

THE WEST CAUCASIAN MATERIAL IN "THE NORTH CAUCASIAN  
ETYMOLOGICAL DICTIONARY" BY S.L. NIKOLAYEV AND S.A.  
STAROSTIN

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The publication of the long awaited "A North Caucasian etymological dictionary" (further on referred to as NS) by Sergei Nikolayev and Sergei Starostin<sup>1</sup> marks a breakthrough in the field of North Caucasian comparative linguistics which has on the whole, even despite the important works by Trubetzkoy (1922; 1926; 1930), Dumézil (1932; 1933), Šagirov (1977, I; II; 1982), and especially Abdokov (1976; 1981; 1983), long been characterised by virtual stagnation and a lack of fresh ideas. This monumental Dictionary, together with the somewhat more disputable Abdokov (1983), provides final proof for the existence of a compact North Caucasian linguistic family with its two branches, the Western, or Abkhazo-Adyghean, and the Eastern, or Nakh-Daghestanian. At the same time, it is now absolutely clear that the North Caucasian family has no immediate relation to the other autochthonous linguistic family of the Caucasus, Kartvelian.

In general, the study presents an exemplary reconstruction of the family of languages which lacks any long written tradition. The vastness of this ambitious undertaking is even more astonishing when one realises that this incredible amount of work has been carried out by two people only. The authors operate with the plethora of North Caucasian dialects and forms with enviable mastery, not being afraid at all of "drowning" in this large body of, often conflicting, data. They proceed from group reconstructions, and then, comparing the reconstructed proto-languages with each other, establish sound correspondences between them and draw the hypothetical PNC forms. Despite some minor cases, the largest part of cited linguistic material is correct and reliable.

It was a wise decision not to mix up different hypotheses connecting North Caucasian with other linguistic families (cf. the Sino-Caucasian, and even more hypothetical Dene-Caucasian hypotheses, proposed by the authors themselves, cf. Starostin (1991)) and to limit external parallels to Hurrian, whose genetic links with East Caucasian are quite probable, cf. Diakonoff, Starostin (1986). The involvement of Hattic, probably related to West Caucasian (cf. Ivanov 1985, Chirikba 1996:406-432), was, of course, out of the question because of its very poor preservation, especially as compared with the more abundant data on Hurro-Urartian.

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<sup>1</sup> Nikolayev & Starostin (1994).

Yet, one must admit that despite the authors' deep knowledge and amazing intuition, a nearly total lack of preparatory etymological research on individual NC languages and (sub-)groups - so far we have only Šagirov's excellent "Etymological Dictionary of Circassian" (1977) -, had an obviously negative impact on some of the etymological solutions.

The undoubted success of the research work undertaken by Nikolayev and Starostin, carried out in strict accordance with the classical methods of historical-comparative linguistics, contrasts sharply with the concurring "Ibero-Caucasian hypothesis", which relates all three groups of autochthonous Caucasian languages (Abkhazo-Adyghean, Nakh-Daghestanian, and Kartvelian) only on the basis of a number of common typological traits and a modest list of similar looking words. The establishing of a linguistic relationship on the basis of regular and systematic sound correspondences was regarded by the proponents of this hypothesis as unfit for the "too specific" Caucasian material. The Ibero-Caucasian hypothesis can now be definitely regarded as belonging to the history of Caucasian linguistics.

Speaking about the predecessors of the Dictionary under review, one should, of course, mention the first published North Caucasian Dictionary by the Kabardian scholar Abdokov (1983), which, despite some methodological drawbacks, also presents a convincing demonstration of the North Caucasian relationship.

Since a general review of NS, published in English by Greppin (1995) has already appeared, as well as a more detailed Russian review by Alekseev and Testelec (1996), I shall proceed immediately to my comments, focusing almost exclusively on the West Caucasian part of the dictionary, with which material I am more familiar. I hope that these comments will prove to be relevant for both the readers of the reviewed book, and for the authors, when they prepare the second edition of their study. For reasons of space, I will not discuss here all the differences between Starostin and Nikolayev's and my own Proto-West Caucasian reconstruction in Chirikba (1996), and will concentrate on the most controversial cases<sup>2</sup>.

### *The West Caucasian reconstruction*

Twenty pages (p. 179-199) of NS are devoted specifically to Proto-West Caucasian reconstruction. The authors give a chart of the postulated Proto-West Caucasian phonemic inventory, a table of the established sound correspondences between Proto-Abkhaz, Ubykh and Proto-Circassian, as well as phonemic charts of Proto-Abkhaz and Proto-Circassian, sets of intra-Abkhaz and intra-Circassian sound

<sup>2</sup> The following abbreviations of the languages are used: Ab: Abaza, Abx: Abkhaz, BesKab: Besleney Kabardian, CAbx: Common Abkhaz, CCirc: Common Circassian, Circ: Circassian, CKab: Common Kabardian, CWC: Common West Caucasian, EC: East Caucasian, Geo: Georgian, Imeret.: Imeretian dialect of Georgian, Megr: Megrelian, NC: North Caucasian, PAbx: Proto-Abkhaz, PCirc: Proto-Circassian, PEC: Proto-East Caucasian, PNakh: Proto-Nakh, PNC: Proto-North Caucasian, PWC: Proto-West Caucasian, Tem: Temirgoj Adyghe, Ub: Ubykh.

The following phonetic symbols are used: .. - tense consonant, ' - glottalisation, j - palatalisation, w - labialisation, <sup>wj</sup> - labialisation-palatalisation, \_ - pharyngealisation.

correspondences, characteristics of the reconstructed phonemes and of their reflexes in the individual languages, as well as a discussion of Proto-West Caucasian consonant clusters, vocalism and prosody. The most important ideas put forward by the authors considering the West Caucasian reconstruction are the following:

1. The redistribution of the timbre features from vowels onto consonants, which resulted in a dramatic increase in the consonantal inventory and in the reduction to the minimum of vocalic contrasts (which is similar, for instance, to the process which led to the appearance of palatalised consonants in Slavic). This means that the hypertrophied West Caucasian consonant system can be regarded as secondary when compared with the corresponding East Caucasian system. The idea of the Great West Caucasian Vocalic Timbre Shift in its clearest form was expressed in Starostin (1978) and in NS 43, 73, 192; cf. also Abdokov (1983:26-29), Dešeriev (1963:179-180) and Rogava (1986).
2. The positing of a series of Proto-West Caucasian labialised-palatalised consonants, the necessity of which is dictated by the need to account for two different sets of correspondences, whereby Common Circassian and Common Abkhaz labialised consonants correspond in one set of cases to analogous Ubykh labialised phonemes, and in another set to Ubykh palatalised phonemes. Labialised-palatalised consonants are reconstructable for nearly all Common West Caucasian obstruent series, though, unlike NS 184, I doubt the plausibility of the reconstruction of the bilabial labialised-palatalised stops.

Although the principles laid at the basis of this reconstruction and the material used do not raise objections, the reconstructed Proto-West Caucasian phonemic system as a whole raises serious doubts as to the possibility of such a huge phonemic inventory, reaching a total of 168 consonants! In addition, the reconstructed inventory contains such phonetically unlikely phonotypes as, for example, \*b<sup>wj</sup> (labialised-palatalised voiced bilabial), \*q̄<sup>wj</sup> (pharyngealised labialised-palatalised strong voiceless uvular stop), \*ɣ<sup>wj</sup> (pharyngealised labialised-palatalised uvular fricative), etc. To the best of my knowledge, pharyngealisation and palatalisation are in complementary distribution in any language where they occur within one phonological system (as exemplified, for instance, by Ubykh).

The established sets of sound correspondences lack any illustrations, which renders it rather difficult for the reader to critically assess either the validity of the reconstructed system or the credibility of the material on which this reconstruction has been based, though one, of course, understands the natural space limits of the already huge volume. One might wonder, wouldn't it have been more expedient to publish two volumes instead, the first part representing the reconstruction, with the necessary number of examples and comments, and the second part containing the dictionary itself?

## Transcription

1. The notation of the West Caucasian labialised sibilants, as employed in NS, has to be somehow modified. The thing is, the Abkhaz sibilants have two types of labialisation: (a) bilabial, as represented by back (= hushing) spirants and marked by the symbol <sup>w</sup> (*ž<sup>w</sup>*, *š<sup>w</sup>*), and (b) dentolabial, to be more precise, endodontolabial, as represented by middle (= hissing-hushing) spirants and affricates, and marked by the symbol <sup>v</sup> (*ž<sup>v</sup>*, *s<sup>v</sup>*, *ʒ<sup>v</sup>*, *č<sup>v</sup>*, *č<sup>v</sup>*). This means that all forms with the Abkhaz back spirants, spelled in NS as *ž<sup>v</sup>*, *š<sup>v</sup>* (cf. e.g. p. 195 and passim), should in fact be put as *ž<sup>w</sup>*, *š<sup>w</sup>*. In Adyghe, in its turn, all labialised sibilants are bilabial, not dentolabial, which means that the notation of the Ad *ž<sup>v</sup>*, *s<sup>v</sup>*, sometimes employed in NS (cf. pp. 280, 352, 361, 1087), should be changed into *ž<sup>w</sup>*, *s<sup>w</sup>*, as they are indeed put in the general chart of the Circassian consonants (p. 198). More generally speaking, in no West Caucasian language does the distinction between the bilabial and dentolabial consonants play any semantic role, which means that in the phonemic notation it can be (and should be) disregarded.
2. Now and then the phonetic notation is being used unexpectedly, alongside the otherwise uniformly used phonemic one. Cf. p. 321: Abx *ab-ni*, Ab *aba-ni*, instead of *abnəj*, *abanəj* (< CAbx \**a-ba-ná-jə*); p. 373: Abx *á-k<sup>w</sup>ic*, Ab *č<sup>w</sup>ec* instead of *a-k<sup>w</sup>əj-c*, *č<sup>w</sup>əj-c*; p. 392: Ad *bžiz*, Kab *bžiz* instead of *bžəjz*, *bžəjz*; p. 593: Kab *bzij*, instead of *bzəj*; p. 858: Abx, Ab *(a)-ni*, instead of *anəj* (< CAbx \**a-na-jə*), p. 864: Kab *bzuw*, instead of *bzəw*, Ab *č<sup>w</sup>u-*, instead of *č<sup>w</sup>əw-*; p. 1016: Abx *a-né-jra*, instead of *a-ná-j-ra*; p. 1038: Abx *á-š<sup>v</sup>ij-ra*, Ab *š<sup>w</sup>ej-ra*, instead of *á-š<sup>w</sup>əj-ra*, *š<sup>w</sup>əj-rá*; p. 1110: Ab *už<sup>w</sup>ə*, instead of *wəž<sup>v</sup>ə*, etc.
3. On p. 618 you will see Ab *h<sup>w</sup>*, absent from the list of phonetic symbols on p. 15-21 and rendered elsewhere in the text as the digraph *h<sup>w</sup>h<sup>w</sup>* (e.g. on p. 548).

## Reconstruction

1. The opposition “lax-tense”: though there is no doubt that the opposition “lax-tense” was present in Common Circassian (cf. Rogava 1943; Kuipers 1963:80; Smeets 1984:376; Keraševa 1986), it is rather difficult to prove its relevance for the Common West Caucasian period as well (pace Balkarov (1970:236), Abdokov (1973:40), and NS 180), as the correspondences of the Circassian tense or lax consonants to their counterparts in the sister languages do not seem to form a system or a pattern. For a discussion of this problem in more detail, see Chirikba (1996:334-341).
2. Pharyngealisation: though the phonemically relevant pharyngealisation is reconstructed by Abdokov (1983) and by Nikolayev and Starostin for the Proto-West Caucasian consonantism, I, however, abstain from such a reconstruction. Firstly, the reconstruction of a separate series of pharyngealised consonants, added to the already reconstructed plain, palatalised, labialised and labialised-

consonantal inventory, which renders it typologically implausible. And secondly, the correspondences of the Ubykh pharyngealised consonants to their counterparts in sister languages do not form a special pattern, different from correspondences with Ubykh non-pharyngealised consonants. One might assume that the pharyngealisation in Ubykh can indicate the presence of pharyngealisation in the Common West Caucasian vocalic system, which disappeared in Proto-Circassian and proto-Abkhaz, but shifted to the consonants in Proto-Ubykh.

3. Bilabial Stops: though all three plain bilabials *b p p'* can be easily reconstructed for Common West Caucasian, I, contrary to NS 181 and 184, do not find enough evidence for the reconstruction of their labialised, palatalised or labialised-palatalised correlates.
  4. Spirant or Affricate: for the correspondence CCirc *\*šj, \*šʰj* : Ub *ś* : CAbx *\*χ* Nikolayev and Starostin reconstruct a PWC tense lateral spirant (*\*ʃ*) (NS 182), while I opt for an affricate here (*\*ʃʰ*), as I doubt the presence of tense consonants in Proto-West Caucasian, and because the East Caucasian cognates also contain the affricate, cf. Chirikba (1996:269).
  5. External vs. Internal Reconstruction: the authors, as much as did Abdokov (1983), resort nearly exclusively to the method of external reconstruction, which strongly determines the shape of the whole of their Proto-West Caucasian reconstruction. It is obvious, though, that sometimes the internal analysis of a given word can present a more simple and economical explanation. Thus, the hypothetical reconstruction of PWC *\*bʒa* 'mark (on cattle's ears)' (NS 535) deems unnecessary in view of Šagirov's (1977, I:80-81, II:244) convincing analysis of CCirc *\*tha-bza* 'mark on cattle's ears' as *\*tha* 'ear' and *\*bza*, derived from *\*bzə* 'to cut'. Despite NS 880, CCirc *\*-p'q'w a-sə* (not *\*-p'asə*, as reconstructed in NS) 'step-' (in kinship terms) cannot be a cognate to CAbx *\*-pśa* 'id.' because CCirc *\*p'q'w* obviously cannot correspond to CAbx *\*p*, and because the Circassian word is plausibly explained by Abitov and Šagirov as 'sitting in place of', cf. Šagirov (1977, I:61).
- Despite NS 717, there is no reason to doubt the internal analysis of the CCirc *\*žak'ja* 'beard' by Šagirov (1977, I:199) as *\*ža* 'mouth', *\*k'ja* 'tail', which means that CAbx *\*žak'ja* is most probably a Circassian loan. Though the authors (NS 1058) rather haughtily dismiss Šagirov's (1977, II:8) etymology of CCirc *\*p<sup>h</sup>asa* 'early' as "a folk-etymology", I find his explanation quite convincing: *\*p<sup>h</sup>a* 'nose' > 'front, first' + *\*sa* 'to sow, plant', to yield 'the first crops' (lit. 'the first sown'), a parallel formation to CCirc *\*k'ja-sa* 'late' (< 'the late crops', with CCirc *\*k'ja* 'tail' > 'end', 'final'; cf. Šagirov (1989:28)). Consequently, CAbx *\*pása* 'early' (and *\*k'jása* 'late') is, pace NS, borrowed from Circassian. Curiously, the original etymological meaning of CCirc *\*p<sup>h</sup>a-sa* as 'early crops' can be found in a poem written by the Abkhazian writer Dmitry Gulia, entitled "The Spring" (*Aapən*): *awəswəc<sup>w</sup>a rəčdərxjojt'*, *ad<sup>w</sup>k<sup>w</sup>a*

*rč<sup>w</sup>ay<sup>w</sup>ak<sup>w</sup>ojt'*, *a-pasa-k<sup>w</sup>a* (sic!) *larc'ak<sup>w</sup>ojt'*... 'the peasants are preparing themselves, they are ploughing the fields, they are sowing **the early crops**...' <sup>3</sup> These examples, the number of which can be increased, prove that while dealing with the West Caucasian languages, notorious for their vast number of monosyllabic roots, a methodological rule should be set up, according to which external evidence for the explanation of the polysyllabic word in question should be sought only when the internal resources (the internal analysis) are exhausted. Wrongly analysed words lead to an increase in the number of quasi-correspondences between the languages, which can directly affect the whole of the reconstructed system.

#### *Proto-Circassian reconstruction*

1. For Proto-Circassian Nikolayev and Starostin (NS 197) posit plain and labialised glottal stops (\*ʔ, \*ʔ<sup>w</sup>), instead of the uvular stops (\*q', \*q'<sup>w</sup>), as present in the reconstructions by Kuipers (1975), Balkarov (1970) and Kumaxov (1981). Of course, one might disregard the evidence of Hakutsw Shapsygh, which also has uvular stops in place of glottal stops in the sister dialects, as possibly reflecting the Ubykh influence (Ubykh, which neighboured on Hakutsw, did not have a glottal stop as a phoneme) and posit the glottal stops, as Nikolayev and Starostin (and Kuipers (1963) !) do. I prefer, however, to stick to the traditional view, regarding the Hakutsw material as archaic. At any rate, the correspondences in the sister languages prove that the glottal stop (plain and labialised) is a result of a purely Circassian development. Incidentally, the absence of a labialised glottal stop and \*j in the chart of Proto-Circassian consonants in NS 199 is obviously due to an oversight, as this phoneme is found elsewhere in the text of the dictionary.
2. Unlike the authors, who reconstruct a voiced lateral affricate (\*ɬ) on the basis of the correspondence Ad g : Kab ž, I regard this correspondence as a mere irregularity in one of the languages (which is parallel to the irregular fluctuation x ~ š in Kabardian dialects).
3. Nikolayev and Starostin (p. 199) reconstruct the palatalised Proto-Circassian \*χ<sup>j</sup> on the basis of the correspondence Ad h : Kab χ. I interpret this correspondence as an evidence for CWC \*H<sup>j</sup>, which gave in Kabardian χ, in Ubykh χ<sup>j</sup> and in Adyghe and Abkhaz h, cf. Chirikba (1996:298).
4. Unlike Nikolayev and Starostin, for Proto-Circassian I reconstruct the voiced pharyngals \*ʕ, \*ʕ<sup>w</sup>. In my view, in Common Circassian and in Ubykh they merged with the uvular \*ɣ, \*ɣ<sup>w</sup>, while in Common Abkhaz they changed into \*f<sub>i</sub>, \*f<sub>i</sub><sup>w</sup> (i.e. the weakened variants of \*ʕ, \*ʕ<sup>w</sup>).

### Proto-Abkhaz reconstruction

For Proto-Abkhaz Starostin reconstructs a series of back labialised affricates, which perfectly accounts for the correspondence Tapanta Abaza  $\text{ʒ c c'}$  : Ashkharywa-South Abkhaz  $\text{v f f'}$ . Lomtadze (1976:179) posits here a redundant series of middle labialised affricates (i.e.  $*\text{ʒ}^w *c^w *c'^w$ ), without accounting for the already present series of the same affricates.

Starostin's discovery of tones in Tapanta Abaza was also important and led him to the idea of tonal character of proto-Abkhaz. The same idea was proposed on the basis of the analysis of the Abkhaz accentual paradigms by Dybo (1989).

Both in Starostin (1978) and Nikolayev and Starostin (NS) a glottal stop is reconstructed for Proto-Abkhaz as a full fledged phoneme. On a phonemic level this consonant is found only in Tapanta, corresponding to  $q'$  in other dialects. Its distribution in native Tapanta words is limited to pre-, and intervocalic position (beside one case in the final position in the interjection of disapproval), which may indicate that originally it only was a positional allophone of  $*q'$ . On the allophonic level the glottal stop is a usual substitute of  $q'$  in all Abkhaz dialects. This is why I refrain from reconstructing a glottal stop at least for the Common Abkhaz level.

### Comments on comparisons, etymologies, and reconstructed forms

1. pace NS 280, Ab  $\text{ʒ}^w \text{ʒ}^w a\text{-ra}$  'to tear in pieces', 'to harrow' (cf. also Abx  $a\text{-}\text{ʒ}^w \text{ʒ}^w a\text{-ra}$  'to scutch, swingle (flax, wool, etc.)') cannot be connected with CCirc  $*\text{ʒ}^w a$ , Ub  $\text{ʒ}^w a$  'to plough', because the correspondence CAbx  $*\text{ʒ}^w$  : CCirc, Ub  $\text{ʒ}^w$  does not exist (cf. the chart of the West Caucasian correspondences on p. 180-4).
2. NS 302: CAbx  $*baga$  'jackal, fox, wolf' cannot be directly connected with CCirc  $*ba\text{ʒ}^j a$ , as CAbx  $*g$  does not correspond to CCirc  $*\text{ʒ}^j$ . The original Circassian form, regularly corresponding to CAbx  $*baga$  and Ub  $bag^j a\text{-}\text{š}^w$  - with the diminutive suffix  $-\text{š}^w$ , despite the authors' scepticism, correctly identified as such by Šagirov (1977, I:72) - , is probably contained in the Shapsygh compound  $bag^j a\text{-}wəc$  'a kind of grass used in popular medicine', which can be analysed as 'the fox's ( $bag^j a$ ) grass ( $wəc$ )'. Two possible solutions can be proposed in order to account for CCirc  $*ba\text{ʒ}^j a$ : (a) CAbx  $*baga$ , Ub  $bag^j a\text{-}$  and CCirc  $*ba\text{ʒ}^j a$  can be regarded as old compounds with the different second component ( $*b/ha\text{-}ga$ ,  $*ba\text{-}\text{ʒ}^j a$ ), or, more probably, (b) it can be a result of a contraction in Proto-Circassian:  $*baga\text{-}\text{ʒ}^j a > *ba\text{ʒ}^j a$ , cf. Chirikba (1996:193-4).
3. NS 380: Ub  $\text{č}^w \bar{a}pa$  'cradle' cannot be related to the Daghestanian forms given in NS, as it is analysed as  $\text{č}^w a$  'sleep', the directional suffix  $\bar{a}$  and the root  $*pa$  '(to) wrap', '(to) cover', cf. similar Ubykh formations like  $\text{ʒ}^j a\text{ʒ}^j \bar{a}\text{-}pa$  'beehive' ( $\text{ʒ}^j a\text{ʒ}^j$  'bee'),  $\text{š}^w \bar{a}n\text{-}\bar{a}\text{-}pa$  'wax' ( $\text{š}^w \bar{a}n\bar{a}$  'honey'),  $\text{ł}ams\text{-}\bar{a}\text{-}pa$  'moss' ( $\text{ł}a\text{-}msa$  'root'), etc. Ub  $*pa$  is related to  $*pa$  in CCirc  $*x^w a\text{-}pa$  'to dress' and in CAbx  $*qa\text{-}r\text{-}pa$  'to cover', 'to throw over', cf. Chirikba (1996:181).

4. NS 383: CAbx \*čʲkʷə-na should be reconstructed with the final -a (not -ə, as given in NS; cf. the Abkhaz singular indefinite form čʲkʷəna-k 'one boy'); \*-na is a diminutive suffix.
5. NS 386: given the irregular character of correspondences CCirc \*č : Ub š, and CCirc \*xʷ : Ub χʷ, it is better to connect Ub šχʷa 'strong' not with CCirc \*čxʷa 'big, large', as the authors propose, following Dumézil (1932:95) and Abdokov (1973:75), but with CCirc \*γa-šχʷa/ə 'to temper, harden' (\*γa- causative prefix). The Kabardian counterpart to Adyghe (Tem) γā-šχʷa, absent in Kuipers (1975), but found in Urusov (1989:183) (Kab š'a-γa-šχʷa 'to temper, harden', containing the preverb š'a- 'under'), with regular correspondence Kab šχʷ : Ad šχʷ, indicates that the cluster-initial sibilant in Common Circassian was a spirant, not an affricate, unlike Kab šxʷa : Tem šxʷa 'big, great' < \*čxʷa, preserved as such in BesKab čxʷa 'id.'.
6. NS 439: several Abkhaz roots are confused here, two of which are loans:
- Abx (Bz) a-gʷagʷalaj 'ring, chain made of large rings', a-gʷargʷalaj 'small cart' < Megr gorgolai 'small cart', cf. also Megr gorgoli 'wheel';
  - Abx (Abzh) a-gʷagʷaraj 'small wheel' < Geo (Imeret.) gogore 'small wheel'. The loan was noted already by Čaraja (1912:15), which was repeated in Genko (1928:48) and Marr (1938:22), who noted that the source for a-gʷagʷarej was the Georgian nominative form gogora-j, dial. gogore-j;
  - Abx a-gʷargʷalasa (Abzh), a-gʷargʷalas (Bz) 'ring made of twisted branches';
  - CAbx \*gʷagʷa 'circle, round', 'to turn (a)round'.
- Of these only c. and d. can eventually be connected by the first element \*gʷa, which is represented in (d) in its reduplicated form. For the possible connection with East Caucasian one can perhaps take into account another Common Abkhaz morpheme, namely the preverb \*kʷə- 'around', as attested in CAbx \*kʷə-ša 'to encircle'.
7. NS 440: CAbx \*gara 'cradle' can alternatively, and more plausibly, be explained as the derivation from the verbal root present (in reduplicated form) in Bz a-gar-čar-ra 'to shake', Abx a-garə-gača-ra 'to waddle', cf. Chirikba (1996:35).
8. NS 445: the comparison of Abx a-gʷəž 'mule' with Ub žəgʷə 'donkey', which presupposes a metathesis in Ubykh and an unexplained shift \*ž > \*ž in Abkhaz, is not convincing. Besides, it is possible to explain Ub žəgʷə as consisting of žə 'horse' and agʷə 'little, small' (with the contraction -ə+a- > -ə-?).
9. NS 448: all three West Caucasian examples (Abkhaz, Abaza and Circassian) given as cognates to East Caucasian forms, belong to different roots:
- Abx a-gʷərgʷən 'wreath', cited in NS, is unreliable; the authors must have used Marr's dictionary (1926:33) as a source for this form, where it could represent a misprint, corrected in (Dondua 1928:7). Genko (1928:51) also cites this word, but he too used Marr's dictionary which is valuable but full of typos (it can only safely be used with Dondua 1928). The usual form for

was really registered in such a form (which I doubt), it could also be anything else but the loan from Geo *gʷirgwin-i* 'wreath'.

- b. The Abkhaz cognate to the cited Ab *gʷərgʷər* is *a-gʷərgʷəl* 'wheel', 'hoop', which can be a native word, but its connection with CCirc *\*kʲara-zə*, where the authors assume a secondary delabialization, is highly dubious. This means that only CAbx *\*gʷər-gʷər* can be a cognate to the East Caucasian forms cited in NS.

10. NS 488: the reconstruction of PWC *\*ačʷV* 'word, speech', taken as a cognate to East Caucasian forms, is highly doubtful. Though Ub *čəq'a* 'to take oath, swear' can be a cognate to Kab *žəʔa* 'to say, speak', it might as well represent an old loan from Proto-Circassian (or Pre-Kabardian). The older Kabardian form with the initial affricate is preserved in BesKab *žəʔa* 'to say, speak'. The voiceless affricate in Ubykh indicates that CKab *\*ž* (> Kab *ž*) is derived from CCirc *\*č*, which leads us to CCirc *\*čəq'a*. While the meaning of *\*čə-* remains uncertain, the second part of the verb can be the same as *\*q'a* in CCirc *\*gʷəčʲə-q'a* 'joke, word, speech', a continuation of CWC *\*q'a* 'to speak; shout', 'word, speech', cf. Chirikba (1996:217), and thus not connected with Ad *ʔʷa* 'to speak, say', pace Šagirov (1977, I:198). The relation of CAbx *\*ažʷa* 'word' to Ub *čəq'a* (and, consequently, to CCirc *\*čəq'a*), proposed in NS, is phonetically improbable.
11. NS 492: Genko (1955:105) convincingly analysed *čʷə* in Ab *(d)-z-a-čʷə-ja* 'who?' as the verbal root *čʷə* 'to belong to' (< CAbx *\*tʷə*). *d-z-a-čʷə-ja* thus literally means 'whom (s)he belongs to?', which, of course, renders its relation to CAbx *čʷə* in *\*za-čʷə* 'single', proposed in NS, impossible.
12. NS 509: CAbx *\*pχ-ʒə* 'sweat' can alternatively be analysed as 'warm (*\*pχa*) water (*\*ʒə*)', which, if correct, renders its comparison with CCirc *\*p'čʲa-(n-t'a)* '(to) sweat', assumed in NS, impossible.
13. NS 517: although Šagirov (1977, II:139) and Nikolayev and Starostin connect CCirc *\*čxa/ə* 'to eat' with Ub *fa*, CAbx *\*fa* 'id.', CCirc *\*x* (or *\*xʷ*) does not correspond to Ubykh or Abkhaz *\*f* (pace NS 180). I prefer to compare the second part of the probable Circassian compound *\*č-xa/ə* (cf. NS 517) with CAbx *\*χʲa* 'food, provisions', cf. Chirikba (1996:279-280).
14. pace NS 537, where a tentative PWC *\*pWV* 'spring' is reconstructed, I analyse *pə* in Abx *aa-pə-n* (*aa-* 'time') and *fa* in Ub *wa-fa-da* (*\*wa* 'weather') 'spring' as 'nose' > 'front', the words meaning 'the first time' (Abx), 'the first weather' (Ub), cf. Dutch *voorjaar* 'spring' (lit. 'before-year'), cf. Chirikba (1996:291).
15. NS 551: I don't find correspondence Abx *w* : Circ *h* : Ub *w* (first proposed by Trubetzkoy and taken over in NS) as quite tenable. It is based on one example only (West Caucasian words for 'long'), and is regarded even by the authors themselves as irregular. In Chirikba (1996:309) I argue that CCirc *\*wa* 'long' can be found in certain compounds.
16. Pace NS 561, CAbx *\*laga* 'to grind' cannot be related to CCirc *\*hažʲa* 'to grind' (reconstructed in NS as *\*haga*, without explaining how the form with *\*g* has

CABx *\*g* does not correspond to CEnc *\*y*. For PWC Nikelayev and Starostin reconstruct *\*L<sup>w</sup>a-ga-* ‘to grind’, connecting the first part (which contains the voiced labialised lateral affricate) with EC counterparts. Such reconstruction, however, is not convincing, because: (a) the correct PCirc reconstruction for the verb ‘to grind’ is *\*haʃʲa*, which cannot be related to PAbx *\*laga* ‘to grind’; (b) the supposedly related forms in the East Caucasian languages contain neither affricates, nor laterals (cf. Nakh *\*ʔah-*, Avar-Andi *\*ʔiχ<sup>w</sup>Vn-*, Tsez *\*ʔaɣ<sup>w</sup>ə-*, Lak *ha=a-*, Dargin *\*ʔurχ<sup>w</sup>ab*, Lezgi *\*reχ<sup>w</sup>a*, Khinalug *zoχ*; all proto-forms are taken from NS 559), which is true also for the proposed PNC form *\*Hěmχ<sup>w</sup>V* ‘to grind’. The authors themselves note “the non-trivial correspondence” of PEC *\*χ<sup>w</sup>* to PWC *\*L<sup>w</sup>* (NS 561). In such circumstances I prefer to posit two CWC roots with similar meaning ‘to grind, mill’: *\*haʃʲa* and *\*laga*. Beside Abkhaz, the latter form is likely to be found in CCirc *\*thaɣaLagʲə* ‘god of agriculture, harvesting’, which can be analysed as *\*tha-ɣa-Lagʲə*, with *\*tha* ‘god’, the causative prefix *\*ɣa-*, and *\*Lagʲə*, whose probable semantics is ‘to thresh’ or ‘to grind, mill’ (in the whole: ‘god causing to thresh/grind’), cf. Chirikba (1996:192-195).

17. NS 585: a more plausible cognate to CCirc *\*səsə* ‘to tremble, shake’ and to the East Caucasian forms given in NS is not CABx *\*c’əśə* ‘to rock, shake, shiver’, as proposed by the authors, but CABx *\*səsə* ‘to sway, shake, tremble, be sleepy’ (used with preverbs). Ub *sa* ‘to doze, slumber’ might also belong here, though it can alternatively be connected with the other East Caucasian root, cf. NS 1038 (from whence Circassian and Abkhaz examples should be transferred to p. 585).
18. NS 597: the connection of CABx *\*aga* ‘silly, stupid’ with CCirc *\*wəgʲə* ‘to play’, as assumed in NS, is very dubious. The Ubykh cognate to the Abkhaz root is *agʲa* ‘bad, evil’, and they are both related to CABx *\*gə*, Ub *gʲa* ‘to lack, be deficient’, CCirc *\*gʲa* ‘bad, insufficient, lacking’. Ub *wəgʲə* ‘to play’ is, pace NS, in all probability a Circassian loan.
19. NS 600: the connection of CABx *\*ʒa* ‘to settle (of liquid), filter’ with CABx *\*r-aʒa* ‘to filter’ (with the causative prefix *\*rə-* and the root-initial *\*a-*, not *\*ra-ʒa*, as analysed in NS) seems to be phonetically dubious.
20. NS 621: it is difficult to agree with the analysis of CCirc *\*q<sup>hw</sup>ə-ʒə* ‘pear’ (not *\*q<sup>w</sup>ə-*, as given in NS) and Ub *ma-š<sup>w</sup>ə* ‘apple’ as proposed in NS. CCirc *\*-ʒə* can either be compared with Ub root *\*ʒə* ‘fat, corpulent’ (as found in the adjective *a-ʒ-q’a* and in the verb *ʒə* ‘to become fat’) and the Abkhaz suffix *-ʒə* ‘awkwardly excessive’ (cf. Chirikba (1996:225)), or be analysed as a regular pejorative suffix, derived from *\*ʒə* ‘old’ (cf. Šagirov 1977, I:239). Despite the objections of the authors, Ub *-š<sup>w</sup>ə* is, most plausibly, a diminutive suffix. Reconstructing on the basis of CCirc *\*ʒə* and Ub *-š<sup>w</sup>ə* an otherwise unattested word for ‘apple’, the authors propose “an irregular devoicing” in Ubykh, without explaining what

- with so far unclear etymology, but certainly not related to CAbx \*sə.
22. NS 721: CAbx \*kʲə-sə in \*ma-čʷ-kʲə-sə 'little finger' (and in \*ǰa-čʷ-kʲə-sə 'little toe') can be compared with the cited East Caucasian forms only by its first part, as \*-sə is undoubtedly a diminutive suffix here, which is clearly seen from the plural form of this word: \*ma-čʷ-kʲə-ara (and \*ǰa-čʷ-kʲə-ara), cf. the same pattern in CAbx \*sə-sə 'lamb', pl. \*sə-ara, \*ǰə-sə 'goatling', pl. \*ǰə-ara, etc. This means that Ub -kʲə-s in q'a(n)čʷa-kʲəs must be regarded as a loan from Abkhaz (as CAbx diminutive suffix \*-sə corresponds to Ub -šʷə 'id.', cf. Chirikba (1986:115-116).
  23. NS 728: I regard the connection of CCirc \*kʲə 'handle' with Ub kʷə 'id.', proposed in NS, as rather dubious. I prefer to connect the Circassian root with CAbx verb \*kʲə 'to hold, grab, catch, keep', whence CAbx \*kʲə-ga 'handle' (with instrumental suffix \*-ga).
  24. NS 756: despite the authors' scepticism, Šagirov (1977 I:150) is quite right in analysing -r- in CAbx \*ǰə-r-fʷə as the causative prefix, the literal meaning of the Abkhaz form being 'to cause (-rə-) news (\*ǰə, which is not the modification of the reciprocal prefix \*ǰə, as explained in NS) be heard (fʷə)'.  
25. NS 797: CAbx 'to pay' is \*sʷa, not \*šʷa (as given in NS), which renders its connection with Ub šʷa 'price' impossible for phonetic reasons: there is no such correspondence CAbx \*sʷ : Ub \*šʷ. I connect CAbx \*sʷa 'to pay' with Ub \*sʷa 'to evaluate, appreciate', cf. Chirikba (1996:259).
  26. NS 804-805: CCirc \*marakʷa and Ub marakʷa, together with Abaza marakʷa 'mulberry', Balkar marako 'strawberry' and Ossetic murk'a 'snowball tree' are considered to be loans from Nakh \*mor 'snowball tree', with the Nakh suffix -ik'. From these forms at least Abaza and Balkar are certainly borrowed directly from Kabardian. As to the Nakh origin of the Circassian and Ubykh forms in question, phonetically Nakh -ik' cannot be a source of Circassian -kʷa. Besides, I am not aware of other Nakh borrowings in the West Caucasian languages.
  27. NS 826: the comparison of CCirc \*fʲə 'man' with the East Caucasian material (regarded by the authors themselves as phonetically not quite satisfactory) should be abandoned in view of its plausible internal Circassian etymology as \* 'mortal', derived from the verb \*fʲə 'to kill, die', as proposed by Colarusso (1989:41). Such etymology represents a widely attested semantic development (especially in Indo-European languages), and finds its parallel in the etymology of the Abkhaz self-designation áps-wa < CAbx \*apsə-wa, in all probability derived from CAbx \*psə 'to die' (the semantic evolution being \* 'mortal' > \* 'man' > 'ethnonym', cf. Chirikba 1991:13-18).
  28. NS 836: Ab ǰajza 'root' is not an Adyghe loan (as claimed in NS), but rather a compound ǰa ('foot') + ajza 'raw, wet, fresh, unripe, young' (a counterpart to Bzyp aža 'id.' < CAbx \*aiša).

'respiration'.

30. NS 967: CAbx for 'hoar-frost, caked snow' is  $*\check{s}^w a b a$ , not  $*s^w a b a$ , as given in NS. This means that it cannot be connected with CAbx  $*s^w a$  'to get cold, freeze' and with the very similar looking Ub  $s^w a b a$  'heap of snow' (there is no correspondence CAbx  $*\check{s}^w$  : Ub  $s^w$ ). A tricky Abkhaz difference between the front (hissing), middle (hissing-hushing) and back (hushing) sibilants is a source of many faulty etymologies, and the majority of Abkhaz dictionaries represent the literary dialect, which lacks these archaic distinctions.
31. The following Common Abkhaz items contain the root-initial  $*a-$ , missing in the reconstructions posited in NS:  $*ak'a$  'one' (in NS 722:  $a-k'a$ ),  $*a\check{z}^w a$  'old' (in NS 969:  $*\check{z}^w a$ ),  $*a\check{s}a$  'sabre' (NS 1042:  $*\check{s}a$ ).
32. NS 1028: it is not clear why the labialisation disappears from the PWC reconstruction  $*p(a)q^jV$  'to feed', 'to rear', given its presence in the Circassian forms.
33. NS 1030: though CAbx  $*p\chi a$  'warm' can regularly correspond to CCirc  $*p\check{s}^j a/a$  'to boil (of milk), to ferment' and Ub  $p\check{s} a$  'warm', as assumed in NS, I follow Abdokov (1983:145) and alternatively compare the Abkhaz root with another Circassian item (taken from CCirc  $*\check{c}a-p\chi a$  'to dry up, dry out') and with the different East Caucasian material, cf. Proto-Nakh  $*=f\bar{a}b\chi-V(n)$  'hot' (cf. especially Bats  $=ap\chi\tilde{e}$  'id.',  $dop\chi$  'sweat': CAbx  $*p\chi a$  'warm',  $*p\chi-3a < *p\chi a-3a$  'sweat', with  $*3a$  'water'), Proto-Avar-Andi  $*=i\chi Vn-$  'to warm', 'to kindle', 'to become heated', Proto-Tsez  $*=i\bar{\chi}V-$  'warm', Proto-Dargin  $*=u\bar{\chi}(Vn)-$  'to burn', Proto-Lezgi  $*?e\chi Vn-$  'to catch fire' (all protoforms are from NS 563). Cf. also Proto-Kartvelian  $*-p\chi-$  'warm', probably a North Caucasian (Proto-Nakh or Proto-Abkhaz) loan, cf. Chirikba (1996:286).
- In the same entry the authors, like Kuipers (1975:37), confuse two different Circassian roots: (a) Kab  $p\check{s}a$  in  $p\check{s}a-f'a$  '(to) cook', tentatively derived by Šagirov (1977, II:33) from  $p\check{s} a$  'to knead' ( $<CCirc *p\check{s}-a/a$ ; if this is correct, in CCirc  $*p\check{s}^j a-$  'to cook', posited in NS, palatalisation should be eliminated), and (b) CCirc  $*p\check{c}^j a$  in  $*p\check{c}^j a-r a-ha$  'servant in charge of the fat/meat', cf. Smeets (1990-1991:51-53).
34. NS 1046: two West Caucasian roots are confused here: (a)  $*\check{s}^w a$  'to hunt', found in CAbx  $*\check{s}^w a-ra-\chi a$  'beast; deer' ( $-ra-\chi a$ , suffix forming deverbal nouns), Ub  $\check{\iota}a-\check{s}^w a$  'deer-hunting' ( $\check{\iota}a$  'deer'),  $\check{s}^w \bar{a}-k^j a$  'hunter' (not  $\check{s}^w a-k^j a$ , as given in NS; the latter form, found in Vogt (1963:178), was corrected in Dumézil (1965:241)), CCirc  $*ja-\check{s}a$  'to be after sth, to hunt, fish',  $*\check{s}a-k^w a$  'hunter, to hunt', and (b) a tentatively reconstructable CWC  $*\check{s}^w j a$ , as presented in CCirc  $*\check{s} a-ha$  'deer', CAbx  $*\check{s}^w a r a$  'animal, beast, wild', cf. Chirikba (1996:265-266).
35. NS 1099: Šagirov's (1977 I:277) analysis of CAbx  $*\check{z}^w a-n a z a$  as  $*\check{z}^w a$  'rib', 'side' plus  $*n a z a$  is quite convincing, pace NS, and is corroborated by such

following NS, Ad *ǰʲanaʒ* 'rennet, abomasum' as a cognate to CAbx *\*ǰʷa-nəza*, is all too risky: the word can be a mere semantic derivation of the homophonic Ad *ǰʲanaʒ* 'old shirt, dress', analysed as *ǰʲana* 'shirt' (< CCirc *\*gʲana*) and *ʒə* 'old'. Even if these two Adyghe words are etymologically unrelated homophones, still the analysis of Ad *ǰʲanaʒ* 'rennet, abomasum' remains rather uncertain. In the absence of a reliable Kabardian or Shapsygh counterpart (this, of course, cannot possibly be Kab *ʒa-n=fa-n* 'intestines (of animal); entrails', presented as such in NS), it is not possible to determine, whether the initial affricate comes from CCirc *\*ǰʲ* or *\*gʲ*. The final element *-ʒ*, in its turn, can be the regular pejorative suffix *-ʒə*, derived from *\*ʒə* 'old'. On the other hand, the Bzyp form of the word for 'spleen' is *a-vanəza*, i.e. with the front *z*, which produces another obstacle if we accept Starostin's etymology: an irregular correspondence between Adyghe *ʒ* and Abkhaz *z*. Furthermore, it is much more tempting to compare the Daghestanian words for 'spleen' (cf. Lezgi *çüleʒ*, Tabassaran *ʒʷelerʒʷ*, Agul *zʷeleʒ*, Rutul *ziliz*, Tsakhur *zılzam*, Udi *zizam*), given in NS as cognates to CAbx *\*ǰʷa-nəza* 'spleen' and Ad *ǰʲanaʒ* 'rennet, abomasum', directly with CCirc *\*zazə*, Ub *zaza*, CAbx *\*zə* 'bile, gall-bladder', cf. Chirikba (1996:305-306).

### Loan words

1. Sometimes it is not clear what chronological level is meant when the authors reconstruct Proto-North Caucasian forms on the basis of supposedly late borrowings. Examples: (a) the reconstruction of a PNC word for 'beer; whey' (NS 224), while the authors admit that it is "certainly an old Iranian (Scythian) loanword, ultimately going back to a Germanic source"; (b) A PNC, or "a very early (common) EC" word for 'birch' is reconstructed (NS 313), which, as the authors remark, "is obviously borrowed from an Iranian source". Incidentally, the EC words for 'birch' might be connected with very similar looking CAbx *\*bra/əçʷə*, Ub *brəçʷ*, *bəraçʷ*, *bərçʷ* 'medlar, Mespilus germanica' (which, if the Ubykh word is not a loan from Abkhaz, could point to CWC *\*bəra/əçʷə*).
2. pace NS 281, Ub *ʒa-śa* 'to swim' should be treated as an Abkhaz loan, cf. Bzyp *a-ʒ-śa-ra//>a-ǰ-śa-ra* 'to swim', with *a-ʒə* 'water', whose semantic counterpart in Ubykh is *bzə*, cf. Klimov (1967:355), Chirikba (1986:120).
3. NS 324: Archi *saqaṭu*= should be eliminated from the entry under PWC 'maimed, crippled' as it is a late loan (cf. Tu *sakat* < Arabic *saqaṭ* 'id.'), present also in other Caucasian languages. This renders the whole PNC reconstruction rather doubtful.
4. NS 359: Ub *ʒʸa* 'to ask' can be an Abkhaz loan, cf. CAbx *\*č'-fi-a* (the second morpheme is the verbal root extension), whose genuine Ubykh cognate is *č'a* 'to know, learn'.
5. NS 449, 450: The reconstruction of PWC *\*kʷəra/əçʷə* 'leopard' is quite dubious.

Kartvelian. The “highly tentative” character of the correspondence is noted by the authors themselves.

6. pace NS 531, Ub *ǰan* ‘to sharpen, wet’ can in fact be a borrowing from Adyghe *ǰan* ‘sharp’; cf. the corrected Ubykh form with the palatalised affricate in Dumézil (1965:223), where the borrowed nature of the Ubykh verb is pointed out.
7. NS 603: the reconstruction of PNC *\*Hrēmkwǝ* ‘reddish, red-haired’ is untenable, as Lezgi examples (Lezgi *raši* ‘dark yellow’, Tabassaran *raši* ‘light brown, reddish’) represent obvious Iranian loans, from where also Geo *raxs-i* ‘red horse’, *raš-i* ‘pedigree horse’, in Gurian *raž-i* ‘mythological winged horse’, Megr *raš-i*, Abx *a-raš* ‘id.’, Svan *raš* ‘gelding’, Arm *e-rašx* ‘reddish’, all from Iran *raxš* ‘red’ (> ‘the name of the horse of Rostam’).
8. NS 690: Abx *a-k’əla* ‘sheaf’, cited in NS as a cognate to similarly looking East Caucasian items, is usually regarded as a loan from Megr *k’əli//k’ili* (cf. Čaraja 1912:13; Bgažba 1964:209), though the etymology of the Megrelian word itself is not quite clear; in principle, it could be a loan from Abkhaz.
9. NS 696: because of the absense of *-r-*, I regard PWC *\*kata* (in Common Abkhaz meaning ‘village’, in Common Circassian ‘sheep-shed’) as representing another *Wanderwort*, different from those given in NS (Chechen *kert*, Ingush *kart* ‘fence, yard’, Geo (dial.), Megr *karta* ‘enclosure for cattle’, Hungarian *kert* ‘enclosure’, etc.), cf. such closer forms as Avesta *kata-* ‘mud-hut’, Persian *kād* ‘house’.
10. NS 736: Abx *a-k’<sup>w</sup>ak’<sup>w</sup>ar* ‘cake with cheese (often used for religious purposes)’, given in NS as a cognate to East Caucasian items, is quite probably a Kartvelian loan, cf. Geo *k’werk’wera* ‘round pie’, derived from Kartvelian *\*k’wer* ‘round cookie’, ‘round’, cf. Klimov (1964:110).
11. NS 925: Abx *a-q’anč’<sup>j</sup>* ‘(cocoon of the) silk worm’, given in NS as a cognate to East Caucasian words, is a Megrelian loan: Megr *ʔanč’-i* ‘silk worm’ (< Geo *q’ač’-i* ‘raw-silk’).
12. NS 1075: not only Ubykh, but (pace NS) also Abaza *h<sup>w</sup>aǰi-ra* ‘to change’ is borrowed from Circassian. For a possible analysis of the Circassian word, see Chirikba (1996:287-8).

### Misprints and omissions

It is not surprising to find some omissions and misprints in a work of this size, though their number is in fact very small. I would like to point out a few of them. NS 199: in the Chart of Proto-Circassian consonants the phonemes *\*j* and *\*ʔ<sup>w</sup>* are missing; NS 320: should be Ab *pslač<sup>w</sup>a* (not *-čw-*); NS 348: should be Ub *ca(n)cəš*, not *-š’*, cf. the corrected form in Dumézil (1975a:164); NS 364, first line: should be *-š’<sup>w</sup>* in Adyghe, not in Kabardian (who has no *-š’<sup>w</sup>*); NS 388: should be “Ad *məč’ə*; Kab *məš’a*”, not vice versa; Dirr (1927-8) is absent from the list of literature, though he is being referred to, e.g., on p. 481; NS 521: should be Ab *č’<sup>w</sup>əč’<sup>w</sup>-ra* (not *č’č’<sup>w</sup>-*); in many cases *a’i* misses the glottalisation mark, cf. NS 521 (should be Ab *č’<sup>w</sup>a’ja*,

PWC  $\acute{c}'^wVq'^wV$ ), NS 564 (should be Ub  $q'^j\partial$ ), NS 629 (should be Ub  $q'^\partial-\acute{c}'^j-$ ), NS 1028 (should be Ub  $a-s-p'q'^j\partial-n$ ); on p. 758 under PNC  $*\acute{t}-arV$  Avaro-Andi examples are missing; on p. 796 should be "W.-Cauc.  $*\acute{x}$ " instead of "PAT  $*\acute{x}$ "; NS 841: the genuine Ubykh form for 'quail' with the palatalised  $y^j$  was recorded by Mészáros 294, not by Dirr, as put in NS. Incidentally, I don't find the comparison of the CWC word for 'quail' with Daghestanian forms, as proposed in NS, phonetically convincing; the latter look very much as onomatopoeic formations, which cannot be said of the WC word; NS 851, 864: should be Abx  $\acute{c}'^v$  (not  $\acute{c}'^v$ ); NS 913: should be  $*q'^j\acute{a}q'^jV > *q'^j\acute{a}fV$  (not  $> *q'^j\acute{a}q'^jV$ ); NS 916: Abx  $a-\acute{z}\partial-tq'^wa$  '(water)-pool' contains  $-t-$ , not  $-t'-$ ; NS 948: CAbx  $*b\partial z-\acute{s}^wa$ , Bzyp  $a-b\partial z-\acute{s}^wa$  'language' contain  $\acute{s}^w$ , not  $\acute{s}^w$ ; NS 1011: the Ubykh word for 'secret' is  $wan\acute{z}a$ , cf. the corrected form in Dumézil (1965:248), not  $-n\acute{z}-$ , as given in NS; NS 1038: CAbx verb 'to curse, damn' is  $*\acute{s}^w\partial j\partial$ , not  $*\acute{s}^w-$ , as given in NS. In Chirikba (1996:266) I connect it with CCirc  $*w\partial-\acute{s}\partial j\partial/a$  'to admonish, exhort' and posit CWC  $*\acute{s}^w\partial j\partial$  (in NS: PWC  $*x^w\partial$ ); NS 1106: CAbx  $*z\partial$  'gall' has the front, not the middle spirant, as given in NS, who cite the mistakenly recorded Bzyp form  $a-\acute{z}\partial$  from Marr (1926:37), which was corrected in Dondua (1928:19).

Some remarks on translations: NS 386: the meaning of Abx  $a-\acute{\partial}apa-ra$ , Ab  $\acute{\partial}pa-ra$  (and hence PAbx  $*\acute{\partial}apa$ ) is 'to make, produce, prepare', rather than 'to plaster, paste'; NS 562: Abx, Ab  $(a)-h^wa-ra$  means 'to comb (hair)', not 'to scratch', as put in NS.

There is no doubt that, as long as our knowledge of NC comparative phonology and etymology continues to improve, some of the solutions proposed in NS will be modified. Further investigations will certainly reveal more lexical correspondences between the West and East Caucasian languages. As Starostin emphasizes in the introduction to the book, "There is still very much to be done, both in comparative phonology and in etymology of North Caucasian, and I am quite sure that *Addenda et corrigenda* will follow" (NS 5). One can hope that the excellent study accomplished by Nikolayev and Starostin will serve as a stimulus for the new generations of students in North Caucasian comparative linguistics, who will elaborate on this dictionary, rich in ideas and untrivial solutions, and move this so far undeservedly neglected branch of historical linguistics forward.

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