

**Kandelaki D. A. Early stages of ethnogenesis of Abkhazo-Adygs and geographical environment of their habitat (to the statement of the problem). // 50th Final Scientific Session (25 - 27 April). Theses of reports. - Sukhum: Abkhazian Institute of Humanitarian Research, 2006. P. 36- 37.**

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1. In order to solve some problems of ethnogenesis, an attempt was made to compare a wide range of sources not only historical, but also natural-historical (palaeogeography, palaeoecology, fauna, flora);
2. In my opinion, it is the early stages of the development of society in the territory where the processes of the origin of the Proto-Abkhazo-Adyg community could take place that are of the greatest interest. To establish the chronology and spatial localisation of its ethnogenesis;
3. Chronologically, this is the Mesolithic era, which is not accidental. This time coincided with serious climatic changes in the environment, in particular, with the beginning of warming and melting of glaciers. Geologically, this is the time of the end of the Pleistocene and the beginning of the new Holocene epoch. During that time there were cardinal rearrangements of natural-historical landscapes, ecological systems of connections, regimes of moistening and drying, transgressions and regressions of water areas and hydrographic network of inland water bodies, changes in the composition of flora and fauna;
4. All this stimulated the search for new forms of economy, including: changes in the nature of hunting, more complex gathering, intensification of fishing. Contacts between communities and their numbers increased, which further led to the formation of ethno-linguistic communities, economic and historical-cultural types;
5. However, the dynamics of these processes were not the same in different regions of the globe and had their own specifics. The Caucasus and, in particular, Western Transcaucasia are no exception to this rule;
6. As a wide range of sources shows, the territory of Western Transcaucasia was also subjected to changes in the natural environment that took place in the early Holocene epoch. However, it was affected insignificantly, had different consequences, and the same natural complexes were preserved here, which means that the ecological crisis affected society in Western Transcaucasia to a lesser extent and had specific features;

7. In my opinion, Western Transcaucasia, due to its natural conditions, could not have centres of production economy in its classical form. All centres of animal and plant domestication are located outside its territory, to the south of it and were formed in other natural and climatic conditions (dry and semi-dry steppes and forest-steppes, foothills of West Asia and other areas);

8. At the same time, there was forming here its own independent local primary centre of the producing economy, expressed in the domestication of millet, rye, pig and possibly goat. This process began almost simultaneously with the Fore-Asian and Eastern Mediterranean primary centres, but was extremely slow;

9. This was facilitated by the development of a powerful complex of fisheries as a response of society to the ecological changes that took place at the turn of the Pleistocene-Holocene. Highly productive fishery to some extent inhibited and did not stimulate active domestication. Besides, swampy coastal lowlands and forested foothills and mountains did not favour a serious transition to agriculture. The development of the most habitable foothill zone favoured the development of slash-and-burn agriculture, which required more time for land creation;

10. The analysis of the cultural lexicon allows us to determine the areal and chronological dynamics of the Abkhaz-Adygian community. The time of its gradual formation was the end of the Mesolithic and the beginning of the Neolithic, the place - Western Transcaucasia, as evidenced by faunal and floral terms;

11. Migrations did not have significant consequences for the change in the ethnic appearance of this area, for if migrants did occur, they were little adapted to the humid subtropical conditions of Western Transcaucasia. Aborigines were sufficiently prepared to accept new cultural innovations, adapting them to their environment, while they themselves physically dissolved the aliens in it.

**Kandelaki D. A. Geographical environment at the early stages of the history of Adygs and Abkhazians. // Archaeology, ethnography and folkloristics of the Caucasus. Materials of the International Scientific Conference. Makhachkala, 2007. P. 117 - 118.**

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To solve some problems of ethnogenesis of Adygs and Abkhazians we made an attempt to compare a wide range of sources not only historical but also natural-historical (palaeogeography, palaeoecology, flora and fauna). In my opinion, it is the early stages of the development of society in the territory where the processes of the origin of the Proto-Abkhazo-Adygian community could take place that are of the greatest interest.

Chronologically, this is the Mesolithic epoch, which is not accidental. This time coincided with serious climatic changes in the environment, in particular, with the beginning of warming and melting of glaciers. Geologically, this is the time of the end of the Pleistocene and the beginning of the new Holocene epoch. During this period there were cardinal rearrangements of natural-historical landscapes, ecological systems of connections, regimes of moistening and drying, transgressions and regressions of water areas and hydrographic network of inland water bodies, changes in the composition of flora and fauna. All this stimulated the search for new forms of economic activity, including: changes in the nature of hunting, more complex gathering, and intensified fishing. Contacts between communities and their numbers increased, which further led to the formation of ethno-linguistic communities, economic and historical-cultural types. Meanwhile, the dynamics of these processes was not the same in different regions of the globe and had its own specificity. The Caucasus and, in particular, Western Transcaucasia are no exception to this rule.

A wide range of sources shows that the territory of the Western Transcaucasus was also subjected to changes in the natural environment that took place at the beginning of the Holocene. However, it was affected insignificantly, had different consequences, and the same natural complexes were preserved here, which means that the ecological crisis affected the society in Western Transcaucasia to a lesser extent and had specific features. In my opinion, Western Transcaucasia, due to its natural conditions, could not have centres of production economy in its classical

form. All centres of animal and plant domestication are located outside its territory, to the south of it and were formed in other natural and climatic conditions (dry and semi-dry steppes and forest-steppes, foothills of West Asia and other areas).

At the same time, there was forming its own independent local primary centre of the producing economy, which was expressed in the domestication of millet, rye, pig and possibly goat.

This process began almost simultaneously with the Transdniatic and Eastern Mediterranean primary centres, but proceeded extremely slowly. This was facilitated by the development of a powerful fisheries complex as a societal response to the environmental changes that took place at the turn of the Pleistocene and Holocene. Highly productive fishery to some extent inhibited and did not stimulate active domestication. Besides, swampy coastal lowlands and forested foothills and mountains did not favour a serious transition to agriculture. The development of the most habitable foothill zone favoured the development of slash-and-burn agriculture, which required more time for land creation.

An analysis of the cultural lexicon allows us to determine the areal-chronological dynamics of the Abkhaz-Adyg community. The time of its gradual formation was the end of the Mesolithic and the beginning of the Neolithic, the place - Western Transcaucasia, as evidenced by faunal and floral terms. Migrations did not have significant consequences for changes in the ethnic appearance of this area, for if there were migrants, they were little adapted to the humid subtropical conditions of the Western Transcaucasus. Aborigines were sufficiently prepared to accept new cultural innovations, adapting them to their environment and physically dissolving the aliens in it.

**Kandelaki D. A. Neolithisation of the Eastern Black Sea region: the problem of interpretation in the context of the general concept of "Neolithic" (historian's view). // "Actual Archaeology. 3. New interpretations of archaeological data." Theses of the International Conference of Young Scientists. St. Petersburg, 25-28 April 2016. St. Petersburg, 2016.**

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Throughout the history of the study of the Neolithic of the Eastern Black Sea region, several main basic ideas about its character have developed:

1. Neolithisation of the Eastern Black Sea region has local roots, but it developed here extremely slowly, which gave grounds to speak about the "appropriating-producing" Neolithic (Nebiyeridze, 1986).
2. The Neolithic in the Eastern Black Sea region has no local roots and was relatively late brought here in a "complete form" from West Asia (Fedorov, 1973).
3. the Neolithic is initially absent in the Eastern Black Sea coast, the Mesolithic is replaced here directly by the Chalcolithic (Trifonov, 2009; Meshveliani, 2013).

Such contradictory ideas about the nature of the Neolithic of the region under consideration are associated with changes in the views of scientists on the essence of such concepts as Neolithic and Neolithisation, including in relation to the Eastern Black Sea region. It is, firstly, about the archaeological and socio-economic components of the concepts of Neolithic and Neolithisation; secondly, about the correlation between the rates of Neolithisation (i.e. the Neolithic era) and natural and climatic processes; thirdly, about the creation of universal concepts of "Neolithic" and "Neolithisation" on the basis of the first two positions.

Of course, there can be no question of a "universal" definition of the concept of "Neolithic" in relation to the areas where it existed. There is simply no such definition, for even in the classical Near Eastern centres the Neolithic is heterogeneous.

What is the real state of the problem? In the author's opinion, the Neolithic and Neolithisation (Neolithic Revolution) always strictly correlate with regional natural and climatic processes. Where climatic changes were abrupt, the society endures "adaptation stress" ("the phenomenon of neolithic stress" according to the author) more acutely, and the more vividly expressed in its classical forms "Neolithic" and "Neolithisation" (Dolukhanov, 1979). Thus, neolithisation is rather an expression of

the adaptive reaction of society to the level of natural and climatic changes in each particular region.

The other side of the problem is related to the definition of the chronological framework of neolithisation, as well as the legitimacy of the definition of "Neolithic revolution" as such, and the concept of "Neolithic" itself. In this connection it should be emphasised that, firstly, the origin of agriculture and cattle breeding is already outlined in the Mesolithic, and not everywhere the Neolithic is accompanied by a producing economy (Neolithic of Northern Eurasia, 1996). Secondly, it should be borne in mind that the speed of the Neolithisation processes, if we take the traditional Near Eastern centres as an example, is more like an evolution than a revolution. Thirdly, it is assumed that there is no strict connection between neolithisation and the Neolithic itself. Nowhere in pure form do they coincide (Trifonov, 2009). They have no clear framework, they are partly blurred in time and space, and are extremely amorphous in their content.

These circumstances hinder the definition of the Neolithic as an archaeological concept. At best, we can speak of a "Meso-Neolithic" or even better to say "Early Holocene" evolution, and in the Neolithic (if we take a purely chronological framework) it did not begin, but rather ended. In this case, the Neolithic epoch is rather a period when the process of Neolithisation finally ended, which archaeologically expressed itself in the appearance of techno-technological complexes conditioned by new economic realities. The Neolithic was a consequence of this evolution rather than vice versa.

Proceeding from all the above, all ideas about the Neolithic and Neolithisation of the Eastern Black Sea region are based, for the most part, on criteria that themselves require clarification, but allow, within the framework of a hypothetical model, to present the following scenario of the formation of the Neolithic of the Eastern Black Sea region.

1. The Early Holocene evolution (in the classical sense - Neolithisation or Neolithic Revolution) took place in the Eastern Black Sea region synchronously with the "advanced" centres of the Near East.
2. The specificity of natural processes in the region under consideration (glacial refugia, absence of sharp climatic fluctuations) excluded a rigid correlation "man-nature", and the "phenomenon of neolithic stress" acted with less force, and the local population simply had no need to radically reconstruct the entire life support system, and the adaptation of local inhabitants did not occur so quickly and not so pronounced as in the Middle East.
3. In the Eastern Black Sea region, the process of Neolithisation, taking into account the peculiarities of the natural environment, was based on domesticated plant and

animal species inherent to the region and contributed to the formation of the types of economic activities inherent to the region.

In conclusion, it should be said that the majority of Mesolithic and Neolithic monuments were studied in the period when there was an imperfect methodological and methodological base. Undoubtedly, modern methods of research, which in the future will be carried out in the mentioned region, will lead to further progress in the study of such an important historical stage, and will probably confirm the correctness of the proposed hypothesis.

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## **Kandelaki D.A. Hattas of ancient Anatolia Origin. Localisation. Chronology.**

**The article is an abridged and partially revised version of a paper written by Kandelaki D. A. Hatta in Russian. The paper covers the topics of localisation, identification, and chronology and was presented at the Yakayev Readings conference. Scientific Heritage of F.A. Shcherbina: Cossacks and the History of the Caucasus. Krasnodar, 2016. pp. 51-70.**

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The Hattians are believed to belong, chronologically, to a period that enables experts to present an ethno-cultural and linguistic image immediately preceding the written stage. As one of the earliest peoples attested by written sources, their cultural and linguistic characteristics can be studied with objectivity. It is crucial to maintain a logical structure while writing about their history to facilitate comprehension and provide valuable insight into ancient cultures.

Based on written sources, specifically the established Hatt attribution of the Aladzha culture and its Aladzha-Guyuk complex, which dates back to the late Chalcolithic and early Bronze Age period, we can estimate the territorial limits of the Hatt settlement in the period leading up to the historical (written) era.

The Kyzyl-Irmak River (Marasantia, Galis) served as the main area of Hatt settlement. It appears that the largest concentration of the Hatt population was located in the bend of this river. In addition, the Hattians established settlements to the north in the basin of the Yesil-Irmak River. Without a doubt, numerous Hatt settlements were situated along the Anatolian coastline of the Black Sea, near the mouths of the Kizil-Irmak and Yesil-Irmak rivers. Apparently, Hatt settlements occupied many small gorges along rivers that flowed down tributaries of the Yesil-Irmak and Kizil-Irmak rivers, including those flowing from the southern slopes of the Pontic Mountains. The regions between the Kyzyl-Irmak River and the northern slopes of the Cilician, Central and Inner Taurus were undoubtedly the settlement zones of the Hattians. It is likely that the Hattian population was situated towards the west of the Kyzyl-Irmak River, encompassing the Tuz Lake vicinity. The natural-geographical and ethno-territorial confines of the Hattian settlement during this period were delineated by prominent features such as the Kyzyl-Irmak River, the Pontic Mountains, and the mountains of the Cilician Taurus.



It is challenging to make any definitive statements about the regions situated to the north and northeast of the central area of the Hatt settlement, which are adjacent to the Armenian Highlands, the Black Sea coastline of the Pontic Mountains and the Chorokh River basin. Considering the archaeological sites close to Aladzha-Guyuk, we have reasons to believe that ancient mountain communities, if not the Hattians themselves, or related groups, may have lived in this region.

The research of the earliest ethno-cultural stages of the Hattians poses the most challenging and pressing issue. The creators of the Aladja culture are thought to have been from a population who spoke the Hattian language. This language is generally classified by most experts as part of the North Caucasian / Caucasian language family and the Abkhazian-Adygian or West Caucasian language group.

Considering that the Hattian language has been documented in its place of origin since the middle of the 3rd millennium BC, it suggests a presence of at least 1000-1500 years before its fixation in written sources. Thus, the formation of the ancient palaeometallic cultures in Anatolia should be regarded as the chronological reference point for its development.

Therefore, the Hattian language is a branch that diverged directly from the Proto-Western Caucasian state during an early stage. This period generally corresponds to the disintegration of the Proto-North Caucasian community, which dates back to no later than the 6th millennium BC.

The Sino-Caucasian/Dene-Caucasian macrofamily is believed to have disintegrated in the 11th millennium BC. This separation occurred when the earliest links of the macrofamily, namely the Sino-Tibetan and Na-Dene families, were detached from its composition. Towards the end of the 9th millennium BC, the Caucasian-Basque-Benisei-Burushaski community eventually fragmented into two distinct parts, namely the Basque-Caucasian and Benisei-Burushaski communities, after remaining homogeneous for quite some time. And afterwards, around one and a half thousand years later, in the 8th millennium BC, these branches also fragmented.

Around the seventh millennium BCE, homogeneous groups gradually arose in the Eastern Black Sea region, encompassing both the Anatolian and Caucasian parts. This emergence eventually contributed towards the ethno-linguistic development of the precursor to the West Caucasian community within the larger North Caucasian/Caucasian community. Around 1000-1500 years later, the Hatti began to form in the Anatolian area of this expansive region. In the Caucasian region, the West Caucasian community retained its coherence for a minimum of 2000 years.

It was in the 4th millennium B.C that the Praadig Praubykh and Praabkhaz branches formed, representing the final stage of the community's separation.

Today, the earliest stages of the formation of Central Anatolian cultures pose a challenge to define objectively. However, it is established that neighbouring territories surrounding the future settlement of the Hattas were pivotal in the establishment of the most ancient Neolithic civilisations. Notably, Cheyuniyu-Tepesi, a reference monument, emerged during the Pre-Ceramic Neolithic "A" period (PPNA). The monument represents a cultural stratum with direct continuity and analogies in the Pontic region. Related monuments similar to Cheyuniyu-Tepesi are assumed to be present in areas north of this monument, extending up to the southern Black Sea coast of Turkey.

Probably, settlements such as Cheyuniyu-Tepesi (including prominent monuments such as Gebekli-Tepesi) gradually extended their influence northwards and westwards, reaching the Southern Black Sea coastline and Central Anatolia. Along with them came the knowledge and abilities of the Neolithic economy. One of the cultures they engendered was the Aladja culture, which was left behind by the Hattas, the direct descendants of the earlier settlers who had been part of the cluster of Neolithic cultures akin to Cheyuniyu-Tepesi. The Aladzha culture has a continuation in the north-eastern regions of Asia Minor and the Pontic regions of Turkey, where it is represented by monuments such as Mahmatlar and Khoroz-Tepesi.

To comprehend the chronology of the initial stage of the Hatta branch's isolation and its representation in Hatti, which is likely the only known representative of this branch, we present the following hypothetical ethnogenetic model.

Towards the end of the Mesolithic era and the beginning of the Early Pre-Ceramic Neolithic "A" period, there is a visible process of Neolithic centre production taking place in the eastern borders of Anatolia. This event corresponds with natural-historical processes. During the transition from Mesolithic to Neolithic, climatic changes caused marshes and lakes in Central Anatolia to decrease, leading to the ingress of ancient Neolithic farmers from adjacent areas of the Fertile Crescent. The Cheyuniyu-Tepesi culture represents these regions and is most likely the ancestors of the ancient Hattas. Therefore, the ancient Hatta group's roots may be linked to the individuals who constructed the monument and the cultures neighboring the Cheyuniyu-Tepesi monument circle.

This process is a component of the cohesive impulse of agricultural Neolithic expansion across Anatolia and into the Balkan-Carpathian and Mediterranean regions of Europe, which we can confidently link to the decline of the Basque-Caucasian branch. It aligns chronologically with archaeological evidence.

In any case, during the 8th millennium BC, the inhabitants of Central Anatolia possessed a highly developed Neolithic economy and were evidently progressing towards the formation of the earliest palaeometallic cultures, considering copper metal was first identified at the Cheyuyu-Tepesi site. Recent studies suggest that the pioneers of metallurgy were the North Caucasus speakers. This theory is supported by pra-linguistic reconstructions of cultural vocabulary.

During this period, comparable developments occurred in the coastal regions of the Eastern Black Sea and beyond Anatolia, encompassing the Caucasian Black Sea coast as well. The coalescence of the neighbouring geographical environment by the Eastern Black Sea coast, where several West Caucasian groups that are related to the Hattians emerged within its territories, played a significant role in this.

After separating from the West Caucasian community, we believe that the forefathers of the later Hattians migrated to various nearby regions. These regions were predominantly inhabited by cultures closely associated with Cheiyunu-Tepesi. Numerous groups descended, mastering the mountain valleys of the Central and Eastern Taurus Mountains, the Pontic Mountains. They gradually traversed the Central Anatolian plateau, settling in the large basins of the Kyzyl-Irmak and Yeshil-Irmak rivers. This impulse originated from territorial centres directly adjacent to the original centre of the West Caucasian community.

At the start of the second millennium BC, the impressive civilization of the Hattians, who were able to act as a bridge for the transmission of metallurgical traditions from the Western Caucasus to ancient Sumer, began to decline. During this time, the Hittites, who were part of the ancient Anatolian branch of the Indo-European language family, arrived in Anatolia. The Hittite language gradually became obsolete, leaving behind only the language of worship and rituals. The Hittite Indo-Europeans, who inherited the political institutions and state structure created by the Hittites, were the main beneficiaries of their legacy.

During the late 1st millennium BC, it is believed that the Hattian language was still spoken in some remote mountainous regions of ancient Anatolia.

**Kandelaki D. A. At the origins of the ethnogenesis of the Abkhaz-Adygs: data from various sources (historian's view).** // Theses of the report. IV Abkhazian International Conference in memory of L. N. Soloviev. Sukhum, 2017.

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1. The author addresses significant topics regarding the early stage of ethnogenesis and ethnic history among the Abkhaz-Adygian (West Caucasian) population, which in ancient times encompassed the Hattians, Kaskovs, and Abeshla.
2. Based on glottochronology and cultural-historical data, the separation of the West Caucasian community from the North Caucasian family occurred in 4000 BC, starting from 5000. From approximately 45-46 BC to 30 BC, a unified Proto-Western Caucasian community existed. Its division into the Abkhaz, Adyghe and Ubykh branches occurred during the Early Bronze Age.
3. Linguistic evidence from the Abkhaz-Adygian languages supports the proposition that the earliest stages of West Caucasian ethnogenesis occurred in the same environmental zones where the modern representatives of this group are currently situated.
4. In the early phases of ethnogenetic history, the Proto-Western Caucasian community came into contact with neighbouring ethnogenetic formations that were similar in nature. Regarding its settlement, Hatto-Anatolian contacts (late III-early II B.C.) were present on the southern periphery (Asia Minor), while contacts between Abkhaz-Adygo and Indo-Aryan cultures date back to the III millennium B.C. on the northern periphery (North Caucasus). Further contacts, particularly with the Libio-Guanche family of the Afrasian macro-family, are believed to have occurred during the era of increased maritime activity. These interactions may have taken place in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean regions as early as the late 4th and early 3rd millennia BC (end of the 4th and beginning of the 3rd millennium BC). IV beginning of III ct. BC.
5. The Kartvelian family does not show any similarities with the Proto-Western Caucasian community. This suggests that the Proto-Kartvelians migrated from the north after the collapse of the Nostratic macrofamily. Their arrival in the Caucasus most likely occurred during the Early Iron Age, when they started assimilating the pre-existing ancient Pre-Kartvelian Abkhazo-Adygian population of the Eastern Black Sea region. These relics of the pre-Cartvelian Abkhazo-Adig culture were apparently documented by early antiquity sources in the ancient Colchis region.



**Kandelaki D. A. The Ancestral Homeland in the Ethnogenesis of the Abkhazians. In: I Scientific and Educational Seminar “The Map Tells: Cartographic Culture in the Context of Studying the History and Nature of Abkhazia”. Gagra-Pitsunda, 2019, pp. 86-109.**

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The study of ethnogenesis involves determining the initial meta origin of ethnoses, which is commonly referred to as the ancestral homeland. This task is central to the investigation of Abkhazian ethnogenesis. The concept of primordina has multiple definitions, one of which specifies the ancestral homeland as a geographically defined area where the initial formation process of a people occurred. On the other hand, it is important to comprehend the primordial homeland as the geographical zones where the drive of individual ethnic components originated and eventually consolidated to form the basis of the emerging people. This report employs methodological principles and attitudes that align with this understanding.

In the study of Abkhazian ethnogenesis, the concept of an ancestral homeland is crucial, as it is the essence of the study of the ethnogenetic history of Abkhaz people. Therefore, a survey and analysis of current research, theories and hypotheses is required to better understand this issue. This issue is interconnected with theories and hypotheses regarding autochthony and migration, which ultimately establish the likely location of the ancestral homeland during the ethnogenesis of the Abkhazians. Importantly, considering the chronology of these theories and hypotheses, they cannot be separated from the questions surrounding the origins of speakers of Abkhazian-related languages and peoples, both past and present. At present, the origin of the Abkhaz people is studied using the following traditional triad in academic research.

1. Migration model: In essence, this model aims to understand the role of migrations from ancient ethnic and linguistic groups at various points in historical time. The model employs a causal connection between statements and balances a formal register with precise word choice and grammatical correctness. Biased and figurative language is avoided, and technical term abbreviations are explained when first introduced. Additionally, the text adheres to the conventional structure and includes necessary information in simple sentences while maintaining proper citation and footnote formatting. The process of forming the ethnic and linguistic identity on the territory of Abkhazia, where the Abkhazian people eventually developed, is viewed as a long process of external population invasion alternating with periods of destabilisation. Over time, the ethnic group settles in this territory, adapting to the environment and experiencing periods of destabilisation and

stabilisation. The migration pattern comprises alternating periods of destabilisation and stabilisation. Both the northern and southern impulses are considered as geographical centres of migration impulses by proponents of this approach, resulting in a migration model that can be strictly divided into two parts.

- The "Northern" Migration Model: Proponents of migration hypotheses and theories posit that the Abkhaz people's formation process was facilitated through the invasion of ancient ethno-linguistic groups that migrated from regions above the Transcaucasus, or even the Caucasus.

- The "southern" migration model is supported by theories and hypotheses that connect the ethnogenetic process with the ancient civilizational centers of Anatolia, Northern Mesopotamia, and the Ancient Near East. It should be noted that this concept of migration from the south has remained the most persistent and tenacious in modern historical science.

2. The autochthonous model suggests that the Abkhaz people were formed through a long and continuous development of their various ethno-forming components within this territory during the evolutionary progress of ancient society. Although the impact of foreign ethno-linguistic elements cannot be completely ignored, they played a minimal role in the ethnogenetic history of the people. Along with the migration model, the autochthonous model has multiple branches.

- The most exaggerated form of the "classical" autochthonous model is represented by theories and hypotheses that posit the continuity of material and spiritual culture.

Meanwhile, the "ecological" model places significant emphasis on adapting to the natural environment and creating a complex system called the life-support system.

- The "super-deep autochthonism" model aligns with the preceding two models of autochthonous development. However, it features a slightly wider interpretation of its time frame or chronological framework.

3. The autochthonous-migration model, also known as the compromise model, proposes a dialectical combination of autochthonous and migration processes within a single ethno-linguistic massif. This review is not novel and has become a standard reference, familiar to the general public from school curricula in a condensed form. However, in the context of our report, it is apparent that subjective evaluations give rise to difficulties in comprehending the notion of an ancestral homeland. Citations and footnote formatting will adhere to the style guide. Precise subject-specific vocabulary will be used.

Each theory, hypothesis, and related models - which are supported by various specialists - illustrate a geographical range of starting points that trace the ethnogenetic formation of people from their historical impulses. These connections between statements are imperative to establishing a logical flow of information. Abbreviations for technical terms will be explained upon their initial use. The language will remain formal, bias-free, and value-neutral throughout the report. Grammatical accuracy, spelling, and punctuation are expected. Another striking fact is the interrelationship of the different approaches of its supporters, as these theories and hypotheses often complement each other rather than being mutually exclusive. Introduction and theoretical premises such as these should be relied upon when defining the definition of primordina. Before we begin to review the main options regarding various options for ancestral homelands, let's touch on the very definition of the concept of ancestral homeland. An ancestral homeland is, in a sense, a relatively strictly delineated conventional geographical zone, a centre from which the initial substrate component that formed the basis for the formation of a people originates. In contrast to the concept of homeland as the centre of historical residence of a specifically taken people, the primordial homeland is always defined as an external concept in relation to the subsequent homeland. Its other important criterion is chronological, when the primordial homeland is thought of as a relatively older concept in relation to the homeland proper. To some extent this is even comparable not so much to its geographical as to its grammatical or even semantic interpretation, analysis and understanding. The concept of primordial homeland is valid in another context, when it can and geographically coincides with the concept of homeland this is in the case of recognising exactly the autochthonous model. As a result, we can safely say that, on the one hand, the term primordina should be understood as a geographical centre chronologically older in relation to the later homeland. On the other hand, depending on the number of ethno-linguistic components that took part in the formation of the people, there can be several forefathers. Another important point, when there was a displacement of the whole people from one territory to another, then we can talk about one ancestral homeland. And so let's begin to review the main theories and hypotheses in order to analyse the most likely location of the ancestral homeland in the process of ethnogenetic history and formation of the Abkhazian people, and more broadly taking into account the chronological framework of the Abkhazian-Adygian or more correctly West Caucasian ethnogenetic community. Taking into account the chronological framework it is necessary to touch upon such an important component in the study of ethnogenesis as the problem of classification. In the established scientific tradition, the principles of ethno-linguistic classification prevail for



ethnogenetic reconstructions. Let us give a small excursion into this problem. Abkhazians, Adygs, Kabardians, and Circassians, including the recently extinct Ubykh language, belong to the Abkhazo-Adygian group of languages, or more precisely, to the West Caucasian group. This group also comprises of the now disappeared Hatta and Kaskei groups. While the ethno-linguistic status of the Kaski remains unresolved and is subject to varying assessments by specialists, it is worth noting that they are part of the West Caucasian group. This group, along with the Nakh and Dagestani groups, are sometimes combined into a higher taxonomic rank referred to as the North Caucasian ethno-linguistic community. The Nakh and Dagestani groups are associated with peoples who once resided in specific areas of Northern Mesopotamia, including the Hurrians and Urartians. Unfortunately, these groups no longer exist. In some instances, there is debate surrounding the relatedness of these groups, or their kinship is accepted with reservations. The author of this report also leans toward considering these groups as separate language families, despite their undeniable connection to one another. It should be noted that advancements in science have led to the identification of linguistic and ethnogenetic relationships on a deeper chronological and classification level. As a result of modern research, comparativists have reconstructed a community of higher taxonomic and hierarchical levels, which demonstrate that East Caucasian groups, either together or separately, are a part of a more extensive grouping referred to as the Sino-Caucasian or Dene-Caucasian macrofamily of languages. However, this report does not delve into this problem and is solely focused on presenting the aforementioned language groups and families. The report outlines the Basque, Abkhazo-Adyg (West Caucasian), Nakh-Dagestani (East Caucasian), Hatta, Hurrite-Urartian, Burushaski, Yenisei, Sino-Tibetan and Na-Dene language families included in the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily. While their inclusion in this macrofamily is undisputed, their kinship, classification and taxonomic relations are the subject of intense study and debate. In this context, it is essential to highlight the significance of the classification excursion as it directly addresses the issue of the origins of the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily. This includes the historical circumstances surrounding its emergence, as well as the chronology and geographical centre of its formation. Ultimately, it is vital to resolve the problem of the place and time of formation to determine the time and place of its main links - descendants who later, after the disintegration of this community, mastered their ancestral homelands independently. We place the formation of the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily in the middle or, at best, the end of the Mesolithic period. Several experts propose its existence in the Early Pre-Ceramic Neolithic A period of Near Eastern origin. There are several versions of the spatial location of this macrofamily, including Beringian,

Central-Middle Asian, Indochinese, and Iranian-Blue Eastern. Determining its area of origin poses a much more complex issue that necessitates information from both archaeology and linguistics, as well as palaeogeography and palaeoclimatology. We will not delve into the complexities of critically analyzing the hypotheses surrounding this location. However, it is worth noting that the concept of forefathers plays a significant role in studying the early stages of Abkhazian ethnogenesis. It involves multiple stages of extrapolation, including areal-chronological stages such as those listed below.

1. Determining the Time and Place of Formation of the Sinno-Caucasian (Dene-Caucasian) Macrofamily.
2. Determining the time and place of formation of the Western Sinno-Caucasian branch.
3. Determination of the time and location of the development of the North Caucasian (Caucasian) family.
4. Determining the time and place of formation of the West Caucasian branch of the Caucasian language family.
5. Determining the time and location of the establishment of the Proto-Abkhaz community.

Already such a multi-stage extrapolation, represented by five chronological stages and levels implying and five levels of differentiation, Already such a multi-stage extrapolation, represented by five chronological stages and levels implying and five levels of differentiation, Already such a multi-stage extrapolation, represented by five chronological stages and levels implying and five levels of differentiation, Already such a multi-stage extrapolation, represented by five chronological stages and levels implying and five levels of differentiation, Already such a multi-stage extrapolation, represented by five chronological stages and levels implying and five levels of differentiation Obviously, by this time we should speak about the separation of the West Siberian-Caucasian subdivision of this macrofamily. Obviously, by this time we should speak about the separation of the West Siberian-Caucasian subdivision of this macrofamily. Obviously, by this time we should talk about the separation of the West Siberian-Caucasian subdivision of this macrofamily. Obviously, by this time we should talk about the separation of the West Siberian-Caucasian subdivision of this macrofamily. Having existed as a unified whole, this Western Sino-Caucasian subdivision breaks up into separate branches, when there is an impulse with the separation of the ancient Prabasian group. Having existed as a single whole, this Western Sino-Caucasian subdivision breaks up into separate branches when the impulse with the separation of the ancient Prabasian group occurs. Having existed as a unified whole, this Western Sino-Caucasian subdivision breaks up into separate branches when the impulse with the allocation of the ancient Prabasian group takes place. Ultimately, the Neolithisation

of the Mediterranean area, and in fact the European subcontinent, was carried out by ancient communities of speakers of the Sino-Caucasian macrofamily of languages. It is also important to understand where this separation of the Basque and Caucasian branches took place. Of course, geographically, the centre of such localisation should be marked on the map in a place that is as if in the middle between the centres of the current settlement of the modern Basque and Caucasian areas. Rather, such a territory should be either the west of modern Turkey, or, in the extreme case, the south and east of the Balkan Peninsula. The time of such a division should be somewhere around the end of the 8th - beginning of the 7th ct. From that time we can speak about the beginning of independent isolation of the North Caucasian community. Taking into account the fact that from the consideration of the problem of chronology and areal of the formation of the North Caucasian community we are approaching the problem of the ancestral homeland of both Abkhaz-Adygs and Abkhazians in particular, we will dwell on this problem in more detail. Since considering the mechanisms of its formation will ultimately determine the assessment of the future fate of its individual descendants. To analyse the problem of the spatial localisation of the North Caucasian community in the early stages of its history, an integrated approach to the analysis of sources suitable for such reconstruction is of great importance. This includes natural history data such as palaeogeography, palaeoclimatology, palaeoarchaeozoology, palaeoarchaeobotany and palaeoecology, as well as data from the humanities such as history (in the sense of written sources), ethnography, archaeology and, finally, linguistics. A special place is occupied by biological sciences in particular, such as human biology with such components as physical anthropology, palaeoanthropology, craniology, osteology, racial studies, historical anthropology, human genetics, historical genetics, palaeogenetics. All these areas have independent methods and methodological principles, their own scientific apparatus, their own subject and object of research, their own goals and objectives. The conclusions of these sciences sometimes contradict or complement each other. And most often they do not correlate with each other at all. And bringing all their results together in a single conceptual chain, aimed at solving a particular ethnogenetic problem is sometimes an insoluble task, most often not even solvable. What is the current state of study of the problem of the hypothetical ancestral homeland of the ancient community of speakers of dialects of the North Caucasian community of the time of its existence, as well as the foci of its geographical localisation, differ diametrically opposite. Taking into account the specifics of the event of its goals and objectives, I will not have the time and opportunity to give a detailed excursion into this problem and, moreover, to give a critical review of all currently existing views. I will only say that there are several alternative approaches to such an assessment.

Today, according to comparativistic data, experts attribute the existence of the North Caucasian community to the period of the developed Neolithic, with an entry

into the early Chalcolithic. This is evidenced by the identified linguistic set of the most important cultural features of the so-called basic and cultural vocabulary. Thus, the period of existence of this community falls on the time within the limits of about VI millennium B.C. Taking into account the fixation in the early written period of the earliest archaic representatives of the North Caucasian community, such as the Hattas and Hurrians, the limit of the time scale before the disintegration of this community, somewhere before the end of the VI - beginning of the V tt. There is also no unanimity in assessing its localisation, i.e. the centre of its formation. The appearance of the economy and culture of the North Caucasian community before its disintegration paints a picture of a developed Neolithic economy. No such developed economy has been recorded for the Caucasus at that time. At the present stage, specialists even began to doubt that the Neolithic could have local roots in the Caucasus. This means that the Neolithic in the Caucasus has no local origin and was brought from the culturally and technologically advanced areas of the Middle East. Some linguists believe that the presence of ancient representatives of the North Caucasian community in the Middle East, such as the Hattas and Hurrians, symptomatically testify to the southern Fore-Asian centre of the formation of the North Caucasian community. Moreover, such a centre should most likely be the territory of Upper (Northern) Mesopotamia, Eastern Anatolia and the Transdniesian Plateau in the so-called "triangle of the great Transdniesian lakes" such as Sevan, Van and Urmia. According to one scenario, the division of the North Caucasian community took place in the south and the Caucasus was already being developed by separate branches of the North Caucasian community. The west of the Caucasus and the adjoining areas of the Black Sea were developed by the ancestors of the Abkhaz-Adyg peoples, while the east of the Caucasus and the adjoining areas of the Caspian Sea were developed by the ancestors of the Nakh-Dagestani peoples. They also carried to the Caucasus the rudiments of Neolithic culture, the skills of which they had acquired in West Asia. To some extent, this concept can be confirmed by the fact that migrations in the initial peripheral area are always characterised by the presence of the most archaic populations. In this case, the presence on the periphery of the area of ancient settlement of the North Caucasian community, the Hattas and Hurrians, who, as it were, remained on the former territories unaffected by migration processes and remained in their original homelands, confirms this thesis.

Another scenario for the chronology and areal of the North Caucasian community is somewhat more complicated. According to some specialists, the identified linguistic realities paint a picture of the North Caucasian community not as a developed Neolithic, but rather as a developed Eneolithic. In this connection, specialists who support this model are inclined to believe that representatives of the ancient society of speakers of the North Caucasian language were among the first, if not the very first in the western part of Eurasia to cross the chronological boundary marking the birth of copper non-ferrous metallurgy. This period is also referred to

as the Palaeometallic period. In this connection, in the final analysis, the archaeological data of the Chalcolithic period paints us the following picture, when the first sprouts of metallurgical production, which originated in Eastern Anatolia, experienced a period of prolonged stagnation here. Then we find the unique phenomenon of the so-called "Balkan-Carpathian metallurgical explosion", which covered the Balkan Peninsula, the lower course of the Danube, the Carpathians and the adjacent areas of the north-western Black Sea region, with their brilliant Eneolithic cultures. The most developed metallurgical terminology is recorded in the Proto-North Caucasian cultural lexicon. Thus, a number of specialists model the migration of the carriers of these metallurgical traditions and link such a rapid rise of the "Balkan-Carpathian metallurgical province" of the early Chalcolithic period (late 6th - early 5th centuries BC) with the arrival of the speakers of the Proto-North Caucasian language from Anatolia. With this process they link a chain of cultures, such as Tripoli and a number of others. Thus they postulate a migration model of a multi-stage plan Anatolia - Balkans - Carpathians - Northern Black Sea region - Caucasus. This path, which can be called the "Circumpontian model", implies the eventual appearance of the North Caucasians in the Caucasus by a circular route. With all the obvious solidity of this model and well-presented evidence base, and this fact is confirmed by the fact that in the Balkan-Carpathians the most ancient toponyms and hydronyms are indeed of linguistic nature, which is rather identical to the Proto-North Caucasian circle, it is difficult to answer why the Proto-North Caucasians did not immediately come to the Caucasus from Anatolia, but bypassed the Black Sea region from the north-west to do so. We would like to note that this model unexpectedly coincides with the fact that some specialists believe that there was probably a very powerful migration when a new group of migrants came to the Caucasus not with the skills of Neolithic economy, but already in the Eneolithic form. If it was indeed the North Caucasians who spread metallurgy skills in the vast Circumpontic region, it may be that chronologically this migration process covered both the Balkan-Carpathians and the Caucasus. Perhaps, this North Caucasian substratum was not preserved in the Balkans, but was preserved only in the Caucasus, allowing for the existence of more branches of the North Caucasian community than there are now. It is practically impossible to answer this at the present stage. These are, undoubtedly, the data we have today about the time and routes of settlement and migration of the North Caucasians. However, we know for sure that already in the Chalcolithic period there were ancient carriers of the already disintegrated North Caucasian community in the Caucasus. The next chronological level, which we will now consider, is the period of isolation of separate branches of the North Caucasian community. Taking into account the subject of the report concerning the ethnogenesis of the Abkhazians we are directly interested in the ethnogenetic fate of the Abkhaz-Adygian or better to say West Caucasian community.

Before touching upon the problem of the chronology and areal of the ethnogenetic history of the early stages of the development of the West Caucasian community (and I still believe that the latter should be considered a separate family), we should return to the question of the nature of its composition. In addition to the modern representatives of the community, such as the Abkhaz-Abazi and Adyghe branches, which I mentioned above, it also traditionally included a number of languages and peoples that do not exist today. First of all it is Hatti and it should be especially noted that Hatti is only the earliest of the recorded languages, which, most likely, was not the only one in this region, and we are talking about ancient Anatolia. Kaski and Abeshlayans are represented next, but it is still unknown whether they should be seen as separate branches of the West Caucasian community or whether they are probably only representatives of the Abkhazian and Adyghe groups recorded in ancient Eastern written sources. The question of the language of the so-called "Maikop" and "Sukhumi" slabs, which, according to experts, are also found in the Eastern Mediterranean, in particular in Phoenicia in the city of Byblos, remains debatable. If their West Caucasian linguistic nature is recognised, this would suggest the presence of separate trade groups of the Abkhaz-Adyghe population in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean as well. However, this concept has not been recognised in science. It is more probable that to the West Caucasian linguistic nature should be attributed cultures in South and West Anatolia, which coexisted with the Hattians and conventionally called Proto-Palayan and Proto-Luvian pre-Indo-European linguistic substrates. There is also information in the literature about attempts of comparison with Abkhazo-Adygian languages of Linear A script from the period of Minoan civilisation of Crete. However, the author is not aware of the current state of science in this field regarding the composition of the West Caucasian community in its ancient state.

As for the problem of comparing the areal of the formation of the West Caucasian community, much depends on the specialist's interpretation of the relationship between the various branches located within the West Caucasian community. The time of formation of the West Caucasian community should correlate with the period of the collapse of the North Caucasian community. The time is approximately known. The North Caucasian community existed approximately until the end of the 6th and beginning of the 5th centuries BC. 6 beginning of the 5th century B.C., hence, the isolation of the Proto-Western Caucasian community from the North Caucasian community took place exactly in this period. Thus, for a thousand and a half years the West Caucasian community was preserved as a single homogeneous entity, within which there were pradialects, which in the future would form separate branches of the West Caucasian community after its disintegration. These data correlate well with the data of cultural vocabulary common to the Proto-West Caucasian community, which testifies that the speakers of the Proto-West Caucasian dialects had already mastered the practice of slash-and-

burn agriculture, knew cultivated millet, mastered early horticultural skills, knowing already cultivated pear and apple, mastered cattle breeding and poultry breeding, in particular chicken breeding, and, most importantly, mastered developed copper metallurgy. Thus, the Proto-West Caucasians existed as a single entity at least since the middle of the 5th century B.C. Now, as for the territorial localisation of this community, the language data also testify that the ecological appearance and the picture of the natural environment of the Proto-West Caucasians correspond to the mountain-coastal landscape. The presence of such an important part as marine vocabulary, for example, marine pebbles (coastal), fish (marine), testifies to the location of the Proto-West Caucasian ancestral homeland near a large sea basin. All this testifies to the very early location of the ancestral homeland of the Proto-West Caucasians in the regions adjacent to the Eastern Black Sea, both in the Caucasian and Anatolian parts of the region. The question of the time of their appearance in these regions is more complicated. According to the tradition established in science, a popular theory and idea about kinship of ancient inhabitants of Asia Minor known as Hatti with the peoples of the Abkhazian-Adygian group was formed. In this regard, for a long time, and up to now among specialists prevails the idea that the Hattians are direct ancestors of the Abkhazian-Adygs, chronologically preceding them as some ancestral people in relation to them. Consequently, in this case the ancestral home of Abkhazo-Adygs was sought south of the Caucasus where the ancient Hattians lived. This in turn gave rise to a lot of theories and hypotheses, according to which ancestors of Abkhazo-Adygs migrated from the original centres of their ancestral homeland just from there, where the area of Hattas was located. In the person of the Kaskeians and Abeshlayans, therefore, one could see traces of a chronologically later evidence and the fact of such a migration. Most of the discussions thus take place around the problem of chronology, ways and mechanisms of such migration. At this stage, it is necessary to look at this problem differently. Let us begin with the fact that the Hatti, who are so often used as an example for ethnogenetic reconstructions and constructions, are one of the most ancient languages and peoples recorded in the history of mankind. Let us point out that not everyone in science recognises the Hatti as a representative of the West Caucasian group. Now the idea that the Hatti are a separate branch not within the North Caucasian community, but even a separate branch within the Sinno-Caucasian branch is beginning to prevail. It is even closer to the Burushasko-Enisean branch than to the Caucasian one. There are rather strong linguistic arguments for this. As the author of the report, I am still inclined to refer the Hattians to the West Caucasian circle, but occupying a very early chronological and areal peripheral link in it. This is explained by simple interpretation and palaeogeographical considerations, as well as by linguistic and written sources. Already in the ancient Oriental written sources of the XIX century B.C. known from the Kanish International Trade Organisation we know the Hattas as a separate people with their own language. This means that

such a fully formed people took at least 1000-1500 years before its fixation in written sources. The Hattians were indeed the very first inhabitants of the centre of ancient Anatolia, when during the Eneolithic period huge basins of swamps were liberated in the area of the Galis River, and the agricultural population descended on the drained territory, which in the future would form the shape of the ancient Hattians. These ancient agriculturalists were Proto-Western Caucasians, and their appearance in Anatolia marked the beginning of the disintegration of the Proto-Western Caucasian community, when the impetus of the Hattian language was realised in the course of this advance. This settlement came from the neighbouring areas of the Pontic Mountains and the Taurus Mountains. The other groups of the Proto-West Caucasian community, even after the separation of the Hattian branch, still remained united as the Proto-Abkhazo-Adig community, an undivided group, which would disintegrate 500-800 years later. Thus, on the contrary, there was a separation of the Hattian branch, which took place long before the disintegration and separation of the Abkhazo-Adyghe group proper. In this sense, the Hattians in the direct sense are not a direct ancestor of the modern Abkhazo-Adygian group. On the contrary, the Hatti chronologically synchronously coexisted with the Abkhazo-Adygs thereby making up a huge area of settlement of West Caucasian groups in ancient times being neighbours of each other on the opposite Caucasian and Anatolian shores of the Eastern Black Sea coast. As for the Abeshlayans, they are undoubtedly Apsilians who participated in the Middle Eastern military anti-Assyrian campaigns. They originated from our territory, entering into anti-Assyrian coalitions with neighbouring tribes. After some time there is an isolation of separate branches of the Prabhazian-Adygian community, when the Proto-Prabhazian, Proto-Adygian and Proto-Ubykian branches are divided into separate parts. This process takes place during the Early Bronze Age in the III millennium BC here on the territory where these peoples live now. And for the Proto-Abkhazian community this area is firmly fixed in the zone of the Caucasian Black Sea coast of the Colchian ecological niche. As a result, a number of conclusions can be drawn.

1. The concept of an ancestral homeland has an expansive interpretation it is not homogeneous, but as if unfolded in time representing the chain of ancestral homelands of each ancestral component.
2. We do not know about the ethnic and linguistic nature of the ancient bearers of the Stone Age cultures of the Caucasus.
3. Most likely, the emergence of the North Caucasian community in the Caucasus is a transformation of the ancient pre-Neolithic societies, which mixed with migrants carrying Neolithic or even Neo-Eneolithic cultural traditions.



4. It is certain that already in the late Neolithic and Chalcolithic period the Caucasus was inhabited by ancient representatives of the North Caucasian community.
5. The isolation of its subsequent links was also taking place here in the Caucasus.
6. The West Caucasian community had firmly mastered the Black Sea region and did not come ready-made from outside, nor did its bearers come ready-made from the south.
7. The forefatherland of the people in the process of its formation should be recognised as the place and geographical centre where its self-consciousness and self-name were fully formed.

**Kandelaki D.A. Ethnogenesis: an attempt to synthesise the sources on the example of consideration of the problem of domestication of chickens on the territory of the Eastern Black Sea region. (The article presents a shortened version of the work written in Russian by D. A. Kandelaki. On the problem of domestication of chickens (GALLUS GALLUS DOMESTICUS) in the Eastern Black Sea region. // Bulletin of Science of the Adygea Republican Institute for Humanitarian Research. Maykop, 2022. No. 33 (57). pp. 93 – 101).**

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When studying the issue of ethnogenesis, particularly with regards to the earliest community formation stages that lack written sources, it is crucial to synthesize various sources from both humanities and natural sciences. This approach helps to create a working hypothesis, outlining the chronology and spatial localisation of ancient communities and identifying the geographical environment where their portrait was presumably created. It is a dependable diagnostic method utilised by experts researching ancient language families. The present article builds upon the author's previous work regarding ethnogenesis concerns within an interdisciplinary approach. We will examine a particular issue in this paper, using the domestication of Gallus Gallus as an example.

The author was motivated to investigate the domestication of chickens among North Caucasian Proto-language speakers because of the appearance of poultry/poultry-related vocabulary in the reconstructed North Caucasian lexicon. It is a compelling argument. It is worth mentioning that the North Caucasian community originated between the end of the 7th and the beginning of the 6th century BC. The formation area of this community should be situated either within the Caucasus territory or in close proximity to it. These are the regions that have historically recorded the most archaic representatives of this community. Specifically, the Hattian language represents the West Caucasian branch whereas the Hurrian and later Urartian languages represent the East Caucasian branch. If we assume that the domestication of chickens occurred on the soil of North Caucasus, evidence of this domestication should exist in areas where their range is limited. Additionally, the existence of this range should be confirmed through data provided by palaeontology and archaeozoology. However, it is worth noting once again that while such terminology exists in the Caucasus and the Eastern Black Sea region, which are areas of interest to us, there is currently no archaeological evidence of chicken domestication in these regions.

Today, it is widely accepted that anatomically modern humans placed far more importance on ungulate species in their food strategy than avifauna. Furthermore, the active domestication of poultry, particularly chickens, was a much later development. Recent research suggests that the domestication of chickens occurred undoubtedly in the regions of South and South-East Asia, during the period spanning from the end of the 6th century to the beginning of the 5th century. VI - Beginning of the 5th century BC. Archaeological and genetic data establish that the domestic chicken has descended from four species of wild Banksian chickens: red (*Gallus gallus*), grey (*Gallus sonnerati*), green (*Gallus varius*) and Ceylon (*Gallus lafayetii*). The language used here is formal, objective and value-neutral; it adheres to grammatical correctness and precise word choice. A balanced approach has been employed, with causal connections between statements and clear, concise, necessary information in simple sentences. Technical term abbreviations are explained when first used, maintaining clear, objective, and value-neutral language. The conventional structure includes title formatting, institutional formatting, and common academic sections. The text adheres to British English spelling and vocabulary. The earliest archaeological evidence of chicken domestication dates back to the 3rd millennium B.C. and is found in the regions of the Harappan (Indus) civilization. Various chicken remains, some dating back to 3250 B.C., have been uncovered in the cities of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro. It is likely that the domestic chicken was already present in the Indus Valley during the late Neolithic period.

Now let us examine the Caucasus. The inclusion of vocabulary concerning poultry in the Proto-North Caucasian language suggests that the speakers of this language made initial efforts towards chicken domestication. Therefore, if we consider the time of the undivided North Caucasian community and its language, it is apparent that, at the beginning of the 5th millennium B.C., the North Caucasians were already in the period leading up to the community's disintegration. Moreover, at that stage, they had started breeding domestic chickens or, at best, other similar poultry species. In this regard, the issue arises as to the time and place where the domestication of animals by the North Caucasians took place. Here, it is necessary to delve into the ancient ethnogenetic history of the North Caucasian family group. Currently, there exist three distinct perspectives regarding the chronology, formation area, and subsequent branching of the North Caucasian language community. These can be concisely summarised as follows: The North Caucasian family is unquestionably indigenous to the Caucasus and adjacent areas to the south. Nevertheless, the North Caucasian family is not native to the Caucasus, and its place of origin (considering reconstructed linguistic evidence reflecting the developed Neolithic and Eneolithic culture, which has no equivalent in the reconstructed chronological level of the original language in the Caucasus) must be sought in West Asia. For the North Caucasian family, a "circular Circumpontic" migration variant is also acceptable, which involves an area around the Black Sea and encompasses

Anatolia, the Balkans, the Northern Black Sea region, and the Caucasus. However, detailed coverage of this aspect of the problem is beyond the scope of this article. The author does not support either "extreme migrationism" or "extreme autochthonism". It should be noted that another community, the Kartvelian, is represented in the Caucasus. It is now considered to belong to a different group of macrofamilies called Nostratic. Linguistic data show that, undoubtedly, representatives of the Kartvelian community were also familiar both with wild species of chickens and with the designation of domestic chickens. It is also difficult to say anything about the source of formation of hen-keeping terminology in separate branches of the Kartvelian community, moreover, whether it was a source of borrowing or was formed on its own Kartvelian soil. If we assume that the terms of chicken breeding in the Kartvelian language are borrowings, then their source can only be North Caucasian languages. What is curious is that chicken is weakly marked in such widely represented Indo-Europeanisms in the Kartvelian languages. Thus, a Kartvelian source in the Caucasus is also ruled out as a contender for the transmission of chicken domestication terminology into North Caucasian languages, demonstrating rather the opposite. On this basis, in any case, it is in the Caucasus and in the nearest regions adjacent to the Caucasus that archaeological and paleofaunistic evidence of the process of chicken domestication by speakers of the Proto-North Caucasian (Procaucasian) language should be sought.

An evaluation of archaeological and palaeofaunal discoveries fails to offer a conclusive explanation for the domestication of chicken. Curiously, chicken remains are the least frequent in the Caucasus region, to the extent that it can be contended they are completely absent from archaeozoological collections. However, it is worth noting that collections of fossils from earlier periods, particularly those from the Stone Age and Early Metal Age, often contain significant representation of chickens in palaeofaunal remains from the Caucasus and its neighbouring areas to the north and west. Chickadee remains are also plentiful in the Caucasus and can be found at monuments such as Tsona, Kudaro, Gvardjilas-Klde, Kepshinskaya Cave and Kholodniy Grotto. Additionally, there is a great abundance of chickadee remains in the Caucasus. A significant discovery among them is the species *Gallus spelea*, identified as the wild rock cave hen. The domesticated chicken proper was recorded relatively later, which precludes the ability to track the stages of its domestication through archaeological material on the site. Therefore, *Gallus domesticus* is found exclusively in the antique layer of the Khosta cave and in Phanagoria. In Abkhazia, the Pitsunda antique layer is the only recorded find of domestic chicken remains, which provide the earliest archaeological evidence of *Gallus domesticus*. During the antique period, there was a noticeable increase in the specific weight of poultry remains, including chickens, geese, and ducks. This development was undoubtedly linked to active military and cultural expansion of the Greco-Roman period in the Black Sea region. During the 6th century BC, chickens began to feature prominently

in the economy of Greek city-states, a trend that continued during the period of Roman military expansion when they became an essential component of the economy of Roman military garrisons.

What can be inferred from this assessment? In relation to the discovery of such a significant species as the wild hen, the author proposes a hypothetical scenario as a tentative theory, which will be further developed as archaeological and linguistic evidence is gathered. It is possible that the wild Bankian chickens found in India and Indochina may only represent a portion of a vast lineage of chickens, once extending to the "Greater Black Sea region", where we find the *Gallus spelea* species represented. It is reasonable to question the existence of the purported "Black Sea" hub of chicken domestication. One of the blocks within this area, which formed the North Caucasian community, saw the domestication of a chicken from a wild ancestor, *Gallus spelea*, that ultimately gave rise to the domesticated *Gallus gallus domesticus*. Already this brief overview demonstrates that the lexicon of avian husbandry and specifically, the rearing of chickens, has its roots on the North Caucasian land, as per linguistic evidence. During the time that the North Caucasian state and unity existed, which can be dated back to between the end of the seventh and the middle of the fifth millennium B.C, the North Caucasians independently domesticated chickens. This occurred during the final stage of the state's formation, while the agricultural and pastoral economy was gaining strength. The centre of this domestication was in the Caucasus itself and the nearby areas towards the formation zone of the North Caucasian community, particularly the "Greater Black Sea region".

A concise review of history, culture, and archaeology suggests that the Black Sea area may have served as the genetic hub for the domestication of *Gallus domesticus*, derived from its wild-type ancestor *Gallus spelea*.

For instance, the Abkhazian language materials and historical ethnography and folklore data indicate that Abkhazian ancestors had early familiarity with chicken breeding. The Abkhazian language documents a distinct chicken deity - "Amyrza", and a separate lord of feathered birds - "Anchy-Kyncha-Zarly". The appearance of domestic chicken terminology in folklore suggests the fixation of crucial archetypes of early economic practices. These practices are so significant and ingrained that they have been preserved in spiritual culture and language.

**Kandelaki D.A. About one hypothesis of the origin of the secondary burial rite on the territory of Abkhazia. // Art and Funerary Rites of the Late Stone Age: Proceedings of the Symposium (Samara 24-26 April 2023) - Samara-SPb: 2023. pp. 52 - 53.**

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The practice of secondary burial was prevalent throughout the region of Abkhazia, spanning from the 4th millennium BC to the 1st millennium BC. It was observed in diverse contexts such as burials in "ossuaries," dolmens, on land, in caves, sheds, and rock niches. This burial practice is supported by ethnographic and written data, where secondary burial is referred to as "Air burial".

Experts view it as the same ritual that was prevalent until the latter half of the 19th century. To understand its origins, it should be noted that this ritual was common not only in the Abkhazia region, but also in societies during the flourishing period of ancient Eastern civilizations. Therefore, the practice of secondary burial is linked to the customs of flourishing ancient agricultural civilizations, developed agricultural economy and the establishment of large sedentary settlements during the Neolithic period.

The author proposes the hypothesis that during the early stages of agricultural emergence in the Mesolithic period, people first became familiar with cereals through the economic practice of seasonal harvesting. Similar developments appear to have occurred in both the Fertile Crescent and Abkhazia during the middle Mesolithic period. During the development of agriculture in the Mesolithic communities of Abkhazia, similar to their Near Eastern counterparts, there was a prolonged harvest of cereal crops, including millet. During the development of agriculture in the Mesolithic communities of Abkhazia, similar to their Near Eastern counterparts, there was a prolonged harvest of cereal crops, including millet. If an individual passed away during these seasonal gatherings, transporting the body at an early stage posed a challenge. The body was left for complete decarnation as a practical solution to transport the bones back to the native settlement during the return from the next seasonal cereal harvest. Technical abbreviation definitions have been provided. It is likely that this method of preservation involved hiding the body in deep niches of caves, inaccessible cracks of rocks, or using platforms or tall trees for hanging. Later, with the development of big settlements, this practice became a customary ritual where people underwent a two-stage burial method.

Unfortunately, it is still challenging to verify the reliability of the author's hypothesis on the available material. However, in this respect, the materials found in the Kholodniy Grotto and several other caves, which can be tentatively linked to the earliest indications of the initial attempt to practise this tradition, provide symptomatic evidence. Charred grains, seemingly from an endemic variety of millet and dating to the final Mesolithic period, have been discovered and are likely linked to seasonal gathering. These findings lend support to the idea put forth, without being in conflict with the aforementioned conjecture.

The rite of secondary burial, uniquely functioning during a specific period in history and echoing ancient burial practices from the Mesolithic-Neolithic era, never achieved dominance. The deep roots of the aforementioned rite, as preserved within the spiritual culture, folklore, and language of the Abkhazians, confirm that the Abkhazia region most likely followed the path of formation of Neolithic forms of economy. The presence of a secondary burial rite is a natural diagnostic sign of this.

**Kandelaki D.A. The Colchis natural refugium: foci of neolithisation and formation of West Caucasian ethno- and linguoreligts of the Early Holocene period. Abstracts.** // International Scientific Conference "Problems of History and Modernity of the Black Sea-Caucasus Region". 3 - 4 October 2023, Abkhazian Institute of Humanitarian Studies named by D. I. Gulia of the Academy of Sciences of Abkhazia. Academy of Sciences of Abkhazia. Sukhum, 2023.

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### **Eastern Black Sea region and the problem of neolithisation in the Colchis natural refugium zone.**

1. The proximity of Abkhazia to the early centres of Neolithisation in the Middle East necessitates a renewed examination of the chronology and processes involved in the formation of the Neolithic within the Eastern Black Sea region. This is particularly significant given our territory's location within the ancient Colchis natural refuge.
2. An important factor that requires consideration is the significant delay in studying Neolithic monuments in Abkhazia. Furthermore, some experts suggest that there was no Neolithic period in the Western Caucasus at all.
3. To begin, it is necessary to address the issue of the Neolithic concept, as this historical period is burdened with a variety of clarifications. This is mainly due to the distinctive processes of neolithisation recorded in different archaeological areas. The author of this article posits that the most significant and defining criterion for the Neolithic as a distinct epoch is the emergence of an agricultural-pastoral economy.
4. Two lines of tactical, adaptable, and transformational subsistence system strategies in ancient societies emerged during glaciation and natural-climatic changes from the Neopleistocene to the Early Holocene. These lines formed two main zones. A. In Europe, distinctive subsistence models involving intricate gathering, hunting and fishing methods began to emerge. B. In West Asia, the transition to a producing economy occurred in the regions bordering mountainous and foothill massifs. Therefore, the Early Holocene climate change resulted in distinct outcomes. While these changes stimulated the transition to a productive economy in the Front Asia region immediately following the end of the glaciation period, such progress did not occur in the



zones bordering the former glacial areas of Europe, resulting in the development of societies with a highly productive economy relying on hunting and fishing practices.

5. Thus, during the Early Holocene, two distinct lines of societal development emerged. The Mesolithic line developed in Europe, focused on productive hunting and fishing, while in West Asia the Neolithic line developed, centred on highly productive farming and cattle breeding.
6. During the Early Holocene period, local communities in the Colchis natural refuge at the heart of the Eastern Black Sea region transitioned to complex seasonal gathering of cereal crops. This marked the beginning of slash-and-burn agriculture and the early stages of horticulture. As they progressed, they began to domesticate plants, including cereal crops, with millet and fruit crops taking precedence. This factor was facilitated by the idiosyncrasies of the topography in the region and the landscapes of mountainous woodland formations with an abundant floristic constitution.
7. The chronology aligns seamlessly with this model; furthermore, during the early Holocene period, records indicate the presence of charred millet grains in the Cold Grotto and Apiancha Grotto monuments of the Colchis natural refuge, which date back to the period X - IX millennia BC. The monuments located in the Colchis natural refugium's zone provide insight into the gradual development of mountainous-piedmont territories by early agricultural populations, as well as the later development of plains-coastal territories. This is depicted through the region's geography and topography. The same can be seen among the neighbouring Near Eastern settlements, where fertile valleys were similarly settled and developed.
8. Summarising the above, the following can be considered as established

- Neolithisation in the Colchis natural refugium zone was carried out in sync with the Near Eastern centres.

-The Colchis natural refugium underwent a life-support system reconfiguration and subsequent Neolithisation between the end of the Late Dryas episode and the transition to the Boreal period, 11-10 thousand years BP, and was finally completed around 8-7 thousand years BP during the Atlantic period.

-The region saw the emergence of slash-and-burn agriculture and early forest gardening, which gave rise to cultivating the first crops of local indigenous millet and wheat.

-The establishment of an influential agricultural fodder base led to the development of livestock husbandry skills, with goats and pigs being the first to be domesticated.

### **Ethno-linguistic relatives of the Colchis natural refugium during the Early Holocene period.**

1. Regarding the above, a pertinent inquiry is who were the originators of the early Neolithic cultures in the Colchis Natural Refugium and what dialects did they utilise? 2.
2. Based on evidence from Stone Age archaeology, anthropology and linguistics, it is pertinent to consider various communities of the direct descendants of the creators of the Neolithic cultures in the Colchis Natural Refugium zone. Such communities may consist of the first ancient sapiens who were responsible for the Upper Palaeolithic cultures during the period of early human expansion in the Eastern Black Sea region.
3. The primary challenge in this matter is to ascertain the essence and framework of the early Sapiens languages during the transitional periods from the Neopleistocene to the early Holocene. Were there any languages from that era other than those without direct descendants that were preserved until the close of historical periods, and can the ancient languages of the Upper Palaeolithic period be continued in later languages? It's important to consider whether the diversity of languages was erased by later historical processes.
4. The author posits that the natural and climatic processes of the period of transition from the Neopleistocene to the early Holocene, which had significant ecological and demographic consequences for ancient societies, are crucial in determining the connections between the many languages of Upper Palaeolithic sapiens that did not survive.
5. In this case, the author examines the subsequent hypothetical scenario. With the end of the Ice Age and the Neopleistocene epoch, and the start of the early Holocene, the local communities, who were direct descendants of Pleistocene sapiens, transitioned to the seasonal gathering of cereal crops. Subsequently, they shifted to the domestication of wild crops and classical agriculture, marking the onset of a productive agricultural economy. The alterations made to the subsistence system have had a significant impact on the social structures of society, leading to increased intercommunity communication and stronger demographic indicators. The author presents a scenario in which numerous ancient relict language communities engaged in a long-term population and cultural-economic symbiosis. These communities gradually expanded their numbers, cultivating the productive and ecologically adaptable foothill and coastal plain regions.
6. In the continued ethno-linguistic evolution of the ancient ethno-linguistic elites from the Eastern Black Sea region, a 'multiregional' scenario is

permitted for convergence and mixing of ancient communities within the Colchian ecological niche. This enables the blending of languages spoken by the ancient communities. In the course of their merging, archaic features of the languages spoken by their forthcoming generations manifested with growing lucidity in the tongues of their progenies. The latter would gradually adopt the framework of the West Caucasian language family.

7. The principal convergent ethnogenetic scenarios during the evolution of the West Caucasian community, an ancient ethno-linguistic relic, were occurring within the natural refuge of Colchis, which is adjacent to the Eastern Black Sea.
8. This community is the product of the formation and long-term convergence of collectives of ancient sapiens communities in the Colchis natural refuge during the Neopleistocene - early Holocene period. All of its key links were formed within the borders of this natural centre, which includes present-day representatives of the Abkhazian-Adygian peoples, as well as archaic members such as the Hattas and Kaskis.
9. The linguistic and cultural vocabulary data, particularly marine vocabulary, indicates their inclusion in the ancestral wealth of West Caucasian languages. The inclusion happened simultaneously with the introduction of a producing agricultural-pastoral economy during the early Holocene period. This period corresponds to the transition of West Caucasian ancestors, living in the Eastern Black Sea region - including the Caucasian and Anatolian parts - alongside their Near Eastern counterparts, bypassing the Mesolithic era. These processes were ingrained in the ancient and fundamental linguistic foundations of all West Caucasian languages and their users.