’s) formation in Sukhum in the wake of the first Georgian-Abkhazian ethnic clashes in the summer of 1989, which resulted from the dangerous rise of Georgian chauvinism and its focusing on the republic’s ethnic minorities as the Kremlin’s grip on the USSR began to be prised open from late 1988.

At the top of p. 384, the sentence ‘While Q[?]arq[?]arashvili promised to exterminate the Abkhaz nation, Yeltsin arranged a ceasefire on 20 May 1993’ might be read as assigning simultaneity to these events, whereas the Georgian general’s (videoed!) genocidal threat was made in the autumn of 1992.

The next paragraph includes the following: ‘In July, when most Georgian troops had left, the Abkhaz besieged Sukhumi and purged Kartvelian (largely Mingrelian) villages around the city. In villages like Kamani men, women and children were tortured and murdered in cold blood’. Firstly, one would like to hear what evidence supports the claim that in July 1993 ‘most Georgian troops had left’ Abkhazia. Secondly, whilst it must be acknowledged that the Abkhazians and their allies were by no means entirely blameless in the matter of abuses of human rights during the war, anyone making specific charges of what would manifestly amount to a war-crime has to be absolutely sure of their facts. DR’s accusation would seem to have come straight from a Wikipedia page entitled ‘The Kamani Massacre’ (at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kamani_massacre). And another passage from this page surfaced more recently on 22 March 2013 in Maxim Edwards’ article ‘Abkhazia: recognising the ruins’ on the Open Democracy website (see <http://www.opendemocracy.net/od-russia/maxim-edwards/abkhazia-recognising-ruins>), wherein Edwards speaks of a local Georgian priest named Andrej being forced to kneel and state to whom Abkhazia belongs. Upon hearing his answer ‘God’, he was allegedly shot. Eye-witnesses on the Abkhazian side absolutely deny there is any truth to the website’s assertions, dismissing them as nothing more than a typical example of Georgia’s myth-making industry. They maintain that, apart from some old folk sheltering

in the monastery, the village had been evacuated prior to the assault. Father Andrej was one of those engaged in a shoot-out from the actual monastery and was killed in the general battle to regain control of the village, which cost the lives of 18 (plus 40 wounded) on the Abkhazian side (V. Pachulija *The Georgian-Abkhazian War 1992-1993*, 2010, p, 201, in Russian). There simply were no women and children to be ‘tortured and murdered’.

The third paragraph on the page would appear to be informing readers of another war-crime: ‘The Abkhaz downed two aircraft carrying refugees’. Contrast that with what was published in *Covcas Bulletin* (III.20 p. 8 for 29 September, 1993), according to which on 24 September Abkhazia’s Supreme Soviet put out a press-statement, including the following:

Georgian forces are using the Sukhum airport to bring in reinforcements and supplies. As such, all aircraft using the airport will be subject to the provisions of Article 22 of the Geneva Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. Thus, between 21 and 23 September, Abkhazian forces shot down five aircraft flying in or out of Sukhum which did not comply with the provisions of Article 22. By contrast, other aircraft which complied with the provisions of Article 22 flew in and out of Sukhum airport unhindered; Abkhazian forces have shot down three SU-25 Georgian air-force jets bombing Abkhazian positions.

The two main incidents occurred on 21 and 22 September when a TU-134 (flying from Sochi) and a TU-154 (flying from Tbilisi) were brought down approaching Sukhum’s airport, the first incident causing the loss of 27 lives, whilst 108 perished in the second. The dead were not refugees.

In the penultimate paragraph on the page DR moves on to developments in Mingrelia in the wake of Georgia’s defeat in the war in Abkhazia. Gamsakhurdia had arrived back on Georgian soil after his exile in Dzhokhar Dudaev’s Chechenia. In the Mingrelian capital (Zugdidi) he is alleged to have demanded Mingrelian independence. In fact, Gamsakhurdia had never been a Mingrelian nationalist/ separatist — what he wanted was the return of his presidency of the whole of Georgia. And, as his movement started a push eastwards towards Georgia’s second city of Kutaisi, DR says that Shevardnadze, having delayed disbanding Ioseliani’s Mkhedrioni, ‘now loosed them on the Mingrelians’. This is odd, for this unruly band of ruffians had been marauding in Mingrelia prior to the start of the war in Abkhazia. Indeed, spending a short time in Abkhazia in July 1992, I

personally recall being astonished as I watched Ioseliani on Georgian television, which could at that time still be picked up in Abkhazia, boasting about the number of Mingrelians his men had slaughtered in the town of Ts'alendzhikha.

On p. 391, DR talks of a 'triumvirate' (consisting of Hittite specialist Arzinba, archaeologist Yuri Voronov, one of those who had correctly interpreted Agathias' material in associating the Missimians with the Apsilians, and historian Stanislav Lakoba) having initially led Abkhazia. Whilst all three certainly played important roles in Abkhazia at the time, and the last continues to do so as Chairman of the Security Council, I do not think that many in Abkhazia would recognise the assumption that power lay in just these three pairs of hands. DR is probably correct to speak of Ardzinba's debilitating illness, which started to take effect around 1999, weakening Abkhazia, just as the country had been stunned in 1995 by Voronov's assassination. However, it is simply not true that during his period out of politics 'Lakoba became a Moscow academic' (as he has personally confirmed to me); he did, however, spend some time at a Japanese university.

In the second paragraph on p. 391, in the context of a group of Chechen mercenaries being contracted in the autumn of 2001 by the Shevardnadze government to be ferried across Georgia from the P'ank'isi Gorge into Abkhazia's Upper K'odor Valley, which had remained under Tbilisi's control after the 1992-3 war and from where they were to launch attacks inside Abkhazia, we read: '...the hard men running Abkhazia were infuriated: there was general mobilization in Abkhazia, and a UN helicopter was shot down on 8 October. Russian aircraft bombed the upper K[']odori valley.' A minor point would be to ask for elucidation as to the identity of these 'hard men', for, although no longer so regularly seen in public, Ardzinba was controlling events in the background, while the government was fronted by his wife's cousin, Prime Minister Anri Dzhergenia, a lawyer and one-time Procurator General of Abkhazia. But the shooting down of the helicopter with the loss of nine lives (including UN personnel) is by far the more important question here. The helicopter was brought down over that part of the valley which was under Georgian control and was thus NOT an atrocity committed by the Abkhazians, as was charged by an excited member of staff at the Georgian Embassy in London on Radio 4's *Today* programme on the day concerned. Nor is there any truth in the claim that Russians bombed the valley at that time.

Speaking of the fateful year 2008, DR writes: ‘In spring Saak[’]ashvili boasted of taking control of the upper K[’]odori valley’ (p. 397). This would have been an odd thing for him to do at that moment, since, as already stated, the upper valley was already controlled by the Georgian authorities in Tbilisi and Saak’ashvili had strengthened his government’s position there when in 2006 he contravened the 1994 ceasefire-agreement by moving Georgian troops into the area and then started demonstratively lavishing funds on the local Svan-occupied villages in a futile attempt to demonstrate to the Abkhazians that financial advantages would flow, should they again throw in their lot with Georgia. Moving on to the war-month of August, DR refers to the movement of 150 Georgian tanks on the 6th of that month, adding the phrase ‘some deterring the Abkhaz’. But, since there were no Georgian tank-movements in the vicinity of Abkhazia, it is unclear how one is to interpret this remark.

The statement that Vanuatu recognised Abkhazia only up to 2011 (p. 398) is not accurate; for details see <http://mfaapsny.org/news/?ID=986>, where a copy can be read of the Joint Statement on Establishment of Diplomatic Relations (signed 23 May 2011).

In the book’s Chronology, it is incorrect to state that Abkhazia was resettled by Mingrelians in the years 1864-6 (p. 423) — see the earlier discussion of the demography. Mingrelian ethnographer Tedo Sakhok’ia wrote in 1903 (in a series of newspaper-articles, republished as the final chapter ‘Abkhazia’ in his *Journeys* in 1985, in Georgian) of Mingrelians flooding into Abkhazia in the wake of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-8, where they revived commercial activity, but the truly massive importation of Mingrelians took place, as mentioned earlier, in the years of 1937-54.

The shortcomings highlighted in this review sadly cannot but detract from the overall value of the book. The serious errors relating to more recent historical events would have been entirely avoided, had greater rigour been employed in ascertaining the facts.

Corrigenda (including those posted on Amazon by the author himself) et Dubitanda

Page 7 line 11up: Zan language; p. 11 l. 8up: *shvidi* ‘7’ has actually been linked with Semitic Akkadian (Georgij Klimov’s *Etymological Dictionary of the Kartvelian Languages*, 1998); p. 12 l. 4: did the Indo-Europeans move from the Balkans into

Anatolia or vice versa? p. 12 ll. 7-8: ‘Another non-Indo-European’ should be ‘Another curious linguistic factor is the presence in Georgian of plant names (e.g. for the box tree) of non-Indo-European’; 1. 15up: is it ‘Hurrite’ or ‘Hurrian’?; p. 13 l. 3: Urartu; p. 14 ll. 8-9: was the Georgian toponym Vardis-tsikhe ‘Rose’s Fortress’ calqued on Greek Rhodo-polis ‘Rose-City’ or vice versa? p. 16 l. 14: Hayastan; p. 17 l. 18: Javakheti lies in south(west) Georgia; p. 17 l. 8up: in what sense do the Colchians ‘disappear from history’ in 735 B.C.? p. 18 l. 6: omit ‘is’; p. 19 l. 2: Makron(e)s; p. 29 l. 8up: rule of Parsman; p. 34 l. 5up: Parsman II should be Parsman III; l. 4up: Amazasp III should be Amazasp II; p. 41 l. 4: 345-368; l. 10: two, Saurmag; p. 45 l. 7up: P‘arpetsi; p. 48 l. 4 *et passim*: surely ‘Achba’ is meant instead of ‘Anchba’ (consider the Abkhazian quip about rivalry over seniority between two princely families ‘One can’t say Chachba without saying Achba’); p. 57 ll. 3-4: to help the; p. 66 l. 9: Arabs; p. 78 l. 20: is ‘theme’ the correct word?; p. 79 l. 11: either Latin *nobilissimus* or Greek *nobelissimos*; p. 80 l. 14: the Georgian monastery on Mt. Athos is usually called the Iveron (rather than the Iberian) monastery; p. 81 l. 4: were spent; p. 86 l. 7 *et passim*: *mandaturtukhutsesi*; p. 88 l. 20 *et passim*: *mts’ignobartukhutsesi*; p. 95 l. 9: the *nuskhuri* script, which intervened between *asomtavruli* and *mkhedruli*, seems to have been forgotten; p. 108 l. 6up *et passim*: Davit Gareja; p. 120 l. 16: uncluded should be included; p. 136 l. 2: is ‘son’ the correct appellation? Since the letter was addressed to Queen Rusudan, should it not be either ‘daughter’ or ‘child’?; p. 162 l. 17up: principality; p. 199 l. 11up: father-in-law (not son-in-law); p. 208 l. 17up: in what sense was Circassia [sic] ‘Russian-held’ in the 17th century?; p. 210 l. 20up: Murtaz; p. 213 l. 11: resulted; p. 252 l. 5up: cousin (not brother); p. 259 l. 1: should it not be the dying King Giorgi (not Lazarev) who was ‘congratulating King Davit on his accession’? p. 278 ll. 18-19: since Abkhazia finally lost the right to control its own affairs only in 1864, and since, as noted on p. 282, it was Rozen who persuaded Svanetia’s Dadeshkeliani nobles to accept Russian suzerainty, how can Paskevich, who left the Caucasus in 1831, be credited with bringing all Abkhazia and Svanetia under Russian rule?; l. 1up: Aryan; p. 279 l. 9: *aznauri* is glossed as ‘freemen’, whilst on p. 294 it is glossed as ‘lower gentry’ — the reason for the difference should be explained; p. 286 l. 8: from Turkey; p. 297: Prince Gagarin is introduced twice, but his role as ‘military governor of Kutaisi’ is only appended to the second token — it should

appear alongside the first; p. 300 l. 12up: clan (or perhaps better to say ‘community’); p. 315 l. 6: no complete edition of the Bible yet exists in Abkhaz — perhaps it is the 1912 edition of the Gospels that is meant here; p. 326 ll. 6-4up: without naming his source, DR states that the British ‘persuaded Denikin to recognize Georgia’s territory by evacuating Georgian forces south to Batumi and making the river Bzyb the Russian-Georgian border’, but the secret note from the British War Office to the Foreign Office of 2 April 1919 speaks of having Denikin agree to the R. M(d)zymta being the said border (A. Burdett’s *Caucasian Boundaries 1802-1946*, p. 524); p. 329 l. 20up: gave in to; p. 333 l. 10up: it is true that (Sir) Oliver Wardrop produced a little English-Svan vocabulary in 1911, but is it accurate to say that he ‘learnt’ Svan?; p. 333 l. 7up: made; p. 340 l. 11: S. Ossetia’s borders are stated to have been fixed in November 1921, but there is no mention that the S. Ossetian Autonomous District was created only in April 1922; p. 346 l. 21: Alikhanashvili; p. 351 l. 13up: since *Q(‘)azakhishi* is the Mingrelian genitive meaning ‘of the people’, we need to place *Gazeti* ‘paper’ after it to complete the sense of the paper’s title; p. 361: Speaking of the wartime deportations, DR states: ‘By August 1944 Beria and Rapava had expelled about 20,000 from Georgia: nearly 15,000 Turks; 1,764 were Muslim Georgians from Ajaria’. One wonders where the so-called Meskhetian Turks figure in this episode, for over 100,000 were deported from the Meskheta region in November 1944, and they seem to have escaped mention here; p. 362 l. 13up: saying ‘Better; p. 368 l. 10up: whilst the Cyrillic-based script devised in 1954 for Abkhaz might be cumbersome, it seems a trifle excessive to say of it that it ‘effectively was written only for official purposes’; p. 374 l. 1up: was the Gelati monastery really used as a target for Soviet artillery practice?; p. 375 l. 11: Andrej Amalrik; p. 376 l. 2up: the hijacked plane took off from Tbilisi but landed in Batumi; p. 381 l. 9up & p. 474 l. 10up: Shengelia — it is also too early here to be talking about Zurab Samushia’s White Legion and Dato Shengelia’s Forest Brothers, for they came on the scene only after Georgia’s defeat in Abkhazia at the end of September 1993; p. 383 l. 12up: wrestler (not boxer); p. 403 l. 10: Settipani; p. 405 l. 1up: *Shioghvimisadmi*; p. 407 l. 6up & p. 411 footnote 20: *église*; l. 8up: For the text of the; p. 412 footnote 4: *Caucase*; p. 415 l. 20: Aron; p. 417 l. 5: s.w. Georgia; p. 418 Against 370: Emperor; p. 419 l. 14: with (?the rest of) Georgia; Against 1155: overthrown; p. 424 l. 12up: Georgian SSR; p. 435 l. 1:

IMERETIAN; p. 444 l. 2up: tsarei; p. 448 l. 2up: usually listed just; in some copies, the first five lines of the endnotes on page 416 may be blank, and, if so, the missing lines are:

19 *Khronika tekushchikh sobytii* 50, 1978, pp. 20-40

20 *saarkivo moambe* 8, 2010, pp. 150-6

21 *saarkivo moambe* 9, 2010, pp. 146-150

23 INDEPENDENCE RESTORED

1 For extracts of Gamsakhurdia rhetoric, see: Charles van der Leeuw *Storm over the Caucasus* (Richmond (UK), 1999), pp. 152-3

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