


GLASHEV AKHMED ALABIEVICH
INTERPRETATION OF FRAGMENTS OF OLD TURKIC MONUMENTS
OF THE 10TH – 14TH CENTURIES WITHIN THE KARACHAY-BALKAR
LINGUACULTURAL CONTEXT

Review



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The author conducted a study on a very important topic, to present special Caucasian Turkic languages as Karachay-Balkar, and he compared it with medieval Turkic written sources. It is not a simple linguistic dissertation, but he introduced to a cultural-historical background of the above mentioned nation.

His main goal was to clarify the location/situation of the Karachay-Balkar language within the Turkic language family tree and find solution to their ethnogenesis as well. According to my assessment, he wrote an outstanding dissertation, and he was able to make Karachay-Balkar culture and language affiliation understand for scholars. Glashev previously published several papers, each of them contained new information related to the cultural history of the above-mentioned small Caucasian nation. The topic selection is unique, there is only a few data available in the Western European and Atlantic scientific environment. This topic is especially important for Hungarians, because our ancient historical chronicles recorded, that ancestors of the Hungarians also had lived in this region for a certain period.

The author endeavored to detailed search certain aspects of the Karachay-Balkar language and culture. From the dissertation, we can get profound information not only the Turkic historical sources as Codex Cumanus or Irk bitig, but the epic poetry of the Caucasian Karachay-Balkars.

He is clearly well-versed in the literature on this topic, not only in linguistics but also in cultural history. The great advantage and strength of this dissertation is that he did not merely research linguistic samples, nor did it examine words taken out of their context but rather considers it important to add cultural-historical aspects. He studied the ancient and medieval history of this region as well. As the author emphasized in his introduction, he considered comparative analysis important, and he made this comparative study the basis of his methodology. Glashev emphasizes it as the following: "The methodology of the study is a combination of the descriptive method, comparative historical linguistic analysis, and the interdisciplinary approach; it also involves field research. According to research works, the essence of the interdisciplinary method is based on synthesizing data from different fields of knowledge to perform a specific academic task. Interdisciplinarity helps to avoid methodological parochialism, to circumvent some negative consequences of disciplinary specialization and fragmentation." So his dissertation confirmed that the comparative method can yield novel results about the Karachay-Balkar people. Due to this new methodology approach, his dissertation may attract the attention of researchers working in similar fields (as ancient history and culture of the neighboring nations, or Hungarians, who belonged this territory, etc.)

The second chapter focused on the ethnogenesis of the Karachay-Balkar people. Regarding the ancient history of the Karachay-Balkar people, Glashev took it back to the migration period, where the local nomadic powers, the Alans and Huns played a crucial role in the regional historical process. The author analyzed this topic very thoroughly, tracing possible origins back to the Huns. Utilizing the comparative methodology, Glashev pointed out that archaeologists excavated some Hunnic-related objects, e.g. fragments of a cauldron, with these objects he confirmed the presence and impact of the Huns to local people. It could be the common tie between the ancestors of the Hungarians and the Karachay-Balkar nations.

So, this dissertation indirectly contributed the understand some aspects of the ethnogenesis of the Hungarians, who lived in the Northern-Caucasian region. We could discover some unknown chapters of the ancient history of the Hungarian-Karachay Balkar common history. Glashev provided evidence for it, and he beard out some previous Hungarian theses. Some local customs and rituals having mentioned in this paper, might also be important from a Hungarian perspective. This topic has been addressed by some Hungarian researchers since the 19th century; however, we have not answered accepted by most scholars. But it will be the next step for the Hungarian scholar to follow up this dissertation for Hungarian perspectives. Considering the ethnogenesis of the Karachay-Balkar people, alongside the listing of theories, the folklore and cultural elements are also the crucial part of the complex research.

We can realize from the thesis that the author aimed for thoroughness regarding linguistic classification. Glashev pointed out that Karachay-Balkar language is not a typical Turkic language as some scholar thought, who listed among the Polovets language, but the author revealed the relationship of the Karachay-Balkar language with some ancient Caucasian local substratum as well. According to his statement, Karachay-Balkar language has a deep root of ancient languages

such as Hunnic- Sabirs/Savirs, Proto-Bulgars, etc. It influenced by Kipchak-Polovets group from the 12th, when new ethnic group of Turkic nations migrated and settled down in the Caucasian region.

From this paper, it is evident that the author possesses extensive knowledge in both folklore and linguistics, clearly understanding historical and cultural processes, which also supported his linguistic insights. Therefore, thanks to this comprehensive knowledge, he placed the history of the Karachay-Balkars in a new light. He did not examine isolated periods but considers the possibility of passing down historical traditions, dealing with the past of the region and the people who lived there from antiquity onwards. I think the only defect was that he tried to cram too much data into paper and therefore mentioned some customs but did not explain their role extensively.

In the third chapter of the dissertation, he analyzed some words. Although Glashev emphasizes to search deeply the two determinative historical sources of the old Turkic languages as Codex Cumanicus and Irk bitig, but he also looked up some other old Turkic dictionaries from the 11th centuries as Kasgari's Diwan-u- lugati turk, etc.

As I Mongolian scholar, I have discovered some common Turkic-Mongolian words in Glashev's list, with different interpretations. In the future, the author should consider extending linguistic research to the Mongolian language, examining the origin of these words or expressions. For example, the Mongolian scholars consider the origin of "bogtag" to be a Mongolian word and the object is a cultural (fashion) element. A comprehensive study of linguistic expression could provide precise answers to these questions.

Meanwhile, in the future, it would be worth conducting some investigations in some libraries or archives, where documents and field-work materials are kept. It is difficult to get it, because almost the well-known Hungarian Turkologists have no idea about it. It would be worthwhile to examine the Adyge or Kabard dictionary of Hungarian researcher Gábor Bálint Szentkatolnai, which was compiled at the beginning of the 20th century, but some parts had not published, yet. This dictionary reflects the linguistic state of the time and likely contains many interesting findings for the author. Thanks to Balint's studies, some scholars as Pröhle also studied the Caucasian languages and as Glashev mentioned it, and the great Hungarian Turkologist, J. Nemeth also dealt with this question. But he got information from Balint's book.

Overall, I think this dissertation is a good summary of the Karachay-Balkar studies, but it can be developed furtherly. Glashev's work is important for understanding the Karachay-Balkar and North Caucasian peoples. His innovative, comparative methodology would lead renewal of linguistics toward the comparative methodology.