

THE NORTH-WEST CAUCASIAN
LANGUAGES

THE NORTH-WEST CAUCASIAN LANGUAGE-GROUP, also referred to as the 'Pontic' or 'Abasgo-Kerketian' subdivision of Caucasian, comprises three mutually unintelligible though fairly closely related¹ languages: Abkhazian², Ubykh³ and Circassian⁴. Besides this North-Western group, the Caucasian languages comprise a North-Eastern (also called Checheno-Lezghian or Caspian) and a Southern (or Kartvelian) group. Though a genetic connection is generally assumed to exist between these three groups of Caucasian languages, such a relationship has not been established conclusively⁵. Suggested genetic links between the Caucasian languages and other languages or language-groups (Basque, Semito-Hamitic, Burushaski, Tibetan, ancient languages of Asia Minor) are open to serious doubt.

Before the completion of the Russian conquest of the Caucasus (1864) the North-West Caucasian peoples filled out the triangle between the Taman' peninsula, the mouth of the river Ingur and the town Mozdok.

The Abkhazians (self-designation *aápswa*⁶, Russ. *abchazcy*) occupied – and still occupy – the Black Sea coast south of the great Caucasian chain between the rivers Psou and Ingur. Smaller Abkhazian tribes lived to the N. of the mountains, at the sources of the Kuban' and the Zelenčuk; the largest group of these were the Abazinians (*abáza*, Russ. *abazincy*).

The Ubykh (*t°ax*, Russ. *ubychi*) inhabited the Black Sea coast N.-E. of the Abkhazians up to the river Šache.

The rest of the triangle was occupied by Circassian tribes, except for the islands formed by the Turkic groups of the Karačaj (between the upper Kuban' and its tributary the Zelenčuk) and the Balkar (along the upper Baksan, Čegem and Čerek, all tributaries of the Terek). All Circassians (Russ. *čerkesy*) call themselves *hadəġa*; geographically and linguistically they are divided into two groups: the Lower (Western) Circassians and the Upper (Eastern) Circassians. In Russian literature the first group is referred to as *adygejcy* or *kjachi*, the second as *kabardincy* in so far as its representatives live in the Kabardian A.S.S.R., the others being referred to as *čerkesy*. The Lower Circassians are divided into the following tribes: the *natχ°aq°-áhža* (Russ. *natuchajcy* or *natuchažcy*) in the triangle formed by the Kuban', the Black Sea and the river Džubga; the *šapsəġ* (Russ. *šapsugi*) next to the above-mentioned, on both sides of the mountains up to the rivers Šache and Psekups; the *habzax* (Russ. *abadzechi*) E. of the Šapsug, extending to the river Belaja; the *bčadəġ°* (Russ. *bžeduchi*) N. of the Abadzech along the

lower Pšiš and Psekups; the *k'amg°əj* or *k'amərg°əj* (Russ. *temirgoevcy*) between the lower Belaja and the Laba; in addition there were several smaller groups. The Upper Circassians comprise the *baslanáj* (Russ. *besleneevcy*) between the Great Laba and the Urup, and the *q'abardáj* (Russ. *kabardincy*) in the territory of the rivers Malka, Baksan and Čerek ('Great Kabarda') and a strip of land E. of the Terek ('Little Kabarda'). Another group, the so-called Kuban'- or Fugitive Kabardians, lives between the upper Kuban' and the Zelenčuk.

The completion of the Russian conquest of the N.-W. Caucasus (1864) was followed by a mass-emigration of the indigenous population to Turkey. Some 20,000 Abkhazians, all the Ubykhs (20-30,000) and 3-500,000 Circassians left. The Circassians who remained were transplanted from the mountains to the valley of the Kuban', where they were settled among the Cossacks so as to be more easily kept under control. Only the Kabardians, who had been subjugated in the first quarter of the 19th century, kept their land and were not affected by the mass-emigration.

During World War II some of the national groups in the N. Caucasus, among others the Karačaj and the Balkar, were deported on the charge of collaboration with the Germans; however, the N.-W. Caucasian peoples all retained their national identity and their political status within the U.S.S.R.

At present, the Abkhazians (without the Abazinians) number 59,000; they live in the Abkhazian A.S.S.R. The Lower Circassians in the Caucasus now number 88,000; they live chiefly in the Adygean Autonomous Province. Smaller groups are located near Tuapse, on the Taman' peninsula and in the Cherkessian Autonomous Province. The Kabardians number 164,000; Great and Little Kabarda constitute the Kabardian A.S.S.R. An additional group of 18,000 Kabardians lives in the Cherkessian Autonomous Province together with the majority of the Abazinians; smaller groups of Kabardians are found in Mozdok (the so-called 'Christian Circassians'), in the Adygean Autonomous Province and near Armavir. The Abazinians number 14,000 (1926) and live in the Cherkessian Autonomous Province; smaller groups are scattered in the Adygean Autonomous Province.

On the N.-W. Caucasians that emigrated to Turkey no recent data are available. Many died of hunger and epidemics in the years following the emigration. The survivors finally settled around Samsun on the Black Sea coast, around Panderma on the Sea of Marmora, and especially between Izmit and the Sakarya on the banks of Lake Sapanja. There are small groups of Circassians in various other parts of the former Ottoman Empire, especially in Syria and Transjordan.

B. DIALECTS AND LITERARY LANGUAGES

Of the three N.-W. Caucasian languages: Abkhazian (including Abazinian), Circassian and Ubykh, the latter is no longer spoken in the Caucasus and has practically died out in Turkey. Linguistically, it took an intermediate position between the two other languages. Abkhazian in the Abkhazian A.S.S.R. comprises three dialects, from N.-W. to S.-E.: Bzyb, Abžuj and Samurzakan; these are closer to each other than either is to Abazinian, spoken N. of the great chain in two dialects: Tapanta and Škaraua. The Circassian dialects cluster into two groups: Lower and Upper Circassian; their subdivisions correspond to the division into tribes (cf. section A.). The Lower Circassian dialects are divided into a Western (Bžeduch, Šapsug, etc.) and an Eastern (Abadzech, Temirgoj) sub-group. Upper Circassian (Kabardian, Beslenej) shows less dialectal diversity; the Beslenej dialect has several features in common with the Lower Circassian group.

The following languages have the status of 'literary language' in the U.S.S.R.: (1) Abkhazian, based on the Abžuj dialect; (2) Abazinian; (3) Lower Circassian, in Russian sources referred to as *adygejskij jazyk*, based on the Temirgoj dialect; (4) Kabardian. The literary languages are in each case based on the phonetically simplest dialect. Abkhazian is written with Georgian characters; until 1938 an adaptation of the Latin alphabet was in use. The other languages are written with Cyrillic characters, which supplanted the latinized alphabets in the mid-thirties (the latter was for (3) and (4) preceded by Arabic script in the early twenties)⁸.

C. PHONEMES

The NWC languages are characterized by an extreme abundance of consonants. Kabardian, phonetically the simplest of all, has 48; the Bzyb dialect of Abkhazian, which has the richest system, possesses 67 consonants. All the languages distinguish plosives (stops and affricates) and fricatives. The series of plosives comprise labials (*p*), dentals (stop *t* and affricate *c*), alveolopalatals (*č*), palatals (*č*), prevelars (*k*) and postvelars (*q*). The fricatives, besides those corresponding to the above series (*f, s, š, š, x, χ* respectively), include laterals (*l*) and pharyngals (*ɣ*). Finally, there is a series without buccal point of articulation: the laryngals (*h*). In all the languages these series have voiceless (aspirated), voiced and glottalic members (e.g. *t, d, t'*)⁹, only some LC dialects (Bžed., Šaps.) have four laryngal distinctions by opposing aspirated to non-aspirated members (*t, t', d, t'*). The inventory of phonemes is further

increased by the use of palatalization (') and labialization (°), especially in LC and Abkh., the Bzyb dialect of which has also phonemes which combine the two (cf. the series of palatal fricatives: *š, ž, š', ž', š°, ž°, š'°, ž'°*). Not all the languages have all of the above series, and not all possible combinations of features occur. Abkh. lacks alveolopalatals and lateral fricatives. In the Circ. languages the palatal and prevelar plosives are in complementary distribution in so far as they are not in free variation. Only Kab. has glottalic fricatives other than *l'*, namely *f'* and *š'*. The postvelar plosives do not occur voiced; LC lacks also glottalic ones. The laryngals do not distinguish voiceless and voiced members (only *h, ʔ*). Labialization is in all the languages found in the laryngals, post- and prevelars, in Abkh. also in the dental plosives and in the palatal fricatives; in LC also in the alveolopalatals (and, isolated, in *p'°, t'°*). Palatalization is found in the non-glottalic laryngals¹⁰ and in the prevelars and palatals (Abkh. *č, š* versus *č', š'*; *k, x* versus *k', x'*), in Abkh. also in the dental affricates and fricatives and in the postvelar plosives (*q', q'°, q''*). Finally, all the NWC languages have two nasals (*m, n*) and a trill (*r*), to which Abkh., which lacks lateral fricatives, adds a non-fricative lateral (*l*).

These rich consonant-systems are combined with only two 'vowels': close *ə* and open *a* (pronounced *u, o* after labialized - , *i, e* after palatalized consonants, etc.). Long *ā, ē, ō, ī, ū* are phonetically present (and with various degrees of consistency symbolized in script), but represent the phoneme-sequences *ah, aj, aw, əj, əw* respectively. It must further be noted that on the level of the morpheme there are not three distinctions: *a-ə-zero*, but only two: *a* versus *ə* or *zero*, the choice between the latter depending partly on phonetic, partly on syntagmatic factors. On this level, the only phonemic feature of *a*, then, is the openness which distinguishes it from both *ə* and *zero*. This feature of openness belongs in one category with the features of palatalization and labialization (*a'-°*). In this way the NWC languages combine the common 'a-i-u'-scheme with consonantal features into units which are neither vowels nor consonants; the latter distinction is absent from the system of phonemes. The vowel *ə* can be distinctive as a juncture-feature; in the following it is written in words consisting of more than one morpheme¹¹.

All NWC languages have an expiratory stress ('; stressed *ə* is written *ə̇*) which is distinctive on the level of the word (not of the morpheme). In Kab. it falls on the prefinal morpheme of the word, not counting certain grammatical affixes; in the other languages its position is variable and governed by a combination of phonetic and morphological rules.

D. MORPHEMES AND COMPOUNDS

The morphemes of the NWC languages consist of a single phoneme or of a cluster of two (seldom three) phonemes; in the latter cases the initial members are subject to strict limitations: they lack the feature *a*, they have no distinctive laryngeal articulation and their buccal point of articulation is usually farther towards the front than that of the following member. Examples: Kab. *pa* 'nose', *f'* 'good', *š* 'three', *x* 'sea', *χ* 'net', *λ* 'carrying', *p š* 'prince', *b ζ* 'yoke', *p'š'* 'ten', *pχa* 'wood', *tχ°a* 'grey', *š λ a* 'head', *p š λ a* 'creeping (into)'; LC (Bžed.) *pa* 'being out of breath', *p'a* 'nose', *ba* 'much', *p'a* 'place', *p'°a* 'shell', *sa* 'I', *ša* 'hundred', *š°a* 'hide', *ša* 'raw fat', *š'a* 'selling'; Abkh. (Bzyb dialect) *š* 'digging', *ž* 'throwing', *š°* 'old', *š'°* 'cow', *x* 'three', *x'* 'hurting', *x°* 'five'. Practically every phoneme or cluster has one, often several meanings, e.g. Kab. *š* 'horse', 'brother', 'milking', 'leading (out)', 'being tired', (in compounds:) 'salt', 'millet'. Widely different meanings of the same phonetic unit often have an element in common, cf. Kab. *da* 'agreeing' (verb), 'together with' (determinative prefix), 'we' (pronoun). Sometimes semantic resemblances exist between units of partially different form, cf. Kab. *k°* 'core', and *g°* 'heart'; *ps* 'water' and *ja-bz* 'slops'. The same morpheme often has forms with and without the feature *a*, cf. Kab. *š* 'horse' but *ša-s* 'mounting a horse', Abkh. *g°* 'heart' but *g°a-px* 'love'. The choice, which now in many instances depends on each particular combination and is also subject to certain phonetic rules, goes back to an old distinction of 'extrovert' (*zero*) and 'introvert' (*a*) forms; this distinction is no longer productive but survives in a variety of cases, cf. Kab. *š* 'leading (out of)' versus *ša* 'leading (into)', *z* 'throwing (out of)' versus *za* 'throwing (into)'; *t* 'giving (trans.)' versus *ta* 'giving (intrans.)', *tx* 'writing (trans.)' versus *txa* 'writing (intrans.)'; Abkh. determinative prefixes *t-* 'from out', *c'-* 'from under' versus *ta-* 'into', *c'a-* 'under'. Another common alternation concerns the phonetically unstable morphemes with a non-glottalic laryngal: *ha, wa* and *ja* (in various meanings), which in non-initial position often change to *-ah, -aw* and *-aj* (phonetically *ā, ō* and *ē*), in which case the distinction of *a* versus *zero* in the preceding morpheme becomes recessive, cf. Kab. *ja-š'* 'he *ja-* does (it)', *š-a j-š'* 'he *-a j-* does (it) there *š-*'; *ja* 'bad', *n-a j* 'malice' (lit. 'eye-bad', cf. *na* 'eye', *f'* 'good' and *na-f'* 'friendliness', lit. 'eye-good'). Other alternations are rare and concern mainly personal prefixes, which are sometimes assimilated to or (Abkh.) dissimilated from neighboring morphemes, or have different forms in initial and medial position.

The number of morphemes in the NWC languages is very small (in Kab.

ca. 200 units of the type *p, pa, ps, psa*), and the languages each have a large number of fixed compounds, many of which express quite simple, every-day notions, e.g. Kab. *na-f* 'blind' (*na* 'eye', *f* 'rotting'), *pšə-l'* 'slave' (*pš* 'prince', *l'* 'man'), *l'ə-k'°a* 'envoy' (*l'* 'man', *k'°a* 'going'), *°ə-ps* 'spittle' (*°* 'mouth', *ps* 'water'), *la-p'q'* 'tribe' (*l* 'blood', *p'q'* 'bone', 'stem'); Abkh. *č'a-žə* 'spittle' (*č'a* 'mouth', *ž* 'water'), *g°a-px* 'love' (*g°* 'heart', *px* 'getting warm'). In the Circ. languages a connective element *-ah-* (cf. the plural morpheme *-ah-*) is often inserted between the constituents of a compound (subject to certain phonetic conditions), e.g. Kab. *n-áh-šχ°a* 'blue-eyed' (lit. 'eye-s-blue'; but *ná-šχ°a* 'a blue eye'), *ζ-áh-k'a* 'beard' (*ζa* 'mouth', 'jaws', *k'a* 'tail'), *p-áh-š'a* 'mustache' (*pa* 'nose', *š'a* 'bottom', 'lower part'). Semantically, such compounds range all the way from complete transparency down to complete unanalyzability, but the latter cases are comparatively few (in Kab., of 40,000 possible combinations of the type *na-f, n-áh-šχ°a*, only some 600 (1.5%) are found as unanalyzable units).

In this way, homonymy and fixed compounds extend the lexical material of the languages; this material is further increased by a not inconsiderable number of borrowings. The latter are usually easily recognizable and formally distinct even from the native 'unanalyzable compounds'. The languages have borrowed mostly from Turkic, Arabic, and recently from Russian; less numerous are borrowings from Georgian (these especially in Abkh.), Greek and Iranian.

E. THE WORD

In all the NWC languages the word can consist of a considerable number of morphemes and is best described as consisting of several layers. The center is formed by a *stem* (morpheme or fixed compound) or a *complex* of stems, e.g. Kab. *k'°a* 'going', *pšə-l'* 'slave' (lit. 'prince-man'), *pšə-l'ə-ζ* 'old ζ slave'. The next higher unit is the *base*, which can consist of a bare stem (-complex) or of such a stem(-complex) extended by *base-prefixes* and *base-suffixes*, e.g. Kab. *mə-k'°a* 'not going', 'false (money)' (negative base-prefix *m-*); *ğa-pšə-l'* 'enslaving' (causative base-prefix *ğa-*), *k'°a-ž* 'going again', 'going back' (repetitive base-suffix *-ž*), *k'°a-ah* 'having gone' (lit. 'going-past'; past base-suffix *-ah*), *k'°a-n* 'to go' (infinitive base-suffix *-n*), *ğa-pšə-l'ə-n* 'to enslave' (base-affixes *ğa-* and *-n*, see above). The base-pre- and suffixes have their own inner hierarchy, e.g. of the above, *m-* precedes *ğa-*, *-ah* follows *-ž*; *-n* and *-ah* exclude each other, etc. Bases with base-pre- and suffixes have essentially the same combinatory possibilities with regard to the

ultimate layers as have bare stems. The last layers are constituted by the *word-prefixes* and, finally, the (case- and finite) *endings*¹². Most of the prefixes¹³ refer to elements in the sentence which are subordinated to the word, whereas the case-endings connect the word with superordinated elements. Only in Circ. is one single group of finite forms characterized by prefixes rather than endings (see below).

F. SELECTIVE CLASSES

The NWC languages distinguish between nouns and verbs, but the two have much of their paradigm in common and, especially in Circ., the difference is statistical rather than absolute. Furthermore, many stems are equally usual in both functions, e.g. Kab. *l'* (1) 'man' (noun), (2) 'behaving like a man' (verb), *šáhk'°a* (1) 'hunter' (noun), (2) 'hunting' (verb), *šə-t* (1) 'standing', (2) 'being able to stand' (with determinative (local) prefix *š-*), cf. the predicative forms: (1) *sə-l'-š*, *sə-šáhk'°a-š*, *sə-šə-t-š* 'I am a man', 'I am a hunter', 'I am standing'; (2) *s-aw-l'*, *s-aw-šáhk'°a*, *sə-š-aw-t* (with predicative prefix *-aw-*) 'I behave like a man', 'I hunt', 'I can stand'. The languages each have a comparatively small category of adjectives, which behave like nouns in all respects except in that they are suffixed to their determinatum, whereas in the nominal composition it is the latter which takes the second place, cf. Kab. *wəná-ζ* 'old ζ house *wəna*' but *pχa-wəna* 'wooden house', *wəná-pχa* 'house-wood', i.e. 'material for building a house' (and 'old people's home' would be expressed *ζə-wəna*). Base-affixes can be nominalizing, verbalizing or adjectivizing, cf. Kab. *k'°a* 'going' (verb), *s-aw-k'°a* 'I go' (verbal predicate, lit. 'of me - occurs - going'), *k'°a-ah* 'past going' (noun), *sə-k'°a-ah-š* 'I have gone' (nominal predicate, lit. 'of me - going - past - is').

Only Abkh. has noun-classes, namely one for rational beings and one for everything else; they require different plural suffixes and are referred to by different pronouns and pronominal prefixes, which, in addition, distinguish between masc. and fem. within the rational class, e.g. *á-an* 'mother', *a-žá* 'hare', *a-ünə* 'house' (*a-* is the definite article); plural *á-an-c°a*, *a-žá-k°á*, *a-ün-k°á*; *w-ará*, *b-ará* 'you' (masc. and fem. respectively); *j-ab* 'his father', *l-ab* 'her father'.

The verbs can be divided into a transitive and an intransitive category; the latter have no actor-prefix and syntactically allow one subordinated element less than the transitive verbs. However, by putting in the appropriate zero's all verbs can be made to follow one single pattern.

G. PREFIXES

The word-prefixes occur in a fixed order which is the same in all the NWC languages. They are the following, in their order of appearance from the beginning of the word:

1. *Subject-prefix*, corresponding to English subject of intransitive verb, direct object of transitive verb, and, in fewer cases, subject of transitive verb, the direct object being expressed by an indirect-object prefix (cf. 5 below).

2. *Direction-prefix*, indicating directedness towards or from the situation of the utterance.

3. *Conjunctive prefix*, corresponding to English subordinate conjunctions and conjunctive adverbs.

4. *Determinative prefix-complex*. The determinative prefixes correspond to English prepositions and prepositional phrases ('in', 'on', 'for'; more exactly: 'interior', 'surface', 'interest'); some of them are quite specific ('mouth', 'fire'). Most of them can be preceded by indicators for person and number ('its surface', i.e. 'on it'; 'our interest', i.e. 'for us', etc.). A word can contain more than one of these complexes.

5. *Indirect-object prefix*, corresponding to English indirect object and sometimes to direct object (cf. 1 above). In causative forms of transitive verbs the person caused to act is expressed by an indirect-object prefix, and in these cases there can be two such prefixes (to cause A to give to B; the order of the prefixes is B-A).

6. *Possessive or Actor-prefix* (in Kab. only in the latter function), corresponding to English possessive pronoun or subject of transitive verb.

7. *Process-prefix* (predicative; in Circassian only, cf. I. below). Examples (Kab.)¹⁴: $w\partial^1-k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'you¹ went', $w\partial^1-q^{\circ}\partial^2-z\partial^5-j^6-t-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'he⁶ gave you¹ (hither²) to me⁵', $w\partial^1-q^{\circ}\partial^2-s^4-x^{\circ}\partial^4-k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'you¹ came here² for my⁴ sake⁴' ('to see me'), $w\partial^1-q^{\circ}\partial^2-s^4-x^{\circ}\partial^4-j^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'he⁶ killed you¹ (hither²) for my⁴ sake⁴', $w\partial^1-q^{\circ}\partial^2-z\acute{a}r\partial^3-s^4-x^{\circ}\partial^4-j^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-r$ 'that or how³ he⁶ killed you¹ (hither²) for my⁴ sake⁴' (-r absolute ending). With regard to the personal prefixes (1, 4, 5, 6) it must be remarked that these include reciprocal and reflexive elements (in Abkh. complexes) and also indefinite elements ('one who...', 'one that...'), e.g. Kab. $w\partial^1-q^{\circ}\partial^2-s^4-x^{\circ}\partial^4-z\partial^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-r$ 'the one⁶ that⁶ killed you¹ (hither²) for my⁴ sake⁴ (abs.)', $w\partial^1-z\partial^4-x^{\circ}\partial^4-j^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-r$ 'the one⁴ for whose⁴ sake⁴ he⁶ killed you¹', $q^{\circ}\partial^2-s^4-x^{\circ}\partial^4-j^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-r$ 'the one (initial zero) he⁶ killed (hither²) for my⁴ sake⁴' (the 3d person subject is expressed by a zero-prefix in Circ., cf. also $j\partial^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'he⁶ killed (him)', $k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ '(he) went'; the Circ. plural-suffix refers to the 3d. person

subject: $j\partial^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-x\acute{a}-\acute{s}$ 'he⁶ killed them', $k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-x\acute{a}-\acute{s}$ 'they went').

Possession in Abkh. is expressed by the prefixes (6), in Kab. by a complex (4); LC uses both methods, the first for inalienable, the second for alienable possessions, e.g. $s^6-\acute{s}\partial$ 'my brother', $s\partial^4-j^4-\acute{s}\partial$ 'my horse' (lit. 'my⁴ - interior⁴ - horse').

In addition to the above-mentioned prefixes, Circ. has demonstrative prefixes, always in word-initial position; Abkh. has special demonstrative pronouns. These elements occur in triplets of the type *hic, iste, ille*. Abkh. has also a prefixed article *a-* referring to a class as such or to a definite specimen, and a suffixed article *-k'* referring to an indefinite specimen; the use of one of these is obligatory with nouns, e.g. *a-žá* 'hare', 'the hare', *žá-k'* 'a hare'.

H. CASE-ENDINGS

The Circ. languages have an absolute ending (-r) for the (Circassian!) subject and a relative ending (-m) for all other words which can be taken up by prefixes in the superordinated expression (actor, indirect object, prepositional object, etc.); these two endings are paralleled by a modal (-wa or -w) and an instrumental (-k'a) ending, which are not taken up by prefixes in the superordinated word. The presence of an absolute or relative ending indicates definiteness of the referent (definite for the speaker only, not, as in English, for the hearer also); the bare base is indefinite (both absolute and relative). Examples (Kab.): $l^{\circ}\partial-r k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'the man went', $l^{\circ}\partial-m \acute{s}'\acute{a}hla-r j\partial^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'the man killed the boy', $l^{\circ}\partial-m \acute{s}'\acute{a}hla-r \acute{s}'\acute{a}hla-m j\partial^5-r\partial-j^6-t-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'the man gave the horse to the boy' (-r- is an empty morph appearing between two prefixes *j-*), $^{\circ}\acute{a}na-m \acute{s}'\acute{a}^4-s-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'he was sitting under⁴ the table', $l^{\circ}\partial-m \acute{s}'\acute{a}hla-r g\partial da-k'a ps\partial ns^{\circ}\partial-w j\partial^6-w\partial k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'the man killed the boy quickly *ps\partial ns^{\circ}\partial-w* with an ax *g\partial da-k'a*', $p\acute{x}\acute{a}h\acute{s}'\acute{a}-w la\acute{z}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'he worked as a carpenter', $p^{\circ}l^{\circ}\partial-wa k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'they came with four', $^{\circ}\acute{a}l\acute{z}a-k'a$ 'by sledge', $had\acute{a}g\acute{a}-bza-k'a psal-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'he spoke in the Circassian language', $m\acute{a}z\partial-m-k'a k^{\circ}-\acute{a}h-\acute{s}$ 'he went in the direction of the forest' (the instrumental ending is in the definite form preceded by the relative ending).

Abkh. has no abs. and rel. endings; there is a modal (-n\partial), an instrumental (-la) and a special factitive ending (-s) for the predicate-noun with verbs of 'becoming', 'making into', etc.

I. FINITE ENDINGS

Lower Circ. has no finite endings other than the negative ending *-p*. Kab. has the present endings *-š* (positive) and *-q'əm* (negative), paralleled by the non-present (i.e. past or irreal) endings *-t* and *-ta-q'əm*, e.g. *l'ə-š* 'he is a man', *l'ə-q'əm* 'he is not a man', *l'ə-t* 'he was a man', *l'ə-ta-q'əm* 'he was not a man'. The Kab. verbal predicate has in the present positive no ending but a process-prefix (cf. G. 7; initially *ma(h)-*, medially *-aw-*, 3d. pers. transitive *zero*; LC has only init. *ma(h)-*). Examples (Kab.): *s¹-áw⁷-k^oa* 'I go', *máh⁷-k^oa* '(he) goes', *s⁶-aw⁷-t* 'I⁶ give (it)', *ja⁶-t* 'he⁶ gives (it)'. Abkh. has present *-p'* for the nominal, *-(j) t'* for the verbal predicate; non-present *-n*; negative *-m*. Contrary to Circ., Abkh. often expresses negative predication by using the negative base-prefix *m-* rather than the negative predicative ending.

A variety of tenses and moods can be expressed by combinations of base-suffixes and predicative endings. Examples (Kab.): base-suffixes *-ah* 'past', *-n* 'infinitive'; *k^o-ah-š* 'he went', 'he has gone', *k^o-ah-t* 'he had gone', *k^oa-n-š* 'he is to go', *k^oa-n-t* 'he would go'; (Abkh.) base-suffixes *-w(a)* 'imperfective', *-š(a)* 'prospective', *-x'a* 'past'; *s-gəla-w-p'* 'I stand', 'I am standing', *s-gəla-š-t'* 'I shall stand up', *s-gəla-x'a-n* 'I had stood up', *s-gəla-ša-n* 'I would have stood up'. In Kab. the absolutive (*-r*) and modal (*-w*) endings can be used in combination with predicative endings: *šáhk^oa-r-t* 'he hunted', 'he was hunting' (the action as such or a definite instance), cf. *šáhk^oa-t* 'he was a hunter'; *k^oá-nə-w-š* 'he will go' (future of expectation; lit. 'he is as one that is to go'), cf. *k^oa-n-š* 'he is to go' (future of necessity or fact).

All the NWC languages have special predicative endings for a variety of sentence-types other than statements (several types of questions, wishes, exclamations). The imperative is endingless, cf. Kab. *k^oa* 'go!', *wə-mə-k^oa* 'don't you go!'; Abkh. *wə-blə* 'you, burn!' (intr.), *ja-blə* 'burn it!'.

J. SYNTAX

In the NWC languages a word-group of which no part is emphasized has its superordinated element at the end, so that (1) a word with prefixes follows the words or phrases these prefixes refer to, and (2) the predicate-word ends the sentence. An element can be emphasized by being put behind the predicate, but usually it will itself become the predicate, cf. Kab. *sə-j-š'áhla-m blənə-r ja-l-áh-š* 'my - boy - abs. wall - rel. (it) - he - painted', 'my boy

painted the wall', *blənə-r ja-l-áh-š sə-j-š'áhla-m* 'my boy painted the wall', *blənə-r zə-l-áh-r sə-j-š'áhla-š* 'it is my boy who painted the wall', (and *səjš'áhlaš blənər zəláhr* 'it is my boy who...'). The usual order of the subordinated members of the phrase is Actor - Subject - Indirect and Prepositional Objects, but this order is not obligatory in cases which are unambiguous either because of the context or because of the presence of personal prefixes (selection!) in the superordinated word. In Abkh. the lack of absolutive and relative endings is counterbalanced (1) by the existence of selective classes (unknown to Circ.) and (2) by the fact that the subject-prefix 3d. person non-rational *j-* is absent when the subject immediately precedes, cf. *á-c^oca a-3ə ta-w-p'* 'there is water 3 in the glass', *á-c^oca a-3ə jə-ta-w-p'* 'the glass is in the water'.

All the NWC languages have coordinative postpositions which are added to each member of the coordinative group, and a few coordinative conjunctions. The 'and'-coordination is sometimes expressed by mere juxtaposition.

A few final examples (Kab.) may illustrate the structure of the NWC stem, word, phrase and sentence: *s'a* 'new', 'young', *l* 'flesh', *-ah-* connective (cf. section D. above), *š'-áh-la* 'boy', lit. 'young flesh', *š'áhla-m šə-r q'ə-j-š-áh-š* 'the boy brought the horse here', *š'áhla-m q'ə-j-š-áh šə-m š'áhq^oa ja-p-t-áh-š* 'you gave bread *š'áhq^oa* to the horse that the boy had brought here', *š'áhla-m q'ə-j-š-áh šə-m š'áhq^oa zar-aj-p-t-áh-r s-áw-š'a* 'I know *s'a* that you gave bread to the horse that the boy had brought here'.

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NOTES

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2. P. K. Uslar, *Etnografija Kavkaza. Jazykoznanie I, Abchazskij jazyk*, Tiflis 1888. G. Deeters, 'Der abchasische Sprachbau', *Nachr. v. d. Ges. d. Wiss. zu Göttingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse*, 1931. K. Bouda, 'Das Abasinische, eine unbekannt abchasische Mundart', *Zeitschr. d. Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*, Bd. 94, Heft 2, Leipzig 1940.
3. A. Dirr, *Die Sprache der Ubychen*, Leipzig 1928. G. Dumézil, *La langue des Oubykhs*, Paris 1939. J. von Mészáros, *Die Päkhy-Sprache*, Chicago 1934.
4. N. F. Jakovlev and D. A. Aščamaf, *Grammatika adygejskogo literaturnogo jazyka*, Moscow 1941. N. F. Jakovlev, *Grammatika literaturnogo kabardino-*

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5. A. Dirr, *Einführung in das Studium der kaukasischen Sprachen*, Leipzig 1928. V. Polák, 'L'état actuel des études linguistiques caucasiennes', *Archiv Orientální*, Vol. 18, Prague 1950. E. A. Bokarev, 'Zadači sravnitel'no-istoričeskogo izučeniya kavkazskich jazykov', *Voprosy Jazykoznanija*, 1954, fasc. 3.
 6. The native names are given in phonemic notation (cf. section C. below); the names of the Circassian tribes are all given in their Kabardian form.
 7. Unless otherwise indicated, the numerical data are those of the census of 1939.
 8. From here on the following abbreviations are used: Abkh(azian); Bžed(uch); Circ(assian); Kab(ardian); L(ower) C(ircassian); N(orth) W(est) C(aucasian); Šaps(ug).
 9. Glottalic consonants are written with the symbols for their voiceless correlates plus the diacritic ' : *p'*, *t'*, etc. The voiced correlates of *c*, *l*, *x*, *χ* are written *ɟ*, *l*, *g*, *g* respectively. 3
 10. The laryngals *h'*, *h^o*, *h'^o* are written *j*, *w*, *ü* respectively. 5
 11. The mark for morpheme-separation (-) is always written after the vowel *ə*. A notation without *ə* can be devised but involves technicalities which cannot be dealt with here.
 12. In the hierarchy of the word in Circassian the plural suffix *-xa* (dial. also *-ha*) stands between the word-prefixes and the endings (cf. section G. below). In general, the structure of the Circassian word can be represented as follows: ((word-pref. (base-pref. (stem or stem-complex) base-suff.)) plural suff.) endings.
 13. In the following, the word 'prefix' refers to the word-prefixes only.
 14. The prefixes (and their translations) are indicated by the number they have in the list above.