ABKHAZ LOANS IN MEGRELIAN

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Abstract

The paper presents a thorough investigation of the Abkhaz borrowings in Megrelian, including structural loans, grammatical elements, adjectives, adverbs, numerals, and appellativa (anatomical and medical terms, household items, terms related to husbandry and pasture, floristic and zoological names, religious terms, landscape, food, etc.). The author examines also the cases of the Abkhaz influence on Megrelian onomasticon.

In Memory of the Great Caucasologist
Professor Georgij Andreevič Klimov

1. INTRODUCTION

Megrelians, the representatives of the western branch of the Kartvelian-speaking peoples,¹ have for many centuries lived in the conditions of close cultural, economic and political ties with the Abkhazians, the neighbouring people speaking an unrelated West Caucasian language.² In different historical periods Abkhazia and Megrelia together were parts of a number of state entities: from the semi-legendary Kolkhian kingdom (whose reality is, however, seriously doubted by many historians) to the historically attested kingdom of Lazica, later—the Abkhazian kingdom (8–10 c. A.D.), and thereafter—the united Georgian kingdom until its disintegration in the 14th century. In the beginning of the 19th century the Megrelian (in 1803)

1 I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Prof. B. G. Hewitt for his valuable suggestions on the text of this paper and for correcting my English. Many thanks also to Boris Džonua for reading the manuscript and for his useful comments.

2 Kartvelian linguistic family comprises four languages: Georgian, Svan, Megrelian, and Laz (only the latter two are mutually intelligible).

3 West Caucasian, or Abkhazo-Adyghean branch, together with East Caucasian, or Nakh-Dagestanian branch, form the independent North Caucasian linguistic family.
and Abkhazian (in 1810) principalities became parts of the Russian empire, and in the Soviet period both Abkhazia (from 1931—as an Autonomous republic) and Megelia were parts of the Georgian SSR.

There was a tradition of dynastic marriages between the representatives of the princely houses of Abkhazia and Megelia, i.e. between the Abkhaz ruling princes Chachbas (called in Georgian Sher-vashidze) and Megrelian Dadianis. The south-Abkhazian aristocrats often knew the Megrelian language and, conversely, some Megrelian nobles knew Abkhaz. Reflecting the situation typical for the beginning of the 19th century, E. Spencer (1838: 308) wrote: "It appears that the peasants of Mingrelia do not speak the Circassian dialect [by which Abx was meant—VCh], which is only used by the princes and nobles, who claim a common origin with the untameable spirits of Circassia..."

The linguistic contact was especially intensive in the zone of the immediate Abx-Megr marchland, in the Samurzaqan province of southern Abkhazia (the modern Gal region) and the adjacent areas of Megelia. The population of the majority of the settlements in Samurzaqan until the end of the 19th century was either bilingual (Meq-Abx), or at least understood the Abx language, which knowledge was more widespread among the men and especially among the local aristocracy. According to A. Cagareli (1880: ix), “Abkhaz in all Samurzaqan was until recently the language of the highest society, of princes and nobles; they boasted of their knowledge of it”.

The dynamics of the influence of one language over the other in various historical epochs was not equal. In general, it is correct to say, that the intensity of the Abx linguistic influence on Meq, which peak probably coincided with the time of the existence of the Abkhazian kingdom, was gradually weakening towards our time, though in the Meq-Abx contact zone Abx still preserved its positions until the first quarter of the 20th century. The strongest Meq influence on Abx was probably in the middle of the 19th—the first quarter of the 20th centuries, which was explained by the fact that the majority of the Abx lands became empty due to the mass forced emigration of tens of thousands of Abkhazians unwilling to live under Russian rule. This in turn stimulated the active process of migration to Abkhazia of a considerable number of Megrelians, which continued, with different intensity, until very recently. This led to a considerable intensification of the Meq-Abx contacts, which was reflected, in particular, in the Abx lexicon, which adopted quite a
number of Megr words, including many Georgian words acquired via the Megr intermediary.

Although of all North Caucasian languages Abx is the second, after Bats, in the number of Kartvelian loans, only a small part of it, some 30 lexemes, is found in the Tapanta dialect of the closely related Abaza (whose ancestors migrated from Abkhazia to the Northern Caucasus in late Middle Ages) and is thus reconstructable for the CAbx period (cf. Chirikba 1996: 101-102). Such a modest number of Kartv words in CAbx indicates a relatively weak intensity of direct Abx-Kartv contacts in the CAbx period (i.e. approximately up to the 14th century). Besides, the traces of such contacts are found exclusively in the lexicon, not involving morphology or syntax.

The lexical influence of the Kartv languages involved first of all the coastal areas of Abkhazia and, to a considerably less degree, its mountainous parts. The relative share of Kartv loans is increasing in the direction from west to east, reaching a maximum in the borderline of Abx-Megr contact zones with infrequent Abx-Megr and, more rarely, Megr-Abx bilingualism, and decreases roughly by half in the Bzyp dialect, reaching here not much more than one hundred lexemes.

It is necessary to note that, beside a small part of the Kartv loans, which goes back directly to a Geo source, the major part of the Kartv lexicon, which entered Abx orally, including the majority of Geo loans, has Megr as its source or intermediary (the traces of the contact of Abx with Svan, despite the earlier views on the mixed Abx-Circ-Kartv character of Svan, on the contrary, are not obviously visible; though cf. Topuria 1967: 69-70 and Hewitt 1992: 245-246). A different situation appeared in the Soviet period, after the incorporation of Abkhazia into Georgia in 1931, when literary Abx acquired a certain number of Geo learned words.

The question of the Megr linguistic influence on Abx has been studied rather satisfactorily thanks to the works by Čaraya 1912, Genko 1928, Schmidt 1950, Bgažba 1964 (BD), Cik’oliya 1969, Lucassen 1980, Šagirov 1989, Džonua 2002, etc. At the same time the problem of the Abx influence on Megr has until recently not been sufficiently studied. This does not mean, of course, that this topic was never investigated by scholars. A number of Abx lexical loans in Megr were noted in the grammar and dictionary of Megr by I. Kipšidze. A. Cağareli (1880: viii-ix) depicted an interesting, from the historical point of view, picture of the linguistic situation characteristic for the Abx-
Megr marchland of the second half of the 19th century. A number of observations were made by N. Marr (1938; cf. also Marr’s notes in Čaraya 1912). Later some aspects of this theme were discussed in the works by Čikobava (1942), Rogava (1942), Gudava (1947), Lomtatidze (1956), Cik’oliya (1977), Klimov (1971), Dzidzariya (1987; 1988; 1989; 2000), Hewitt (1992; 1992a), Gubliya (2002), and some other authors.

In this paper I discuss the phonetic peculiarities of Abx loans in Megr, as well as the etymology of these loans. I touch upon the problem of the possible influence of Abx on Megr morphology and syntax only briefly, as these interesting themes deserve a separate discussion. The major part of the lexical material analysed below has already been discussed in the literature, another part was revealed by me. The main sources on Megr were the above-mentioned dictionary by I. Kipšidze (Kipš), the large new three-volume Megr-Geo dictionary by O. Kadžaia (OK I, II, III), works by A. Cagareli, P. Čaraya, and others, as well as lexical material additionally collected by me during the field-work. The Megr lexemes, wherever it was possible, were checked with speakers of both Megr dialects (i.e. Senaki and Zugdidi-Samurzaqan).

The Abx loans form a special layer in the Megr vocabulary and can be divided into several thematic groups. The biggest group is represented by agricultural terms, words belonging to animal husbandry and dairy products. The second largest group is the terminology of the household. Then follow the names of plants, religious terms, body parts, natural objects, personal characteristics, sea-faring terms, etc. I regard as Abx loans also words, which in Abx itself are borrowed from other languages, as, e.g., Megr bžak’e ‘beard’, daq’va ‘deaf’, uro ‘wooden hammer’ (in Abx from Circ), naxut// naxuto// naxwta ‘bridle’ (eventually from Turkic, but in Abx probably from Circ), činori ‘hired shepherd’ (eventually from Iranian languages).

The material analysed here was discussed with the late Professor Georgij Klimov in Moscow, during my work there at the Caucasian languages Department of the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences of USSR, and some years later, during the Seventh Caucasian Colloquium, Marburg (in 1994). All his remarks and criticisms were taken into consideration in the final version of this paper. I devote this paper to Georgij Andreevič, a great scholar beside whom I was happy to work and communication with whom contributed much to my development as a specialist in Caucasian linguistics.
2. AREAL TRAITS IN PHONETICS

The phonemic inventories of Abx and Megr represent a striking contrast both from the point of view of the vocalism and the consonantism. One can name but a few traits, common to the phonological systems of both languages, the main of which is the three-fold consonant opposition “voiced-voiceless-glottalised” and a relative simplicity of the resonant system. But these features are typical of the majority of the indigenous Caucasian languages. The main difference in the consonant system is that the majority of Abx consonants have a timbre correlation of palatalisation and labialisation, which are lacking in Megr and other Kartv languages. On the other hand, the Abx vocalic system has only two phonemes differing by the degree of openness (a ~ ә), whereas Megr has five vocalic phonemes (some authors regard schwa as the sixth Megr vowel, cf. Imnadze 1971: 6).

Despite the considerable differences in the phonemic inventories, there is an observable mutual phonetic accommodation between the contacting Megr and Abx isolects, which manifests itself in the adaptation of the articulatory features originally possessed by only one of the contacting languages. Thus, the Abž dialect of Abx, neighbouring with Megr, simplified some of the older contrasts, such as the difference between the middle and front simple sibilants, which merged in the simple series (ʑ > z ʒ > ʒ). Cf. also the elimination of the pharyngealised uvular fricatives, which merged with simple uvulars (χ > x x°). All these phonemes are still preserved in the Bz dialect. In the Abx speech, bordering Megr, a specific Megr accent is heard in the phrasal intonation, in the general melodic of the speech and in the softened pronunciation of the lateral resonant l. The Megr influence is also manifested in the considerable number of lexical loans and in the Abx-Megr bilingualism in some areas of Southern Abkhazia.

On the other hand, there is an obvious Abx influence on the pronunciation of the Megr sounds, which is stronger in the zones of immediate contact. This is especially typical for the Samurz speech of Megr (which is not surprising, given the ethnically mixed Abx-Megr origin of the majority of its speakers), somewhat less in the Zugd speech and even less so in the Sen dialect, more remote from Abkhazia and undergoing the influence of the West-Geo dialects. These peculiarities of the Megr speech were noted already by P. Čaraya (1926), who observed that “in Samurzaqan everybody speaks the Megrelian
dialect from the phonetic point of view very close to Abkhaz”. According to Čaraya (: 59), “the Svan language and the Samurzaqan dialect of Megrelian represent an intermediary stage between the Georgian sound system and the Abkhaz one. Both Svan and Megrelian have a sound ә, which plays a great role in the Abkhaz phonetics, ... the sound ı in the Megrelian is pronounced very softly, more softly than in Georgian; but in Samurzaqan it is pronounced very hard, just in the same way as in Abkhaz” (cf. also Cagareli 1880: 9, 18; Kipš: 012-013). It is probable that Megr developed the sound schwa, which, as I noted above, some authors even regard as a sixth vocalic phoneme of Megr, under the influence of Abx.

It is also possible to envisage the Abx influence in the tendency to split the vowel o into the diphthong va [wa], which is attested in a number of words in the Zugd-Samurz dialect of Megr, cf. Sen kora : Zugd-Samurz kvara ‘belly’, Sen gola : Zugd-Samurz gvala ‘mountain’ (cf. Kiziria 1967: 63), which resembles the situation in Abx, which lacks the vocalic phoneme o and in loans with o splits the latter into wa (admittedly, a similar process is attested in some Geo dialects as well). Cf. also the noted in the literature change o ~ va [wa] in such Megr words as čikovani//čikvani, xorava//xvarava (family names), q'varani//q'orani ‘crow’ and in Megr ečva borrowed from Geo ečo ‘small axe’. Another example of a possible influence of Abx phonetics is the tendency in the Zugd-Samurz speech to the elision of the final vowels, e.g., doɣur < doɣuru ‘he died’, doʔvil < doʔvilu ‘he killed’, which is compared by Cik’oliya (1975: 47) with similar processes in Abx.

3. THE PHONETIC ANALYSIS OF ABX LOANS IN MEGRELIAN

(1.) Vocalic correspondences
One can observe both regular and spontaneous correspondences between vowels in words borrowed by Megr from Abx and their Abx originals. Depending on the adjacent consonant, one and the same Abx vowel can be reflected in Megr by various ways.

(1.1.) Beside the usual correspondence Abx a > Megr a, cf. such cases as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a &gt; u</td>
<td>: Abx Aq’a &gt; Megr Aq’u ‘Sukhum’ (under the influence of the labialised qeson); a-šxorəš &gt; šxoriti ‘wild grapes’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a &gt; e</td>
<td>: Abx h-taca ‘our bride’ &gt; xateci ‘bride’, a-pha &gt; xe ‘daughter’ (in female forms of surnames), a-čumsk’a &gt; čemkva ‘a kind of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dairy product’, a-xč’at > xeč’eti ‘cream’, a-ha-č’ʲč’ʲa > xeč’eč’i ‘a sort of pear’. Beside other possible explanations, the rendition of Abx a by e in Megr can be explained by a somewhat front articulation of the Abx vowel.

\[a > o\] : this process is typical mainly for the final position: Abx a-wara > Megr uro ‘wooden hammer’, a-xač’aja > xec’o ‘curds’, a-k(a)k’ara > k’ak’uro ‘thicket’; cf. also Abx ak’o < *(y)ak’a ‘one’ > Laz ak’o ‘once’.

(1.2.) The Abx vowel a can be either preserved, or changed into other vowels:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a  &gt; i</td>
<td>Abx a-naʃi &gt; Megr niʃi ‘boat’, k’ola &gt; k’ila preverb ‘through’, a-naʃa &gt; niʃa ‘wooden milk-pail’, a-c’ac’emdra &gt; c’ic’emdra ‘strawberry’, a-tay &gt; tiyi ‘ram’; this substitution is especially often observed in the Sen dial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a  &gt; u</td>
<td>Abx aapom &gt; Megr apuni ‘spring’, a-lag &gt; luqa ‘fool’, napor-ncxa &gt; napurnaxa ‘name of a divinity’, a-poča &gt; puča ‘crumble’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a  &gt; a</td>
<td>napor-ncxa &gt; napurnaxa ‘name of a divinity’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a  &gt; o</td>
<td>Abx a-č’amak’a &gt; Megr čemkwa ‘a kind of dairy product’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(1.3.) It is possible to suppose that final vowels, sometimes present in Megr loans from Abx but absent in Abx, could indicate older Abx phonetic forms, cf. Abx a-top > Megr tipu/ʃ topa ‘summer station of shepherds’, Abx a-xaʃ基 ‘rhododendron’ (< CAbx *qazja) > Megr xoʃ in xoʃ-ʃvar ‘large cone-shaped dumpling’, Abx a-lag > Megr luqa ‘fool’ (< Geo lungi, with the epenthetic nasal; to CAbx *laga ?). In the case of non-final vowels, cf. also k’ak’ara/o and xeč’eč’i below.

(1.4.) The preservation of the initial a-Megr borrowed Abx words either with the definite-generic article, or, more often, without it, though the number of words borrowed with the article is rather high (some 30 lexemes). Sometimes parallel forms both with the article and without it are found, cf. Abx a-xk’ara ‘temporary fenced enclosure for cattle during the summer season’ > Megr xek’ara//akx’ara ‘temporary shepherds’ station’. Megr preserves also the Abx root-initial a-, as in ak’a ‘on(c)e’ (also Laz ak’o ‘once’) < Abx ak’o < *(y)ak’a ‘one’, aywiri ‘bridle’ < Abx ay’ra, aʃvank’yad (Samurz) < Abx aʒ’oj-mk’at ‘a small table for cheese’ (aʒ’o ‘cheese’).
(1.5.) Changes in diphthongs

(a) Abx aa > Megr a

Megr avoids hiatus in Abx words with the vocalic diphthong aa (which is the surface realisation of the underlying voiced pharyngeal ʕ) by means of its monophthongisation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aapәnә</td>
<td>әpuni 'spring'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-xәk'әrәa</td>
<td>ask'әra ‘fenced enclosure for the cattle’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-xәxә'a</td>
<td>xәxә ‘ferment’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cf. also the epenthetic increment v in the family names suffix -aa//-ava.

(b) Abx aa : Megr y

In several cases the modern Abx aa corresponds to Megr y, which reflects the older phonetic form of aa, namely, the voiced emphaticised pharyngeal ʕ, preserved as such in Abaz, cf. Abx Maan (< *Maʕan) > Megr Maryan-ia ‘aristocratic family name’ (with the epenthesis -r- and the adding of the usual Megr surnames suffix -ia), Abx aanda > Megr yanda ‘fence’. Cf. also Megr apxaza ‘Abkhazian’, via *abyaza < *abazya, from OAbx *abaz(a)-Ya (see below).

(c) Changes in the rendering of other diphthongs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>aw[ow]  &gt;  ou, u</td>
<td>Abx abawra [abowra] &gt; Megr aboura, abәra, ambura ‘cattle-shed’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ay  &gt;  e</td>
<td>Abx ayla(r)ǯ &gt; Megr ela(r)ǯi ‘hominy prepared with fresh cheese’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ay  &gt;  ø</td>
<td>Abx ayk'ya &gt; Megr k'wya ‘small axe’ (but see below, in 4.2.).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2) Consonant correspondences

(a) Palatalised consonants

Both simple and palatalised Abx back sibilants are rendered in Megr by means of (phonetically palatalised) simple back sibilants. Abx palatalised velar stops are changed into simple stops with the transfer of palatalisation to the adjacent vowels. Thus, the sequence /Cəa/ (where C denotes any consonant) gives in Megr the combination /Ce/:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx /Cəa/</th>
<th>Megr /Ce/</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a-ʒak'ә</td>
<td>bәzә ‘beard’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-ԛәt'ama</td>
<td>yәtә ‘pintle of the yoke’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-ckә bzәya ‘(ritually) clean (and) good’</td>
<td>ckebzi ‘ritual cheese’.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The sequence /Сʲә/, pronounced [Сʲi], is rendered as /Сi/:  
Abx  Megr  
- a-k'аc'еc' > k'аc'еc'i 'a sort of grapes with small berries'  
- a-pš'ыrha > аpš'ыrha 'wooden vessel for keeping yoghurt'.

(b) Labialised consonants  
Labialised consonants, which are absent in Megr, are usually rendered by the sequence /Сv/ or /Сu/:  
Abx  Megr  
- a-dag⁰a > dagva 'deaf'  
- a-maž⁰a > mazva 'dough'  
- a-q'арта > agvarta 'herd'  
- a-max'ыr > maxvari 'arm'  
- a-k'адac > k'vadaci 'sea-buckthorn'.

The sequence /С⁰ә/, in case of velar and postvelar stops, phonetically realised as [Сʷu], is pronounced in Megr as /Сu/:  
K′әǯʲmaxan > Guǯmaxan 'male name'.

The words with final labialised consonants are rendered by means of the final sequence “simple consonant plus labialised consonant”:  
Abx  Megr  
- a-с⁰ак'ыр > xozo-k'vari 'ritual large dumpling'  
- a-bac⁰ > bacu 'medlar'.

(c) Other substitutions of consonants:  
Abx  Megr  
- y⁰ > : Abx Nay⁰ey > Megr Naveia 'male name'  
- q⁰ > y, x : Abx a-q'ат'amа > Megr yetama 'pintle of the yoke', Abx a-baq'а 'wicker-work' > Megr pacxa 'wicker hut'  
- q⁰ > ?u : Abx Aq⁰u > Megr Aʔu 'Sukhum', Abx Bataq⁰u > Megr Bataʔua 'masculine name'.

(d) Abx voiceless emphaticised pharyngeal h [h] is usually replaced in Megr by the uvular x, cf. Abx a-hata > Megr xarta 'wineskin', h-taca 'our bride' > xateci//xaceci 'bride', -pha 'daughter' > xe 'feminine sur-names suffix'. In some cases Abx h corresponds to a cluster in Megr, cf. Abx a-чамha > Megr ҷамhва//禛мва (also ݧмпа) 'maple'. Given CCirc *pxa 'wood', a supposed cognate to Abx -mha (preserved in compounds, cf. Šāgirov 1982: 79), the reason for the presence of the cluster in Megr is obscure.

(3) Epenthetic sounds  
The insertion of the epenthetic sounds, mainly resonants, is quite typical for Megr and Laz. Cf. the following examples with increments
in Abx loans: Abx abowra > Megr ambura 'cattle-shed', a-xaga > xanga 'madman', a-hata > xarta 'wineskin' (> Geo xalta), a-xc'ara > x(a)c'(a)ra 'to mark cattle' (> Svan xnc'ora), a-t'ama > Megr at'ama > Laz ant'ama, ant'arma, at'amba (cf. also Imeret art'ami, Osset alt'ami) 'peach', Abx a-ʃәykә < Megr ʃikva//ʃirkva 'trousers'. Cf. also the epenthetic v in -a-va surnames suffix.

(4) Consonant clusters

(a) Substitution of consonants in clusters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>yt</td>
<td>nt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nd</td>
<td>nd/nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ms</td>
<td>mc//nc</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

: Abx Aytar > Megr Antar 'name of divinity';
: Abx a-c'ic'indera > Megr c'ic'indera//c'ic'imdera 'strawberry'.
: Abx a-xamsa 'Caucasian rhododendron' > Megr xva xma<scape>ca, xvanca 'holly, ilex'.

(b) Simplification of clusters:

Abx consonant clusters are usually simplified in Megr by means of the insertion of a vowel (a, i, e, a).

Initial clusters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a-ʃәgәʃәr     | ʃәgәʃәr 'cornel'
| a-ʃәk'аra     | ʃәk'аra/ʃәk'аra 'temporary fence for the cattle'
| a-xraʃәga     | xraʃәga//xraʃәga 'wooden milk strainer'
| a-ʃә'әt'      | ʃә'e't'i 'cream'
| h-ʃәc'aara    | ʃәc'e'ti 'bride'
| a-ʃәn'ar      | ʃәn'ori 'hired shepherd'
| a-ʃәk'аra     | ʃәk'аra 'thicket' (can as well be the reflection of the older Abx form).

Non-initial clusters:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a-ʃәʃә'ә      | ʃәʃә'e'ti (Sen) 'a sort of pear with small fruits'
| 'wild pear'   |                |
| a-c'ic'indera | c'ic'indera//c'ic'imdera 'strawberry'
| a'ыra         | a'ыри 'bridle'.

Cf. also the elision of one of the components of the cluster in the suffix of feminine forms of surnames -xe < Abx -pha 'daughter'.

(5) Metathesis

This process is very usual in Megr and is observed in both native and borrowed words. One can mention two structural varieties of metathesis in Megrelian:

This process is very usual in Megr and is observed in both native and borrowed words. One can mention two structural varieties of metathesis in Megrelian:
(a) $C_1C_2 > C_2C_1$: 
Abx > Megr
  a-pra ‘sail’ > apra// > arpa ‘girder-beam’
  a-xra > axra// > arxa ‘rock; hill; steep mountain’
  a-bazgar > bazgari// > bgiri ‘cornel’.

(b) Another typical metathesis is the change of the structure of the type (V)CVCCV into the structure (V)CCVCV:
Abx > Megr
  a-q’arta > qvarta// > argvata ‘herd, crowd’.

Cf. similar transformations in words borrowed from Geo: kupri > Megr kupri//krupi ‘darkness’, karva > Megr karva//krava ‘amber’, okro > Megr vrke ‘gold’. Cf. also Megr margali from the original *magral-i (Geo megrel-i) ‘Megrelian’, xrabi ‘greedy’ from xarbi, etc.

The popularity in Megr of the metathesis of the type (V)CVCCV > (V)CCVCV allows us to explain the origin of the Megr ethnic term apxaza ‘Abkhazian’: from the OAbx plural form *abaz(a)-ya (*abaza ‘Abaza’ + plural human suffix -ya) < Megr *abazyya > *abyaza, whence, with the devoicing of the medial cluster, the modern form apxaza. This modified Megr form was then borrowed into Geo with the loss of the final -a (Megr apxaza > Geo apxaz-i), in the same way as Megr (from Abx) at’ama ‘peach’ gave Geo at’am-i. The Geo apxaz- was then borrowed into Russian and other languages. On the other hand, OAbx *abaz(a)-ya became the source for the Middle Greek form abazg-oj ‘Abaz(g)ians’

4. Lexical and Etymological Comments

4.1. Back loans
Sometimes Abx borrowed words which earlier were acquired by Megr from Abx. Such are the designations of the wicker hut (apacxa), of dry twigs (a-pace), of crumb (a-paöxa) (see below under pacxa and puöxa). Another probable example of a back loan is Abž a-yat’ama ‘pintle of the yoke’. The original form is probably preserved in the Bz dialect—a-q²at’ama, whereas the Abž form with the initial y⁴- can indicate the Megr intermediary, cf. Megr (Zugd-Samurz) yeta-ma ‘pintle of the yoke’ (Megr does not have the consonant q?). The

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1 Abaza—one of the ancient Abx tribes, known from Georgian sources as abasgoi.

2 For the alternation of voiced and voiceless consonants in Megr clusters, cf. also bija > pijä ‘the filling (of smth)’, bixu > pixu ‘thick; big’, abil-uri > apil-uri ‘*Apilian’, etc.
Abx word, as proposed by Bgažba (BD 225), is related to Ad q⁰әtame, Kab q⁰әdame ‘pintle of the yoke’ (š Circ *q⁰әtama).

4.2. The closeness to Abaza forms
It is interesting that some loans in Megr are phonetically more reminiscent of the northern, i.e. Abaz, than of south-Abx forms. Cf. Megr k’vaɣa ‘small axe’, which is closer to Tap k⁰әyaɣa ‘id.’, than to Abž ayk⁰әya or Bz ayk⁰әy. Cf. also Megr pacxa ‘shelter made of twigs; wicker hut’ with Ašx, Tap bacq’aɣa ‘wicker work’, bzi in Megr ckebzi ‘ritual cheese’ with Tap bziɣ vs. Abx bziɣa ‘good’. These and some other facts might indicate that, contrary to the widespread view (especially in the historical literature), according to which the ancestors of Tapanta Abazas migrated to the North Caucasus from the territory of Western Abkhazia (where historically the Sadz dialect was spoken, which is not directly connected with Tapanta), it seems to be conceivable that they used to live in the south-eastern part of Abkhazia, either on the territory of the ancient province of Mis-siminia (the Kodor valley, the historical province of Dal-Tsabal), or in Apsilia (which included the territory of the present-day Gal region of Abkhazia), i.e. in any case in the immediate contact with the Megrelian-speaking area. It is possible to surmise that it is from there, South Abkhazia, where the ancestors of Tapanta Abazas crossed approximately in the 13th-14th centuries the Klukhor pass and entered the North Caucasian plain, rich in land and pastures, where their descendants live to the present day. It is worthwhile noting that the Tap dialect has such Megr loans, which are lacking in both central (Bz) and the western (Sadz) dialects of Abx, cf. Tap kaɣ ‘yes’, Abž ko < Megr koɣ ‘yes’.

5. Morphology
The Abx influence on Megr was not limited to vocabulary only, manifesting obvious traces in morphology as well. I shall not dwell here in the details of this interesting topic, as it deserves a special discussion, and shall mention only the most interesting results of the research in this field.

Megr-Laz and Abx demonstrate obvious parallels in the categories of potentiality and reciprocity (cf. Klimov 1971: 258). A sophisticated system of preverbs in Megr is also close to that of Abx and differs from the sister-languages, which have poorer systems of preverbs. Many authors pointed out not only the structural affinities of
Megr and Abx verbs with preverbs, but also their sometimes material identity. Thus, Marr, in his review of the Megr grammar by Kipshidze, indicated the Abx origin of the Megr preverb *k'ila/*k'ola- ‘through (the opening)’ (Marr 1915). Marr also suggested the borrowed nature of the Megr preverb *ta-/to- ‘inside’ (cf. Abx preverb *ta- ‘inside’), whereas Šanidze supposed the same for the Megr preverb *a-/la-/i-la* (cited in Čikobava 1942: 155). Čikobava (ibid.: 151-152) thought that the Megr preverbs *c'a- ‘below’, k'a- ‘upon’, no- ‘there’, to- ‘inside’, la- ‘to inside’, which do not have parallels in Geo and Svan, were borrowed from Abx. Gudava (1947), in his turn, argued that the Megr directional suffix -*x* is borrowed from Abx (see below). According to S. Džanašia (1959: 226), Megr borrowed its subordinating suffix -*ni* from the Abx converb suffix -*na*, while Hewitt (1992a) supposes the Abx origin of the Megr irrealis mood suffix -*k'o-(n)i*.

Although some of the mentioned Megr affixes might well be of Kartv origin, the others could indeed have been borrowed from Abx, which is especially obvious in the case of the preverb *k'ila/*k'ola- ‘through (the opening)’ and the second part of the directional suffix -*ša-x(į/s)*.

Another possible area of Abx linguistic influence is the evidentiality category: a large number of evidential forms in Megr contrasts with their more limited use in the sister-languages, but finds a direct parallel in Abx, which has a sophisticated system of evidentials (cf. Chirikba 2003: 267).

6. Structural Loans

Structural models of some of Megr compounds and idiomatic expressions correspond to their counterparts in Abx (and in its sister-languages); cf. Megr *nina-dačiri*, Abx *a-mca-bz* ‘flame’, in both languages lit. ‘tongue of the fire’ (cf. having the same structure Kab *maʃ'e bzy*, Ub *maʃ'a ba‘ flame’). G. Hewitt (1992a: 405) points out the peculiarity of the structure of the Megr expression ‘barrel full of wine’, where ‘barrel’ is in Genitive, which differs from the corresponding Geo expression (where ‘barrel’ is in Nominative) and is closer to Abx, which in this type of construction uses the postposition with the possessive prefix. Hewitt assumes here a calque from Abx.

Some of the examples of Megr-Abx structural parallels have their continuation also in Laz, whose present habitat does not border on
the Abx one, now being separated from the latter by the West-Geo and Megr speech, which can shed a certain light on the ancient linguistic geography, when Abx and Laz were immediate neighbours. An interesting example is the construction with the postposition ‘then, after’. In Megr and Laz it is formed by means of the morpheme -k’ule, which is preceded by the Genitive suffix -š, cf. Laz ondye(r)-i-š-k’ule ‘in the afternoon’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home'. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home’. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home'. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home'. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home'. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home'. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home'. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home’, oxor-ša mo-p-ti-š-k’ule ‘after/when I came home'. Geo uses in this case the adverbs roca, rodesac: roca saxlsvuaxlovdit ‘when we came home', roca is dabrundeba ‘when he returns’. The element k’ule is also found in the adverb: Laz e-k’ule, Megr u-k’uli ‘then, after’ and is derived from k’ule ‘trace’, akin to Geo k’val-i ‘id.’. In Geo k’val-i is not used in such a function, but in Abx we find a similar use of the word a-š-ta ‘trace’: d-an-ca-[a+]š-ta-x ‘when/after he left’, d-an-ba-aš-ta-x ‘when I saw him/her’, etc. Cf. also the adverb a-š-ta-x ‘after, then’ (aš-ta-x, lit. ‘towards the trace’), parallel to u-k’uli/e-k’ule in Megr and Laz. In Tap Abaz the same element š-ta, in the phonetically simplified form ta, is used to form past con- verbs, cf. Tap d-ca-ta < d-ca-š-ta ‘(s)he having left’, i.e. ‘after (s)he has left’, s-čva-ta < s-čva-š-ta ‘I having sat’, etc., whereas in the Ašx dialect the same morpheme is found in the form -ša, cf. d-ca-ša ‘(s)he having left’, s-t-ša ‘I having sat’. The Abaz data even more resemble the Laz constructions with -š-k’ule.

7. Syntax

Specialists point out a number of syntactic traits in Megr, which fall outside of the standard common-Kartv syntactic model and can be regarded as the result of the Abx influence. Thus, according to Cik’oliya (1977: 96), such features of the Megr sentence as the word order, the specific syntactic construction of two contacting verbs with the suffix -ni ‘when’, the use of some adverbs and postpositions, the presence of the construction identical to Abx phrase, which includes the finite verb with an adverbial particle, etc., in some cases are closer to Abx than to Geo and Svan, and, according to Cik’oliya, are the result of long-term Abx-Megr contacts (cf. also Cik’oliya 1987). Interesting facts of a possible influence of Abx syntactic models on Megr are discussed in Hewitt (1987: 248, 260; 1992; 1992a; 2001). In particular, Hewitt explains the presence of the atypical for the Kartv languages postverbal marking of subordination in Megr by the influence of Abx.
Below I present the main corpus of Megr loans from Abx subdivided into the following rubrics: grammatical elements, common words, and onomastics. The majority of the discussed material has reliable Abx etymologies, which indicates the direction of the borrowing.

8. Grammatical Elements

8.1. Preverbs

k'ola-//k'ila- preverb meaning ‘through (a hole, cavity)’, e.g. (Zug-Samurz) k'ile-b-le ‘I shall pass through the hole’.

From Abx k'ola- translative preverb ‘through (a hole, cavity)’ (Džanašia 1959: 226; Čikobava 1942; Čirikba: 132, 139); cf. also the nouns a-k'ol-aa-ra/a-k'ol+ha-ra, a-k'ol+c'ra- ‘hollow, opening’. Čaráya (: 27) regarded Megr and Abx preverbs as genetically related. Cf. his examples of full parallelism in both languages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abx</th>
<th>Megr</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a-k'ol-ca-ra</td>
<td>k'ola-ra'ua</td>
<td>‘to drive out’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-k'ol-pa-ra</td>
<td>k'ola-ssap'ua</td>
<td>‘to jump out’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-k'ol-par-ra</td>
<td>k'ola-purinua</td>
<td>‘to fly out’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a-k'ol-da-ra</td>
<td>k'ola-dvala//k'ola-ryvapa</td>
<td>‘to put through’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ya-k'ol-sa-yt'</td>
<td>k'el-ed &lt; k'ola-i-d(u)</td>
<td>‘came out, appeared’</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cf. also Abx a-k'ol-piš-ra, Megr k'ila-žina ‘to peep (in/through the whole, opening)’. The element k'ola-//k'ila- is used also in substantival derivatives like k'ila-švili ša ‘(tree) hollow’ (lit. ‘a drilled-through tree’), k'ila-šit'onili ‘gouged, dug through’, k'ila-xit'onili ‘id.’, etc.

8.2. Postpositions

-x//xi//xa postposition meaning ‘till, up to’; usually combines with the postposition -sa, e.g. ša-ša-x(a/i) ‘till the house’, yura dya-ša-x ‘till the day of the death’, zugidi-ša-x ‘till Zugdidi’.

From Abx directional postposition -ax(a) ‘towards’ (Gudava 1947), cf. a-bna-a[a]xl ‘to the forest’, a-y'n[a][a]xl(a) ‘to/in the house’. The first part of the Megr compound suffix -ša-x has a Laz parallel, cf. Laz k'oči-ša ‘towards a man’, ozo(ro)-ša ‘towards the house’. But the second part too can correspond to the Laz directional suffix -xa ‘towards’. It is not quite clear whether the Laz suffix -ša-xa meaning ‘like, such as’ also belongs here, which is a possible cognate to Megr -ša-x ‘towards’, cf. baba škimi-ša-xa ‘like my father’, hamu-ša-xa ‘like this’ (Marr 1910: 228), where the comparative meaning could have de-
rived from the locative one. Gudava (1947: 194) thought that the Abx directional suffix -še is also present in such Megr words like žido-x-še ‘from above’, ek’o-x ‘upward’, dik’o-x ‘downward’, dolo-xe ‘inside’, uk’ač-xe/a ‘behind’, etc.

9. Lexicon

9.1. Nouns

9.1.1. Anatomical terms

aq’vaq’va ‘neck’ (OK I: 200).

From Abž Abx a-q⁰aq⁰a ‘back (from waist to neck)’; in Bz – a-q⁰aq⁰.

bžak’e ‘beard’ (OK I: 258).

From Abx a-žak’ja ‘beard’ (Kipš: 207; Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 133; Gubliya: 44). The Abx origin of this Megr word was also pointed out by Marr, in his editorial notes in Čaraya (: 24); the latter regarded the Megr word as genetically related to Abx. The initial bilabial in Megr is epenthetic. The name for ‘beard’ in Sen Megr is primuli. The Abx word itself is regarded as a loan from Circ žač’e < žak’ja ‘beard’ (cf. the Circ etymology in ESAY I: 199).

č’ač’a ‘kidney (anat.)’ (OK III: 460).

From Abx a-č’ač’ja ‘kidney’ (Klimov: 182; Gubliya: 72). Via Megr, the word entered also Geo (č’ač’ja ‘kidney’) and Svan (žač’, with the usual voicing of the initial consonant). Gubliya (: 72) connects Abx a-č’ač’ja with the verb a-č’ač’ja-ra ‘to string (smth on thread)’. From Abx comes also Ub č’ač’ja ‘kidney’.

maxvari ‘arm’ (OK II: 235).

From Abx a-max’ar ‘arm’ (Kipš: 278; Marr [in Čaraya: 30]; Čirikba: 133; Gubliya: 53); cf. Ašx max’ja ‘id.’. The Abx word is analysed as ma ‘hand’ and x’ja ‘handle’ (Chirikba 1996a: 111; Gubliya: 53). The final -r < -ra can be the abstract suffix. Čaraya (: 29-30) compares the Megr and Abx words as genetically related, adding here also Svan mxer ‘id.’. But in his editorial comments to Čaraya 30, Marr rightly points out that Megr < Abx, and that the Svan word is related to Geo mxar-i and Megr (m)xuži ‘shoulder’.

9.1.2. Medical terms

ababara ‘jaundice’ (OK I: 161).

From Abx a-baba-ra ‘sickness accompanied by swelling’ (OK I: 161).
The Abx word is analysed as *a-baba* ‘downy, fluffy’, plus the abstract suffix *-ra*.

9.1.3. Household items

*ašira* ‘mould into which cheese is placed’ (OK I: 164).
Cf. also Geo Lečx *apšara* ‘mould for preparing cheese’ (*sulgunis q’alibi*) (Ghlont’i: 44). The source can be Abx *a-pšørha* ‘wooden cylindrical vessel for yoghurt and water’ (cf. also below).

*apšara* ‘a kind of wooden vessel’ (OK I: 199).
Same as *ašira* and *apšırha* ? (see below). The connection with *apšırha* was suggested also by Kadžaia (OK I: 199). Cf. also Geo Lečx *apšara* ‘mould for (making) cheese’ (Ghlont’i: 44).

*apšırha* ‘wooden vessel for yoghurt’ (OK I: 199).

*ašvamk’iad* ‘small table for cheese’ (Samurz).
From Abx *a-š⁰әmk’at* ‘the shepherd’s small table on tall legs for cheese’ (Čirikba: 132, 136). Another meaning of this word: ‘a wicker table on four legs on which they put the sacrificial meat during pagan rituals’ (Kaslandziya 2005: 661). Džanašša (1915: 81) proposes a Megre etymology for this word: *sum-ke’ti* ‘three sticks’. But beside the unsatisfactory semantic side of such an explanation (no obvious motivation for the meaning ‘three sticks’), phonetically too it is not quite satisfactory: Megr *ke’ti* ‘stick’ gives Abx *a-k’at*, with the final ejective, not aspirated, which we have in *a-š⁰әmk’at*. Kvarčiya 2002: 114-115, on the contrary, argues for the Abx source for Megr; he analyses Abx *a-š⁰әmk’at* as *a-š⁰* ‘cheese’ and *mk’at*, understood as ‘container, place of smth’, found also in Abx *y⁰ә-аyә-mk’at* ‘vessel for young wine’ (*y⁰ә* ‘wine’), an archaic term preserved in the Abx Nart epics. Cf. also *a-psi-mk’at* ‘a special place where the hunters put the bones of wild animals killed and eaten by them’ (*a-psi* ‘soul’). Besides, the very geography of this term—the southern Abkhazian province of Samyrrhaqan, indicates its Abx source.

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5 Cf. Dbar (2004: 281); this paper was pointed out to me by B. Džonua.
čaq'va 'wooden vessel for yoghurt' (Kipš: 182), ‘deep wooden dish/cup with handle’ (OK III: 297).
From Abx a-čaq'ya ‘small wooden pitcher’ (Klimov: 182). The Abx word is akin to Ub čaq'ya ‘basin’, with further correspondences in Dagestani languages: Arč čaq’ya ‘spoon’, Tab (Diub) čaq'a ‘wooden jug for yoghurt and other products’ (cf. Starostin 1985: 87).

yet'ama, yat'am-i, yet'am-i ‘pintle of the yoke’ (OK III: 172).
From Abx a-q'atama ‘id.’ (Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 133, 135); in Abž—a-y'atama, probably a back loan from Meğr. Bgažba (BD 224-225), beside Meğr, points out also at Ad q'otame, Kab q'odame ‘pintle of the yoke’. Another Meğr term for this item is t'abuk'i, Sen t'abik'i (= Geo).

k'aga, k'ga ‘hallstand, peg’ (OK II: 114).
Probably, from Abx a-k'aga ‘handle’ (as of jug, bucket), also ‘smith’s tongs’, lit. ‘the holder’ (k'ag ‘to hold’, -ga agentive suffix).

k'vaya ‘small axe’ (OK II: 127).
From Abx a-yk'vaya ‘small axe’ (Čirikba: 133, 135); for the anlaut, see especially Abaz k'aya ‘id.’.

labāsə ‘long wooden cane with iron tip, or with iron or wooden hook at the handle, which is carried during the walking in the mountains’ (Kipš: 269).
From Abx a-labāsə ‘id.’ (Klimov: 182; Gubliya: 63). In Abx it is used also without the final -sə (a-laba ‘stick, cane’). Čikovani (1966: 15) erroneously suggested the reverse direction of the borrowing.

naga, niga ‘milk-pail’ (OK II: 387, 403).
From Abx a-naga ‘wooden bucket for milking’ (Kipš: 281; Klimov: 182; Gubliya: 71). Čaraya (: 31) compared the Abx and Meğr words as genetically related. Gubliya (: 71) derives the Abx word from the verb a-naga-ra ‘to take away’ (the centrifugal preverb na- ‘from the surface’ plus the root ga ‘to take, carry’). Cf. also Gur Geo niga/e ‘cast-iron pitcher (for water)’ (Ghlont’ti: 421 < Meğr?

svira ‘handbag made of linden bark’ (OK II: 594), also sura ‘little basket made of linden bark’ (OK II: 618).
Probably from Abx a-surarə ‘bag, knapsack, travel/hunting bag’ (if Meğr is not somehow related to Geo sura ‘a small wine jug’).

uro ‘wooden hammer’ (OK III: 67).
Probably from Abx a-wara ‘big wooden hammer’ (Čirikba: 132; Gubliya: 74), itself regarded as a loan from Circ (cf. Klimov 1968: 294; ESAY II: 97). According to Bgažba (BD 203), the word is known only in the
Abž dialect, for which he supposed the Megr source. While Rogava (1956: 109) suggested for Geo uro ‘hammer’ a direct borrowing from Circ, Šagirov did not exclude here the Abx intermediary (ESAY II: 97), probably via Megr. Svan uro ‘hammer for forging’ can be either directly from Abx, or from Megr.

xart‘a ‘wineskin’ (OK III: 517).
From Abx a-hata ‘wineskin, leather sack’ (Čirikba: 134; Gublia: 71).
According to V. Ardzinba (p.c.), the Abx word can be analysed as the combination of the root of the verb a-ha-ra ‘to weave’ and the locative suffix -ta. The rhotic resonant in the Megr form is a usual epenthesis. With the same meaning, the word also entered Geo (xalta, from Megr) and Ub (xāta).

xirāqaga//xirāqaga//xirazak’a ‘wooden strainer for filtering milk’ (OK III: 515, 558, 591).
From Abx a-xrāqaga ‘id.’ (Čirikba: 134; OK III: 591, citing P. Čaraya; Gubliya 57-59), analysed as x(a) ‘milk’, r-aqa ‘to filter’ and the agentive suffix -qa. The connection of Megr and Abx words was noted in Bžaniya 97 and Inal-ipa (1976: 347).

xāqa ‘woollen yarn’ (OK III: 393).
From Abx a-xāqa ‘woollen lisle thread, yarn’; in Bz a-xāqa (BD 47). The first part of the Abx word can be connected with x/ in Abž a-xāx-ra, Bz a-xāx-ra ‘to sew’, the final -qa is the agentive suffix.

9.1.4. Architectural terms, buildings

abarac’a ‘porch, open balcony’ (Kipš: 191; OK I: 162).
From Abx a-barac’a ‘open balcony, verandah’ (Kipš: 191; Klimov: 182; Dzidzariy 2000: 146). The final -c’a in Abx can be a-c’a ‘bottom, lower part’. Sadz a-barac’a ‘verandah’ represents probably an older non-reduced form. For the part bar(a) cf. a-xa-bra ‘roof (a-xa ‘head’) < *a-xa-bara?

aboura, abora, abūra, abura, ambura, ambūra ‘cattle-shed’ (OK I: 162, 163, 184).
From Abx a-bawra [abowra//abora] ‘cattle-shed’ (Klimov 1968: 291-292; Inal-ipa 1976: 347; ESAY I: 101; NS 497; Čirikba: 133). In Abaz bawra [bora], Čaraya (:) 20 wrongly supposed the reverse direction of the borrowing, connecting the Megr word with Geo boseli-i ‘cattle-shed’. Kipš: 192 strangely enough derived from this Abx word Megr qamara (see below). The Abx word is being connected with Kab baw [bow] ‘cattle-shed’, which is supposed to have lost the final syllable
(cf. ESAY I: 101). Cf. also Kar-Balk bau ‘(cattle-)shed, stable’ and Svan bāw ‘(big) mountain-hut’, both from Kab. In Šagirov’s view (ESAY I: 101), the source for the Abx word can be Slavic obor(a) ‘cattle-pen, cattle-shed’, which penetrated also into Rumanian, Moldavian and Albanian, although it is unclear how it could find its way into Abx. An alternative etymology is also possible: if the final -ra is the usual abstract suffix (cf. Klimov 1968: 292), then the connection of the Abx word with Kab becomes more plausible (cf. such idea in NS 497; Klimov 1968: 291-292 regarded both Abx and Circ words as borrowed, but for Abx he supposed the Circ intermediary). In this case the affinity with the Slavic word can be simply fortuitous.

agavra ‘cattle-shed, cattle-pen’ (Kipš: 192; OK I: 164). From Abx a-g’ara ‘fence, yard’ (Bleichsteiner 1931: 74; Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 137; cf. also OK I: 164). The Megr toponymical element agvara, derived from this word, according to Eliava (1987: 95), is found on the territory of Megrelia up to the River Cxenisc’q’ali. Kipš: 192 erroneously derived the Megr word from Abx a-bowra (see above).

agvarta ‘watch-hut of shepherds and hunters in mountains or in the wood’ (Bleichsteiner 1931: 74; Ghlont’i: 22; not in Kipš; or OK). From Abž Abx a-g’ara+ta ‘fence’, ‘fenced place’, ‘cattle-shed’, cf. the full-grade Bz form a-g’ara+ta. The Abx word is derived from a-g’ara (see above) and the locative suffix -ta, lit. ‘the fenced place’. It is not connected with Abx a-g’arta ‘herd, flock’ (see sub argvata). The word entered also into the West-Geo dialects, cf. Gur agvarta(i) ‘hut for overnight stop in the distant field’ (Bleichsteiner 1931: 74) and Imeret agvarta ‘bee-garden’ (BD: 229); in Ghlont’i (: 22) the semantics of the Gur word is the same as in the Megr one given above; cf. also in Žghent’i (1965: 278) Lower-Gur agvarta ‘tent, marquee’; the indication of the Abx source for Gur is in Inal-ipa (1965: 216) and for Imeret is in BD: 229.

amxara ‘a small house for a newly-married couple’ (OK I: 185). From Abx a-mhara ‘a small house or a hut for a newly-married couple’. The Abx word can be analysed as containing the negative prefix m-, the verb (a)ha- ‘to hear’ and the abstract suffix -ra, lit. ‘not hearing’ (cf. Džanašia 1917: 193). The Turkish Abkhazians still use this term in a fuller form: a-taca mhara, lit. ‘not hearing of the (newly-married) bride (a-taca)’, which reflects the typical ritual of “avoidance” by the newly-wed bride of the husband’s family (the young couple had to spend a certain time in this wedding-house, situated
nearby the main house, and only after a special ritual the bride was allowed to enter the main house).

*apra* ‘two highest vertical beams in the middle of two opposite walls of the wooden house, whose heads support the horizontal beam, to which the whole span roof is attached’ (Kipš: 197), Sen: ‘beam-girder, on which the hearth chain is being hung’.

From Abx *a-pra* ‘sail’ (Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 137; Dzidzariya 2000: 143; Gubliya: 68), Kipš (: 197) indicated Geo as the source for the Megrelian word (cf. Geo *apra* ‘sail’), but Marr (1938: 87) regarded the Geo word itself as an Abx loan. Marr derived the Abx word from the verb *a-pra-ra* ‘to fly’, taking into account the Abx association of a vessel or a boat with the bird, and the fact that ‘oar’ in Abkhaz is designated by the word *a-ziy$a* ‘wing’.

*apta*ra ‘fenced place for cattle’ (OK I: 199). From Abx *aaptra* ‘shepherds’ spring-station’ (OK I: 199), cf. especially Đžg Abž *aaptara*; in Bz *aaptra*/a. The word contains the compound root *aap-* ‘spring’ and *ta+ra* ‘the placement of X’ (*ta* ‘be inside’, -ra abstract suffix), preserved as a separate word in Abaz (*ta+ra* ‘vessel; placement for cattle’, etc.).

*arpa* (OK I: 195), a metathesis from *apra* (see above).

*aaxk’ara*/*xek’ara*/*xaak’ara* ‘fenced place in the pasture’, ‘fenced place for the cattle’, ‘a temporary pastoral station’, ‘wattled fence’; also as a toponymic element in Megrelia (cf. OK I: 207, III: 509, 528, 591).

From Abx *a-xk’aara* ‘fenced place’, ‘fenced part of the field’, ‘summer-time enclosure for horses and calves adjacent to the farm-yard’ (Čirikba: 132; OK III: 528). The Abx source for the Megrelian toponymic element was indicated by Cxadaya (1975: 34). The Abx lexeme is derived from the verb *a-x+k’aa-ra* ‘to fence (around)’.

*yanda* ‘fence’, ‘wall’ (Kipš: 349).


*nashi, nishi* ‘boat’ (OK II: 391, 404).

Cf. also Laz *nuši/*nishi, Geo (dial.) *nuša/*nuš-i, in the Geo dictionary by Saba Orbeliani (18th century) *nuša* ‘boat’. Probably, from Abx *a-nas$* ‘boat’. Despite Čaraya (: 13), who regarded the Abx word as bor-

6 G. Klimov suggested to me the Turkish source for this Megrelian word, probably having in mind Tur hendek ‘fence’, but the Abx connection seems more plausible phonetically.
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rowed from Megr, Dzidzariya (2000: 142) thinks that the presence of ә in the Megr form can, on the contrary, indicate the Abx source for the latter; for the dialect Geo dialect forms and Laz it is possible to suppose the Megr intermediary. It is noteworthy that both Megr and Geo borrowed another Abx nautical term, a-pra ‘sail’ (see above). Abx a-naʃ can eventually have some IE source, continuing IE *nau-s ‘sea vessel’ (cf. Gr nau-s, Lat nāvi-s, Skr nau-s ‘ship’), though the preservation of the Nominative suffix in the borrowing is not quite usual.

paca� ‘shelter made of branches and twigs; wattled hut’ (OK III: 92).

Cf. also Geo pacxa ‘wattled hut (in Western Georgia)’ (K’ank’ava 1965: 323), Imeret pacxa ‘small basket put on the stone in the mill, into which maize pours from the box’ (Ghlont’i: 538), Gur pacxa ‘wattled hut covered with sedge’ (Ghlont’i: 538), Laz pacxa ‘a kind of basket wattled from thick raw twigs of hazel-tree or chestnut’ (Vits), ‘a hastily built wooden construction used as a cattle-shed’ (Atin) (Bucaklişi/Uzunhasanoğlu 1999: 379), ‘basket’ (Arx), ‘stable’ (Ardaş).

The word is known also in north-eastern Tur dialects having Arm (Hamşen) substrate (probably via Laz). Kipş: (: 335) suggested Geo as the source for the Megr word, but it is known only in areas of Western Georgia adjacent to Megrelia. Cf. also Abž Abx a-pacxa ‘wattled hut, wattled kitchen’, for which Bgažba (BD: 203) suggests the Geo source, while Klimov (: 182), on the contrary, sees in Megr an Abx loan.

The Kartv words can be derived from the Abx term for the wicker-work: Abž a-bacq’a, Bz a-baʃaq, Tur Bz a-bacq’a ‘wicker wall, wattle’, cf. from the point of view of vocalism especially such forms as Tsw Sadz a-bacq’a, Aḵ, Tap bacq’a ‘wattle’ (< CAbx *baʃa-q’a ‘wattle’, from *baʃa ‘twigs used for wattle’ and -q’a ‘flat’, cf. Chirikba 1996a: 13; Čirikba: 133, 135). The original meaning of the word is thus ‘something wattled’, which could be a wattled hut, wicker fence or a wicker basket. The form bacq’a could thus yield Megr pacxa, with the devoicing of the initial bilabial (by regressive assimilation) and the substitution of the Abx palatalised and glottalised uvular stop ʡ, absent in Megr, by the uvular fricative x. Abž a-pacxa, thus, can be a back loan from Megr. It is worthwhile mentioning that this word

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7 R. Lacroix, p.c.
8 U. Bläsing, p.c.
spread to Western Abkhazia only relatively recently (perhaps during the last 50 years), from the Abż dialect, because of the chain of popular wattled restaurants called a-pacxa with traditional Abx cuisine. Another Meq derivative from bacq’a is pacxi ‘thorny or other twigs’, which was also borrowed into Abż: a-pacxf ‘dry twigs, small fire-wood’.

*tipu* ‘shepherd’s cabin on the mountain pasture’ (Kipš: 243); OK II: 69: ‘area around a sheepfold (where guard-dogs are placed)’. *tap, tapa* ‘place to keep cattle by night’, ‘reportedly, a woman in confinement had her own corner (place) to be, which they named tapa’. From Abx a-tap ‘shepherd’s cabin’, ‘cabin’, ‘place’ (Dzidzariya 1987: 38; 1988: 69; 2000: 144; Čirikba: 132), cf. also Abaz (Ašx) tap ‘cabin, tent’. The Abx word can contain ta’a ‘place’ (cf. Kvarčiya 113; Dzidzariya 2000: 144), though the analysis of the final element (p) is less clear (though see Kvarčiya 113). Kipš (243) connected the Meq word with the verb tip ‘to mow’, tipi ‘hey’, which seems less probable. There are also attempts to connect both Abx and Meq words with Gr topo-s ‘place’ (cf. Dzidzariya 1987: 39; 2000: 144).

*xek’ara//axk’ara*, see axk’ara.

9.1.5. Clothes, etc.

*k’vaxča, ḥvaxča* ‘goat or sheep fell used as spreading by shepherds (in the mountains)’ (OK II: 128; III: 222).

From Abx a-kəx’veła ‘spreading from goat (or other) fell used in the mountains (mainly by shepherds)’. Kvarčiya (: 122) analyses the word as k’a ‘bosom’ and x’vela ‘to protect, guard’.

žikva ‘trousers’, ‘kind of men’s breeches with narrow lower part of trouser legs’; also žirkva (OK III: 389, with r-epenthesis). Probably, from Abx a-ʒayk’a [adkeykʰwa], a-ʒyku’a [adtykʰwa] ‘kind of men’s breeches with narrow lower part of trouser legs’, ‘trousers’, ‘underpants, drawers’ (Klimov: 182; Gubliya: 112). The part ayk’a means in Abx ‘trousers’, ʒ is explained by B. Džonua (p.c.) as a-ʒa ‘thin’, i.e. ‘the thin trousers’. The word also penetrated into Laz: žikva, žik’a, zip’k’a, c’ık’va ‘underpants, drawers’ (Marr 1910: 145), and via Laz – into Tur dialects, cf. such Tur forms as zipka, zbiqa, zibka, zivga, zibka, zivga, zipka, zivka, cikva, zaţya, zika ‘breeches with narrow lower part of trouser legs’ (cf. Eren 1999: 469; Emiroğlu

In some Arx isolects zip’k’a means ‘narrow’, rather than ‘trousers’ (R. Lacroix, p.c.).
1989: 239), and the Kurd dial. of Erzurum (Tur and Kurd forms were pointed out to me by U. Bläsing, p.c.).

9.1.6. **Terms related to animal husbandry and pasture**

*agvarta* ‘herd, flock, drove’; ‘innumerable, immense number of cattle’ (OK I: 164).

From Abx *a-gʰərtə* ‘herd, flock’; ‘multitude, great number’ (Čirikba: 133). The Abx word is connected with Abaz *gʰərtə*, Kab *gʰərte*, Ad *kʰertz* ‘herd, flock’, in Ad also ‘group’ (cf. ESAY I: 109; Chirikba 1996: 336). See also *argvata*, *gvartə* below.

*aɣviri* ‘bridle’ (OK I: 200).

Probably from Abx *aɣrə* ‘bridle’ (Čirikba: 132, 136; Gubliya: 71), cf. also Abaz *ɣrə* ‘id.’ Although Starostin (1985: 80) regards the Abx word as borrowed from Kartv, I think that it can be native in Abx. If we have had here a Kartv loan, the Meq/Agy should have been adapted in Abx as *aɣər*, which is not the case. Abaz usually preserves the root-initial *a*, but not here, though the Abx possessive forms (e.g. *w-aɣrə* ‘your (male: human) bridle’) indicate the presence of the root-initial vowel. For CAbx we can reconstruct *(a)ɣəra*. The Abx word can be further connected with such EC items as Lak *xürü*, Darg *urxur*, Tab *furə* and, probably, also Avar, Bežt, Hunz *royo*, if we suppose a metathesis here (the EC forms are from Kibrik & Kodzasov 1990: 158). It is symptomatic, that the Kartv lexemes were not included by Klimov in his Proto-Kartv dictionary. If this word is really native in Abx, then Meq is the source for Geo *ayviri* and Svan *hayvri*-il (with the diminutiv suffix -il). Via Geo the term entered also Laz (*ayviri*) and Bats (*awir* ‘bridle’).

*činori* ‘hired shepherd’.


In any case, the Abaz form seems to be original, as compared with the Abx one (with the metathesis), which could have been the source for Meq *činori*. 
naxvta//naxta//naxuta 'halter' (OK II: 376). Klimov (: 182) regarded it as borrowed from Abx a-nax'ta 'id.' Though this word comes eventually from Turic languages (found also in Mongolian) and has, as assumed, a Chinese source (cf. Šagirov 1989: 94), it is not found in Geo and is spread mainly in the North Caucasian area (cf. Abaz nax'ta, Circ nax'te, Ub nax'ta, Kar-Balk noxta, Kum naxuta 'halter', Osset nax-ta-bos 'part of a saddle'), with the exception of Azer noxta; cf. also Ottom Tur noxda (both from Pers nɔtɔ?). It is thus safe to assume that the term entered Megr via Abx, together with a number of other terms associated with livestock breeding.

xnc'ra//xәnc'ara (OK III: 556, 566) 'the marking of the cattle by making incisions on animals' ears'. From Abx (Abz) a-x+c'a+ra 'the marking of cattle by shepherds by making incisions on animals' ears' (Inal-ipa 1965: 219; Kvarčiya 109; Čirikba: 134; Gubliya 62; OK III: 556). Cf. also Bz a-x+c'a+r, Abaz x+c'a+ra 'id.'. The Abx word contains the verbal root c'a 'to put' and the abstract suffix -ra; the initial x- is not quite clear. In Megr -n- can be epenthetic. The word entered also Svan (xunc'ara 'id.'), probably via Megr.

Cf. also naga, xirazaga, aboura, agvara, agvarta, aptara, axk'ara, tipu, k'vaxc'a, aču, tiyi, antari, ažmax-i/a, ckebzi, xac'a, xat'o, xeč'eti, xига.  

9.1.7. Botanical terms

9.1.7.1. Wild plants

aia 'the name of a plant' (Kipš: 193), cf. aia žeška 'Aia Sunday', Zugd aia-oba 'the name of the spring festival'.

Cf. also Svan aya mišladey 'the Sunday day of Aia' (from Megr ?). The source of the Megr and Svan word may be Abx a-yə-ra 'vegetation' (Čirikba: 133), cf. also Abaz aya-ra 'plant'. The resemblance of Svan and Abx words was noted by Bžaniya 150. The Abx word is derived from the verb a-yə-ra 'to be born', 'to grow, bear fruit'; the alternative etymology, connecting aya-ra with the adjective a-yə+c'ə 'green, blue' (cf. Šakryl 1961: 111) is less satisfactory phonetically.

anč'a 'mountain maple'. From Abx a-mč'ə, (dial.) a-nč'ə 'acutifoliate maple'. The genuine Megr name for 'maple' is cxali (in Geo – korap-i).

ašešra 'kind of black grass tall as a man, with white flowers' (OK I: 207), probably 'cow-parsnip'.


From Abx a-xә+š+ra 'limestone cow-parsnip, heracleum calcareum'. The Abx word can be analysed as a-xә-š ‘white head’, plus the abstract suffix -ra.

ašɪra ‘kind of tall and thick grass’ (OK I: 208).

Probably same as axešra (see above).

bacu ‘medlar, Mespilus germanica’; cf. also tuntiši bacu ‘a kind of mountain ash’ (Maq: 11: ‘rabina греческая, Sorbus graeca’), lit. ‘bear’s medlar’ (tunti ‘bear’).

From Abx a-bač’/a-brac’ ‘Mespilus germanica’ (BD: 217; Čirikba: 133). Ub b(a)rač ‘id.’ can also come from Abx, although it can as well be related on a genetic level (cf. Čirikba 1996: 335). The genuine Meğr word for this plant is cəmunk’turi (Kipš: 202), cəmunk’turi//cəxunk’turi, akin to Laz cərκmunt‘uri (Maq’: 29), cəxımunt‘uri and Geo zymart’-i.

baç’a ‘Caucasian bilberry’.

Probably from Abx, cf. Abz p’ac’a in a-ha-r-p’ac’a ‘bilberry’ (for the first part see probably a-ha ‘pig’), Bz p’ac’ in a-ha-r-p’ac’, a-ʃg-a-r-p’ac’ ‘bilberry’ (a-ʃgа ‘mountain’, -r- connective element). It is not excluded that the name for this plant is etymologically connected with the name for the insect discussed in 9.1.8.1. The other names for ‘bilberry’ in Meğr are mažurzen (from ğurzeni ‘grapes’) and mešiais ʒa, lit. ‘fox’s tree’.

bagəzəri (Zugd-Samurz, Kipš: 210), bəgəiri (Maq’: 81; OK I: 276) ‘cornel, Cornus mas L.’.

From Abx a-bagçər ‘cornel’ (Čirikba: 134). The second part of the Abx word (-çər) is being connected with Abaz zara ‘cornel’ and further with Ad zara-ʒi ‘snowball tree’ (ṣi ‘bad’), Kab ze ‘cornel’ (ESAY I: 204, 205, 207). Abdokov (1973: 52) explains the first part in Abx (bəga) as ‘slope’. Alternatively, it can be connected (as an attribute) with a-bqa ‘wolf’ (‘the wolf’s cornel’). Meğr bəgəiri is from bagəzəri via metathesis. Svan ʒigir ‘blackberry, Rubus’, Meğr zəgəri ‘Smilax’ can represent a different root. Memişisi (1988: 90) tries to connect Meğr bəgəiri with Geo bazji and Laz bəzəraj ‘cicuta (Rus ‘веха мышьяк’)’, which does not seem plausible.

c’ič’indera//c’ič’indara//c’ič’imder ‘strawberry’ (OK III: 424).

From Abx (Abz) a-ça’çəndra ‘strawberry’ (Čirikba: 132); cf. also Bz a-tə’te’əndar, a-tə’te’əndar, Sadz a-ça’çəndara. Though the Abx etymology is not quite certain (cf. for the second part the last element in a-kə’okəndar ‘shrub’), the fact of its presence in all Abx dialects, and its phonetic shape in the Bz form (with the middle sibilant affricate ts’),
allows us to see here a genuine Abx word. Via Megr, it entered into West-Geo dialects, cf. Upper-Rač čic’i’dera 'strawberry' (Maq': 47). Megr has also other names for this berry: xvixvinia, com(ʔ)ua 'strawberry'; cf. also in the sister-languages: Geo marc’q’-v-i, xendro, Imeret Geo dardala, čiamp’ola, Svan basq’(i), básq, mayöl, Laz k’andyu/o.

čamkva, čamhva, čampa 'mountain maple'; cf. also čamua 'a kind of mountain plant' (OK III: 291).

From Abx a-čʲamha 'maple' (Čirikba: 134). The second element (mha) can be akin to Circ *pxa 'wood'. The presence of the labial element in Megr forms (kva//hva//pa) is quite interesting—can they reflect an older Abx form? The genuine word for 'maple' in Megr—mek’en čxali k’ak’ara/o 'thick wood with big trees'; also a toponymic element in mountainous Megrelia.

From Abx a-k’k’ara 'thick wood with big trees; wood without under-growth and thickets' (Čirikba: 132, 137), derived from the root k’(a)k’α 'open, clean, clear, free from smth' and the abstract suffix -ra (etymology by B. Džonua, p.c.). Cxadaya (1975: 34) pointed out the Abx origin of the toponymic k’ak’ara/o. The Me gr form can reflect an older (unreduced) Abx form (*a-k’k’ara-ra).

k’vadaci, k’vadaca, k’vadacia (OK II: 118), k’udacia (Maq’: 73) 'sea-buckthorn'.

From Abx a-k’adac ‘id.’ (Čirikba: 133). The Abx word probably contains -dac ‘root’, but the first part is not clear. The word is known also in Geo (< Me gr ?): k’adac-i ‘blackthorn’ (cf. Čubinašvili 1984: 606), beside the more usual kacv-i.

šxuriči ‘wild grapes’ (Kipš: 361; OK III: 286). Probably, from Abx a-šxa ‘mountain’, a-ʃi ‘grapes’; cf. Čirikba: 131). Kipšidze (Kipš: 361) and Kadžaia (OK III: 286) derive the Me gr word from šxuri ‘sheep’ (according to Kadžaia, from šxuri-ʃ ěi ‘intestine/waist of the sheep), which is doubtful semantically. Another Me gr word for ‘wild grapes’ is burexi.

xvanca, xvanca ‘holly, ilex’ (OK III: 539).

From Abx a-xamsa ‘Caucasian rhododendron’ (rhododendron caucasica); in Bz a-ho̱msa.

9.1.7.2. Cultivated plants

at’ama, ant’ama ‘peach’ (OK I: 197, 188).

From Abx a-t’ama ‘peach’ (Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 134; Gublia: 67; cf. also
Via Megr, the word spread to Geo (at'am-i, Imeret art'am-i) and Svan (at'ama). Cf. also such compounds as Megr uškar-at'ama, Geo vašl-at'ama ‘the nectarine peach’, lit. ‘apple-peach’ (Maq’: 27; Megr uškuri, Geo vašl-i ‘apple’). Via Geo, the word entered Laz: Xop at'ama, Vits ant'ama, Ardaš at'amba (cf. Buçaklişi/Uzunhasanoğlu 1999: 5, 8), Arx ant'ama, ant'arma. Osset: at'ami, alt'ami, and a number of Dagestani languages, cf. Bežt at'ami, Hunz ŋat'ami, Ants Avar ŋat'am ‘peach’ (cf. Khalilov 1989: 110, 114).

The lexeme is present also in Ub (t'ama ‘peach’) and in Šap Ad (q'a-t'ama ‘a kind of pear’, lit. ‘pear-peach’, cf. q'a-ža ‘pear’). Mészáros (1934: 257) and Dumézil’s (1974: 19) proposed the Ub etymology: t'ə ‘soft, a bit overripe’, plus ma ‘apple’, i.e. ‘the sappy and soft apple’. Šagirov (1989: 68) doubted this etymology because of the unusual position of the constituents in the Ub form: the determiner (t'a) should be postposed, not preposed to the head noun. Starostin (NS 1004-5), on the other hand, reconstructs for CWC *t'um ‘marrow’, ‘kernel (of a fruit, nut)’, Proto-Lezgi *t'um(:)-ul/*t'um(:)ut' ‘grape’, ‘plum’ (Tab t'umut', Agul t'ibit', Rutul t'imil, Tsaxur t'umul, Bud t'ombul, Arč t'ummul, Udi t'ul). Acc. to Starostin, Xinalug t'umbol ‘damson’ is from Bud, and Udi dam'ulsul ‘plum’ is also an old loan from the Shakhdagh languages; part of Lezgi languages reflect the form *t'um(:)ut', which is a reduplication.

The genetic connection of WC and EC forms seems to be plausible both phonetically and semantically (‘marrow’, ‘a kind of fruit’). The WC languages preserve related forms which probably explain the original semantics of this NC root: ‘sappy, soft, overripe’, cf. Abx a-t'am+t'am ‘soft, slightly swollen’, ya-t'am+t'am-wa ‘soft (of dough, fruit)’, e.g. a-χ'orma t'am+t'am-wa ‘soft and sappy persimmon’, a-t'ama t'am+t'am-wa ‘soft and sappy peach’, Abaz t'am+t'am ‘sappy, overripe’, ya-t'am+t'am+ʒə-t' ‘it becomes overripe’, Circ t'ema/t'ama in Ad qe-t'ema, Kab q'e-t'ama- ‘to swollen, get plump’ (preverb qe-//q'e- ‘hither’).

Besides the etymology of the Abx word, the initial a- in Kartv forms is an additional indication of their Abx origin. Incidentally, one of Arm words for ‘plum’ (cf. Classical Arm damon, Artvin damun, R. Lacroix, p.c.)
Arm dial. *dambul*, which does not have an IE etymology, seems to have come from the EC source, cf. especially Bud *təmbul*, Xinalug *təmbol* and Udi *dampul* (it cannot be excluded, however, that the Udi form might be a back loan from Arm); Starostin explains ʰb in Bud as epenthetic (NS 1004); this naturally raises the question about the relation between Arm *damon* and *dambul*: are they chronologically different loans (*damon* < *dəmol* < *damul* – earlier, and *dambul* – later loan), or do they reflect borrowings from different EC dialects? Interestingly, in the Arm dialect of Svedia (Syria) the name for ‘plum’ is *tama*, beside more usual *dəmmen* (Martirosyan, p.c.). H. Martirosyan sees in the Arm word *təŋ* ‘pear’ (acc. to him, supposedly < *tam-* + Arm “plant-suffix” *-j*) a possible borrowing from the discussed above WC root for ‘peach’.

šući ‘kind of black grapes with small berries’. From Abx a- *šući* ‘id.’ (Čirikba: 132). The Abx word is explained as being derived from the name of the Abx peasant who first cultivated this sort in his farm (BD 210). The term is known also in Western Georgia (Kontariya/Čanba 1987: 50), probably via Me Gr.

*xəćeč’u* ‘a kind of pear with small fruit which ripens late’. From Abx a-*ha*-*xəće* a ‘pear with small fruit’, ‘wild(ing) pear’ (Čirikba: 131), containing a-*ha* ‘pear’ and suffix -će (<*xəće* a) ‘small, little’. Cf. a similarly built a-*cʰa*-*čće* a ‘wild apple with small fruits’ (a-*cʰa* ‘apple’), a-*kʰara*-*čće* a ‘small river, rivulet’ (a-*kʰara* ‘creek’). Abx a-*ha* is related to Circ *qʰarɑ* and Ub x*ɑ* ‘pear’. Via Me Gr, the lexeme entered also West-Ge dialects, cf. Aχa *xəćeč*+ur+a, *xəćeč*+ur-i *sxali* (*sxali* ‘pear’), Gur *xəćeč*+ur-*i//*xic’ič*+ur-i (with the attributive suffix -ur; cf. Ghlon’ti: 748, 756), as well as Laz: xačač’uri (mcxuli) ‘a kind of pear with small fruit’, also mcxuli *xəćeč’uli* ‘a kind of pear’ (Marr 1910: 230; mcxuli ‘pear’), Arx xačač’i/e, *xəćeč’uli* ‘a kind of pear with high sugar content’ (Bucaklış/Üzunhasanoğlu 1999: 196). Klimov (1971: 259) pointed out the Abx origin of the Laz word. Given the presence of the Geo suffix -ur, (Aχa) Geo must have served as an intermediary for Laz. Probably from Laz, the word spread among the languages of north-eastern Anatolia, cf. Arm (the Pontos area) xača-žur, Tur xačažur armud-u (armud ‘pear’), *xəćečur, hećečur* (the Hamşen region), hećečulap (the Trabzon area) (Bläsing 2004: 101-102); according to Bläsing (2004: 102), the element -ap in the last form indicates the Pontic Gr medium (cf. Gr ap ‘pear’); thus, the Laz form *xəćeč’uli* was the source for Pontic Gr, whence it found its way into Tur of the Trabzon area.
9.1.8. Zoological terms

9.1.8.1. Wild animals

bač’a ‘tick’ (zool.), metaphorically ‘small, shortish’, bač’a-bač’a ‘very small’ (OK I: 230).

From Abx, cf. especially Tsab a-bač’a ‘tick’; in Abź a-p’ač’a, Bz a-p’ač’, Sadz a-başa, Ašx başa ‘id.’ (Čirikba: 135); for the second meaning cf. Abx a-p’ač’ ‘short, small’. Kipshidze (Kipš: 202) suggests the connection of this Megr word with Geo bačk’a ‘stake with hooks’, which is doubtful semantically. The Tsab form and the Megr one derived from it reflect the CAbx form (*bač’a), which later underwent the regressive (in Bz and Abź) or progressive (as in Sadz and Ašx) assimilation. The reverse direction of the borrowing (Megr > Abx) is excluded, in view of the Abx dialect forms, and of the fact that Megr č’, which is phonetically palatalised, would have invariably given in Abx the palatalised affricate (č’), not č. The genuine Megr term for this blood-sucking insect is girźyibe.

9.1.8.2. Domesticated animals

aču ‘horse’; also aču, aču-aču ‘interjection for driving horses’; ačua ‘horse (in baby talk)’ (OK I: 204).

Probably, from Abx a-čo ‘horse’. The alternation u/a is usual for Megr. Cf. also Geo aču-a ‘horse (in baby talk)’ (with the diminutive -a), aču/ači ‘interjection for driving horses’. Džanašia (1959: 226), not mentioning the Megr word, regarded Geo aču as borrowed from Abx. Nikolayev and Starostin (NS: 520-521) regard the Geo word as acquired from EC languages, Gamkrelidze and Ivanov (1984: 919) think of a loan from some IE source, while Klimov (1994: 171) suggested the closeness of the Geo form to the Olnd one. Given the phonetics of the Megr and Geo words, exactly matching that of Abx with the definite-generic article, as well as the fact of quite a number of cattle-breeding and pasture terms borrowed by Megr from Abx, the Abx source for this term seems to be more probable. The borrowing could chronologically correspond to the time of the Abkhazian Kingdom (i.e. 8–10 centuries). See also below, sub čou, in 9.5.


From Abx a-ta+y’ ‘(sire) ram’ (Kvarčiya: 75; Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 132). The Abx word is analysed as ta ‘ram’ and y’ ‘semen’.
9.1.9. Ritual and religious terms

**antari, žini-antari** ‘the chief god of livestock-breeding’ (OK I: 187, II: 500), ‘patron saint of small horned cattle’ (Bžaniya: 265); žini ‘the above, upper’.

From Abx *aytar*//*aytar* ‘the chief god of livestock-breeding’ (Čirikba: 134, 137; Adžindžal 2003: 42). The nasal epenthesis before the dental stop (*ayt > ant*) is usual for Megr. The prayers cycle to the especially revered deity Aytar, regarded by Abkhazians as one in seven fractions, used to start in spring, on the first Monday of Lent (Bžaniya: 127). Most probably, under the cover of the pagan deity we have here the old Christian saint, St Theodore Tyro,\(^{11}\) to which in Abkhazia the Anakopia temple was consecrated (in the present-day Novy Afon). The form *aytar*//*aytar* comes from Gr *Agios Theódóros* ‘St Theodore’ as a result of haplology: *ay toda/ar > *ay tata/a > aytar//aytar*. This etymology can be corroborated by the presence in the Osset pantheon of the deity Tūt’y (Iron)//Totur (Digor) ‘patron saint of wolves’, also ‘patron saint of cattle-stealers’, which Abaev (1979: 323) also derives from the name of this saint. The festival dedicated to this deity took place, as in Abkhazia, in the first week of Lent. Abaev regarded the Kartv languages as the source for the Osset forms, like Svan li-Toduri, li-Tödri festival dedicated to St Theodore, the first week of Lent, Geo Mox festival Tevodoreba, Rač Tedoroba, during which they prayed for the reproduction of cattle. Abaev also drew attention to the Balk toponymic name Aš-Totur taš-i ‘the stone (taš) of St Theodore’. Cf. also Kar-Balk Totur-nu al aya ‘March’, Totur-nu art aya ‘April’, containing the name of the saint. The Osset form with voiceless intervocalic stop t is also phonetically close to the Abx one (vs. d in Svan and Geo forms). The Abx source (intermediary) for Megr is quite probable given the modified as a result of haplology Abx form (the Kartv languages preserve the name of this saint in a more original form) and the voiceless character of the second stop. Besides, the Megrelians do not associate this pagan deity with the Christian saint, in full conformity to its function among the Abkhazians. The Abx source is also indicated by the special terminology accompanying this cult, also borrowed from Abx (see below *ckebzi, xoxo-k’vari*). Beside Megr, cf. also the deity *Anatori* known among the

\(^{11}\) A Christian martyr, who was a recruit (tiro) in the Roman army at Pontos (Black Sea area).
mountainous Georgian groups (from Megr or a parallel development?).

napra//napurnaxa 'the name of a deity, to which a sacrifice is made in July, exclusively on Saturday' (Kipš: 286-287; OK II: 366, 367), 'patron saint of cattle, during whose prayer they stood with faces turned to the west; the deity was asked to provide wealth, health and to protect cattle and people' (Bžaniya: 265).

From Abx anapra//napor-naxa 'the deity of internal diseases, of gastric ailments', 'the patron saint of the sick' (a-naxa 'shrine') (Čirikba: 132, 137). The similarity of Megr and Abx words was noted in Bžaniya 265. As in the case of the preceding item, here too under the guise of a pagan deity we have, in all probability, the old Christian Saint Onuphrius (Gr Ονούφριος).

Interesting parallels to Megr and Abx popular beliefs can be found in the Russian popular tradition, where Saint Anufrij protects the cattle from all the evil, heals people from bleeding from a wound and protects them from a sudden death (cf. Yudin 1997). The initial a- in Abx anapra belongs to the root. The Abx source for Megr is indicated by the element naxa/e < Abx a-naxa 'shrine'.

živov 'ritual procession to Dziou' (Samurz, Calendžixa), 'ritual doll called Dziou' (Samurz); cf. also in a somewhat modified form (as a result of the progressive assimilation) žiava 'ritual prayer for rain by women, in which figures a specially made doll' (OK III: 390).

From Abx žә-ywow 'the ritual prayer for rain, in which figures a specially made doll' (Čirikba: 137). The first part of the Abx word is a-žә 'water', the second part is not quite clear (from ayaw-ra//ayaw-ra 'to get, receive'?). In Calendžixa Megr the doll is called moč’udia, i.e. 'bride', 'doll', 'hostess' (Kontariya & Čanba 1987: 52).

9.1.10. Geographical terms, relief, mountains, ponds

algada 'a cone-shaped hollow' (OK I: 181).

From Abx a-lgat 'ravine, gully, hollow, depression'. Cf. also the Abx toponym a-lgat//lgat found in several places in Bzyp Abkhazia, and its variant a-lgad(ә) in Abzhywa Abkhazia (cf. Kvarčiya: 2002: 582).
The etymology of the Abx word is not clear, though it has probably deverbal origin (for the initial consonant cf. the centrifugal preverb ‘from the mass’, as, for instance, in a-l-g*ag⁰-ra ‘protuberance, prominence’). Cf., on the other hand, a-g(ә)da ‘hornless (animal)’ (?). In any event, the presence of the initial a- in Megr points to the Abx source.

**apsta** ‘river, ravine’.

From (Abž) Abx a-пsta ‘gorge, canyon’ (Kipš: 197, OK I: 199), in Bz a-psta. The Abx word is thought to contain the old word for ‘water, river’ (*пшо), akin to Circ пшо ‘id.’, whereas the final -ta is the locative suffix (cf. ESAY II: 16), i.e., ‘the place of water, river’ (the bottom of a canyon is usually a river-bed in the mountains), which renders the Megr meaning ‘river’ quite symptomatic.

**arxa** ‘rock; hillock; steep mountain’ (OK I: 196)

A metathesis from axra (see below sub axira, axora, axra).

**ašta** ‘meadow, field’; also a toponymic element in mountain Megrelia.

From Abx aštä ‘yard, small field (especially before the house), glade’ (Cxaday 1975: 34; Čirikba: 137), which comes from *yaša-ta ‘a flat place’, consisting of a-yaša ‘right, even’ and the locative suffix -ta (with the loss of the initial y-).

**axira, axora, axra** ‘rock; hillock; steep mountain’ (OK I: 207, 208); also xora ‘high rocky slope’ (OK III: 591). From Abx a-xra ‘rock’. See also arxa (above).

**azmax-i/azmax-i** ‘artificial water reservoir, made near the summer station (тп’) (Dzidzariya 1987: 39), ‘the place outside the cattle-shed (агвара) to get the cattle to drink’ (OK I: 165), ‘puddle, pool, pond’ (Cxaday 1975: 34; OK I: 165, 204); also as a toponymic element in Megrelia.

From Abx a-ʒmax ‘swamp, mire, bog’ (cf. Cxaday 1975: 34; Dzidzariya 1987: 39; 1988: 69; 2000: 144; Čirikba: 133, 137; Gubliya: 53), the first part of which contains Abx a-ʒә ‘water’. The Bz form is a-ʒмаx (BD: 60), which presupposes CAbx *ʒә-маq. According to Dzidzariya (2000: 144), the word is found also in Gur Geo (< Megr?).

9.1.11. *Food*

**ckebzә** ‘a cone-shaped cut piece of cheese in the middle of the ritual bread made of maize flour and used during the prayer about the reproduction of cattle to the god žini antari’ (Kipš: 195; OK III: 360).
From Abx a-ðkla ‘(ritually) clean, sacred’ and a-bzәya ‘good’ (Džanašia 1915: 77; Čirikba: 133, 135). The Abx parallel to this term is a-ðkʰ-ajо ‘(ritually) clean cheese (ajо ‘cheese’) used during the prayer to the god aytar’ (cf. Bžaniya 126).

čemkva, čemxva, čemhva ‘a kind of porridge prepared on milk and maize flour with cheese’ (OK III: 299), ‘a milk dish’ (Kipš: 364). From Abx a-ðamkʰa ‘hominy made of maize flour and cooked with milk and cheese’ (Čirikba: 131); cf. also Abaz ðamkʰa ‘dish made of sour cream, cheese and maize flour’, Kab ẓamkʰe ‘hominy-like dish made of sour cream, maize flour and fresh cheese’, which is thought to have come from Abaz (cf. ESAY II: 193). Historically the Kab form derives from *ẓamkʰe < *ẓamkʰe < *ẓ:amkʰo. The etymology is unclear; the first part can contain Abx ða ‘wheat flour’ (?).

eла(р)жи ‘maize hominy cooked with fresh cheese’ (cf. Kipš: 231, OK I: 546).

From Abx ayla(р)жить ‘id.’ (Čirikba: 133; Gubliya: 63). The Abx word is analysed as preverb aya-la-, meaning ‘together in the mass’, and the root жить, which Marr (1926: 11) connected with the verb a-жра ‘to bake’, explaining the whole word as ‘a baked mixture’, which is not quite felicitous from the semantic point of view (the dish is cooked, not baked). Probably, it is better to suppose an original form *aya-la-жить, from the verb aya-la-жра ‘to heap together in the mass’. The sonorant is most likely a non-etymological increment.

According to Inal-IPA (1965: 341), in the form elarжi the word is known also in Geo dialects (from Megр?).

mazva ‘flat cake made by Abkhazians of flour and honey’.

From Abx a-maзa ‘dough’ (Schmidt 1950: 19; Ardzinba 1985: 162; Čirikba: 133; Gubliya: 93). Čaraya 12 erroneously saw in Abx the Meg loan, and in the latter—the borrowing from Greek mазa ‘dough, flat cake’, which does not explain the labialization of the fricative in Abx. Besides, the semantics of the Megр word indicates its Abx origin.

pučxa//punčxa//pinčxa ‘crumb (of bread, etc.)’, the verb pučxolua ‘to crumble’ (Kipš: 340; OK III: 120).

According to Lomtatidze, from Abx a-pčxa < a-pčxa-xa // a-pčxa-xa ‘crumb’. The word is found also in West-Geo dialects: Imeret, Gur pučxa//punčxa//pinčxa ‘crumb (of bread, etc.)’, and with the suffixed -l: pinčxa-l (Lomtatidze 1989: 49-50); cf. also Laz punčxa ‘crumb’. Abx a-pčxa-xa is derived from the verb a-pčra ‘to break’ (the preverb p(о)-), with the nominal suffix -xa ‘the rest of’. As argued
by Lomtatidze (1989: 51-52), it was borrowed back by Abž Abx (a-pәčʲxa ‘crumb’), which is indicated by the palatalised ʃ (if this palatalization is not the result of the “diminutivisation” of the word. What is the relation to these words of Svan na-picx ‘crumb, remains’, West Geo prɛxvna ‘to crumble’?\footnote{G. Hewitt, p.c.}

\textit{xač’a} ‘ferment for producing yoghurt’ (OK III: 524).

From Abx a-xač’a ‘id.’ (Dzidzariya 1989: 145; Čirikba: 132; Gubliya: 58), analysable as x(ɔ) ‘milk’, the preverb aa- ‘hither’ and the verbal root c’ɑ ‘to put’. Cf. the similarly built a-ʒ Stopwatchx’s ‘to put hither (aa+c’ɑ) [into] water (ʒ).’ An alternative etymology is dependent on the technology of the fermenting, whereby a piece of lead or a leaden bullet (a-xa) was put into the milk to stimulate the fermenting process; thus a-x+aa+c’a ‘lead/bullet put [in the milk].

\textit{xačo} ‘curds’.

From Abx a-xač’ya ‘curds’ (Čirikba: 132; Dzidzariya 2000: 145; Gubliya: 58). In the first part we have probably x(ɔ)- ‘milk’ found as the first part of compounds in many Abx terms for dairy products, e.g. a-xativo+ʒr+c’atya ‘yoghurt’ (r+c’at ‘to sour’). Cf. also a-x+ʃ ‘milk’ as an independent word (ʃ ‘white’). The second part (ɛt’ya) is not clear. Gubliya: 58 analyses ɛt’ya as ‘grains’, i.e. ‘grains of milk’, and Dzidzariya (2000: 145) as ‘tiny’. The word penetrated also Geo: xačo ‘curds’, whence xač’a-p’ur-i ‘xačapuri, a cake with cheese’ (p’ur-i ‘bread’, from Gr), borrowed into Abž Abx (a-xač’ap’or), despite its own form a-ɛt’ya.\footnote{G. Hewitt, p.c.}

\textit{xeč’et’i} ‘cream’ (Samurz).

From Abx a-xeč’at ‘cream’ (Čirikba: 131; Dzidzariya 2000: 145; Gubliya: 58), which is analysed by Abdokov (1973: 75) as x- ‘milk’ and ɛt’, connected with Ašx ɛata, Ub ɛata, Ad ɛate < *ɛt’hata ‘sour cream’, without explaining the glottalization in the Abx form. The explanation of Abx ɛt’a, Circ-Abx ɛata as a loan from Turkic čati, sathi ‘roof’, ‘surface’, suggested by Kvarčiya 119, does not seem plausible. A more probable etymology is the contamination in Abx of the borrowed from Circ *ɛt’hata ‘sour cream’ (containing *ɛt’h ‘milk’) with the native a-xač’a ‘curds’.

\textit{xigaila//xaga//xač’aja} ‘beestings’ (OK III: 526, 565, 592).

xozo in xozo-k’vari//xozo-k’ori//xozo-k’oni ‘large ritual cone-shaped dumpling, at the start of Lent they would place a rhododendron (or walnut) stalk in one of them, and the person to choose it would have good luck for a year’; cf. also xozo-k’vari-ši ĉ’k’umua ‘the eating of dumplings on the first Monday of Lent’, xozo ‘a kind of dumplings made of maize flour with fresh cheese’.

Probably, from Abx a-x’әaзо ‘cone-shaped, round or half-round dumplings or cakes, mainly of maize flour, sometimes filled with cheese’ (Čirikba: 133; Gubliya: 52); in Bz a-x’әaзо (BD 64), a-x’әaзо < CAbx ә’q’әәзо. Cf. also Abx x’әaзо-k’ә-n ‘the time of a special prayer during which they prepare ritual dumplings a-x’әaзо’ (k’ә ‘to hold’, -n ‘the time of’), x’әaзо-k’ә-ra ‘ritual prayer when they prepare ritual dumplings in the first day of the Shrove-tide’ (k’ә-ra ‘the holding (of)’), x’әaзоk’ә-ra-mzә ‘February’ (or ‘March’) (lit. ‘the month of the holding of a-x’әaзо’) (a-mzә ‘month’), x’әaзо-nәх’ә-a ‘ritual prayer during the x’әaзоk’ә-ra ritual’ (a-nәх’ә-a ‘prayer’). Cf., besides this, Abx a-x’әaзо-k’әк’әәr ‘ritual cone-shaped cake prepared during the x’әaзоk’ә-ra festival’, when they made a ritual prayer devoted to Aytәr, the god of fertility and cattle, which coincided with the first day of the Christian Lent (a-k’әк’әәr ‘flat cake filled with cheese’). Čaraya 15 regarded the Abx words as borrowed from Megр, though, curiously, he explained the Megr word as ‘a small cone-shaped cake used by the Abkhazians during the ritual sacrifices’.

Etymologically, Abx a-x’әaзо is being associated with the name of the rhododendron—a-x’әaзо (cf. Akaba 1984: 52, 54). Indeed, rhododendron played a special role during this ritual. The maize cakes were prepared, with the filling made of ritually clean cheese. Covered with the rhododendron leaves, they were baked in hot embers (Bžәniya: 126). Besides, an elderly, ritually “clean” (i.e. not having sexual life), woman put into one of the dumplings or cakes a little rhododendron stick, called ‘the happy stick’ (a-nәәәp a-cәә) or ‘the rhododendron stick’ (a-x’әaзо cәә). The one who happened to get the cake with this stick, was regarded as destined to happiness during the whole year, and was supposed to give a feast on that occasion (Akaba 1984: 52). A similar ritual was practised by the Megrelians: “During the time of Lent they cook by the dinner-time the truncated cone-shaped cakes, into one of which the house woman, before the cooking, secretly sticks a wooden nail c’k’әri; the cake with the nail is called xozo-k’vari. The one who got the xozo-k’vari, had to give a feast” (cf. Kobaliya 1903: 102).
The etymological connection of the word for the ritual cake with the name of the rhododendron seems to be plausible. An alternative etymology of a-xa2ø was proposed by Gubliya: 52: xøa from xøa3 'millet' and žøa from žø 'to cook', which is problematic from the semantic point of view. O. Kadžaia translates the Mevr term as 'a big cooked dumpling', probably under the influence of the Mevr word xo2o 'big; separate' (cf. OK III: 566), but cf. above Čaraya's translation: 'a small cone-shaped cake...'. Beside Mevr, the word xo2o is known also in Geo dialects, cf. Mtiul, Imeret xo2o 'coarse-grained bread' (Ghlont'i: 758). Cf. also in the Georgian dictionary by Saba Orbeliani (18th century): qweyza 'round bread'. Marr (in Čaraya: 15) connected Mevr xo2o with OGeo qweza-y 'bread' and Abx a-xa2ø 'dumpling' with Imeret xo2o (in Marr 1938: 32).

9.1.12. Seasons

apun-i 'spring' (Kipš: 197; OK I: 199); also apun-oba 'spring' (OK I: 199).
From Abx aap 'spring' (Kipš: 197; Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 132; OK I: 199). Čaraya 18 regarded Mevr and Abx words as related. Abx aa-pa-n is analysed as 'time-front/before-season', i.e. 'the early time of the year'.

9.1.13. Varia

aqaga 'shadow'; 'lean, skinny', 'one who is barely alive' (OK I: 164).
From Abx a-gaga 'shadow, silhouette'. The Abx word can contain the agentive suffix -ga. Kadžaia (OK I: 164) suggests the connection of Mevr aqaga with magagia 'tramp, vagabond' (cf. OK II: 202) and with the verb gagap-i 'to be hardly able to walk, to drag oneself along' (OK I: 278), which, given the Abx connection, does not seem quite plausible.

argvata 'crowd, mob, people' (Kipš: 196; OK I: 190).
From Abx a-gøarta 'herd, flock, pack' (Inal-ipa 1965: 216; Čirikba: 134), connected with Abaz gøarta, Kab gøarte, Ad køert 'id.'. The Mevr form is the result of the metathesis usual for this language from aqøarta (see below sub gøarta), cf. similar cases of metathesis described above.

ašxara 'swindler, rascal' (OK I: 204).
Probably not from Geo (from Pers) ašk(')ara 'obvious, public, open' (cf. Mevr adverb aškarat < Geo ašk(')arad 'evidently, openly, publicly')
because of the semantics. Maybe from Abx a-şʲxarәwa ‘mountaineer, mountain dweller’ (?).

bzou ‘fool, blockhead’; ‘rude, uncouth, impolite’ (OK I: 259).

Probably, from Abx ya-bžo-w ‘cripple, defective’, derived from a-bža ‘half’.

c’içi-k’vak’va ‘words from the children’s game’ (OK III: 423).

Probably, from Abx c’içi-k’k’ak’a ‘words from the children’s game’; cf. also c’içi-g’ag’a, Abaz c’uc’u-g’ag’a ‘id.’. Abx c’içi-k’k’ak’a rhymes in the juvenile folklore with the word ayç’ark’k’ak’a ‘yoghurt with bits of maize hominy’ (B. Džonua, p.c.).

gvarta ‘(big) wave’, ‘pile, heap’ (OK I: 320), cf. also the adverb gwarta-gvarta-d/s ‘by heaps, piles’ (id.).

Same as argvata (see above), as suggested also in OK I: 320; this time the word is without the Abx definite-generic article. Cf. also Abx g’arta-k’m ‘many, big quantity, multitude, heap’ (-k’ indefinite article).

luga ‘fool, stupid (man)’.

Probably, from Abx a-lag < *laga ‘id.’ (Čirikba: 132).15 Kipšidze (Kipš: 274) alternatively connects the Megr word with Geo (č)lungi ‘blunt’, while Klimov (1998: 16) derives luga from PKartv *blagw ‘blunt, obtuse’. The dilemma is thus in the choice of one of the alternative hypotheses: the borrowing from Abx, or the genuine kinship with the Geo adjective. In Abx the second part (ga) functions as a separate word: a-ga ‘foolish, bad fellow’ and is connected with Ub ayg’a ‘bad, fool’ and Circ *-g’a privative suffix (ESAY I: 93).

q’ala ‘crazy’, q’ala-ni ‘id.’ (OK III: 217).

Maybe, from Abx a-q’ala ‘stray, tramp’, derived from the verb a-q’ala-ra ‘to tramp; to go astray; to get confused’, which consists of the root q’ ‘to hit’, or q’y ‘to jump out’, plus the root extension -la.

q’un-i ‘silver decorations on the belt’ (OK III: 214).

Probably, from Abx a-q’ona ‘silver decorations on the thong, belt, bridle, saddle-girth, etc.’. The Abx word is connected with the pre-verb q’ona(ə) ‘on the belt’, as well as with possible cognates in sister-languages, cf. Ub g’ona ‘buckle, clasp’ and, possibly, CCirc *q’oṇa ‘nail’ (cf. Čirikba 1996: 222).

t’at’a ‘affective vocative to children’ (Samurz).

From Abx t’at’a; Abaz t’at’a ‘id.’. The Abx word means actually ‘soft’.

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15 Abaz laga ‘fool, bad man’ is probably connected with another Abx word, aj-la+ga ‘mad, crazy’.
t’at’a ‘soft small things’. From Abx t’at’a ‘soft, relaxed’ (Klimov: 182); same as above.

vara(y)da, sivarayda ‘refrain in popular songs’. From Abx vara(y)da, saywarayda ‘refrain in popular songs’. The same refrain is known in Circ, Ub and Abaz, and from Kab it went to Osset (ESAY II: 92-93). The part sa- in saywarayda means ‘my’ in all West Caucasian languages, though the form sa-y- (with the marker y- of the alienable possession) is purely Ad, which gives reason to regard the Abx word as borrowed from Ad (pointed out by G. Klimov). Apart from Megr, the refrain is known also in West-Geo dialects, and even in some eastern Geo dialects too, cf. Mox varada-varada (Ghlont’i: 223). Cf. also the first part of Megr vara-nani ‘refrain in songs’ (if it is not the vocative vara, see below).

xač’a-mač’a/xič’u-mač’u/xič’-muč’u/xič’-mač’o ‘small items, minute’ (OK III: 524, 564).
From Abx a-xač’a-mač’o ‘small items, things’, from a-xač’ ‘small, little’ and the alliterational repetition of the word with the change of the first consonant to m, although the second part too can correspond to Abx a-mač’o ‘little; small’. Abx Bz a-xač’-mač’o ‘small dry twigs for kindling’ can be a phonetic variant of the same reduplicated word (with the loss of the labialization of x).


xateci/xaceci/xacei/xatisi ‘bride, a newly-wed bride, the new daughter-in-law’ (OK III: 509, 524).
From Abx h-taca ‘our (h-) bride, our daughter-in-law (taca)’ (Kipš: 396; Marr in Čaraya 44; Čirikba: 133). The first c in Megr xaceci is the result of regressive assimilation.

9.2. Adjectives

dagva ‘deaf’. From Abx a-dag9’a ‘deaf’ (Kipš: 221; Čaraya 23; Klimov: 182; Čirikba: 133; OK I: 425; Gubliya: 69). Cf. also the toponym dagva in Western
Georgia. The Abx word is itself regarded as borrowed from Circ (cf. Schmidt 1950: 19; ESAY I: 146).

9.3. Adverbs

ak’ak’a see in 9.4.

mačxoma ‘enough’ (OK II: 232).

From Abx mačxomma ‘much, enough’, in essence a rhetoric question meaning ‘is it little?’ (< mačxomma ‘little+share-STAT:PRES-QU’ = ‘there’s plenty’).

9.4. Numerals

ak’a ‘one’, ak’a c’uns ‘(for) a minute’, ‘(in) a moment’, ‘immediately’, ak’a xvale ‘the only one’, whence the proper name ak’axvale (Cagareli 1880: 26), ak’a bu(r)cxa ‘a bit, of a size of a nail’, ak’a-žans ‘one hour’, Sen ak’a skua p’unsu ‘I have an only child’, Zugd ak’a c’uti ‘one minute’, etc.

From Abx ak’a ‘one’ (non-human) (Kipš: 193; Džanašia 1959: 226; Čirikba: 132; Gubliya: 55) < CAbx *(y)ak’a. Here belongs, probably, also Laz (Atin) ak’o ‘once’; Klimov (1998: 1) explains the final -o as the remainder of the petrified adverbial suffix (akin to Mebr -o(t) and Geo -ad). The presence of the word in Laz can indicate its borrowing already in the Common Zan period. Čaraya erroneously regarded the Mebr and Abx words as genetically related. The Abx numeral ak’o ‘one’ and the indefinite article -k’ derived from it are connected with the Ub indefinite article -k’o.

ak’ak’a ‘one by one’ (OK I: 170).

From Abx ak’ak’a ‘one by one’, the reduplication of ak’o ‘one (non-human). The final -a in Abx can be either the preservation of the older form, or the old multiplication suffix found in numerals (cf. Chirikba 1996: 369).

9.5. Interjections

čou/ču interjection for driving the horse (OK III: 316).

Probably, from Abx do(w)//do (Bz) ‘id.’ Cf. also above, sub aču.

(he)i(ei), vara (OK III: 134, 632), varo (OK III: 216) vocative word while addressing smb.

From Abx wa-ra ‘you (male)’, also as a vocative word while addressing a male.
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vay ‘come!’. Recorded by the 17th century Turkish traveller Evliya Çelebi in his book *Seyahatname* ("Book of Travels"). Currently seems to be unattested.


ʔa, ʔah ‘no!’ (OK III: 216, 218).


9.6. Onomasticon

The Megr-Abx onomastic parallels, with rare exceptions, have not yet been a subject of a special discussion. From the point of view of the topic of the present paper, a number of Abx loans can be pointed out.

9.6.1. Toponymics

*Abţua* ‘Abkhazia’ (OK I: 163).

From Abx abţә-wa ‘the Abzhywa (region of Abkhazia)’. Analysed as bţә ‘middle’ and -wa ‘ethnic suffix’ and designates the middle part of Abkhazia.

*Aq’u*, or *Aq’u-ʔixa* (lit. ‘Aqu-fortress’) ‘Sukhum’ (OK I: 200). Cf. also Geo *Aq’u* ‘Sukhum’, *Aq’u-s cixe* ‘the Sukhum fortress’. From Abx *Aq*a ‘Sukhum’ (the Abx name of the capital of Abkhazia), usually derived from aq*a-ra ‘the stony (sea)shore, coast’.

9.6.2. Personal names

The following Megr personal names can be mentioned as borrowed from Abx:

- *bata’ua* < Abx bataq’a (from Circ)
- *gudu* < Abx gә-dәw ‘big heart’
- *guz’maxan* < Abx kәz’ma-xan ‘wolf-khan’
- *gvaśa* < Abx gәašә feminine name < Circ gәašә ‘lady, mistress’
- *naweia* < Abx nayәey masculine name (lit. ‘the Nogay’).

9.6.3. Family names

A number of Megr surnames (especially noticeable by the presence of the Abx surname-formant -ba) have Abx origin, cf. *alšibaia* < alš’n-(d)-ba, čik’oba-va < a-čeq’-ba, šxvacaba-ia < a-ʒә’ac’әa, etc. It is interesting that the Megr surname *apšila-va* preserves the name of the ancient Abx tribe of Apšilians/Apšilians, who used to be neighbours of the ancestors of the Megrelians; cf. by analogy a somewhat later
Megr surname *apxaza*-va, based on the ethnic term *apxaza* ‘Abkhazian’. In OGeo the same ethnic term is found as *apšil* ‘the country of the Apshilians’ (Džuanšer’s Chronicles of the 11th century). Beside the surname, the ancient ethnic term *apšil* is preserved in such Megr words as *abšil-uri uča* ‘a sort of grapes’ (OK I: 163-164), lit. ‘the black (uča) Apshilian’, and in the adjective *apšil-uri* ‘a sort of grapes with white berries’ (OK I: 199). The back fricative (ś) in both Megr and Geo reflects the archaic middle sibilant fricative (ṣ), preserved only in the Bz dialect. On the etymology of the ethnonymic root *ape*-, which lies at the basis of the Abx self-designation (*ape*-va), see Chirikba (1991).

9.6.3.1. Family names suffixes


The allomorph of this suffix is -a (cf. *bok’uča*-a, *apxaza*-a, *leča*-a, *mika*-a, *p’ap’a*-a, *karda*-a, etc.), which Kipš: 233 derived from -va, though see below the discussion of the latter. The suffix -va/*a* can have as its source Abx -aa (*=*-śa) human plural suffix (e.g. *apswa* ‘Abkhazian’, pl. *apswaa*) used also to form collective forms of family names, cf. *agr-aa*, *tar-aa*, *sųy-aa* ‘the members of family clans *Agr-*ba, *Tar-*ba, *Zhi-*ba’, etc. (cf. Čirikba: 134, 137-138). The rendering of Abx -aa by means of -a in Megr is regular, cf. above other cases of similar replacement of Abx -aa. In this case the form -va must be secondary, the labiodental being epenthetic, in order to avoid the hiatus in the sequence “vowel-vowel” (e.g. *bok’uča*-a[*a]* > *bok’uča*-va), cf. in a similar way Megr *ma*-va < *ma*-a ‘I:QUOT’, *pswa* ‘wing’, beside *psua*, *xubu*-va ‘Xubua (surname)’, beside *xubua*, etc.

A somewhat less probable possibility is to regard the older form of the Abx plural suffix *-śa* as the source of -va. Though from the phonetic point of view the shift of intervocalic velars or post-velars into labiodental is plausible (cf. Rus *segodniya* ‘today’, pronounced as [sivodn’ja]), there are at least two examples where old Abx *ś* is rendered in Megr as y, not as v, cf. *maryania* ‘Marghania (family name)’ < Abx *maʃan* (the modern form – *maan*), Megr *yanda* ‘fence’ < Abx *yan-da* (> modern *aanda*).

The Abx origin of the Megr surnames suffix was suggested already by N. Marr (1912: 5), who linked it, however, with Abx *pa* ‘son’, whence the Abx family masculine suffix -ba (cf. above *agr-ba*, etc.). Though this is also a feasible alternative possibility, in this case one has to suppose in Megr the shift b > v. Džanašia (1959: 41, 76) did
not accept Marr’s etymology, deriving this suffix from the assumed older Megr form \*-\*van < -v-an and connecting the last element with the Svan surnames suffix -an. Kaldani (1980: 69-74), rejecting in his turn Džanašia’s etymology, connects Megr -av-a (deriving it from \*-\*v-an), with the Geo-Svan suffix -el-a, explaining the shift / > v in Megr by the labialization of the lateral and the shift of the labialization to the fore. Yet I regard the Abx etymology of the Megr suffix as quite plausible. Beside the suffix -va, Megr borrowed from Abx also the feminine family suffix -xe (see below).

9.6.3.2. Feminine family names suffixes

-xe feminine family names suffix, cf. \*zinc’are-xe ’female of the family clan Zints’are’, zik’i-xe ’female of the family clan Zik’i’, dadi-xe ’female of the family clan Mocik’a’, etc. (Kipš: 400). The same suffix in the form -pxe is found also in West-Geo Gur, Imeret and Ačar dialects, cf. Gur gurieli-pxe // guri-pxe ’female of the clan Gurieli’, beri-pxe ’female of the family clan Beridze’, rami-pxe ’female of the clan Ramishvili’, Ačar noyaideli-pxe ’female of the clan Noghaideli’, dadiani-pxe ’female of the clan Dadiani’, Imeret čikovani-pxe, ratiani-pxe ’female of the clan Čikovani, Ratiani’, etc. (cf. Ghlont’i: 556). In Lower Imeret both -pxe and -xe are found (Marr 1938: 42). Megrelidze (1938: 140) indicates that there is a strong Megr substrate in these West-Geo dialects, cf. such feminine forms as \*ja-ši-pxe ’female of the family clan Dža’, t’uyu-ši-pxe // t’uyu-pxe ’female of the family clan T’ughu’, etc., containing the Megr-Laz genitive suffix -ši, often used in family names. The suffix -pxe// -xe is becoming archaic in both West-Geo and Megr, and its use with the woman’s surname, according to Megrelidze (1938: 134), acquires sometimes a mocking connotation. Cf. a humoristic song in Gur, compiled of the feminine family names:

\*ali-pxe, mali-pxe, 
\*bzik’i-pxe, bzik’i-čila-pxe, 
\*malazoni mocik’a-pxe (Megrelidze 1938: 136).

The feminine surnames suffix -pxe (which indicates the maiden name of a married woman) is found sporadically also in Laz (in Atin, Vits-Arx and Xop dialects), cf. Laz gurieli-pxe ’female of the clan Gurieli’, šaq’eli-pxe ’female of the clan Džaq’eli’, c’ulu-pxe ’female of the clan C’ulu-ši’, murut’i-pxe ’a woman whose maiden name is murut’i’, bost’anži-pxe ’a woman whose maiden name is bost’anži’, etc. (cf. Megrelidze 1938: 134; Kojima/Bucak’lişi 2003: 395). Sometimes the Laz
forms with this suffix even masculine forms of family names (e.g. c’u-lu-pxe-ši), which testifies to the weakening of the original semantics of this suffix and its transformation into a genderless family names formant (I. Megrelidze). In one case, this suffix is found in a Svan folklore text (Megrelidze 1938: 137).

From Abx family names feminine suffix -pha, derived from a-pha ‘daughter’ (akin to Circ pxә and Ub pxә ‘daughter’ < CWC *pxә); in Abx dialects the suffix is found also in the form -ha (and exclusively as –ha in the speech of Abkhazians in Turkey). The Abx origin of Megr and West-Geo suffixes was pointed out already by Marr (1938: 42; cf. also Kipš: 400; Inal-ipa 1976: 334; Čirikba: 131, 134, 138-139). In this case, taking into account the phonetic differences between the Megr and West-Geo forms, one has to suppose a direct borrowing of this suffix from Abx into West-Geo, without the intermediary of Megr, unlike many other cases of Abx loans in Geo. The spread of the Abx feminine surnames suffix in Megrelia, West-Georgia, Adzharia and Lazistan can be attributed, undoubtedly, to the time of the Abkhazian Kingdom (after its capital was moved from Anakopia in central Abkhazia to Kutaisi in Western Georgia), i.e. to the 9th-10th centuries, when Abx, together with Geo, became the prestigious language of the royal court and of the highest aristocracy in the whole of Western Georgia (including Megrelia). The same explanation holds for the spread in Megr of the Abx masculine surname suffix va//-/a (see above).

Despite the obvious Abx source of the feminine suffix under discussion, there are attempts to prove its Kartv origin. Thus, Čikobava (1942a: 26) connected -pxe//-/xe with OGeo mqev-al- ‘female slave’, regarding -al as a derivational suffix, though he was not sure whether the part mqev- was genuine or borrowed. Čurguliya (1983: 134) regarded -xe as being of Kolkhian (Zan) origin, without any further etymology. Megrelidze’s (1938: 137-138) etymology of this suffix stands apart in that he analyses -pxe in the spirit of Marr’s infamous Yaphetic four-element analysis. Bgăžba (1987: 91), nevertheless, emphasised that the feminine surname suffix has a clear Abx origin (al-pha > ha ‘daughter’), and that pxe is not known in Eastern Georgia.

10. Conclusions

The material presented in this paper demonstrates that the Abx linguistic influence left its obvious traces in Megr lexicon, morphology
and syntax, which testifies to a very long period of contact between these unrelated neighbouring languages. It also supports Marr's (1915: 214) thesis about a substantial Abkhaz ethnic influence on the Megrelians. Some of the borrowings or structural calques from Abx are found also in Laz, which at present time occupies a geographical area distant from Abkhazia, which can shed a certain light on the ancient geolinguistic situation of the Western Transcaucasia.

ABBREVIATIONS

Abaz  Abaza
Abx  Abkhaz
Abž  Abzhywa dialect of Abkhaz
Ačar  Acharan dialect of Georgian
Ad  Adyghe
Ants Avar  Antsukh dialect of Avar
Arč  Archi
Ardaš  Ardashen dialect of Laz
Arm  Armenian
Arx  Arhavi dialect of Laz
Atin  Atina dialect of Laz
Ašx  Ashkhar(ywa) dialect of Abaza
Azer  Azeri
Balk  Balkar
Batum Abx  Batum speech of Abkhaz
Bežt  Bezhta
Bud  Budux
Bz  Bzyp dialect of Abkhaz
CAbx  Common Abkhaz
CCirc  Common Circassian
Circ  Circassian (Adyghe and Kabardian together)
CWC  Common West Caucasian
dial.  dialect
Darg  Dargwa
Diub  Diubek dialect of Tabasaran
Džg  Dzhgiarda subdialect of the Abzhywa dialect of Abkhaz
EC  East Caucasian
Fer  Feria speech of Batum Abkhaz
Geo  Georgian
Gr  Greek
Gur  Gurian dialect of Georgian
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<td>Hunz</td>
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ABBREVIATIONS OF LITERATURE

BD Bgažba X., Bzybskij dialekt abxazskogo yazyka (issledovaniya i teksty), Tbilisi, 1964.
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