

Chapter 3

3. Language Contacts

3.1. The proto-dialect

By the facts collected above we have been led to positing a proto-dialect which to all intents and purposes appears to have been comparatively uniform (a wholly variation-free dialect is, of course, unthinkable), and from which the modern dialects, in all their variants, must have derived. As to the place of this proto-dialect within the much greater continuum of the mediaeval Alanic dialects, from which it must have branched off, we are left in darkness. The split of the proto-dialect which resulted in the emergence of modern Iron and Digor cannot be dated with certainty, but it need not have been earlier than the 13th century, the time of the Mongol invasions which dealt the Alans a devastating blow and brought the ethnic map of the North Caucasus into total confusion.

We conclude from this that the speakers of this proto-dialect, the linguistic ancestors of the present-day Ossetes, were a residual population who lingered on in an area to the west of the Terek River, adhering to their Alanic tongue (and spreading it to adjacent tribes), while the bulk of their fellow-countrymen switched on to other languages (Turkic, Cherkas dialects). Another, but less probable, hypothesis is that we have to do with a kind of koiné, a mixture of different but closely related dialects, which were brought to the Central Caucasus through the migration of various tribes from the Northwest Caucasus, who gradually intermingled with each other, so as to form a relatively homogeneous population. This might explain certain anomalies that we find in the sound correspondences of the modern dialects.

3.1.1. Ossetic was brought into its present sites by an immigrating population from the north and the west, in part, perhaps, by marauding bands, who subjugated and gradually merged with the indigenous population, the latter adopting the language of their conquerors. The exact social circumstances under which this development took place is mostly a matter of speculation. If the Alanic immigrations were something like the later Cossack colonisation of the Terek and Kuban area, we expect the settlers to have been mostly men who married native women, a recurrent situation in the history of invasions and conquests. From the uniformity of the proto-dialect it is tempting to conclude that there was originally a comparatively small community of immigrants.

3.1.2. In his “*Études sur la langue ossète*”, at the end of the chapter dedicated to “*le vocabulaire traditionnel*”, Benveniste (1959: 142 ff.) makes a few remarks on the two cultural layers which he finds reflected in the Ossetic religious and social vocabulary – one aristocratic, the other popular, the later having its sources in a society of peasants and shepherds:

“... il semble qu'on observe une ligne de partage, peut-être même la marque d'un conflit, entre deux traditions que le vocabulaire reflète également. D'une part, une tradition guerrière et aristocratique qui inspire l'épopée des Nartes, de l'autre la tradition populaire et paysanne des divinités du foyer et du bétail. A la première se rattache le culte du cheval

sous des différentes manifestations: sacrifices du cheval lors de l'enterrement, mais aussi présents de chevaux à l'occasion du mariage [...] A la tradition paysanne se rattachent les fêtes saisonnières et les rites de fécondité. [...]"

In a previous study I have maintained that this would agree with a view according to which Ossetic was brought into its later habitat by a comparatively small warrior caste who subjugated, and gradually imposed their language upon a more numerous autochthonous population (Thordarson 1986a: 284).

In the above comments I have hinted at some questions which may be relevant for our investigations into the prehistoric substratum (or substrata?) of Ossetic; other matters relating to the same problems will be touched upon in the following paragraphs. Needless to say, the penetration of Ossetic into its present area in the Central Caucasus and its gradual spread among an earlier indigenous population (as well as its eventual retreat from a part of this area), are not only the consequence of immigrations and conquests, but are also closely connected with complex social developments within the area.

3.2. Lexical interferences

As mentioned above (cf. Ch. 1), there are some indications that the Nakh (North-Central Caucasian) languages formerly extended farther to the west than they do today, into areas where they eventually were ousted by Alanic dialects and where Ossetic, Karachay-Balkar and Circassian are spoken today. Some linguistic arguments which may support this assumption may be summed up here.

Gamrekeli (1968; cp. also Volkova 1973: 115) and various other Soviet scholars maintained that the Dualeti region of Upper North Ossetia was inhabited by a Nakh-speaking population in antiquity and the early Middle Ages. Other scholars date the Iranisation of these parts to the first centuries A. D. According to Volkova (o.c.: 116) the archaeological evidence indicates that the appearance of the Alans in the alpine regions of North Ossetia cannot be earlier than the 7th–8th centuries A. D. However, both the scarcity of archaeological finds in Central Ossetia (cf. Kaloev 1967: 20 ff.), and, in general, the difficulties in correlating such evidence with linguistic data, make us cautious as regards an exact dating of the Ossetic expansion in these parts.²⁶

3.2.1. Ossetic, Nakh and Svan

Fährnich (1983: 22 ff.; 1986: 32) argues for the existence of some Nakh (and other NE Caucasian) loanwords in the Kartvelian Svan language of Central Highland Georgia. The borrowing must have taken place at a time when the languages concerned were neighbours. Today they are by no means contiguous, Ossetic, Karachay-Balkar and Kabardian tribes inhabiting the interjacent area. Mutual borrowing between Ossetic and Svan (cf. Abaev 1949: 291 ff.; cf. also 3.2.5.11. below) shows that the mountains are not an unsurpassable obstacle to linguistic contacts between the North and the South

²⁶ "The question of the historical and cultural relations between the Ossetes and the Chechen-Ingush peoples is for the time being little investigated. Nevertheless, the ethnographical material, collected by us during the expeditions to the Chechen-Ingush ASSR in 1958, 1959 and 1962, offers points of great resemblances between numerous elements in the material and spiritual culture of the Ossetes and the culture of the Chechens and, in particular, the Ingush", Kaloev wrote (1967: 23).

Caucasus.²⁷ Not all of Fähnrichs comparisons are convincing, and others need a more detailed historico-lexicographical research.

Chech. *kert*, Ing. *kärt* “a fence”, from which Fähnrich derives Svan *li-kyrt-e* “to fence”, “umzäunen, einfrieden”, is a widespread migratory word that is also found in Russian dialects and various Uralic, Turkic, Iranian (Oss. (I.) *kært* “farmstead”) and Caucasian languages including Mingrelian and Georgian (Mgr. *karta* “a paddock”, Georg. dialects (Gurian, Imerian) *karta*, *kalt’a* “id.”), cf. also Arm. *kert* “town”. The ultimate origin of the word is uncertain (Turkic? or Iranian **kṛta-*? – cf. Abaev: IES: I, 586 ff.; Joki 1973: 269 f.). If the Svan verb was borrowed from some language of the North Caucasus, Ossetic is quite as likely to have been the source as Nakh is.²⁸

3.2.2. Ossetic and Nakh

There has been a considerable interchange of words between Ossetic and the Nakh languages. Considering their close geographic proximity this is not surprising. Vladikavkaz (Зæузиқæу), the present-day capital of North Ossetia, has for ages been, and still is, a commercial and cultural centre of the Ingush, the westernmost of the Nakh tribes.

Abaev (1959) lists 216 Ingush and / or Chechen (occasionally also Bats) lexical items, which he sometimes tentatively compares with Ossetic words. Most of the latter are found in both dialects, some in Digor only. Not all the comparisons are convincing. As pointed out by Abaev (o.c.: 102), the majority of these words common to both Nakh and Ossetic belong to the semantic fields of material culture and economy, living conditions, agriculture, cattle breeding, implements and plant names. Many of the words are perplexing, and it is often impossible to decide whether a loan went from Nakh to Ossetic or the other way round, or whether both languages borrowed it from a third (unknown) source. The borrowings have taken place at various times; some may be ancient. In some cases NE Caucasian (Daghestanian) words have entered Ossetic through the medium of Nakh.

Some of the words listed by Abaev (o.c.) deserve a closer investigation.

3.2.2.1. OIran. **aspa-* has in modern Ossetic been superseded by *bæx* (I., D.) as the generic term for “horse”, but has been retained in the form of I. *iæfs*, D. *æfsæ* “mare” (< **aspā*) and in a few compounds (*xærg-æfs* “mule”; – *xæraeg* “donkey”,²⁹ *æfsury / æfsorq* “a mythological breed of horses” (< **aspa-urya-* “strong horse”).³⁰ Ancient **aspa-* is found in numerous Sarmatian proper names (Zgusta 1955: 73 ff.; Abaev 1979: 281 ff.). In the Yass word-list (line 13) Lat. *ecus* (i.e. *equus*) is translated by *Bah* (Németh 1959: 14). Accordingly, the word must have entered Alanic and taken root some time before the emigration of the Yass tribes from the North Caucasus to Hungary (13th century;

²⁷ As regards the varying interrelations between the Ossetes and the other ethnic groups of the Caucasus, I refer to Gaglojty 1966 and Kaloev 1967 (both with copious bibliographies and references to foreign sources). For general surveys cf. Istorija Severo-Osetinskoj ASSR, I, 1959, and Očerki Jugo-Osetinskoj avtonomnoj oblasti, I, 1985.

²⁸ In Digor *turyæ* is used in the same sense as I. *kært*; in Iron this word (*tiry*) means “balcony, the uninhabited antechamber of the house”. This word has not found any satisfactory etymology and is probably a migratory word (cf. IES: III, 341 ff.).

²⁹ *xærg-æfs* < **xæraeg-æfs(æ)*: The syncope in the prior member of the compound may indicate that the word was formed at a time when the ancient accent rules were still operative: **xæraeg-æfsæ-* (cf. Thordarson 1990 and 2.6.2. above).

³⁰ *æfs-ury*, if from **aspa-urya-*, seems to be an inverted karmadhāraya compound. Ἀσπυργγος, on the other hand, found as a Sarmatian proper name at various places (Zgusta 1955: 75; Abaev 1979: 281), is an inverted bahuvrīhi (“having strong horses / a strong horse”). The same applies to the ancient tribal name Ἀσπυργγῆταιοι (Strabo XI,2,1).

cf. 2.3.2). Abaev (IES: I, 256) compares Oss. *bæx* with Ing. *baqh*, Chech. *beghi* (sic Abaev, l.c.³¹) “foal” and further with Georg. (Imerian dialect) *baxi* “jade”, *baxuri* “a saddle-tree made of a single piece of wood” (KEGL: I, 1006), and Russ. (dial.) *бax* “jade”. This seems to indicate that we have to do with a migratory word of unknown derivation, perhaps originally carrying some expressive (derogatory) connotation. If this holds true, the Ossetic word need not have been borrowed directly from Nakh.

3.2.2.2. In current Ossetic speech the native words for “hand”, “foot” and “mouth”, *arm*, *fad* and *kom*, have been supplanted by in their primary (somatic) meanings by *k'ux* / *k'ox*, *k'ax* and *zix* / *zux*, *c'ux*, resp., loanwords whose ultimate origin is uncertain. Abaev (IES: I, s. vv.) assigns the three words to a “Caucasian substratum”. On account of both the phonetic resemblance and the semantic parallelism he compares *k'ux* / *k'ox* with Chech. *kujg* (*küg* = Ing. *kulg*) “hand”. For the same reason *k'ax* is compared with Chech.-Ing. *kog* “foot”. These etymologies, if correct, would point to a rather close connection between the Ossetes and their Nakh neighbours. Still more obscure is the origin of *zix* / *zux*, *c'ux*. Because of the phonetic likeness, Abaev refers to Chech.-Ing. *zʒok*, Bats *zok* “beak”, Balk. *žux* “mouth, snout”, which he further compares with Northwest Caucasian words: Abkh. *a-č'ə*, Ubykh *čɛ*, Abaz. *že*, Kab. *žeh*, *ž'e* “mouth” (IES: I, 408-9;³² but cf. Bielmeier 1977: 151-4). But even if these etymologies are correct, we would not know the direction of the borrowing. A connection of *zix* / *zux*, *c'ux* with Sogd.B. *kwc'kh*, M. *qwc'* “mouth”, cf. also Russian (Sibirian dialects) *чуха* “mouth” and Permian *čuka* “jaw”, is hinted at by Abaev (l.c.) as another possibility. In that case we have to do with a migratory rather than an inherited Iranian word (**kuča* > **čuxa* with metathesis and sonorisation of the intervocalic *-č-*, generalised from compounds like *a-zix* “silent?”). If all this holds good, the word may have been introduced into the Caucasus through the medium of Ossetic. In a previous study (Thordarson 1984: 186-191) I have argued that these three words originally entered Ossetic as expressive vocables, which little by little lost their semantic markedness, at the same time ousting the native words as unmarked (neutral) somatic terms (for details cf. Bielmeier 1977: 151-4; 172-4; 176-8; Thordarson 1984).

3.2.2.3. There seems to be good reason to connect Oss. (L., D.) *læg* “man, husband, male, manly; human being” with Chech.-Ing. *laj*, Bats *lag* “slave, serf” (Proto-Nakh **lag*). The same word is also found in Avar *lay* “slave”. From Avar the word has passed into various Daghestanian languages, with the same meaning (cf. Gasanova e. a. 1971: 133). According to Trubetzkoy (1937: 171 f.), a Nakh language must be the source of the Avar word. Here also belongs *Lakk*, the name by which the Lak call themselves (Trubetzkoy o.c.). In Kartlis Cxovreba, the mediaeval Georgian chronicle, *lek'i* (pl. *lek'ni*) is used for denoting the inhabitants of Daghestan (now for the most part consisting of Lezgian tribes only). It has also been usual to connect this word with ancient Greek *Lēgai*, *Lēges*, the name of a tribe (or a tribal confederation), which Strabo (XI,5) and Plutarkh (Vītae, Pompeius XXXVI) locate to the north of the Caucasian Albanians (between the Albanians and the Amazons).

As to the possible connections of this word with NW Caucasian counterparts cf. Bielmeier 1977: 180 ff.

We assume that the original sense of this word was “man, human being”, reflected in its use as an ethnic name. The semantic development “man” > “slave” is probably

³¹ Chech. *beġha* (*бекъа*) “жеребенок”, Karasaev / Maciev 1978: 153; Ing. *baġhilg* (*бакъилг*) “id.”, Ozdoev 1980: 181.

³² The phonologically inconsistent spelling of the examples quoted here stems from Abaev, ib.

due to changes in social conditions within the Nakh tribes. The word was then borrowed by the Avars in its secondary meaning (as a social term) and thus passed on to the other Daghestanian peoples.

Abaev (IES: II, 19 ff.) explains Oss. *læg* as a Caucasian “substratum word” without, however, determining the immediate source language. Sköld (1925: 29), on the other hand, derives *læg* from Iran. **viriaka-* (cf. Scytho-Sarm. (Herodotus IV, 110) οἰόρ, v.l. αἰόρ “άνήρ”, Sogd. *wyr-* “man, husband”, OInd. *vīra-* “man hero”, etc.; cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 238). In this case, Ossetic must be the source of the Caucasian words (through Nakh?). But if Sköld’s reconstruction were correct, we would expect an intermediate form **ilæg* that should have been preserved in Digor. This difficulty could possibly be avoided by assuming interdialectal borrowing (cf. Bielmeier 1977: 184 ff.). The loss of initial *i-* (< **i-*, **wi-*) is a dialectal, probably fairly recent, phenomenon, confined to Iron, and in no case so early that a form **lag-* could be at the basis of Greek *Lēgai*, *Lēges*, attested as early as the first century B.C. In the modern language an earlier form **ilæg* should be reflected by sandhi variants like **me’ læg* “my man” < **mæ ilæg*, whereas the actual form is *mæ læg* (cp., e.g., *ie siæxstæ* “his brothers / sons-in-law” < **iæ isixstæ*; sg. *siæxs*). We shall also expect the notion of definiteness in bi(poly)syllabic declensional forms to be expressed through a shift of stress from the second to the first syllable, e.g. in the dative *lægæn* “for a man”: **lægæn* “for the man” (Abaev 1964: 11; IES: II, 21).

The same arguments apply to Dumézil’s derivation of Oss. *læg* from ancient **aryaka-* (Dumézil 1958: 81, fn. 8). Still more far-fetched seem Bailey’s (1947: 204; 1979: 155, 371) attempts at connecting *læg* with Khot. *daha-* “man, male”, Wakhi *ḍāy* “id.”, Av. *dāhī-* (fem.) “a Scythian tribal name”, OInd. *dāsa-* “demon, barbarian, slave” (for further connections cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: II, 38 ff.). In Ossetic, a development of **d* (**ḍ*) > *l* is not attested with certainty (cf. also Bielmeier 1977: 185).

Thus the available material lends substance to Abaev’s explanation of the Ossetic word as a Caucasian loanword. As the NW Caucasian connections are uncertain, a Nakh dialect is reasonably suggested as the source. In that case the original meaning “man” has been retained in Ossetic.

According to the current and, as it seems, most plausible interpretation, *læg* occurs as a proper name in the Zelenčuk inscription (cf. Zgusta 1987 with bibliography and my review, Thordarson 1988). For epigraphic reasons, the inscription has been dated to the 11th–12th centuries, which would be the *terminus ante quem* for the borrowing of the word.

3.2.2.4. The relations between Oss. *fos* / *fons* “cattle, property” and Avar *panz* “horned cattle”, Dido *poso* “cattle, wealth” (apud Abaev, IES: I, 479), and Chech. *hons*, Ing. *fos* “spoils of war, booty” are not quite clear. The Ossetic word has no satisfactory etymology within Iranian. D. *fons* suggests an earlier form **fans-* (**pansa-*?); the nasal shows that the word has nothing to do with *fīs* / *fūs* “sheep” (< **pasu-*). Although Avar and Ossetic have not been spoken in contiguous areas in modern times, mediaeval contacts between these languages cannot be ruled out. If the Ossetes borrowed the word from Avar (or some other Northeast Caucasian language as an intermediary) in the shape of **fans*, the borrowing must have taken place before the narrowing of *a* to *o* in front of nasals (13th–14th centuries, cf. 2.6.1. above). The substitution of initial *f-* for *p-* in a loanword is regular and has parallels: *fændir* / *fændur* “lyre”, cf. Georg. *panduri* “id.”; *fing* / *fingæ* “table”, cf. Georg. *p’ina(k’i)* “wooden bowl”. Ancient **p-* is represented by *f-* in Sarmatian proper names in the first centuries of our era (Zgusta 1955: 223) and cannot be presumed to have been retained unchanged in mediaeval

Alanic. Apparently, the Nakh forms were borrowed from Ossetic (IES: I, 479), at least the Chechen form, earlier than the Iron assimilation of *-ns* to *-s*.

Abaev (IES: I, 479) assumes a semantic development “cattle” > “property” > “loot, booty” which, of course, may be right. It is tempting, however, to follow Benveniste’s (1970: 47 ff.) line of reasoning in his comments upon I.E. **pekú-* and suggest the reverse development: “booty, property” > “cattle”. A semantic parallel would be found in English *cattle* (Middle English “movable property, beasts”) < Old French *catel* (*chattel*) “property, inheritance” < Latin *capital(e)*. This possibly finds some support in the fact that the majority of words belonging to the semantic field of husbandry are of Iranian derivation. But so long as the historical background of the word is uncertain, this is only a guess.

Whatever the ultimate origin of *fos / fons* might be, it seems certain that this word belongs to an early layer of loanwords. The available information indicates a borrowing from an East Caucasian language.

3.2.2.5. Among the comparatively few loanwords denoting “livestock, domestic animals” we find *gal* “bull, bullock” (I., D., pl. *galtæ*, the absence of vowel shortening indicating a recent borrowing?). The initial *g-* shows that the word is not inherited from ancient Iranian. Abaev (IES: I, 506), by the way of comparison, refers to Darg. *q’äl* “cow”, Lezg. *kal* “id.” (cf. Xajdakov 1973: 23), and to the Azerbaijani, Daghestanian and Persian words for “buffalo”, Azer. *kal* (*käl*), Lezg. *kel* (Udi *käl* etc.; cf. Xajdakov o.c.: 21), Pers. *kal* “buffalo, any male animal”, cf. also Talyš *käl* “ox, buffalo”, *kälä* “steer, young ox”, Kurd. *kel* “calf, buffalo, ox; male, strong” (cf. Andreas-Christensen-Barr 1939: 305; 349). According to Xajdakov (o.c.: 21) the Daghestanian words for “buffalo” are either Turkic or Iranian loanwords, whereas the Lezgian and Dargva words for “cow” are indigenous. In that case we have to do with two different sets of words. It is most natural to connect the Ossetic word with the latter set. The immediate source is not clear, however. Nothing corresponding to Oss. *gal* seems to be found in the Nakh languages, where the buffalo is called *gomaš-buyga* (Chech.), *gamaža buya* (Ing.) (*gomaš-*, *gamaža* < Pers. *gāmūs* “id.”, a word in current use in the Daghestanian languages; cf. also Georg. *k’ambeči*, *k’ameči* “id.”, > Oss. *k’ambec* “id.”, ultimately of the same origin).

3.2.2.6. It is of some historical and geographic interest to note that the Nakh word for “sea” has been borrowed from Ossetic: Ing. *ford*, Chech. *hord* (with a secondary *h-*), cf. Oss. *furd / ford* “sea, large river”. The Nakh vocalism indicates that the word was borrowed before the Iron narrowing of *o* to *u* (a direct borrowing from Digor is for geographic reasons improbable). In Ossetic *furd / ford* has been replaced by *denžiz / dengiz*, a Turkic loanword, in the meaning “sea”, and now mainly denotes “a large river”; the Nakh word seems not to occur in this sense. This fact, as well as the Chech. *h-* and the Nakh vocalism, indicates that the borrowing is not of a recent date.³³

3.2.2.7. Among Nakh words that have been explained as borrowings from Ossetic (Alanic) we find Chech. *ēla*, Ing. *āla* “prince, chieftain” (Russ. “князь”),³⁴ Bats *ālē* (Georg. *bat’oni*, Russ. “господин”); D. and N. Kadagiže 1984: 34) < Ir. **ārya-* “Aryan” (an ethnic term), cf. Oss. *allon(-billon)* “a kind of speech” < **āryāna-*; IES: I,

³³ Abaev (IES: I, 486) derives *furd / ford* from OIran. **prtū-*, which he compares with Av. *pərətu-* “Durchgang, Gang, Eingang, Pforte” (Bartholomae 1904: 892), and the Scythian river name Πόρτα “Pruth” (Her. IV,48). But the vocalism of the Ossetic words points to **paurta-*; ancient **prtū-* would have yielded **fard*, cf. *ard* “oath” < **rta-*.

³⁴ Note also Chech. *ēla*, Ing. *āla* “queen bee”.

47 and above 2.5.3.). If this etymology holds good, it may indicate that the ethnic name of a conquering race was adopted in the meaning “superior, ruler”. An approximately similar use of the same word is found in Mingrelian, where *alani-k'oči* denotes “a strong, valiant man” (as an ethnic term *alani* is used for the Turkic Karachays; cf. Kipšidze 1914: 193, and 3.2.5.9. below).

3.2.2.8. Alternating with *kænin* “to do”, *lasin* “to pull, extract, carry, take away” is used as an auxiliary for forming compound (periphrastic) verbs from nouns: *gærax lasin* “to shoot”, *zivitt lasin* “to throw away”, etc. (Abaev 1964: 67; Axvlediani 1963-69: II, 103 ff.; cf. 3.5. below). This usage is common to both dialects. According to Abaev (1959: 110) Nakh *dakqa* (masdar *dakqar*) “to take away, bring out, extract” is used in a similar way as an auxiliary. Abaev convincingly derives the Ossetic verb from an earlier form **nasun* (initial *n- < l-* has parallels), adducing Yaghn. *nos-*, *nóta-* (“*nās-*, *nāta-*” apud Abaev, l.c.) “to take, catch, seize, buy” (Andreev-Peščereva 1957: 295), Pashto *nas-*, *nīs-* (inf. *niwəl*), “to take, seize, catch”, Ishk. *nas-*, *nad-* “to take, seize” (Paxalina 1959: 219), Khot. *nās-*, *nāta-* “to take”, Av. *nas-* (2) “hingelangen zu, erlangen, erreichen” (Bartholomae 1904: 1056), etc. In Yaghnōbi *nos-* is used as an auxiliary, forming periphrastic verbs from nouns: *kipaš nos-* “to embrace” (*kipaš*, *kapaš* “bosom”), *dam nos-* “to rest (*dam* (NP) “breath”), *yod nos-* “to remember” (*yod* (NP) “memory”), *jang nos-* “to fight” (*jang* (NP), “war, battle”). Similarly Ishkashmi: *dam(b) nas-* “to rest”, *dəm nas-* “to follow” (*dəm* “tail”), *gap nas-* “to obey” (*gap* “word, speech”) (Paxalina 1959: 219).

We can infer from this that the use of *lasin* as an auxiliary verb is an ancient East Iranian inheritance and that the similar use of Nakh *daqqa* as likely as not is due to Ossetic influence.

According to Abaev (IES: II, 15), *lasin* etc. derives from the IE root **nem-* “zuteilen, nehmen” (Pokorny 1959: 763), i.e. < < **nm-sk-*. This etymology explains neither the long vowel nor the transitive use of the verb; in Ossetic, the verbal suffix *-s-* (> **sk-*) forms intransitive verbs. More satisfactory is a derivation from the causative of I.E. **(e)nek-* (**əin-ek-* / *əin-k-*) “to reach, gain” (cp. Pokorny 1959: 316 ff.), cf. OInd. *aśnōti* “reaches, gains”, *naśati* (aor. subj.) “shall reach, attain”, Av. *nas-* (2) (e.g. *aiβi.nāsənti* “they get”, Y. 23.3, cp. Bartholomae 1904: 1056).³⁵ If this is correct, the corresponding intransitive verb *læsin* “to creep, sink, be drowned” is probably a secondary formation, based on an analogy with verbal pairs of the type *marin* “to kill”: *mælin* “to die” (Abaev 1964: 42 ff.).

In addition to this, both Ossetic and the Nakh languages share numerous phraseological and syntactic features as well as individual words with other languages of the Caucasus. In many such cases the direction of borrowing can hardly be decided.

3.2.2.9. A suffix *-sk-/sk'-* seems to occur in a number of Ossetic place names, particularly in the mountainous parts of West Ossetia (Digoria), but also in Kabardian and Balkar speaking areas (formerly Ossetic-speaking territory; cp. Cagaeva 1971: 23, 39 ff., 66 ff.; cp. also Abaev 1949: 289 ff.). Cp., e.g.:

villages: *Zadælaeskæ*, *Mæxčeskæ* (sic Cagaeva), *Moskæ* (all in Digoria), *Tamisk'* (in the Alagir Glen), *Lesken* (on the left bank of the Terek River);

meadows: *Geliskæ*, *Garniskæ* (Digoria), *Qæduska* (in the Kurtat Glen), *Zyarisk'* (in the Alagir Glen);

Loski teγæ “the Losk Summit” (in Digoria), and many others.³⁶

³⁵ Cf. Emmerick 1968: 53; Hoffmann 1975-92: II, 358 ff.; Kellens 1984: 355.

³⁶ Note the absence of the final *-æ* in the non-Digor names.

Some of these place names are possibly derived from inherited Ossetic words: *Qæduska*, cf. *qæd* / *γædæ* “wood”; *Bodišku* (Kabarda), cf. *bud* / *bodæ* “incense, fragrantcy”; *Xoska* (the Kurtat Glen), cf. *xos* / *xuasæ* “hay”; *C’ifeskæ* (Digoria), cf. *c’if* / *c’ifte* “mud, marsh” (if connected with Greek τῖφος “marsh” and / or OInd. *tépati* “sprinkles”, *stéplate* “drops, drips, oozes”, as suggested by Abaev, IES: I, 338 (but cf. Mayrhofer; KEWA: I, 502; III, 519, and Chantraine 1968-80: IV, 1123). For some of the names Nakh etymologies have been suggested: *Lesken*, cf. Nakh *laj* (plur. *leš*) “slave”; *Tæmisk’*, cf. Nakh *t’om* (plur. *t’emaš*), “battle, war” (Čokaev 1964 apud Cagaeva 1971: 67).

The suffix has been explained as deriving from the Nakh ending of the locative (adessive, directive) plural *-ška* “towards, at a place” (i.e. the plural ending *-š* plus *-ka*), which is frequently found in Nakh place names (Čokaev o.c.). This explanation was challenged by Cagaeva (1971: 68 ff.) who prefers to ascribe *-sk/-sk’-* to the oldest layers of “Scytho-Alano-Sarmatian” derivative suffixes, without, however suggesting any Iranian etymology. If Čokaev’s explanation holds good (a matter that cannot be decided here), it would be in support of the hypothesis that Nakh was formerly spoken in the area later occupied by the Ossetes.

3.2.2.10. In conclusion the following remarks may be made: There are strong indications that linguistic contacts between the Ossetes and the Nakh tribes go back at least to mediaeval times. It is also permissible to suggest – tentatively – that the present-day area of the Ossetes was previously inhabited by a Nakh-speaking population that gradually adopted the language of an immigrant (conquering?) race. This process can hardly be dated with certainty, our historical sources being what they are. But it is natural to connect the language shift with the Mongolian invasion and the expansion of the Circassians in the late Middle Ages.

3.2.3. Ossetic and Turkic

3.2.3.1. At least since Khazar times (6th–10th centuries A.D.) Ossetic has been exposed to direct or indirect contacts with Turkic languages. The part played by these contacts in the development of Ossetic is still imperfectly elucidated. The Turkic influence on the Ossetic vocabulary is noticeable; the same applies to the autochthonous languages of the North Caucasus. But we know little about the chronology of these borrowings and their immediate sources, and many questions must no doubt remain unanswered. Today there are hardly any direct contacts between the Ossetes and their Turkic-speaking neighbours (the Noghays, the Karachay-Balkars, the Kumykhs, and the Turkmens (Trukhmens) of the Stavropol’ region). But this is a situation that has arisen through the social upheavals and the Circassian expansion in the Middle Ages (cf. 1.1 above). In mediaeval times the Alans and the ancestors of the gen seem to have lived jointly in a political community in the plains of the Northwest Caucasus, where bilingual relations were no doubt common (cf. Fundamenta 1959: 340). The present-day Karachay-Balkars occupy territories which were formerly inhabited by Alanic-speaking tribes; this is borne out, among other things, by numerous place names of Alanic origin. In Ossetic the Balkars are now called *Asi* / *As(s)i* (*asiag* / *æsson* “(a) Balkarian”), i.e. by the ancient ethnic name of the Alans, cf. Georg. *o(v)s-ni*, *-ebi* “the Ossetes”, *o(v)s-eti* “Ossetia, Alania, the North-(west) Caucasus”. (cf. Abaev, IES: I, 79; Encyclopaedia Iranica: II, 764 ff. – *Asii*). In modern Digor the term *æsson nimæzæ* denotes the ancient decimal counting system that was formerly in use among the herdsmen of Digoria and Balkaria (lit. “As (Ossetic) counting”). In Mingrelian, *alani* is (or was until recently) used of the Karachays (Kipšidze 1914: 193). We are thus

justified in regarding the present-day Karachay-Balkars as Turkicised Alans. In modern times the territories of these peoples are separated by intervening Circassian (Kabardian) tribes.

The role of Azerbaijanian in intertribal communication in the North-East Caucasus has already been mentioned (ch. 1 above). Similarly Noghay and Kumykh have been used as *linguae francae* outside their own territories (cf. Volkova 1967: 27 ff.).

3.2.3.2. In the Zelenčuk inscription (11th–12th centuries), ΠΑΚΑΘΑΡ occurs twice as a proper name (of two different persons, as it seems). This is no doubt to be interpreted as *Baqətar* (or *Bakətar*? Cf. Zgusta 1987: 34, and my review 1988: 93) < Turk. **Bayatur* (**Bayatyr*?), cf. OTurk. *bayatur* (in *Bayatur Cığşı*, a title and proper name), *batur* “hero”, a proper name (Drevnetjurkskij slovar’ 1979: 77 and 89; ESTJa: 1978, 82 ff.), Noghay *batir* “brave; a hero”, Kar.-Balk. *batyr* “id.”, Kum. *batyr* “id.”, Kom. *bayatur* “brav, probus” (Grønbech 1942: 47), βαγατοῦρ, according to Byzantine sources (Bulgarian inscriptions, 9th century) a title among the Danubian Bolgars (Moravcsik 1958: II,83), etc. *Bayātur* / *Bagātur* (an emendation of *T’ātr*) is recorded by an Arabian source as the name of a Khazar *qayan* in the late 8th century (Golden: 1980: 155 ff.). The Arabian historian Ibn Rusta (10th century) mentions an Alan title *B.γāy.r* (read as *Bayātar* by Minorsky 1958: 169), “which (name) applies to every one of their kings” (Minorsky’s translation, l.c.).

Today this word, in a number of variants, is found as a proper name all over the North Caucasus, including Ossetia: Oss. *Bæyatær*, *Batir*, *Bataer* (Fritz 2006: 37 ff.). It is also met with in the name of the legendary mediaeval hero *Os-Bæyatir* “B. the Ossete”, and possibly in the name of the Nart hero *Batraz*, *Batraz*, *Batiraz* (< **batur* plus *as*, the old tribal name of the Alans, cf. IES. I, 240 ff.; II, 277 ff.). In the modern language I. *bæyatir*, *qæbatir*, D. *bæyatær* “brave, courageous” is used as a common name only.

In Kartlis cxovreba, a Georgian compilation of chronicles written at various times, an Alan king (*mtavari ovisi*) called *Baq’atar* is mentioned among the enemies of the Georgian king Adarnase (881-923; cf. Kartlis cxovreba, ed. Q’auxčišvili, I, p. 261; Brosset, I (text), p. 194, (French translation) p. 274). In the legendary story of King Vaxt’ang Gorgasali (latter half of the 5th century) *Baq’atar* is given as the name of an Alan “giant” (*bumberazi ovstagan*), with whom the king fights a duel (Kartlis cxovreba, ed. Q’auxčišvili, I, p. 154; Brosset, I (text), p. 118, (French translation) p. 157; cf. also Fritz / Gippert 2005, 403 ff. [S.F.]).

Hence it is evident that the borrowing of this word dates back to early mediaeval times.

3.2.3.3. Today Turkic proper names are common among the Ossetes as well as the other peoples of the North Caucasus. Turkic has also influenced the typology of proper names formed from native materials. Nouns consisting of a verbal form (or a noun plus a verbal form) seem to be formed after a pattern widespread in the Turkic languages (cf. Fritz 2006 passim; Rásonyi 1953 and 1962). Examples:

Girls’ names:

Anigvila (Fritz o.c.: No. 109): “may she die”, 3rd singular present subjunctive of *anigvilin* “to sink, perish”; a daughter is not wanted (or a “nom protecteur”?).

Cæmænquid (Fritz o.c.: No. 359) “why, what for was she needed?”; *cæmæn*, dative singular of *ci* “what”, and *quid*, 3rd singular past of *qæuin* “to need”.

Mamæla (Fritz o.c.: No. 973) “she shall not die”; *ma*, the prohibitive negation particle, and *mæla*, 3rd singular present subjunctive of *mælin* “to die”.

Uarzetæ (D.; Fritz o.c.: No. 1564) “you shall love (her)”; 2nd plural imperative of D. *uarzun* “to love”.

Likewise: *Kafetæ* (D., Fritz o.c.: No. 838) of D. *kafun* “to dance”, *Zaretæ* (D., Fritz o.c.: No. 1682) of D. *zarun* “to sing”.

Boys’ names:

Qæclæu (Fritz o.c.: No. 1211) “wait and stay”; 2nd singular imperative of *qæcin* “to wait” and *læuuin* “to stand, stay”.

Ousa (Fritz o.c.: No. 1230) “may he hear”; 3rd singular present subjunctive of *qusin* “to hear”.

Cæra (Fritz o.c.: No. 361) “may he live”; 3rd singular present subjunctive of *cærin* “to live”.

Cærai (Fritz o.c.: No. 362) “may you live”; 2nd singular present subjunctive of the same verb.

This type of proper names is common among Turkic peoples outside the Caucasus area as well. Cf., e.g., Turk. *Yeter* “enough (of girls)”, of an unwanted daughter, *Gïzyeter* (the Kars region) “id.” (Rásonyi 1962); Kazakh *Baibol* “become rich”, *Erbolsun* “may he become a man”; Uyгур *Säbin* “be happy”; Turkmen *Gıldursun* “may the rose stop” (i.e., “enough of daughters”; Rásonyi o.c.; Fritz o.c.: 54 and passim).

3.2.3.4. Of special interest is the Ossetic word for “horse race”, I. *duy*, D. *doγ*, which has been explained as a borrowing from a Turkic dialect³⁷ and compared with OTurk. *joy* “dirge, funeral ceremony” (Radlov 1893-1911: III, 1, col. 409; Drevnetjurkiskij slovar’ 1969: 269). If this etymology is sound – I see no reason to call it in question – the word must have been borrowed from a dialect where Proto-Turkic initial **d-* (or **ǰ-*) had been retained (cf. Räsänen 1949: 185 ff.; Markwart o.c.). Greek sources seem to indicate that a Turkic dialect with initial *d-* (or *ǰ-*) instead of historical *j-* was spoken in the Ponto-Caspian steppelands in late antiquity and early Byzantine times.

In his excerpts of Valentinus’ report on his embassy to the *Türküt* (*Kök Türk*) qaghanate (576) Menander Protector gives *δόγια* (v.l. *δόγια*) as a Turkic word for funeral ceremonies³⁸ (Historici Graeci minores, ed. Dindorfius, II, 1871, p. 89, l. 15-16); cf. Moravcsik 1958: II, 119).

In the 2nd century *Δάιξ* is mentioned by Ptolemaeus (Geography VI, 14, 2-5) as the name of the *Jajyq* (Ural) River (lit. “spread out, extended”, from *jaj-* “to disperse”). The name of the river is given as *Δαιχ* by Menander Protector, in his account of Zemarchus’ embassy to the *Türküt qaghan* (ca. 570; Hist. Graec. min. II, p. 54, l. 31; cf. Moravcsik o.c.: II, 116). Cf. also *Daicus*, a river name mentioned by Ammianus Marcellinus (XXIII; 6, 63; – Ural or Volga?).³⁹ In the 10th century the name of this river is rendered as Γεῖχ by Constantinus Porphyrogenitus (De adm. imp., ch. 37; Moravcsik l.c.; cf. also Pauly-Wissowa IV (1901), col. 2016. For further evidence, cf. Markwart and Menges, oo.cc.).

There are no semantic obstacles to the derivation of Oss. *duy* / *doγ* “horse race” from Turk. **d/ǰoy* “dirge, funeral ceremonies”. Horse races played an important part in the traditional burial rites of the Ossetes and their Caucasian neighbours, as well as among various peoples of the Eurasian steppelands. In the 18th century the Georgian prince Vaxušti Bat’onišvili (Bagrat’ioni) gives a description of the Ossetic funeral customs in his Geography (*Ayc’era sameposa sakartvelosa*):

“For the salvation and commemoration of the souls of their dead they [the Ossetes] arrange what they call a *doγi*, as they make horsemen ride from two or three days’

³⁷ Cf. Markwart 1929; Abaev 1949: 86; IES: I,373 ff.; Menges 1968: 87 ff.

³⁸ *δόγια δὲ τῆ οἰκεία γλώττῃ προσαγορεύουσι τὰ ἐπὶ τοῖς τεθνεῶσι νόμιμα*, Men. Prot.

³⁹ *Inter flumina vero multa, quae per has terras vel potioribus iungit natura, vel lapsu ipso trahit in mare, Rhyrnus celebris est et Iaxartes et Daicus*, Amm. Marc.

distance. And he who comes first, to him they give a gift and hold him a banquet and a feast, so far as each one is able to, and they believe that this is to the delight and the maintenance of the souls of the dead”⁴⁰ (K.Cx., ed. Q’auxčišvili, t’. IV (1973), p. 641).⁴¹

Via Ossetic as an intermediary the word has passed into Georgian *doyi*. Regarding horse races as a part of the funeral ceremonies of the mountaineers of eastern Georgia, the neighbouring tribes of the Ossetes, I refer to Charachidze 1968: 375 ff.

There can be little doubt that we have to do with an ancient loan from an archaic Turkic dialect. This dialect has not been identified, but it was hardly the immediate forerunner of any of the present-day Turkic languages of the North Caucasus. As likely as not the borrowing took place at a time when the Alans held sway in the country east of the Sea of Azov. It would then reflect early linguistic and cultural relations between the Alans and some Turkic-speaking tribes.

3.2.3.5. Another religious term of Turkic derivation is *tabú* (I., D.; note the accent!), used as an interjection in invocations and praises of divinities: *xuicauæn tabu* “God be praised”, but also as a noun in compound verbs: *tabu kaenin / uin* “to praise / be praised” (with the dative or the allative): *tabu dæuæn kaenæm, ruxs Alardi* “we praise you, bright Alardi” (from a hymn to A., a divinity invoked in purification rites against epidemics, especially smallpox; Miller 1881-87: II, 102); D. *Nikkola, tabu din uæd* “Nicholas, be praised” (IES: III, 218-219).⁴² Furthermore it is found in the compound noun *tabuafsi (tabiuafsi, tabuuavsi, D. tabuavsi, tabiavsi)* “entreaty”: *mæ tabiuafsite min kui nicæmæ dardtai* “you paid no attention to my prayers” (MF: III, 1178), *tabuafsi, ærbadut næm* “please sit down with us” (IES: III, 218). The same word occurs in other languages in the North Caucasus, mainly, as it seems, in fixed phrases; cf., e.g. Kar.-Balk. *tabuda dejme* “with pleasure”, *allaxxa tabula bolsun* “God be praised” (Gočijaeva / Sunjučev 1989: 595). In Abkhaz, *tabu, tabəw* is used in invocations of the tutelary god of smallpox (IES: III, 219). The immediate source and chronology of the borrowing can hardly be decided; note, however, the final -u of both dialects, which possibly indicates a recent loan (we expect I. -i = D. -u in an ancient word). Oss. *tabu* etc. apparently derives from Turk. **tabuγ/x*, with loss of the final -γ/x in the source language (Räsänen 1949: 123; Menges 1968: 84), cf. OTurk. *tapıy, tapuy* “service” (Drevnetjurkskij slovar’ 1969: 533 ff.), Kom. *tabux* “Verehrung”, *tabun-* etc. “anbeten, Verehrung bezeugen, adorare” (Grønbech 1942: 231), Anat.Turk. *tabu* “respect, esteem” (Radlov 1893-1905: III, 1, 977: *tabū* “die Verehrung, die Gottesfurcht (Ausdruck der Schamanen)”, cf. ibid. 951: *tapu*), all belonging to a root *tap-* “to serve” (“in the sense both of serving a human master and serving God, i.e. worshipping”, Clauson 1972: 435; cf. also Räsänen 1969: 462 s.v. *tap* “verehren, anbeten”).

3.2.3.6. The third religious term that has been explained as a Turkic loanword is *coppai* (the same form in both dialects) “a ceremonial dance around a victim struck by lightning, a refrain sung at the burial of the same, and a rite at the time of drought (Dowsett 1961: 166, footnote = MF: III, 1672); cf. also *aldari coppai* “id.”, *coppai kaenin* “to perform the c.”, also “to stagger”. The word is explained in the same way by Abaev in IES: I, 314, where a description of these rites is given. The same word is found all over the Northwest Caucasus, e.g. Kar.-Balk. *čoppa, Eli, Eliri čoppa* “the

⁴⁰ *uc’q’ian sulta mk’udarta matta saqsrad da mosaqsenebelad, romelsa uc’odeben doysa, rametu cxenosanta k’acta oris samis dyis savlidam gamoušveben, da romeli matgani up’irveles mivals, mas miscemen nič’sa da gardaiqidian p’urobasa da lxinsa didsa, vis ray zal-ucs, da hgoneben amas salxinebelad da sacxorebelad sultatvis mk’udarta matta* (Vaxušti).

⁴¹ Cp. also Bleichsteiner 1936 and Encyclopaedia Iranica, vol. III (1989), 876 ff. (*Bāx fāldisin*).

⁴² As to *tabú* cf. Fritz: 1986.

name of a divinity in the pagan pantheon of the Karachay-Balkars to whom kids were sacrificed”, *Čoppany tašy* “a sacrificial stone near the village Učkalán” (Gočijaeva / Sunjučev 1989: 736; further examples in IES: I, 314).

Dowsett (l.c.) suggests a connection between Oss. *coppai* etc. and *č'op'ay*, a word attested in the Armenian compilation *Patmut' iwn Ahanic*^c (History of the Caucasian Albanians), attributed to Movsēs Daxuranc'i (10th-11th century?), in an account of the religion of the “Huns” of the North Caucasus. According to Dowsett the word probably means “the remains of a person or animal struck by lightning” and is connected with Turkic *čöp* “remains (of sacrifices)”, cf. OTurk. *čöp* “sediments, remains” (Drevnetjurkskij slovar' 1969: 155), Kom. *čöp* “Überbleibsel, Abfälle”, *tirki čöbü* “die Überbleibsel vom Opfer” (Grønbech 1942: 76; Clauson 1972: 394: *ço:b* “sediments, dregs”).

Even if this explanation may be accepted, it remains uncertain whether the word was borrowed by Ossetic directly from a Turkic language or through some third language as an intermediary. The *o* of the Iron form, instead of the expected *u*, possibly indicates a comparatively recent borrowing, but in the case of a religious term where conservatism would not surprise, this is not decisive.

3.2.3.7. I. *tæriyæd*, D. *tæreyæd* is used in the double sense “pity, compassion” and “sin” (religious, i.e. Christian meaning): *t. kænin* “to feel sorry for” (with the dative); “to commit a sin”; *t. kæsin* “to arouse pity” (lit. “to look pity”); *tæriyædžin* “feeling pity for; sinful, sinner”; *tæriyæddag* “worthy of pity, unhappy”; *tæriyædgænağ* “merciful”; *ænetæriyæd* “merciless; sinless”. According to Abaev (IES: III,268 ff.) the word is derived from Turk. *tariy-* and a (sandhi?) variant of the Ossetic suffix *-æt*, cf. Kar.-Balk. *taryγrya* “to lament, complain”, Kirgiz *taryk* “eng werden, in engen Verhältnissen leben, in Noth sein, traurig, beleidigt sein...” (Radlov 1893-1911: III, 1, 847 s.v. 5. *taryk*), Karaim *taryk* “jammern” (ibid.), OTurk. *tar* “tight, narrow” (Drevnetjurkskij slovar' 1969: 536); Clauson 1972: 528 *ta:r* “narrow, constricted, confined”. If this etymology is sound, the semantic development must have been “pity, complaint” > “sin”. In a similar way Georg. *codva* means both “sin” and “pity”: *icodebs* “he takes pity on somebody”, *acodebs* “he arouses pity in somebody”, *scodebs* “he sins against somebody”, *codvaa* “it is a pity”, *codvili* “sinful, miserable”; cf. also Chech.-Ing. *k'a* “sin; pity”. The semantic doubleness may well be an areal phenomenon, as Abaev suggests (l.c.).⁴³

The suffix *-æd* reflects OIran. **-ata-*, whereas *mælaet* “death”, *cæuaet* (*cot*) “posterity, descendants” are action nouns in **-avθa-* (**myvavθa-*, **čyavavθa-*). However, OIran. **-ata-* seems to occur as *-æt* in *nimæt* / *nimæt* “felt (cloak)”, if this is rightly derived from **namata-*, a verbal adjective of **nam-* “to beat”, Oss. *næmin* / *næmun* “to beat, ram, knead” (IES: II, 169; 202 ff.); cp. in this context also *cægat* “north; the back of a knife (or the like); the wife’s paternal home and family”, ending in *-at*, a word that is usually deduced from OIran. **čakāta-* (not **čakāθa-*) and thus etymologically identical with Sogd. *čk't* “forehead”, N.Pers. *čakād* “top of the head, summit of a mountain”, Phl. *čagād* “peak, summit” (IES: I, 296; MF: III, 1637; MacKenzie 1971: 21; Benveniste 1933: 216⁴⁴). If these equations are correct, *-æd*, *-æt* are two sandhi variants of OIran. **-ata-*; cf. also such pairs as I. *nimæc*, *nimæz*, D. *nimæzæ* “number, category” < **nimāti*, from the Aryan root **mā-* “to measure” (IES: II, 201; regarding *ā* > *æ*, cf. Thordarson 1989: 459).

⁴³ A similar phraseology is found in the Scandinavian languages: Dan. *det er synd for hende* “I am sorry for her”, *hvor er det dog synd* “what a pity”; *synd* “sin, pity”.

⁴⁴ Regarding the relations with OInd. *kakāṭikā-* “the back of the neck” (AV, X,2,8) cf. Mayrhofer EWAlA I, 286.

3.2.3.8. A Turkic loanword connected with religious practises is I. *qabaq(q)*, D. *qabay* “shooting mark, target; Zielscheibe beim Wettschießen zu Ehren eines Verstorbenen” (MF: I, 417); I. *qabaquat*, D. *qabayuat* “place where such shooting contests are being held” (also a place name); shooting competitions with bow and arrow were indeed a part of the traditional burial rites (*Bæx fældisin* “horse consecration”). The original meaning of the Turkic word is “pumpkin”, cf. Anat.Turk. *kabak* “id.”, Kom. *qabaq* (*cabac*) “Kürbis, cucurbita” (Grønbech 1942: 188), etc. (Räsänen 1969: 233). In this meaning the word has been borrowed by various North Caucasian languages. In Chagatay *kabay* / *kabak* is found in both senses (“pumpkin”, “target”). Originally a pumpkin was put on top of a tall pole and thus the word came to be used of the target itself (Clauson 1972: 582; Radlov 1893-1911: II, 1, 437). The word has entered Persian in both senses: *qabāq* “a gourd; a pole in the middle of a palaestra to the top of which a ring of gold or silver is fixed, serving as a mark for archers” (Steingass 1892: 951; Doerfer 1963-75: III,412). In Georgian *q’abaxi* means “a cup or a bowl, as a rule of some precious metal, put up as a target for mounted archers and given as a prize to a winner; a place where the shooting competitions take place; the shooting competition itself”; in the first sense *q’abaxi* is now obsolete (KEGL: VII, 494; cf. also the derivate *q’abaxoba* “shooting competition”). In Kabardian *qābaq* is (or was formerly) used of traditional festivals, as a rule held in spring at the end of the ploughing season, where shooting competitions were the main entertainment and where the prizes were put on a high pole, the *qābaq*, as targets for the competitors (sic: IES: II,252 ff.; cp. also Šagirov 1977: I, 222 s.v. *кълэб қәб* / *кълэбы қәбә* “pumpkin”).

It does not appear from the dictionaries that the shooting contests took place in connection with funeral rites anywhere except in Ossetia. As likely as not the word has entered Ossetic and Kabardian from Georgia. If that is so, Georg. *q’abaxi* was borrowed from Persian and not from Ossetic nor any other language of the North Caucasus. In short, Oss. *qabaq* / *qabay* is not the result of direct contacts with a Turkic language.

3.2.3.9. In a previous study (Thordarson 1986a: 279; cp. also id. 1986: 504 ff., and id. 1990) I have derived I. *čizg*, D. *kizgæ* “girl, daughter” from Turk. **kyz* “id.”, enlarged with the Iranian oxytone (feminine?) suffix **-akā-*, where the *-a-* of the pretonic syllable was syncopeated: **kizakā* > **kizgā*. This etymology seems to preferable to that of Abaev (IES: I, 614) who obviously presupposes an original form **kiz-ga* (**-gā?*), with a suffix **-ka-*. It seems questionable whether **-ka-* was still a productive suffix in mediaeval Ossetic (Alanic), so that it could be used for forming derivatives from Turkic loanwords.

If my explanation is correct, the word must have been borrowed at a time when the ancient Indo-Iranian rule of free accent at the word level was still operative, possibly also when the two gender system (m., f.) had not yet been obliterated (cf. 4.2.12 below). In Turkic loanwords initial **q-* is as a rule rendered by Oss. *q-* (in both dialects). In Ossetic the voiceless uvular stop *q* has been introduced through loanwords and a “Verschärfung“ of initial *γ-*. The latter development is recent (18th–19th century; cf. Abaev 1949: 511) and confined to Iron (see 2.8.2. above). From this we may infer that **kizakā* was adopted at a time when Ossetic had no phoneme *q* yet.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ In the *Yass* word list (l. 12) *caz* is translated by Lat. *auca*, i.e. “goose” (Németh 1958: 18). This word is no doubt identical with modern Oss. (I., D.) *qaz* “id.”, a loanword from Turkic (IES: II, 272). The spelling of the word in the *Yass* document is ambiguous; we cannot say whether *c* is written for *k* or *q*. But as the word has *q* in both dialects, the reading *q* seems preferable. In that case an unvoiced uvular stop *q* existed at least in some varieties of Alanic in the 13th century.

In modern Ossetic the word accent is subordinate to clause accent.⁴⁶ This prosodic feature need not be old and is most likely due to Caucasian influence.

From these facts I conclude that *čizg* / *kizgæ* belongs to the old, probably mediaeval, stock of Turkic loanwords.

3.2.3.10. It is of some historical interest that the ancient word for “sea”, I. *furd*, D. *ford*, has been replaced by a Turkic loanword, I. *denžiz*, D. *dengiz* (OTurk. *teñiz*; Drevnetjurkskij slovar’ 1969: 552; ESTJa 1980: 194); Kom. *teñiz* (Grønbech 1942: 241); Noghay, Kar.-Balk. *teñiz*, but note Kum. *deñiz*; – Anat.Turk. *deniz*, Azer. *däniz*, etc.; cf. Clauson 1972: 527, and Radlov 1893-1911: III, 1, 1045; IES: I, 362 and 485 f.) Turk. *teñiz* is first actually noted in the 11th century, when it replaced *taluj*, but is at least so old that it existed in the language from which Hung. *tenger* “sea” was borrowed (Clauson l.c.).

In modern Ossetic *furd* / *ford* is mainly used of great rivers, but the old meaning is still found in proverbs and in the archaic poetic style. In the glossary of the 1946 edition of the Nart epos (NK 1946: 385) *furd* is explained as 1) *denžiz*, 2) *sindæg či cæui, axæm stir don* “a great river which flows quietly”.

furd / *ford* has been borrowed by the Nakh languages, where it has retained its old sense: Ing. *ford*, Chech. *hord* (Ing. *f* = Chech. *h* is regular).

In Klapproth’s list of Ossetic words (Klapproth 1814: 197) both *denghis* and *furd* are given as the equivalents of German “Meer”. In the vocabularies of Pallas (Pallas I, 1786: 311) Russian *море* is translated by Oss. *furd* (фурдъ). In Mémoires etc. (1797: 71) French *mer* is rendered by Oss. *foord* (“Dialecte d’Osseti”; no entry under “Dialecte de Dugor”). In the German-Ossetic vocabulary of Sjøgren’s Ossetic grammar (Sjøgren 1844: 512) German “Meer” is translated by *denžyz* / *dengiz* (дендиз / денгиз) only; in the Ossetic-German vocabulary *furd* / *ford* is not found. In the 1864 translation of the Gospels (Siȳdæg evangelie 1864 = 1902) *denžiz* is regularly used where the Greek text has θάλασσα; in Jn. 7.38 *doni furdæ* corresponds with Greek ποταμοί. These facts, as far as they can be traced back, seem to indicate that *furd* / *ford* and *denžiz* / *dengiz* were still competing with each other as approximately synonymous nouns at the time of our earliest sources.

As a rule, D. *e* corresponds with I. *i*. In front of *n* plus an affricate / velar stop D. *i* becomes I. *i*: *činz* / *kinzæ* “bride, daughter-in-law”, *fing* / *fingæ* “table”. We expect a parallel narrowing of *e* to *i* in the same position, but the examples seem to be few and uncertain: *činzi* / *kenze* “coriander” (< Georg. *kinzi* “id.”), *c’ingur* / *c’engor* “the name of a small fish” (MF: III, 1698 and 1700, with a question mark; the word is not found in Bigulaev 1962, nor in IES); cf. also I. *dinžir* “big, high, deep” (Turk., cf. below; no corresponding Digor form (**dingir*?) is given by the dictionaries). – As to the vowel correspondences cf. Thordarson 1989: 460 ff.

With some sporadic exceptions original voiceless **t*- has been retained in the Kipchak group of Turkic languages, those languages that have in most cases served as the source of Turkic loanwords in Ossetic (Räsänen 1949: 158 ff.; Menges 1968: 86 ff.). In Turkic loanwords initial *t*- is normally rendered by Oss. *t*-. In those North Caucasian languages where Turk. *teñiz* has obtained a footing, an initial voiceless dental stop seems to be the rule: Kab. *tenžyz* (but Adyg. *xy* “sea”), Abaza *tenğyz* (Abkh. *a-mšyn* “sea”, but also *a-t’engiz*; cf. Doerfer 1963-75: III, 205 ff.), Andi *tengizi* (Xajdakov 1973: 75). With the exception of Kumyk the Turkic languages of the area have retained *t*-. Kumyk therefore suggests itself as the source of the Ossetic word, although the possibility of an irregular phonological identification cannot be ruled out

⁴⁶ For details, cf. in particular Abaev 1949: 529 ff.; regarding syncope and vowel shortening as the consequence of a former free word accent, cf. Thordarson 1990 and 2.6.2. above.

(nor that of an unattested source). Formerly Kumykh was used as a lingua franca in intertribal communication in the Northeast Caucasus (Benzing 1959: 391). It seems natural to infer from this that *denžiz / dengiz*, in contradistinction to *čizg / kizgæ*, is a comparatively recent borrowing.⁴⁷

However, initial *d-* occurs in I. *dinžir* “big, high, deep”, which is generally explained as a Turkic loanword, derived from Turk. *tāhri* “heaven, god” (IES: I, 383; Biemeier 1977: 148; details in Doerfer 1963-75: II, 577 ff.). Although this etymology may be sound, nothing can be said about the source language nor the circumstances under which the semantic change “heaven, god” > “big” has taken place.

3.2.3.11. To express mutual actions or relations both dialects use the same word: I. *kæræzi-*, D. *kæræze-*, e.g. I. *kæræziimæti* (com.pl.) *nixas kodtoi* “they spoke to each other” (Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 180). This word has been convincingly explained by Abaev (IES: I, 581) as deriving from Turk. *qarşy* “opposite” (Radlov 1893-1911: II, 208 ff.), cf. OTurk. *qarşī* “enmity, discord; contrast; adversary, hostile”, *qarşu* “contrast; opposite, against” (Drevntjurkskij slovar’ 1969: 429); Kom. *qaryš-*, *-ur* “defendere”, *qaryštur-* “misculare” (Grønbech 1942: 195); – Kum. *qarşy* “against”, Noghay *karsy* “against”, Kar.-Balk. *qarščy* “against”, all denoting reciprocity (Kar.-Balk. *bir birine qarščy* “against each other”. Cf. also Clauson 1972: 747: *keriš-*, deverbal noun, “connoting mutual action...”).

In Digor *-m-*, a characteristic trait of the pronominal inflection, is inserted between the stem and the case ending in the dative, the ablative and the inessive: *kæræze-m-æn*, *-m-æi*, *-m-i*, and the word is thus integrated into the inflectional system of the pronouns.

Note also the initial *k-* of the Ossetic word, contrary to the *q-* of the relevant Turkic languages, a fact that is indicative of an early loan.

3.2.3.12. In the old traditional (“feudal”) society I. *uæzdan*, D. *uæzdan*, *uæzdon*, *uæzdon*, *iezdön* was used as a social term denoting the nobility, the class of landed aristocracy which stood between the tribal princeling (the *ældærttæ*) and the free peasants (the *færssag lægtæ*); it is also used in the more general sense “courteous, polite”. This word is obviously connected with Kum., Noghay, Kar.-Balk. *özden* (Balk. also *özdön*) which in all these languages denoted the class of free peasants. Cf. also Kom. *özden* “frei, adlig, nobilis” (Grønbech 1942: 186). Regarding the other languages of the North Caucasus I refer to IES: IV, 103 ff.

Abaev (IES: I.c.) argues that this word has no clear Turkic etymology and is only found in those Turkic languages that had contact with Alanic-Ossetic. Accordingly he suggests an Iranian etymology and derives the word from a radical **wazda-* “fat, grease”, originally “fast(ness), firmness”, an explanation that had earlier been put forward by Morgenstierne (1927: 95; cf. also Benveniste 1959: 141 ff.). A radical **wazda-* is well attested by various Iranian languages: Pashto *wāzda* “fat, grease, Av. *vazdah-* (Y. 49.10), usually explained as “durable, solid, firm”,⁴⁸ *vazdar-* (ntr., Y. 31.21 and Young Avestan) “permanence” (further references in IES: IV, 104). Av. *vazdah-* etc. are as a rule assumed to be connected with OInd. (Ved.) *vedhas*, the exact meaning of which is not clear; it is used as an epithet of gods, singers and priests and thus possibly carried some social connotation (cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 258 ff.). The

⁴⁷ There are numerous examples of Oss. initial *t-* corresponding to Turk. *t-* in loan-words: I., D. *tala* “junges Bäumchen, Schößling”, Turk. *tāl* “branch, twig” (Clauson 1972: 489; Räsänen 1969: 457); – *talas(a)* “Liebkosung, Unterstützung, Schutz”, Turk. *talaš* “anxiety, quarrel” (Radlov 1893-1911: III, 884); – *tona / tonau* “Raub, Beute, Rüstung”, Turk. *tona-* “to tear, skin, flay” (Räsänen 1969: 488); etc.

⁴⁸ “charmeur”, Kellens / Pirart ad Y. 49.10 (1988-91: I, 173, and II, 300); “fatness”, Humbach’s translation of the same passage (1991: I, 182).

semantic development “fat(ness), solid(ity)” > “ruling (class), landowner(s)” is understandable (cp., e.g., *bæsti soi* “fat of the country” > “a distinguished person”).

If this explanation is sound, it seems natural to conclude that we have here an old Alanic social term which was borrowed commonly by the Kipchak languages of South Russia, not later than the 13th century and at a time before the connections between the Kumans and the Turkic peoples of the North Caucasus were interrupted.

The final *-an* of I. *uæzdan* is, however, somewhat disconcerting. Olran. **-āna-* normally results in *-on* in modern Ossetic, and this is what we actually find in some of the Digor variants (ancient **-ana-* would have become *-æn*). Is this anomaly due to a borrowing from an unknown, extinct dialect, or shall the irregular forms be explained as “Rückwanderer” from some unattested source?

3.2.3.13. Texov (1979: 90 ff.) lists some 30 Ossetic plant names and botanical terms of Turkic origin. Most of his etymologies are based on those of IES; not all are indisputable.

Two of the names given in the list end in *-gæ*: I. (South Ossetic?) *simirtgæ* “buckthorn” (not in MF, IES, nor in Bigulaev 1962) and D. *tak’uzgæ* “rowan-tree” (not in IES). It is tempting to see here an ancient oxytone suffix, with syncope of the pretonic *-a-*; in that case these words would be ancient borrowings (cf. 3.2.3.5. above). But as the etymologies of the radicals are not clear, this is probably too hazardous.⁴⁹

A large share of the plant names are found in the other languages of the Caucasus and are obviously migratory words which had been brought to the region from the north and the east through the medium of some Turkic language. A thorough treatment of these questions is outside the scope of the present studies.

In general, Turkic languages seem to have acted as intermediaries between Ossetic (and the other languages of the North Caucasus) and the Uralic and Altaic languages of South Russia. Interactions between Turkic and Alanic and related Iranian dialects are also likely to have taken place in Central Asia at an early stage, still before the Turkic immigrations to the Ponto-Caspian area in the 6th century; *duγ / doγ* may reflect such early contacts.

3.2.3.14. The words treated in the above paragraphs, to which numerous others can be added, testify to intensive linguistic contacts between the Ossetes and their Turkic-speaking neighbours. This is, of course, no surprise. Since late antiquity until recent times Turkic in some form or other has been the language of peoples ruling large areas of the North Caucasus and has thus obtained the status of a language of prestige. The words adopted from Turkic into Ossetic are to a large extent found in the other languages of the Ponto-Caspian lands. Hence it follows that the path of borrowing is not always easy to determine. The influence exerted by Ossetic (and the North Caucasian languages) upon the Turkic languages of the area is to all appearances much more limited. There are, however, close affinities between Ossetic and Karachay-Balkar, a fact which is easily understandable if we consider the history of these peoples. In addition to the examples mentioned above (3.2.3.1.) I refer to the notes made by Abaev (based on three research expeditions, undertaken in 1929–1931), according to which the Ossetic numerals were used by the Balkars, at least occasionally, besides the Turkic ones – an unmistakable indication of close bilingual relations (Abaev 1949: 282 ff.). The Ossetic word for “north, the northern side of a mountain”, *cægat* (of

⁴⁹ Regarding *simirtgæ*, Texov (1979: 93) refers to Tat. *et šomyrty*, Chuv. *jyta semerče*, Uzbek. *it žumurt*, i.e. *it* etc. plus *šumurt* “bird-cherry”. As to *tak’uzgæ*, cf. Kar.-Balk. *tiqüzqü* “rowan-tree”.

Iranian derivation) has been borrowed by the Balkars in the same sense, *čēget* (Kar. “forest”).

Thorough examinations of the manifold lexical interrelations between Ossetic and the Turkic languages are of the greatest importance – not only concerning lexicography in its narrower sense, but also for the cultural history of the Ossetes and the North Caucasian peoples in general. But it remains to be demonstrated whether these contacts have served as an instrument in changing the grammatical structure of the Ossetic language at all, and, if yes, to what extent.

3.2.4. Ossetic and Northwest Caucasian

3.2.4.1. For historical reasons we may presume that language contacts between the Ossetes-Alans and their Northwest Caucasian neighbours date back to remote antiquity. It goes without saying that very little, if anything, can be said with certainty about the nature of these contacts in ancient times. There can be said even less about the extent to which they have affected the development of Ossetic.

As previously mentioned (1.1.), Alanic was spoken over vast areas in the Northwest Caucasus until the late Middle Ages, when it was gradually superseded by Circassian (and Turkic) dialects. This is borne out by numerous place names of Alanic derivation found in areas where Kabardian and Balkar are now spoken. Miller (1881-87: III, 7 ff.) lists a number of such place names; not all of his etymologies are unassailable, however. Alanic place names in these areas are also treated by Abaev 1949: 45 ff., and Cagaeva 1971: 34. Thus we find numerous compounds containing the lexical elements *-dor* “stone” (I. *dur*, D. *dor*; of uncertain derivation): *Šaw-dor* “Black Stone” (I., D. *sau* “black”, *Ors-dor* “White Stone” (I. *urs*, D. *ors* “white”), *Arvə-dor* “Heaven’s Stone” (I., D. *arv* “heaven”), *Stur-dor* “Big Stone” (I. *stir*, D. *stur* “big”), *Gil-dor* “Penis-Stone” (I. *žil*, D. *gil* “penis”; a non-Iranian word), etc. (cf. Abaev, IES: I,376);

æfcæg “neck; mountain pass” (probably of Iranian origin, cf. Bielmeyer 1977: 120 ff.; Bailey 1969: 137 ff., and 1979: 105; against Abaev, IES; I, 108): *Žwar-fčik* “Cross Pass” (I. *žuar*, D. *žuaræ* “cross”), *Šaw-fčik* “Black Pass”;

kam (now I., D. *kom*) “mouth; ravine”: *Šaw-kam* “Black Ravine”, *Məstə-kam* “Mouse Ravine” (I. *mist*, D. *mistæ* “mouse”), *Asia-kam* (= *Asi kom*) “As Ravine” (I. *Asi*, D. *As(s)i*, “an Alanic tribal name”);

place names in *-sær* “head”: *Kizgan-sær* “Girl’s Head” (I. *čizg*, D. *kizgæ* “girl”); – in *-uat* “room, bed”; (in compounds) “place”: *Doy-uat* (I. *duy*, D. *doy* “horse race”).

Cp. also names in *-dan* (now I., D. *don* “water, river”): *Šaw-dan* “Black River”; etc.

Furthermore, there are place names containing adjectives such as *surx* “red” (I. *sirx*, D. *surx*), *bor* “yellow” (I. *bur*, D. *bor*), *ors* “white”, *stur* “big” (cf. above).

In passing, we may note that place names in *-kam*, *-dam*, instead of modern *-kom*, *-don*, indicate that they were borrowed at a time prior to the narrowing of *ām*, *ān* to *om*, *on* (late Middle Ages, cf. 2.6. above). The vowels of *stur*, *bor*, *ors*, *doy* also suggest an early borrowing.⁵⁰

Owing to the weakening of Alan power through the Mongol invasion in the early 13th century the Circassian tribes started their expansion to the east and south, from their old homeland on the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov. Around 1300 the Kabardians arrived in their later habitat in the basin of the Upper Terek and its

⁵⁰ An early borrowing seems to be preferable to a phonological substitution within the borrowing languages. – Transcriptions of Kabardian and Balkar names are mostly those of Abaev (IES), with modifications.

tributaries. After the collapse of the Golden Horde about the middle of the 16th century they ascended to a leading role in the Northwest Caucasus. Kabardian princelings imposed their hegemony over the mixed population of the area, which was reduced to being serfs of the feudal lords. The Kabardian dominion lasted until the Russian conquest in the latter half of the 18th century, and in some places even until the 19th century. Kabardian manners became fashionable and were widely imitated; the Kabardian language gained a prestige that in former times was probably held by Alanic, and was viewed as the key to social advancement.

Lexical affinities between Ossetic and Kabardian-Adygean are numerous; this applies especially to the Digor dialect of Ossetic. It seems likely that the majority of the Cherkas loanwords of Ossetic were borrowed during the hey-days of Kabardian feudalism and are thus of a comparatively recent date. The greater part of these loanwords refer to material culture, husbandry, vegetation, social life and the like, i.e., they were borrowed together with its referent. In the case of common migratory words or loanwords from Turkic languages, the direction of the borrowing may be more difficult to determine.

The vocabulary of the Circassian tribes contains quite a number of loanwords of Iranian derivation; some of these are likely to be old.⁵¹

In matters of social organisation and culture, the relations between the Ossetes and their Circassian neighbours have been particularly strong so that we are justified in speaking of a community of civilisations or a homogeneous cultural area. These relations no doubt date back to ancient times. This is, among other things, attested by the Nart epic cycle found all over the Northwest Caucasus; the motives and the structure of these Nartic tales, however, are to a large extent of old Iranian origin. The strict rule of exogamy practiced by all the peoples of the Northwest Caucasus, including the Ossetes – in contrast to the practices of the Daghestanians and, as it seems, the Chechen and the Ingush tribes – points into the same direction (Luzbetak 1951: 50 ff.; Charachidze 1968: 62 ff.).⁵²

3.2.4.2. The following list, although it is not meant to be exhaustive, should give the reader a good idea of the semantic fields of the Kabardian-Adygean loanwords (the transliteration of Adygean and Kabardian words is mainly based on Šagirov 1977 and partly on Klimov 1994; only the transliteration of the glottalised consonants as (<C'> etc.) is given according to Abaev, IES.⁵³

a) Words referring to material culture:

I. *gon*, *gom* “corn-bin”, cp. Kab. *гъэн г'ан* “id.” (Adyg. *к'уэны к'анэ* “barn” (Šagirov 1977: I, 112); IES: I, 523 f.: “corresponds with Kab. *gwan* / Adyg. *kon*”.

I. *aguvizæ*, D. *agubze*, *agubyzæ* “glass” (IES: I, 37); cp. *агубзæ*, *агубзæ* (MF: I, 7); cp. IES: I, ib., where the Oss. word is derived “from Kab. *hægwæ-b'ze* ‘cup’; for details on the compound cf. Balkarov 1965: 44: Adyg. *Іэгубжьэ 'äg'bz'* (cf. Kardanov e.a. 1957: 467), *Іэгу 'äg'* “palm” plus *бжьэ бз'а* “cup” (cf. ib., 29).

⁵¹ The question of possible contacts between the ancestors of the Cherkas and other Northwest Caucasian peoples and early Indo-European tribes living in South Russia has not been considered in this survey.

⁵² As regards the question of consanguinity as an impediment to marriage among the Ingush and Chechen tribes, Charachidze is at variance with Luzbetak. According to the latter, both the Ingush and the Chechens prescribe exogamy, at least where the ancient customary law – the *adat* – prevails over the Islamic law (Luzbetak, o.c.: 50 ff.).

⁵³ As there is no generally accepted transliteration of Kabardian-Adygean and in order to avoid misunderstandings, I have added the original Cyrillic spelling as given by Šagirov (1977) himself, in some cases also that of Balkarov (1965) and Kardanov e.a. (1957) – [S.F.]

I. *xædon*, D. *xædonæ* “shirt”, cf. Kab. *хъыдан хæдан*, Adyg. *хъэдэн хăдăн* “rag, piece of cloth” (Šagirov 1977: II, 110). According to Abaev, both the Oss. forms and “Kab. *xædan*”, representing a migratory word, can be traced back to a Semitic source (cf. IES IV, 157 f.).

D. *зæхиæ* “tin”, cp. Kab. *дзэху’ зăх°*, Adyg. *цэфы цăф* “id.” (Šagirov 1977: I, 167); cp. IES: I, 396: “from Kab. *зăхwæ*”.

D. *сирхæ* “(rifle)shot”, cp. Kab. *шэнхъ šărx* “id.” (Kardanov e.a. 1957: 430; IES I, 313: “from Kab. *šerp̄*”).

D. *xamec* “a high wattle”, cf. Kab. *хъэмэи хăтăš*, Adyg. *хъамэшъ хатăš’* “enclosure, threshing place” (Šagirov 1977: II, 119; cp. IES: IV, 139 f.: “from Old Kab. *hāmăč*”).

I. *guiffæ*, D. *guffæ* “the body of a carriage”, cp. Kab. *губьфэ г°əfă* (Adyg. *кубышьуэ k°əš°ă*) “id.” (Šagirov 1977: I, 120; cp. also IES: I, 529: “from Kab. *gufă*”).

D. *qoyancæ* “a small shovel for cleaning the ploughshare”, cp. Kab. *кхъуэхъэницэ q°ăhāncă* “id.” (Šagirov 1977: I, 238; IES: II, 307: “from Kab. *qwāxāncă*”).

I. *cik’æ* “chintz, (cotton)print” is connected by Abaev (IES: I, 312, following Lopatinskij) with Kab. *šek’* (sic) “cloth, textile”, i.e. modern Kab. *уэкI сăč*.⁵⁴ Should we in this case rather presume an opposite direction of the borrowing, thus going from Ossetic to Kabardian? Or does this lemma represent a migratory word, the origin of which cannot be determined with certainty?

D. *læudanæ* “silk shawl”, cp. Kab. *лæудан lăwdan* “silk cloth” (Šagirov 1977: I, 243; IES II, 37: “from Adyg. *lăudană*”).

D. *sæxu, sæux* “pole, pillar”, cp. Kab. *сэх сăх* “id.” (Šagirov 1977: II, 60; IES III, 98: “from Kab. *săx*”).

I. *p(i)sunæ*, D. *p(u)sunæ, pusingæ* “lavatory”, cp. Kab. *псыунэ psə’nă* “id.” (cf. Kardanov e.a. 1957: 303; IES: II, 247: “from Kab. *psəună*”).

D. *uanik’iafsæ* “saddle-strap”, Kab. *уэнэкIансэ wănăk’apsă* (*уэнэчIансэ wănăč’apsă*) “id.” (Šagirov 1977: II, 88, s.v. *уăнэ wană* / *уăн wan* “saddle”). Cf. also IES IV, 48: “from Kab. *wanăk’apsă*”.

D. *xaku* “a workshop where wheel rims are made” (MF III, 1486; IES has no respective entry): A phonetic and semantical connection with Kab. *hăk°* “stove” cannot be excluded (cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 118: *хъэку’ / хъаку’ы* and Balkarov 1965: 39 who mentions Kab. *хъэку*).

I. *č’eps(i)* “a leather strap”, cp. Kab.-Adyg. *къенс q’eps / kIансэ č’apsă* (older *k’apsă*) “id.”; cf. Balkarov 1965: 25. From its vocalism, this derivation seems to be more likely than Abaev’s from Georg. (Ratch.) *k’ipsi* “patch for mending a bursting wineskin”; cf. IES: I, 632.

b) Culinary terms:

I. *xalivnæ* “pasty of cheese and meat”, cf. Kab. *хъэлыуэ хăлăwă* “fried pasty of curds, a kind of cheese-cake” (cf. Kardanov e.a. 1957: 416); with all probability, the Oss. and the Kab. word can hardly be separated from Turk. *helvâ*, Pers. *halwa* “sweetmeat” [S.F.].

I. *xælt’amæ* (*xælt’ama, xalt’ama, xælp’anæ, xælp’amæ, xæmp’alæ*), D. *xalt’ama* “a boiled maize cake”, cf. Kab. *хъэлламэ хăl’amă*, Adyg. *хъальнIамэ халəp’amă* “id.”; this is ultimately a Turkic loanword, widespread in the Caucasus, as already stated by Šagirov (1977: II, 118 f.). Cp. also IES IV, 169 f.: “from Turkic *qatlama*”.

I. *livzæ, libzæ*, D. *livzæ, libzæ* “ragout”, cf. Kab. *лыбжьэ лəbž’ă* “id.” (a Kab. national dish; cf. Kardanov e.a. 1957: 246; cp. further Balkarov 1965: 29).

⁵⁴ Orthography following Šogencukov e.a. 1955: 842 s.v. Russ. *ткань* “id.”; transliteration according to Klimov 1994: 392; Šagirov has no respective entry [S.F.].

æfsap`æ (mainly D.) “cook”, cf. Kab. *нубафлэ псаф`а* “id.” (cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 31; cp. also IES I, 108 f.: “from Kab. *псаф`а* (with metathesis)”).

I. *civzi*, *cibzi*, D. *civzæ* “red pepper”, cp. Kab. *шыбжуй šəbžij*, Adyg. *шыбжьыий š'əbž'aj* “pepper” (a common Northwest Caucasian word; cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 142 and Balkarov 1965: 18; IES I, 327: “probably from one of the Circassian languages ..., e.g. Kab. *šəbžij* ...”).

c) Plant names and botanical terms:

D. *t'aff(ə)* “leaf”, cp. Kab. *thāmpā*, Adyg. *thap* “id.”; cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 83: *тхэмнэ / тхьан*. – Cp. IES III: 351: “Close to ... Kab. *thapā*, Adyg. *thap* ...”

D. *fagæ* “millet”, cp. Kab. *хыгы'х°əg°*, Adyg. *фыгы'fəg°* “id.” (Šagirov 1977: II, 108). – Cp. also IES I: 416, where Abaev only hesitantly thinks about a West-Caucasian origin of Oss. *fagæ*, considering “... Ubyx *фурwə* or Circassian *фəγo*” [sic].

D. *æpxæ* “carrot”, cp. Kab. *пхы пхə* “id.” (cf. Šogencukov e.a. 1955: 354 and Balkarov 1965, 18. Cp. also IES: I, 171, where the Oss. word is derived “from Kab. *пх°ə*”).

I. *bin*, D. *bun* “forest” is of uncertain origin. There might be a connection with Kab. *banā*, Adyg. *panā* “thorn, thorny bush”; cp. IES I, 279 where the word is seen in relation “with Abx. *a-bna*, Abaz. *bna* “forest”. – According to Šagirov 1977: I, 68 the etymon *банэ / панэ* etc. belongs to the West-Caucasian basic vocabulary. – Last not least, a connection with Av. *van-*, *vanā-* etc. “tree” must also be taken into consideration.

I. *žezžin*, D. *gedigin*, *gædigin* “savory”, cp. Kab. *žədəγən* “id.” (Šagirov 1977: I, 160 *джэдыгын* [sic]). For further details cf. Balkarov 1965: 19. – Abaev tries to connect *žezžin* etc. with Oss. I. *gædi* “cat”, in analogy to the derivative *gædi-bælas / gædi-bælasæ* “boplar”, i.e. “cat-tree” (IES: I, 518 and 510).

D. *gec* “bean, pea” in *gec-færsæn* “fortune-telling by means of peas”, cf. Kab. *джэ(р)и жə(r)š*, Adyg. *джэнычы žāncə* “bean” (Šagirov 1977: I, 161 f. – Cp. also IES: I, 517: “Kab. *geš*, Circ. *genš*”).

I., D. *zala* “sedge”; a comparison with Kab. *zāl* “willow” seems to offer itself on phonetical grounds, but seen from a semantical point of view it remains problematic (cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 166: *дзэл zāl / пцелы pcelə* “willow”). – Abaev precariously proposes to relate Oss. *zala* with Georg. *č'ala* “forest at a riverside, lakeside etc.”, taking into account a semantic change from “sedge, grass at the riverside etc.” to “forest ...” (IES: I, 389).

D. *zætxæ* “oats” is derived in IES: IV, 306 “from Svan *zəntx*, Kab. *zəntx* [sic Abaev] “id.”; cp. Šagirov 1977: I, 206: Adyg. *зəнтхə zəntx* “id.”.

I. *nas*, D. *nasæ* “pumpkin”; cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 275 who mentions Kab. *нашə našə* “cucumber” and Adyg. *наи naš* “melon”. – Cp. also IES: II, 161. “cp. Kab. *našə*, Ubykh *nəšə* etc. ‘cucumber’, Georg. *nesvi* ‘pumpkin’ ...”

D. *pavzæ* “thicket” is derived by Abaev, IES: II, 238 “from Kab. *pabžə* ‘shrubs’ “. Cf. Kardanov e.a. 1957: 285, mentioning *пəбжьə pəbž'ə* “id.”

d) Animal realm:

I., D. *æpγai*, *arγai* “salmon” is compared by Abaev (IES: I, 176) with Kab. *arγej* which he translates with Russ. *акула* “shark” (sic, with a question mark). – But cf. also Šagirov 1977: I, 63 and Kardanov e.a. 1957: 19, who translate *арγей arγej* with “some big fish; salmon”. This seems to be a migratory word, may be ultimately of Turkic origin (cf. IES: I, 176)?

D. *gaia* “whale”, “sea monster”; cp. Kab. *джей зѣј* “whale”, Adyg. *джайэ зѣј* “catfish”; according to Šagirov (1977: I, 162) the Kab.-Adyg. forms can be ultimately derived from Turkic. (Cp. IES: I, 505: “cp. Kab. *gej* id.”)

I. (*i*)*emlik*, D. *emellek* “an unbroken colt”, cf. Kab. *йемылыдж жәмэлэж*, Adyg. *йэмлыч жәмләч* “wild, untamed” (also found in other North Caucasian languages, probably of Turkic origin; cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 175 and IES: I, 411 f.).

D. *æfirik'u(æ)*, *tifirik'uæ* “jibbing, restive” (of animals), “a restive horse” is derived from Kabardian both by IES: III, 291 and Balkarov 1965: 49; cp. Kab. *фтырыкIуэ фтәрэк°'ä* “id.”, lit. “going backwards” (Šagirov 1977 and Kardanov e.a.: 1957 have no respective entries).

e) Social conditions:

I. *xauillæ*, *xæuillæ*, D. *xauelli* “tramp, homeless”; IES: IV, 147 f. derives the Oss. word “from Kab. *xāwlej* “idle; tramp”; cp. Balkarov 1965: 12 f.: Kab. *хьэулей һә'lej* ‘id.’.

I. *xomix*, D. *xomux* “indolent, a lazy fellow”, cp. Kab. *хуэмыху х°āmэх°*, Adyg. *фэмьф фāmәф* “id. ultimately” (Šagirov 1977: II, 107; cp also IES: IV, 213: “from Kab. *x°āmэх°*”).

D. *qazar* “expensive, one who sells dear”, cp. Kab. *кьIэзэр q'āzār* / Adyg. *кьэзэр q'āzār* “one who sells dear, a miser”; originally an ethnic name, “the Khazars”, cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 222 f. According to IES: II, 274 the semantic change took place in the “Adygean sphere”.

D. *qarabuḡa*, *qærabuḡa* “coward”; cp. Kab. *кьIэрабгъэ q'ārabyā*, Adyg. *кьэрабь q'āraby* “id.”, cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 225. Cf. also IES: II, 294.

D. *ac'ayuae* “skill, mastership”, cp. Kab. *IсуIагъэ* (sic Kardanov e.a. 1957: 471; for the derivation cf. Balkarov 1965: 48) *'ās'ayā* “trade, handicraft”. Cf. also IES: I, 27 f.: “from Kab. *ās'agā* ...” [sic]

D. *niqoq* “quarrel”, cp. Kab. *ныкъIуэкъIуэн пәq'°āq'°ān*, Adyg. *нэкьу'кьу'эн нәq'°q'°ān* “to argue, contend” (cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 286, Balkarov 1965: 11, IES: II, 184).

D. *kezu* “turn” (e.g.: *dæ kezu æi* “it is your turn”); cp. Kab. *чэзу çäzu*, Adyg. *чэзы'çäzy* “id.” (or < Balk. *keziw* “id.”?) – ultimately a Turkic word, cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 127 and IES: I, 595).

D. *k'en* “draughts”, cf. Kab. *кIэн ç'ān* (< *кIьэн к'ān*) “knuckle-bone (used as a dice)”; cp. Šagirov 1977: II, 132 and IES: I, 632.

I., D. (*i*)*eblayuae* “welcome, please” (interjection); cp. Kab. *йэблэгъэн jäbläḡān* “to visit” (Šagirov 1977: I, 171). Abaev quotes Trubetzkoy’s derivation “from Adyg. *jeblāḡ* id.” (IES: I, 410).

f) Public matters, religion:

I. *uinaffæ*, D. *unaffæ* “counsel, judgement, decision”, cp. Kab. *unafā* “order, decision” (cf. IES: IV, 116, Kardanov 1957: 359, Balkarov 1965: 9, Bielmeyer 1977: 121).

I. *zillæ*, D. *zillæ* “village community, people”, cp. Kab. *жылэ žälä*, Adyg. *чылэ çälä* “village” (Šagirov, o.c.: I, 197). Cf. IES: I, 405: “from Kab. *žällä*, Circ. *žällä* ...”

D. *uasxæ* “vow, oath”, cp. Kab. *уаушхъуэ wāšx°ä*, Adyg. *уәушхъуэ wāšx°ä* “o blue heaven” (in oaths); cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 89. Cp. also IES: IV, 57: “an Abkhaz-Adygean cult expression”.

D. *xædæterxæ* “shroud, cerements”, from Kab. *šhädä-terx°ä* “id.” (lit. “corpse-veil”); cp. also the modern form Kab. *цхьэтенхъуэ šhäterx°ä*; Balkarov 1965: 16 and IES: IV, 155.

For the two last-mentioned words Iron has *ard*, *somi* “oath” and *mardī kættag* “shroud”, all of them of Iranian derivation (may be the last one calquing Kabardian?). The Iron words *ard*, *somi* have their counterparts in Digor *ard*, *somi*.

g) Attitudes of mind and the like:

I. *guizauæ*, D. *guzauæ* “uneasiness, vacillation”, cp. Kab. *гъызэвээн г°эзъвээн*, Adyg. *гъызэжъгъээн г°эзъз°эн* “to worry” (Šagirov 1977: I, 116; Balkarov 1965: 14). Cf. also IES: I, 533: “from Kab. *guzavä*”.

I. *guirisxo*, D. *gurusx(u)æ* “doubt, suspicion”; cp. Kab. *гъырышхъгъэ г°эръсх°э* “suspicion” (Šagirov 1977: I, 119; cf. also Balkarov 1965: 14 f.: Kab. *гърышхъгъэ*. – IES: I, 533: “from Kab., Circ. *gurəšxwä*”).

D. *aiuan* “mockery, gibe”, cp. Kab. *ауан аван* “id.” (of Turkic origin, as already mentioned by Šagirov 1977: I, 65. – Cf. also IES: I, 42).

I. *laz*, D. *lazæ* “fault, misfortune, vice”, cp. Kab. *лажьэ лаžă*, Adyg. *лажьэ лаž’* “fault, blame” (Šagirov 1977: I, 240). – IES: II, 16: “from the Adygean languages, cp. Kab. *lažä* ...”.

h) Miscellaneous words:

I. *zac’ e*, D. *zak’æ*, *zek’æ* “beard”, cp. Kab. *жъачIэ žac’ă*, Adyg. *жачIэ žac’ă* “id.” (cf. Šagirov: I, 199 and IES: IV, 285).

D. *aquz* “chilly wind”, cp. Kab. *акъIуыжъ аq’°эž* “chilly south wind” (Šagirov 1977: I, 59). Cp. IES: I, 55: “from Kab. *aqwəž’*...”.

D. *nigæ* “steiniger, mit Gras bewachsener Boden (am Flussufer)” (MF: II, 851); cp. Kab. *ныджэ пэžă*, Adyg. *ныджы пэžə* (older *ныгъэ пэг’ă / ныгъы пэг’ă*) “water-meadow” (Šagirov 1977: I, 285). – Cp. also Balkarov 1965: 43 and, furthermore, IES: II, 180: “from Kab., Circ. *nəžä* ...”.

I. *moræ*, D. *moræ*, *mora* “(dark) brown”; cp. Kab. *морэ moră* “brown”, but also Ing. *mora mora* (< Oss.?), Georg. *mura* “dark-red, dark-brown”; a widespread migratory word of unknown derivation, denoting various degrees of dark colour (cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 269; IES: II, 130 f.).

In the case of migratory words and Turkic loanwords it is sometimes difficult to decide on the direction of the borrowing.⁵⁵ At least some of these loanwords have probably entered Ossetic in recent times. This applies apparently to Iron words in final *-æ* (*uinaffæ*, *zillæ*, *moræ*, *xauillæ* etc.; cf. 4.12.3. below). The Ossetic loanwords containing */f/* are not likely to be ancient borrowings either (cf. Bielmeier 1977: 121).

3.2.4.3. The Circassian languages possess a number of words of Iranian origin. At least some of these seem to be early borrowings, dating back even to Scytho-Sarmatian antiquity. Needless to say that cognate words are not always found in Ossetic, and that Iranian dialects different from the antecedents of Ossetic may have played a part in the transmission of Iranian loanwords to the Northwest Caucasian languages, a fact that hampers the investigation of these matters.

3.2.4.3.1. I. *scæn*, D. *scænæ*, the usual word for “wine”, seems to occur in a few Scytho-Sarmatian proper names:

Σανᾶγοϋς (**sanā-* plus a suffix *-aka-*; Olbia; Abaev 1949: 180 = 1979: 302); as to the typology of the name cf. Αλουθα(γ)οϋς (Olbia), Oss. *æluton* “beer”; cf. also the

⁵⁵ For further details cf. Abaev, IES, Šagirov 1977 and Balkarov 1965 s. vv.

Georgian dialectal (Khevsurian) proper name *Aluda* and *aludi* “beer” (Georg. *ludi*). For other, less likely explanations, cf. Vasmer 1923: 50; Zgusta 1955: 140 ff. and 186.

Σανάπη, the name of an intemperate Amazon living in exile in Pontus, cf. the *scholia* on Apollonius Rhodius (ed. Wendel 1935: 197) according to which the name means “who drinks much”. According to the same source women were addicted *sanapai* by the Thracians; either the same word was used for “wine” in Thracian and Scythian, or the Scythians and the Thracians were mixed up, as it frequently happens in Greek and Roman sources. The same word is also, as it seems, found in the Greek lexicon of Hesychius: σανάπτην τὴν οἰνόποτιν Σκύθαι (Scaliger’s correction for σάναπτιν τὴν οἰνώτην; cf. Dumézil 1967: 29 ff.; 1978: 241). If this explanation is sound, *sanapai*, *sanaptēn* (acc.) are compound nouns, probably consisting of **sanā* and a root (agent) noun derived from the Indo-Iranian root **pāy-* “to drink”.

Cognate words found in the Northwest Caucasian languages are: Adyg. (Shapsugh) *sānā* “vine”, *sanā* “wine”, Kab. *sanā* “an intoxicating liquor” (in the Nart legends), and Ubykh *s^oanā* “honey” (Vogt 1963: 178). – Concerning the occurrence of this word in the Daghestanian languages cf. IES: III, 68.

Oss. *sæn* / *sænæ* “wine” is no doubt connected with OInd. *śanā-* (AV and later; regarding the cerebral *ṇ*, cf. Petersson 1921: 152; cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 292) “a species of hemp”; cf. Khot. *śamvām*, Zor. Phl., NPers. (rare) *šan* “hemp”. The original meaning of the Ossetic word is apparently “an intoxicant made from hemp”. Most likely the word has been borrowed in the common Aryan period from some unknown (Uralic?) source. Ultimately it may be connected with Oss. *gæn* / *gænæ* “hemp”, *kættag* (< **kantakā-*) “coarse linen”, a word widely diffused in Iranian Eurasian languages. As the Ossetic word is also found in other Indo-Iranian languages, the derivation of the Northwest Caucasian words from Iranian seems to be beyond doubt. For details cf. IES: III, 66 ff.⁵⁶

3.2.4.3.2. Kab. бѣджынэ *bāžənā*, Adyg. бѣджын *bāžən* “a kind of porridge made of sour cream (*smetana*) and barley, wheat, oats or maize meal” (Adyg. Shapsugh *bāžənā* “oats”) > Ubykh *bağāna* “id.” (Vogt 1963: 88) is probably not to be separated from Oss. *bægæni* / *bægæni*, the common word for “beer” (cp. Šagirov 1977: I, 72; Balkarov 1965: 31).

The native origin of the Ossetic word seems certain, as cognate words are found in other Iranian languages: Khwar. *bknyn* “millet beer” (MacKenzie 1990: 106; Benzinger-Taraf 1983: 171), NPers. *bagnī* “potus ex oryza, milia, hordeo, sim. paratus, alias *nabīz* et *būze* dictus B[orhāni qātiū]” (Vullers 1855-64: I, 255).⁵⁷ Sogd. *bg’ny* “beer”, suggested by Bailey (1954: 134) and repeated by Abaev (IES: I, 245), does not exist (Henning 1965a: 242 ff. = 1977: 617).

The ultimate etymology of this word is disputed: Is is a loanword from Turkic, cf. OTurk. *bekni*, *begni* “an intoxicating beverage” (Drevnetjurkskij slovar’ 1972: 328; Clauson 1972: 328), or a derivative from an Iran. root **bag-* “to drink” = Av. *bag-*, OInd. *bhag-* “to share, enjoy” (cp. Weber 1990)?

If connections between the Adygean-Kabardian and the Ossetic words are acceptable, the evidence points towards the latter language as the source of the former.

3.2.4.3.3. Various scholars have derived Adyg.-Kab. нысэ нэсэ “daughter-in-law” from PrIran. *(*s*)*nušā-* “id.” (Hübschmann 1887: 52; cp. Schiefner 1863: 445; Abaev, IES: II,

⁵⁶ A connection with the world-field around OInd. *kāṇṭa-ka-* “thorn”, most of the respective words denoting (“thorny”) plants, remains rather dubious; cf. Mayrhofer, EWAIA: I, 292.

⁵⁷ Is *bagnī* a genuine Persian word? According to Vuller’s Praefatio (p. VI, footnote), the *Borhāni qātiū* contains a number of non-Persian words.

190 (s.v. *nostaē* – hesitantly); Šagirov 1977: I, 287); cp. OInd. *snuṣā-*, Sogd. *šwnšh*, Pashto *nžōr*, NPers. *sunuh* etc. “id.”. Initial **sn-* > *n-* is a regular Ossetic development. Words of a similar form and meaning are also found in other languages of the Caucasus (IES: s.v.). The Caucasian words are, however, not immediately derivable from D. *nostaē* “daughter-in-law”, which seems to go back to **nausa-čt-*, a feminine form in *-čt* (with an unexpected *guṇa*, cf. Thordarson 1986a: 285). The word is not found in modern Iron, but its former existence is proved by I. *fainust* “sister-in-law” (D. *fainostaē* “id.”, < **pati-(s)nauš-*; the brothers’ wives are called *fainustitæ*). If the Iranian etymology of the Caucasian words is acceptable, they presuppose something like **naušā / nušā-*.

3.2.4.3.4. Oss. *fisim / fusun* “host”, apparently from **fšuma-* (cf. Av. *fšumant-* “rich in cattle”), has been suggested as the source of Adyg.-Kab. *бысым бəсəт* “id.” (Ubykh *bəsəm*, cf. Vogt 1963: 96 < Cherk.), Abkhaz *а-нуыма а-ршума*, Abaz. *нуыма ршума* “id.” (cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 104). The word has also been adopted by the Nakh languages, with a somewhat different meaning: Ing. *fusæm*, Chech. *husam* “(host’s) house, living quarters” (cf. IES: I, 502).

3.2.4.3.5. Among Circassian words which have been explained as loanwords from Ossetic the following can also be mentioned:

Oss. *saužin / saugin* “priest” (lit. “dressed in black”): Kab. *шəоджəн шəžəн*, Adyg. *шəуджəн шəžəн* “id. A connection with the world-field around OInd. *kāṇṭa-ka-* “thorn”, most of the respective words denoting (“thorny”) plants, remains rather dubious; cf. Mayrhofer, EWAIA: I, 292.”); also found in Kabardian family names, such as *Šogenov*, *Šogencukov* (here given in their Russian form). The Cherkes word is attested as *sciugen* by an Italian 17th century traveller, E. d’Ascoli (apud Abaev, IES: III, 45; cf. also Šagirov 1977: II, 147).

Kab. *Іəрмəфт(р)у* ‘*ərməft(r)u* “clumsy” is of special interest if it is derived from D. *ərm-æftud* “with fallen hands” (M. I. Isaev apud Šagirov 1977: II, 158). The Ossetic word, which seems not to be registered in the dictionaries but is attested by a native speaker, must be an inverted *bahuvrīhi*, derived from *arm* “hand” and the past participle of *æftuiun* “to fall” (I. *æftin*, *æftid*, cf. IES: I, 115). Compounds of this type are not common in the spoken language of today and mostly belong to poetic or archaic style. This may indicate an old borrowing.

3.2.4.3.6. There are a few other Adygic-Kabardian words the Iranian origin of which seems fairly certain:

Kab. *уəшəт* *wəš*, Adyg. *уəшəты* *wəš’ə* “axe, wood-chopper”: Oss. *uæš* “id.”, cf. Ved. *vāšī-* “axe” (Šagirov 1977: I, 94; IES: IV, 98; Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 197).

Kab. *абəдж* *abž*, Adyg. *анч* *apč* “glass”: Oss. *avg / avgæ* “id.” (Šagirov 1977: I, 82; IES: I, 84: “... << **āpaka-* from *āp-* “water”).

Kab. *бəд* *bod* “fragrancy, incense”: Oss. *bud / bodæ* “id.” < **bauda-* “smell” (IES: I, 269; Šagirov 1989:161).

Kab. *догəтə* *dog’ə* “wait a moment” (interj.): *dug / dogæ* “time” < **daukā-* (?); (cp. IES: I, 372; Šagirov 1977: II, 151; 1989: 161).

Kab. *хуцхəтə* (sic Balkarov 1965: 51) *x’əx’ə* (Abkhaz *а-хəвицы* [sic] *а-х’əс’ə*) “medicine”: Oss. *xos / xuasæ* “hay; medicine, means, way out” (orig. “grass”) < **hu-ūāstra-* “good grass” (IES: IV, 220 ff.; or, rather, “with good grass”? – Cp. also Pashto *wāšə* (nom. pl.) “grass, fodder, hay” (Morgenstierne 1927: 93).

Kab.-Adyg. *чэм цӕт* (cp. also Shapsugh *кӕтты к'ӕтӕ*, *чэты цӕтӕ*) “sheep-fold”: Oss. D. *kæt* “stable”, Av. *kata-* “store-room, mud-hut, dug-out”, NPers. *kad* “house” etc. (Šagirov 1977: II, 128; IES: I, 590).

Kab. *хъӕдӕ* *хӕдӕ*, Adyg. *фӕд фӕд* “similar, same”: Oss. *xædæg / xuedæg* < **xʷataka-* (Šagirov 1977: II, 106; IES: IV, 155; cp. OInd. *svá-* “suus”, Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 559).

Concerning the relations between Ossetic (I., D.) *sag* “deer” and Kab. *шъыхъ сӕх*, Adyg. *шъыхъ сӕхӕ* “id.” and cognate words in other Caucasian languages I refer to IES: III, 11 ff. and Šagirov 1977: II, 149.

As to more details and the etymologies of the Ossetic words, cf. IES s. vv.; cp. also Abaev 1949: 88 ff.

3.2.4.4. These examples, to which numerous others could be added, show that there has been a constant lexical interchange between Ossetic (and its Iranian forerunners) and the Cherkes neighbour dialects, probably since remote antiquity. This is, of course, what we expect, considering the fact that Ossetic has been gradually ousted by the latter idioms in the greater part of its former territory. The loanwords adopted from Ossetic by Adygean-Kabardian may accordingly be ascribed to substratum as well as adstratum influence. Some of these borrowings are to all appearances old, though an absolute chronology cannot be established. It is perhaps of some historical interest that Christian terms like those for “incense” and “priest” have been transferred from Ossetic to Adygean-Kabardian.⁵⁸ Ossetic borrowings from the Cherkes dialects seem to be largely recent and mostly limited to Digor. Most of these loanwords are names, “Kulturwörter” and the like, terms which have been borrowed together with the referent. In their core vocabulary both languages have for the most part remained unaffected by the contacts.

3.2.4.5. Most of the words mentioned by Abaev 1949 (pp. 309 ff.) as evidence of lexical interchange between Ossetic and Abkhaz are also found in other languages of the area, but they do not tell anything about *direct* linguistic contacts between the speakers of these languages in the past; some of the respective comparisons have been omitted in the IES or set forth with reserve. In historical times the Ossetes and the Abkhaz-Abaza populations did not inhabit contiguous areas. Lexical items found in both languages were most probably transmitted by some third language as an intermediary; at all events this situation must be presumed for the post-Mongolian era.

No studies of linguistic contacts between the Ossetes and the Ubykhs (or their ancestors) are known to me. The geographical location of the latter people at the dawn of their recorded history (by the end of the 18th century) makes direct contacts unlikely, at least in recent times.⁵⁹

3.2.5. Ossetic and South Caucasian

The influence of Georgian and the other South Caucasian (Kartvelian) languages on the Ossetic vocabulary seems to have been less marked than that of the languages of the North Caucasus. This is, however, only true with some reservation as regards the language of the South Ossetes of Georgia.

⁵⁸ As to the early history of Christianity among the Alans and their Christian terminology cf. 3.2.5.5. below and Thordarson: 2000.

⁵⁹ Concerning the habitats of the Ubykhs in the Northwest Caucasus by the time of their emigration, I refer to Vogt 1988.

The oldest layers of the South Ossetic settlements date back to late mediaeval (post-Mongolian) times (cp. Axvlediani 1960: 6; Bekoev 1985: 41 ff.; Očerki Jug-Osetinskoi avtonomnoi oblasti I, 1985: 83 ff.). Their language is a local variant, or, rather, a bunch of local variants, of the Iron dialect. In all essentials, in its vocabulary as well as in its grammatical and phonological structure, it agrees with Iron as it is spoken in the North Caucasus, sharing most of the features which separate it from Digor. In part, however, South Ossetic represents a somewhat more archaic stage of development than its sister idioms of North Iron.

3.2.5.1. The palatal (palato-alveolar) pronunciation of the old (inherited) affricates, which was a characteristic feature of the Žava idiom of South Ossetia at least until the middle of the 19th century (today the old affricates have become palatal sibilants), is possibly an archaism; in that case the dental pronunciation of the North must be regarded as an innovation. Cp. S.Oss. *čærin* (now *šærin*) “to live” = standard Iron *cærin*; *žurin* (now *žurin*) “to speak” = standard Iron *zurin*. Cp. Abaev 1949: 494 ff.; Axvlediani 1960: 48 ff.; Bekoev 1985: 174 ff.; Thordarson 1989a: 14 ff.).

The spirant pronunciation of ancient initial γ - (< *g-) was retained in the local idioms of South Ossetia until recent times, in contrast to North Iron where it had become an uvular stop (q -) in the earliest records (cf. 3.2.3.9. above).⁶⁰

The diphthongs *uæ*, *ui*, *ui*, *ua*, which in North Iron tend towards monophthongisation, are still retained as such in South Ossetic; cp. *uæniŋ* = *oniŋ* “steer”, *uidon* = *idon* “bridle”, *uarin* = *arin* “rain”, and also S.Oss. *-æuæ-* = N.Iron *-o-*: *ræuæd* = *rod* “calf” (Bekoev 1985: 218 ff.).

In South Ossetic the affricatisation of the velars (*g*, *k*, *k'*) preceding front vowels (*e*, *i*, *i* < *i*) is not consequently carried through in the genitive, inessive and comitative cases; cp. *lægi* “the man’s”, *lægiæ* “with the man”, etc. (Bekoev 1985: 221).

3.2.5.2. The majority of the place names of South Ossetia are Georgian (Cxovrebova 1979). At least some of them are only imperfectly adapted to the phonetic structure of Ossetic, e.g. *Cxinval*, the name of the capital, where the initial cluster *cx-* does not comply with the rules of Ossetic phonotactics.⁶¹

A place name like *Ruk'* < Georg. *Rok'a* (a group of villages at the upper reaches of the Great Liaxvi; cf. Cxovrebova 1979: 46 ff.) must have been adopted before the Iron narrowing of *o* to *u*, thus testifying to an early Ossetic settlement in the area.

Place names containing Ossetic lexical elements are also found:

Bæx-fændag, lit. “Horse Road”, a defile in the Žava district (Cxovrebova 1979: 140);

Sint badæn, lit. “Raven Seat”, Žava district (Cxovrebova 1979: 141);

Eloiti qæu, “Village of the *Eloitæ* (Georg. *Elošvili*) clan”, *Ruk'*;

Zuari bin, lit. “Below the sanctuary”, *Ruk'* (Cxovrebova 1979: 46).

In the Soviet period there seems to have been a certain tendency to replace Georgian names by Ossetic ones: *Dællag soc'i* = *Kvemo-soč'i* (“Lower *Soč'i*”,

⁶⁰ The “Verschärfung” of $\gamma > q$ in North Iron must date back at least to the 17th cent. In the vocabulary of Witsen (cf. the article at the end of this volume) the word for “hare” is spelled *tirrikos* = modern I. *tærqus* (D. also *tærqos*) < **dary-qos* “having long ears” (IES: III, 271). Klaproth (1814: 205) writes *ckuss* = *qus* “ear”. In Pallas’ vocabulary I (1786), p. 72 this word is spelled *kusъ* (cf. Bielmeier 1979 (1980): 84). Similarly, Gūldenstedt (1834), p. 233 writes *chus* (cf. Bielmeier: ib.).

⁶¹ Prince Vaxušti (18th cent.) spells the name *kcxinvali* (463), *kcxilvani*, *krcxilvani*, *krcxinvali* (Kartlis cxovreba, ed. Q’auxčivili, IV, 370 & passim, and in the index of names, p. 1083. Concerning other spellings cf. Cxovrebova 1979: 83 ff. – Is the simplification of the initial consonant cluster due to Ossetic influence?

Cxovrebova 1979: 164). At least some of these names may have been in use among the Ossetes before they were acknowledged in official usage.

3.2.5.3. Nouns denoting plants peculiar to the Transcaucasian flora are mostly of Georgian origin. As a rule they have been adapted to the sound pattern of Ossetic (Iron). Some of these plant names are found in South Ossetic exclusively; others are common Ossetic (Iron, in part also Digor) words. Plant names of Georgian derivation are frequently used in South Ossetia instead of corresponding North Ossetic (Iron) names:

S.Oss. *bza* (*biso*) “box tree” < Georg. *bza*: I. *česa* (< Kab.), D. *senseræ* (ultimately < Pers. *šimšār*, cf. Georg. dial. *šimširi*);

lobia “haricot” < Georg. *lobio*: I. *qædur*, D. *qædoræ*;

maqali “blackberry” < Georg. *maq`vali*: I. *zædæræg*, *zædir*, *zæzir*, D. *zæduræ* (IES: I, 396; cf. Svan. *ziti`ir*, *zet`ir* – a widespread migratory word);

uazi “vine” < Georg. *vazi*: I. *sænæfsiri bælas* (*k`utær*);

uardi “rose” < Georg. *vardi*: I. *rozæ* (< Russ. *pozä*); – note Oss. *u* [w] = Georg. *v*; an initial labio-dental *v*- is exceptional in Ossetic.

To some extent both a North Ossetic and a Georgian word may be in use as synonyms in the idiom of the South Ossetes.

3.2.5.4. O. Tedeeva (Tedeevi: 1983) has collected some 380 Ossetic words which she explains as borrowings from Georgian. In her etymologies she mostly follows Abaev (IES), but some she adds of her own. Not all her etymologies are unassailable, but in most cases they are clear. Some of her entries are migratory or common Caucasian words, so that the immediate source of the Ossetic word can hardly be decided with certainty.

3.2.5.4.1. Most of these words are nouns, names for agricultural products and implements, food or dishes, or relate in other ways to material culture. There are some 86 plant names and botanical terms in her list. The list contains only a couple of verbs, apart from those where a Georgian noun constitutes the first member of a compound verb:

I. *k`uirin*, D. *k`uærun* “to push, strike, chop off”: cf. Georg. *k`vra* “to strike” (Tedeevi 1983: 107; cf. Abaev IES: I, 654: “Probably this is a loan word from the Kartvel languages ...”);

I. *c`irin* (*c`irin*), D. *c`erun* (*c`irun*) “to suck”: cf. Georg. *c`urva*, Mgr. *c`ir-*, *c`ur-* “to empty, drain, press out” (Tedeevi 1983: 178; IES: I, 335; Klimov 1964: 246).

A considerable part of the words are found in South Ossetic only; not all are registered in the dictionaries. It is interesting to notice that Georg. *xeli* “hand” and *p`iri* “mouth” are used in (South?) Ossetic with an expressive connotation (cf. Thordarson 1984: 186 ff.).

3.2.5.4.2. The list contains some 20 words which seem to be used in Digor exclusively. Most of them are agricultural terms and the like. As there have been no direct contacts between the Digors and the Kartvelian peoples in recent times, we have every reason to believe that these borrowings are old; in some instances, however, the word may have passed out of use in Iron. There are a few social terms as well. An old word for “slave” is *gælæx*, (Tedeevi 1983: 54; IES: I, 512), cf. Georg. *glæxi* “farmer”, OGeorg. “beggar; poor, mean, humble”; cf. also *gælæxxa* “poor man”, Georg. *glaxa* “id.”.

3.2.5.4.3. Nouns ending in *-a*, *-æ*, which apparently corresponds to the Georgian diminutive suffix *-a*, are of dialectal origin. This suffix is particularly common to the dialects of the mountaineers of East Georgia (e.g. Pshavian, Mokhevan), where it frequently loses its diminutive (affective) force (cf. Šaniže 1973: 120 ff.; Vogt 1971: 228):

I. *celxa kænin* “to cut into pieces”: cf. Georg. *čelxi* “chaff, brain” (Tedeevi 1983: 169);

D. *satalæ* “Birkengertenunterlage unter dem Schober, zur Erleichterung seines Transports im Gebirge” (MF: II, 1041): cf. Georg. (Mokh.) *satari* “id.” (Tedeevi 1983: 131; IES: III, 39);

I. *sixirna*, D. *sixirna* “sieve”; the derivation from Georg. *cxrili* “id.” is uncertain (Tedeevi 1983: 139; IES: III, 216);

k’obola, *k’obala* “a stick with a knob” (also a proper name): cf. Georg. *k’o(m)bali* “a club” (Tedeevi 1983: 97 ff.; IES: I, 635);

S.Oss. *k’unela* “hawthorne (Crataegus)”: cf. Georg. *k’uneli* “id.” (Tedeevi 1983: 102);

D. *paxsa* “rake”, probably a contamination of Georg. *parcxi* “harrow” and *pocxi* “rake” (Tedeevi 1983: 125; IES: II, 238);

S.Oss. *žimžela* “bees’ wax”: cf. Georg. *dindgeli* “id.” (Tedeevi 1983: 67);

S.Oss. *arzac’ela* “wild artichoke”: cf. Georg. *aržak’eli* “id.”;

I. *k’æbæda* “twaddler, gossip”; talkative”: cf. Georg. *q’bedi* “id.”; – etc. (Tedeevi 1983: 91; IES: I, 620).

I. *žuar*, D. *ziuaræ* “cross; divinity; sanctuary” < Georg. *žvari* (O. Georg. *žuari*) “cross” may owe its *-æ* to an adaptation to the declensional pattern of Digor (or mediaeval Alanic?); cf. Tedeevi 1983: 72.

I. *kasutæ* “a spring feast” < Georg. *kvašveti*, the name of a sanctuary dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, may have been reinterpreted as an Ossetic plural form (Tedeevi 1983: 82).

3.2.5.5. Here is not the place to go into details about the Georgian share in the Christian vocabulary of the Ossetes. The earliest borrowings seem to date back to the Middle Ages, while others may be quite recent. At least in part the words have been borrowed from the dialects of the highlanders of East Georgia, a fact that is reflected in a number of cases by the semantic content of the words (cf. below).

The first attempts to convert the Alans to the Christian faith can be traced back to early Byzantine times. In the days of the first Lazic war (527 – 533) Greek missionaries were engaged in the conversion of the Abkhaz (Abasgi) and seem to have penetrated even farther into the North (Kartlis cxovreba, ed. Q’auxčišvili. t. I, 215: *apxazta mokceva*; Procopius, History of the wars, VIII, 3, 18 ff.; 4; cf. Allen 1932: 77 ff.). Procopius (o.c., II, 29, 15) mentions the Abasgi and the Alans as Christian peoples and friends of the Romans (i.e. the Greeks) from of old (Χριστιανοί τε καὶ Ρωμαίους φίλοι εκ παλαιού ὄντες). The effects of this early Christianisation of the Alans were hardly great. More endurable was the proselytizing work of the Greek missionaries in the 10th century, during the patriarchate of Nikolaos Mystikos (901 – 907, 912 – 925). For the following centuries, two Alanic bishoprics are mentioned in the Greek sources (cf. Dictionnaire d’histoire et géographie ecclésiastique, t. I (1912), col. 1334 ff.: Alania). The turmoils resulting from the Mongol invasions in the 13th century and the Turkish conquest of the Byzantine Empire undoubtedly meant a serious blow to Alanic Christianity. The Russian expansion in the 18th – 19th centuries was accompanied by the propagation of the Orthodox Church. In 1798 an Ossetic catechism was published in Moscow; as it seems, this was the first Ossetic book to appear in print. The following

decades brought Ivane Ialyuziže's translations of religious books into the idiom of the South Ossetes (Axvlediani 1960: 80 ff.; cf. Thordarson 1989: 457 ff.).

In actual fact, Christianity has never taken deep roots among the Ossetes nor their Alan ancestors. Christian ideas and practices have largely merged in ancestral paganism and become a part of the traditional culture of the people.

We have no safe knowledge of the Christian vocabulary of the mediaeval Alans. We do not know whether they created their own terminology at all – and, if they did, to which extent. According to William of Rubruk, who visited Alania about the middle of the 13th century on his way to Central Asia, the Alans were Orthodox Christians and used Greek letters and priests (Itinerarium, ch. XI,1). This seems to indicate that the Alans had adopted Greek as their liturgical language.

3.2.5.5.1. However, there is some evidence that the Alan priests or missionaries made use of native pagan terms to express Christian concepts, instead of borrowing Greek or Georgian words. Some of these have been treated by the present writer in a separate study (cp. Thordarson: 2000).

I. *siȳdæg*, D. *suȳdæg* (< **sukta-ka-*, cf. *suȳin* / *soȳun* “to burn” (tr., intr.), past participle *siȳd* / *suȳd*) “clean, pure, genuine, immaculate” is used in the sense of “holy”, corresponding with Greek ἅγιος, Georg. *c'minda*, OGeorg. *c'mida*: *siȳdæg ud* “The Holy Ghost”, *siȳdæg zæd* “a holy angel”, etc. In other Iranian languages we also find derivatives of the verbal root **suč-* “to burn” used figuratively in a moral, psychological or religious sense; cp.:

Sogd. B. *'ws ȳtp'zn* (*'wsȳtp'zn*) **ōsuȳde-pāzan* (a *karmadhāraya* compound: SCE, ed. MacKenzie, 6, 62, 404, cp. p. 48; VJ, ed. Benveniste, p. 7 (*'wsȳtp'zn*), p. 82 etc.; cf. also p. 106), or Sogd. M. *'wsȳtm'n'ky'* **ōsuȳdamānākȳā* “pure heart” (*karmadhāraya*; BBB, ed. Henning, 40; repr. Henning 1977: 454); Sogd. M. *'wsȳȳc* “pure”, from **awa-(or upa-?)suxta-*;

Bactr. *ωσoȳδoμαȳȳo* (< **upa-suxta-mānaka-*) “with a pure mind” (a *bahuvrīhi*; cp. Davary 1982: 254);

Khot. *vasva-* (< *vasuta-* < **ava-suxta-*) “pure”, e.g. *vasve ba'ysā dā* “the pure law of the Buddhas” (Jātakastava, ed. Dresden, p. 432, 18r1); cp. *vasūj-* “to purify” (< **ava-saučaya-*), *vasus-* “to become pure” (< **ava-sauk-*; Emmerick 1968: 121); e.g. *vasūjī kṣaittra tti ba'ysūñā* “may I purify these Buddha-fields” (Bhadracaryādeśanā, ed. Asmussen, 52v3, p. 27).

The original meaning of Oss. *siȳd* / *suȳd* would be “burnt” > “purified (by fire?)” > “morally or ritually pure”. In all probability the word was already used in Alanic in a religious sense before it was adopted as a Christian term. In choosing it the Alan missionaries may have been influenced by Georg. *c'mi(n)da* “pure, clear; holy”, which is attested in its religious meaning since the earliest Christian documents (*Mart'vilobay Šušānik isi*, ed. Abulaže 1983: II,12 (p. 5): *c'miday šušānik'* “Saint Šušānik”; V,24 (p. 16): *c'miday da net'ari šušānik'* “the saint and blessed Šušānik’”; etc.

3.2.5.5.2. I. *kuvīn*, D. *kovun* is used in the sense “to pray”, past participle *kuivd* / *kuvd* “prayer, ceremonial, ritual banquet”; for other derivatives cf. IES: I, 603. Benveniste (1959: 12 ff.) connects this word with OInd. *kubhanyú-*, an epitheton of the Maruts (RV 5.52.12, hapax legomenon), which he derives from a hypothetical root **kubh-* “célebrer un rite de communion”. If this holds good, we may assume an Aryan root **kubh-*, originally meaning “to shout, raise voice”, which in Aryan antiquity developed a religious connotation “to pray, perform a religious rite” (cf. Thordarson: 2000).

3.2.5.5.3. The third word which may be of interest in this connection is I. *argyauin*, D. *aryaum* “to celebrate the Mass, get baptised or married”; past participle *argyuid* / *aryud* “wedding ceremony, baptism, divine service”; *aryuan* / *aryauæn* “church”. Abaev (IES: I, 65) convincingly derived this verb from the Aryan root **gar-/gr-(ə)* (IE **g^her-*, *g^herǝ-*, cf. Pokorny 1959: 474; LIV 188 f.: **g^herH*), preceded by the preverb **ā-*: **ā-gr-(ə)aw-*. In Old Indic this root is found in a number of derivatives used in a religious sense: *grṇāti* / *grṇūtē* “invokes, praises” (cf. Mayrhofer, EWAI: I, 468 f.). The same root has been identified in three verbal forms in the Avesta, always in the sense of “to praise”, and also in the root noun *gar-* “praise, eulogy” (cf. Bartholomae 1904: 512, and, in particular, Kellens 1974: 21 ff.). A verb belonging to this root seems to be used in a religious sense in Sogdian (B.): *nyr’y* **ni-gr-āy-* “to praise” (SCE, ed. MacKenzie, 542, p. 61 f.); cf. also Chr. Sogd. *yr’ty*’ “praise” (Hansen 1955). Cf. also the Sarmatian proper name *Αργόδα*, *Αργότου* (both in the genitive; Abaev 1979: 279), and the Crimean place name *Ἀργώδα* mentioned by Ptolemaeus, Geogr., III, 6, 5 (“a holy, consecrated place?”).

If my reasoning is sound, Oss. *aryauin* (or its Alanic forerunner) was used in the sense of “to recite some kind of a solemn text at a sacrifice”; *aryauæn* was then the name of the place where the sacrifice took place.⁶²

3.2.5.6. Of course we expect to find Georgian influence in the Christian vocabulary of the Ossetes. The first attempts of any importance in creating a literary Ossetic language were made in South Ossetia, at the beginning of the 19th century, by Ivane Ialʒuziʒe, who translated a few liturgical books from Georgian into his local idiom; a modern edition of his works, which was promised by the Georgian Academy of Sciences more than 30 years ago, would undoubtedly shed light on the matter being under discussion.⁶³ The Georgian expansion into the North Caucasus in the Middle Ages was most likely accompanied by a propagation of Christianity. In the Ossetic folklore Queen Tamar (Oss. *Tamar-nepe*, *-dedopal*, *-dudupal* etc.), herself an Ossete on the mother’s side and married to an Ossetic chieftain, is credited with church building activities (cf., e.g., Iron adæmon aryæuttæ, III (1962): 27 ff.; cf. also Istorija Severo-Osetinskoj ASSR, I (1959): 75 ff.), and this may well be based on historical facts.⁶⁴

3.2.5.6.1. I. *zuar*, D. *ziuaræ* “cross, sanctuary, divinity” (also “smallpox”) is probably an old (mediaeval) adaptation of Georg. *žvari* (OGeorg. *žuar-i*) “cross” (originally “stake, pale”; cf. Klimov 1964: 269). In the dialects of the Khevsurs, the Pshavs and the Tush, *žvari* is used in a similar way denoting both a divinity and the sanctuary where it is worshipped (Kartuli dialekt’ologija I (1961): 559 (Khevsurian), 588 (Tushian); KEGL: VIII, 1580). The early kings, in their campaigns against paganism, set up crosses in holy places instead of the idols that had been destroyed. The word, as well as its meaning, has evidently been borrowed by the Ossetes from the neighbouring (and culturally closely related) Georgian-speaking highlanders of Eastern Georgia.

Another Georgian word which has evidently entered the Ossetic language from some of the idioms of the Georgian highlanders, is *dek’anoz* “priest, minister of religious sacrifices attached to a *zuar*”. In literary Georgian *dek’anozi* denotes a “highpriest”, “Kirchen- und Chorleiter in einem Kloster, auch Erzpriester” (Tarchnišvili

⁶² For details I refer to the IES (s.v.) and Thordarson: 2000.

⁶³ Regarding the literary activities of Ialʒuziʒe, in general I refer to Axvlediani 1960: 80 ff.

⁶⁴ On the church building activities of Queen Tamar cf. Charachidze (1968: 498).

1955: 158).⁶⁵ Among the highlanders (in Xevi, Tušeti) this word is used in the sense “priest, officiating at the sanctuary of a *xat'i* (pagan divinity)”, which is synonymous with the term *xewis-beri*, *xuc(es)i* used in some of the highlanders’ dialects (in Pšavi, Mtiuleti, Xevsureti). Originally *dek'anozi* was probably used of a sacrificial coadjutor, an assistant priest, but it replaced *xewis-beri*, *xuc(es)i* in some regions (Charachidze 1968: 232 ff.). The Iron vocalism of the Ossetic word indicates a recent borrowing (later than the Iron narrowing of *e* to *i* and *o* to *u*). This would be in agreement with the late semantic development of *dek'anozi* in the highlanders’ dialects where it is found.

3.2.5.6.2. Some of the Ossetic *zuærtæ* have names of Georgian origin:

Mikalgaburtæ / *Mikalgabortæ*, a kind of a twin divinity, Michael and Gabriel, cf. Georg. *mikel-gabrieli* (KEGL: V, 472);

Taranželos “the Archangels“, cf. Georg. *mtavarangelozi* “id.” (KEGL: V, 247);

Saniba < Georg. *sameba* “triad, the Trinity“ (Khev. *saneba*; *sami* “three”) is the name of a village in North Ossetia (Tagaur Ravine) and a feast celebrated about Whitsun;

I. *Ič'ina* (*Ič'na*), D. *Ik'ina* is the name of a divinity and its feast celebrated in September, when the cattle were driven from the summer pastures to the villages. In popular Georgian *enk'enis tve* is a name of the month of September;⁶⁶

I. *Žiorguba*, D. *Geuærgoba* < Georg. *giorgoba* is St. George’s day, celebrated in November;

I. *Alardi*, D. *Alaurdi* is the name of a divinity whose feast among the Ossetes of the Darial Ravine and their Georgian-speaking neighbours coincides with that of St. John the Baptist. His worship is connected with purificatory rites against epidemics, especially smallpox. According to von Stackelberg (apud Abaev, IES: I, 43) he owes his name to *Alaverdi*, a locality in *K'axeti* with a famous sanctuary dedicated to St. John (but where the consecration feast took place on the 27th of September).

I. *Atinæg* is the name of a feast which is celebrated at the beginning of the hay-mowing season (in July) by the Ossetes as well as the Georgian highlanders. *atengenoba* is an ancient Georgian summer feast celebrated in honour of Athenogenes (Atenagena) the Martyr, bishop of Sebaste (17th of July; 25th of July among the Georgian highlanders; cf. Kartuli dialekt'ologija, I (1961): 560; (cf. also KEGL: I, 189; Charachidze 1968: 469 & passim; Tarchnišvili 1955: 471);

Kasutæ, *kasuti sabat*, the name of a vernal festival, is according to Abaev (IES: I, 573) derived from Georg. *kvašveti* [sic], the name of an ancient Georgian sanctuary (cp. 3.2.5.4.3. above);

Amistol, a Digor name of the summer months (June-July), is explained by Abaev (IES: I, 51) as a distortion of Greek ἀπόστολοι, i.e. “the month of the apostles” (the day of Peter and Paul falls on the 29th of June). No Georgian word seems to exist which might have been the link between Greek and Ossetic here; cf. Georg. *mocikuli* “apostle” but Oss. *minævar* (< Iran.; “id.”). It is tempting to explain the Ossetic word as a direct borrowing, dating back to the times of Byzantine missionaries; or was it transmitted through Slavonic as an intermediary (O.Slav. *apostoli*, pl.)?

3.2.5.6.3. Among the Ossetic words of Georgian origin that are related to Christian concepts, the following can be mentioned:

⁶⁵ *dek'anozi*: “1.: ek'1. *krist'ianuli ek'lesii uprosi myvdeli*. 2.: ist' *ek'lesii mtavari, myvdelta da mgalobelta uprosi*. 3.: k'utx. (mt.) v. etn.: *xat'is msaxuri, romelic saxat'o rit'uals (drošebisa da xat'ebis gamosvenebas, dalocvas, msxerp'lis šec'irvis c'esebs) asrulebda da xat'is konebas ganagebda (dek'anozs vitomda tvit xat'i irčevda)*”; KEGL: III, 1134-5.

⁶⁶ From G. ἐγκαίνια “renewal”, “consecration” > church holiday [S.F.].

Čiristi / Kiriste “Christ”, Georg. *krist’ e* (cf. also IES: I, 613);
alč'er / alker (aker) “archbishop”, Georg. *arkieli*;
barišč'i (barasč'i) / baras'k'æ “mourning, fast(ing)”, Georg. *p'arask'evi* “Friday”
 (IES: I, 238: < Greek *παρασκευή*);

marxo / marxua (marxua) “fast, the Lent”, Georg. *marxva* (IES: II, 74);
molozan (molazan, molozan) “nun, monk”, Georg. *molozani* < *monazoni*; cf. IES:
 II, 128);

k'uri / k'uerae “week”, Georg. *k'vira* “week, Sunday” (but note D. *avdisær*
 “Monday” vs. I. *k'uirisær*, which possibly indicates *avd* “seven” as an ancient word for
 “week” (IES: I, 652);

sabat “Saturday”, Georg. *šabati*; occurs in many languages of the Caucasus, cp.
 Armenian *šabat*; Greek *σάββατον* < Old Hebrew *šabbat*; cf. IES: III, 6.

I. *kuazæn*, D. *komuazæn*, *kouuazæn* “Easter”, also “(Virgin Mary’s) Assumption“,
 lit. “(time for) releasing the mouth (after Lent)” is to all appearances a loan translation
 of Georg. *p'iris axsna* “to start eating meat after Lent” (lit. “to open, release the mouth”
 (vs. Georg. *aydgoma* “Easter”); cf. IES: I, 604.

I. *saužin*, D. *saugin*, the common word for “priest”, is possibly a calque of Georg.
šavosani “clad in black”, in literary Georgian used in the sense of “in mourning”.
 Čubinov (1887: 823) renders Georg. *monazoni* by *beri šavosani*, lit. “monk clad in
 black”. This meaning of the word is not given in KEGL (cf. vol. VII, 614). – Cp. also
 IES: III, 45.

Last but not least the word for the monotheistic concept of “God”, I. *xučau*, D.
xucau, deserves special mention. Abaev (IES: IV, 255) connects this word with Georg.
xucesi “old man, priest”, which is used among the East Georgian highlanders in the
 meaning of “a priest of a pagan *xat'i* “; in its primary form it consists of *xuc-i* plus the
 intensive suffix *-es-* (cf. *xuc-oba* “priesthood”, *xuc-uri* “ecclesiastical script”; –
 regarding the word formation I refer to Dondua 1938: 29 ff. = 1967: 222 ff.). If this
 etymology is correct, we must presume an original meaning “Lord, Dominus“. For
 phonetic reasons a connection with NPers. *xudā* “god, master (Phl. *xwadāy* etc.) is
 unlikely. The *-au* of the final syllable is probably due to the analogy of *xicau / xecau*
 “master, owner, chief”, with *-au* < Iran. **-āwa-* (cf. IES: IV, 197).

In general it seems likely that Georgian ecclesiastical words and phrases have been
 more largely used among the Christian population of Ossetia, particularly the South
 Ossetians, than appears from the lexica. As to the semantic and etymological details, as
 well as the Greek background of the words and their occurrence in other languages of
 the Caucasus, I refer to Abaev’s IES, s. vv.

3.2.5.7. The majority of the Iranian loanwords in Georgian and the other Kartvelian
 languages were not borrowed from the West Iranian languages of Azerbaijan and Iran
 proper. In part, but probably not exclusively, they were imported through the medium
 of Armenian.⁶⁷ Ossetic loanwords are comparatively few and limited to dialectal and
 marginal vocabulary – terms relating to agricultural tools and products, cattle breeding
 and the like. This applies to the greater part of the Georgian words listed by
 Andronik’ašvili (1966: 75 ff.; 549 ff.) as borrowings from Scythian-Alanic-Ossetic.
 Unfortunately, the authoress has been rather large in attributing Ossetic etymologies to
 Georgian words, and quite a number of them do not hold good; some are clearly based
 on superficial phonetic similarities only (cf. Šanize’s review of 1968). Many of the
 examples given by Andronik’ašvili are derived from Common Kartvelian roots. In this
 case the borrowings would be very old, dating back to Indo-European times.

⁶⁷ Regarding the question of the Iranian loanwords of Georgian cf. Gippert 1993, with new material.

There is, for instance, no reason to connect Georg. *den* / *din*- “to flow, stream” (*dis* 3rd sg. pres., *mdinare* “river”; cf. Klimov 1964:74) with Iranian **dānu*- “water, river”, Oss. *don* (Andronik’āšvili 1966: 85).

Georg. *vs*- “to fill” (*avsebs* “fills”, etc.) belongs to a Common Kartvelian root (Klimov 1964: 86); a connection with Oss. *æfsadin* / *æfsadun* “to satiate”, *æfsis* / *æfses* “satiety” (<**spāy*- / *spāta*-, cf. IES: I, 479 ff.; 484) is most unlikely.

The same applies to Georg. *gz(n)*- “to kindle, set fire to” (*agznebs* “lights, sets fire to”, etc.; Klimov 1964: 62; a common Georgian Zan root), which Andronik’āšvili (1966: 83; cf. also Axvlediani 1960: 209) connects with a hypothetical Ossetic root **guz*-, supposed to be present in *ært-guiz*- / *ært-guz* “stoker”, I. *fænik-guiz* “idler” (from *art* “fire”, *fænik* “ashes”; cf. IES: I, 180 ff.; 449).

Nor seems there to be any reason to derive Georg. *verzi* “ram” and its Mingrelian cognate *erž*- from Oss. *uirs* / *urs* “stallion” (< **wršan*- “a male (animal)”, IES: IV 124 ff.), cf. Andronik’āšvili 1966: 86.

Georg. *zv*- “to give birth to” (of animals: *izveba*, *izvebis* “calves, kittens” etc.) derives from a Common Kartvelian root (Klimov 1964: 87), which makes a direct connection with Oss. *zaiin* / *zaiun* “to give birth to” unlikely (Andronik’āšvili 1966: 88 and Abaev, IES: IV, 284).

Georg. *tar*- / *ter*- (*trev*-, *tri*-) “to pull, drag” (*atrevs* “pulls” etc.) Andronik’āšvili wants to connect this with Oss. *tærin* / *tærun* “to drive away”. This etymology is accepted (with some hesitation) by Abaev (IES: III, 278 ff.), who adds Georg. *t’ar*- “to lead, carry” (*da-at’arebs* “will carry” etc.) as possibly belonging to this root. Georg. *tar*- etc. derives from a Common Kartvelian root **tr*- (Klimov 1964: 95). It is also highly improbable that a productive and semantically central root like Georg. *t’ar*- should have been borrowed from Ossetic. And why should the Georgians render the aspirated *t* of Ossetic with their glottalic *t’*?

Georg. *q’ven*- / *q’vin*- (*q’uen*-, *q’uin*-) “to shave, shear, clean” (*daq’uena*, *-q’uina* etc.) is an ancient root (Abulaze 1973: 74: 74; 130; 469-70). As the Iron “Verschärfung“ *ɣ*- > *q*- is a recent development (Thordarson 1989: 464; Abaev 1949: 511; cf. 3.4.1. below), a derivation from Oss. *quin* / *ɣun* “hair, wool” (< **guna*-) can be ruled out (Andronik’āšvili 1966: 70; IES: II, 327).

Georg. *tiva* “hay” is common to Georgian and Zan (Mgr. *tip*- “hay”, Laz *tip*- “grass”; cf. Klimov 1964: 94) and thus hardly connected with Oss. *tau* / *tauce* “aftermath, aftergrass” (Andronik’āšvili 1966: 90).

Georg. *k’ma*- “(is) satisfied” (*k’mara* “it is enough”, Pshav. *k’maobs* “id.”, etc.) belongs to an ancient root (Abulaze 1973: 200). A connection with Os. *komin* / *komun* “to agree, give way to” (< **kām*- is improbable (Andronik’āšvili 1966: 93 ff.)).

Georg. *m-con-ari* “lazy, a good-for-nothing” is a participle formed from the root *con*- “to be lazy” (Abulaze 1973: 519) and unlikely to have anything to do with Oss. *æncoi* / *æncoinæ* (< **ham-čyāna*-) “rest, repose”, *æncaiin* / *æncaiun* (**ham-čyā*-) “to cease, rest” (cf. IES: I, 151; Benveniste 1959: 27 ff.), as suggested by Andronik’āšvili (1966: 100).

The same applies to Georg. *m-st’o(v)-ari*, *m-st’u-ari* “a spy”, a participle derived from the root *st’o*-, *st’u-r* “to look” (ancient verbal nouns *st’uanva*, *ganmst’uroba*; cf. Abulaze 1973: 403; 63-4). A connection with D. (*æ*)*stæfun* “to notice” (of uncertain origin), cf. IES: I, 190) seems unlikely (Andronik’āšvili 1966: 100).

3.2.5.7.1. Since Klapproth’s days it has been usual to compare Oss. *xid* / *xed* “bridge” and Georg. *xidi* “id.”. According to Klapproth (1814: 210), Georgian is the source of the Ossetic word. But, as pointed out by Hübschmann (1887: 69), this is inconsistent with the Digor form. The Iranian origin of *xid* / *xed* is unquestionable; cf. Av. *haētū*- “dike,

dam”, OInd. *sétu-* “bond, fetter; bridge, dike” (Bartholomae 1904: 1728 ff.; Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 501; IES: IV, 199), derivatives of the I.E. root **seH₁-i*, **sH₁-ey-* “to bind,” (OInd. *syāti* “binds”; cf. Mayrhofer, ib.: III, 549; Lindeman 1968: 112). Modern scholars have explained the Georgian word as a loanword from Ossetic; cp., e.g., Bailey 1946: 31; Abaev 1949: 86; 336; repeated in IES: IV, 199; Andronik’ ašvili 1966: 128 ff.).

This can hardly be correct. The Old Georgian form is *qidi*, with an initial aspirated (non-glottalic) velar *q-*, still retained in the dialects of the highlanders of eastern Georgia. The word is attested in this form in the oldest Georgian texts; so, e.g., in the Vita of St. Šušanik’ (late 5th cent., oldest extant ms. from the 11th cent.): *da vitarca mič’ines qidsa mas cixisasa, hrkua p’it’iaxšman c’midasa šušanik’s* “when they reached the castle bridge, the Pitiakhsh said to St. Shushanik” (ch. IX, 20, ed. Abulaze 1938, p. 28; transl. by Lang 1956: 53).

The narrowing of ancient *e* to *i* is peculiar to Iron and comparatively late. If the Georgian word had derived from Ossetic (Alanic), the borrowing would have to have taken place at a time when the vowel still had its open pronunciation. It would also be difficult to understand why the Georgians should render the Ossetic velar spirant *x* by a velar stop and not by their own spirant *x*.

A more likely explanation was given by G. Mač’avariani (1965: 21), who derived Georg. *xidi*, *qidi*, Mgr.-Laz *xinži* “bridge”, Svan *qid* “present, gift, what is (to be) delivered” from the Old Georgian (Common Kartvelian) root **qed-*, **qid-*, **qd-* “to carry, go across” (cf. Klimov 1964: 263), cf. OGeorg. *qdoma* “to come, go” (with various preverbs); cf. e.g. *da arasada gardaqided mcnebata šenta* Lk. 15.29 (the Adiši ms., 9th cent., one of the three Šat’berdi Gospel mss. ed. by Šanize in 1945; the Žruč’i and the P’arxali mss. (10th cent.) read: *da arasada mcnebasa šensa gardavhqed*): “Καὶ οὐδέποτε ἐντολήν σου παρήλθον”; *vitar c’arqda šapati igi* Mk. 16.1 (the Adiši ms.; the Žruč’i and the P’arxali mss.: *da vitarca gardaqda šabati igi*) “Καὶ διαγενομένου τοῦ σαββάτου”; etc. (cf. also Abulaze 1973; 566).

The identification of Oss. *xid* and Georg. *xidi* is therefore based on the fortuitous phonetic likeness of the Iron the Modern Georgian forms, without regard to their history.

3.2.5.7.2. Georg. *mona* “(male, female) slave, servant” (Andronik’ ašvili 1966: 98 ff.) is an old word, well attested by the mediaeval documents; cf. e.g. *da hrkua boos monasa mas missa* (v. l. *da hrkua boosman q’rmasa missa*), Ruth 2.5 (ed. 1991: 206) “καὶ εἶπεν Βοος τῷ παιδαρίῳ αὐοῦ”; *da aydga k’aci igi da c’arvides igi, da coli igi misi da monay igi misi* (v. l. *da aydga k’aci c’arslvad, tvit da xarč’i misi da č’abuk’i misi*), Judges 19.9 (ed. 1991: 188) “καὶ ἀνέστη ὁ ἀνὴρ τοῦ ἀπελθεῖν αὐτὸς καὶ ἡ παλλακὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ τὸ παιδῆριον αὐτοῦ”; *c’arvida da tana-c’ariq vanna coli da švilni da mona-mqevalni misni* “he went out and brought with him his wife and children and his servants and retainers” (the Vita of St. Šušanik’, ch. XVI, 3, ed. Abulaze 1938, p. 40; transl. by Lang 1956: 55; cp. also ch. XVI, 20 and 45; XVI, 3; cf. Abulaze 1973: 271). Andronik’ ašvili (1966: 98 ff.) suggests a (hypothetical) Scytho-Alanic **man(u)-* “man” as the source of the Georgian word, cf. I. *moi*, D. *moine* “husband”, perhaps also the Sarmatian proper names Μανιαγος, Μανδασου (gen.; cf. Zgusta 1955: 114; 328; IES: II, 127 ff.). But as the narrowing of *an / ān > on* is a recent phenomenon in Ossetic (later than the 13th century, cf. Thordarson 1989: 460 and above 2.6.1.), this etymology seems unlikely.

3.2.5.7.3. For semantic reasons it is difficult to believe that either Georg. *kadagi* “preacher” or *kadeba* “to promise, threaten” (*kadili* “threat, bragging”, *kadiloba* “to

pride oneself”, *sikaduli* “pride”) are adaptations of Oss. *kad* / *kadæ* “glory, fame, extolled in song or epic poetry”, *kadæg* / *kadængæ* “praise, epic song, saga” (Andronik’ašvili 1966: 115 ff.; IES: I, 565 ff.). Oss. *kad*, *kadæg* are rather derivatives of the Indo-Iranian root **kay-*, **čay-*, *kāy-e-* (I.E. *k^oey-* etc.) “to observe (with reverence)” (Mayrhofer, EWAIA: I, 531, s.v. *CAY*), belonging to the stock of social and ideological terms inherited from (Indo-)Iranian antiquity; cf. Av. *nā xratu.kātō* “a man honoured for his wisdom” (Yt. 13.16); *āθrava dūrē.frakātō* “a priest honoured far off” (Yt. 16.17; cf. Benveniste, 1959: 48; for other translations I refer to Bartholomae 1904: 1904: 323 f.).

In Old Georgian the noun *kadagi* “preacher, herald” and the verb *kadageba* “to preach” are frequently used as equivalents of Greek κήρυξ, κηρύσσω; cf. e.g. *da kadagebda da it’q’oda* (the Adiši ms.; same reading in the ჯრუჭ’i and the P’arxali mss.) “καὶ ἐκήρυσσεν λέγων” (Mk. 1.7; ed. Šaniže 1945); *rametu šeinanes kadagebasas ionayssa* (the Adiši ms.; the ჯრუჭ’i and the P’arxali mss.: *rametu šeinanes kadagebasas mas ionayssa*) “ὅτι μενεοήσαν εἰς τὸ κήρυγμα Ἰωνᾶ” (Mt. 12.41; ed. Šaniže 1945); *kadagni* (pl.) “τῶν κηρύσσοντας” (Act. 15.21, ed. Garitte 1955; mss. from the 10th century). According to Sulxan Saba Orbeliani’s Georgian lexicon (ed. 1966: II, 209), *kadagi* has the meaning “(he) who proclaims knowledge aloud” (*mayla mʒaxebeli sc’avlisa*); *kadageba* is explained as “instruction in a loud voice” (*maylis qmit sc’avleba*). In the dialects of the highlanders of Eastern Georgia (the Pšavs, Xevsurs) *kadagi* is used of a shaman, an intermediary between the world of the gods and the world of men (Charachidze 1968: 113 ff.). Charachidze (p. 117) is no doubt right in regarding *kadagi* as an originally Christian term which has been introduced into the popular language in comparatively recent times.

The verbal root *kad-* (*kadeba*) “to promise” is found in the oldest Georgian literary documents: *amas ukadebda* “(he) made a pledge” (the Vita of St. Šušanik’, ch. I, 28, ed. Abulaže 1938, p. 4; also ch. X, 7, p. 31. – Cf. also Abulaže 1973: 450).

These facts do not lend support to the theory that the Georgian words derive from Alan. **kāta(ka)-* “praise, epic song”.

3.2.5.8. Among those Georgian words for which more or less plausible Ossetic etymologies have been suggested – or at least cannot be excluded, the following are worth noting:

3.2.5.8.1. Dialectal (Rač’an) *naxšoba* “talk, discussion” (*v-naxšob* “I speak”), *sanaxšo* “the place where the village gathered for debates”, have been explained as an adaptation of Oss. *nixas* / *nixas*, *nixas* “talk, debate; village assembly and the place where it gathered” (IES: II, 219 ff.; Andronik’ašvili 1966: 101; Žigjuri 1977: 118); cf. Sulxan Saba Orbeliani (ed. 1966: I, 583, 589) s.v. *naxši*: *lap’arak’i*, *mtis k’act ician*; *naxšoba sit’q’va šetxna*. Abaev derives Oss. *nixas* from a causative of the verbal root **kaš-* “to appear” (IE **k^oek(-s)-*, Pokorny 1959: 638), cf. Av. *kaš-* (**kas-š*) “to teach” (present *čāš-*), Phl. *čāšīdan*, *čāštan* “to teach”, Av. *čašan-* “teacher”, Av. *ā-kas-* “to catch sight of”, OInd. *kāšate* “is visible, appears”, etc. The same root occurs also in Oss. *kæsin* / *kæsun* “to look at, read” (IES: I, 589). Oss. *x* from intervocalic *k*, instead of *g*, has parallels; cf. I., D. *max* “we” < **ahmākam*, *s(i)max* / *sumax* “you” < **yušmākam* (or **xšmākam?*); cf. also *zæxx* / *zænxæ* < **zān-kā-* (or **zānā-kā-*), *xæssin* / *xærsun* “to carry” < **karš-*, Av. *karš-* “to pull”, NPers. *kašīdan* “id.” (as to the spirant in this word in other Iranian languages cf. Benveniste 1959: 46).

If we accept this etymology, the original meaning of *nixas* seems to have been “(place of) teaching, information”.

The Ossetic word has entered some other languages of the North Caucasus (cf. IES: II, 220); this may make it difficult to locate the exact source of the Georgian word.

3.2.5.8.2. Oss. *us* / (*u*)*osæ* (plural *ustitæ*, *ustæltæ* / (*u*)*ostitæ*, (*u*)*ostæltæ*) “wife” may be connected with Georg. *uso* “an esteemed peasant woman” (IES: IV, 20; Andronik’ašvili 1966: 110; Axvlediani 1960: 138); cf. Sulxan Saba Orbeliani (ed. 1966, II, 170) s.v. *uso*: *glext diact up’at’iosnesi*). However, the etymology of the Ossetic word is not clear. Abaev (IES: s.v.) suggests connections with Ved. *yóṣā*, *yoṣít-* “young woman, wife” (IE **yew-* “young”, Pokorny 1959: 510); in that case the final *-t-* of the plural stem of the Ossetic word (*ust-* / *uost-*) may indicate an original stem in *-it-*. Or is this word somehow connected with the IE root **wedh-* (2.) “to lead, marry” (Pokorny 1959: 1115)?

3.2.5.8.3. Georgian dialectal (Mokhevian, Mtiulan) *urvadi*, *urvati* “bride-money paid by the bridegroom for the bride, *kalym*“ has been explained as deriving from Oss. *iræd* / *æruæd* “id.”; cf. also Chech.-Ing. *urdu* “id.”. The Ossetic word has been connected with Av. *uruuata-* “accord”, “règle” (Kellens / Pirart 1988-91: II, 311), OInd. *vratá-* “promise, rule, religious duty” (Benveniste 1959: 35; IES: I, 546 ff.; Mayrhofer, KEWA: III, 278; Andronik’ašvili 1966: 110). The occurrence of the Georgian word in the neighbour dialects of Ossetic supports the derivation of the former word from the latter.

3.2.5.8.4. Georg. *kašagi* “a young slave” (Sulxan Saba Orbeliani, ed. 1966: II, 218): *mozrdili t’q’ve*, *da bayana-ččvili t’q’ve*) seems to be identical with Oss. *kæsæg* “the Kabardians, Kabarda“ (*kæsgon* “(a) Kabardian”), an ancient name of the Cherkas tribes. Independently of Georgian, Svan *kašag* is used as the name of the North Caucasian plains. For the use of an ethnic name in the sense of “slave” cf. Oss. *guirziag* / *gurziag* “a Georgian, a slave” (*guirzi* / *gurzi* < “the Georgians” < Turk., NPers. *gurži* “id.”). Cf. Andronik’ašvili 1966: 118; IES: I, 588.

3.2.5.8.5. It is worth notice that at least three Georgian words denoting “beer“ are of Ossetic origin or have been transmitted from the North through Ossetic.

ludi, the common Georgian word for “beer” (Rač’an, Tush. *aludi*) is obviously cognate with the widespread group of North European migratory words for “beer”, all ultimately deriving from **alud/t-*: Finnish *olut*, Nordic *öl*, etc. (IES: I, 129). Oss. *æluton* / *æluton*, *ilæton* is used of a fabulous drink or food which is supposed to allay hunger for ever, but legends and old folkloristic texts indicate that the word was formerly the name of a special kind of beer (IAS 1961: II, 644; IES: s.v.). Αλουθα(γ)ος, a Sarmatian proper name (Olbia), may belong to this (Zgusta 1955: 186). The occurrence of (*a*)*ludi* in proper names among the highlanders of eastern Georgia (e.g. *Aluda*, *Važa Pšavela*, cf. Andronik’ašvili 1966: 96) may of course be due to an independent mode of naming.

Oss. *rong* (I., D.) is used of an “intoxicating beverage made from honey” (IES: II, 421); the word has disappeared from daily use but occurs in the epic tradition. According to Abaev (IES: s.v.) it derives from OIran. **frān(a)ka-* (or perhaps **frānakā-*, cf. Thordarson 1986: 505), an *-aka-* derivative of Aryan **prāná-* “breath”, cf. OInd. *prāná-* “spirit, the personified breath of life, the base of all existence” (cp. Mayrhofer, KEWA: II, 376, 282). The semantic development from “breath, spirit” to “intoxicating beverage” entails no difficulties. The Ossetic word has been adopted by the Kartvelian mountaineers (Svan *rang*, Mgr. *rangi*, dialectal Georg. (Rač’an) *rangi*: *taplisagan damzadebeli sasmeli*, *taplis yvino* (“a drink prepared from honey, mead”:

KEGL: VI, col. 364; Andronik'ašvili 1966: 105). The adoption must have been earlier than the Ossetic development of *ān* > *on*, but later than the syncope of pretonic *-a-* in the oxytone suffix **-akā-*, if my derivation of the Ossetic word from *frānakā-* is correct.⁶⁸

Georg. *buraxi* “a fermented beverage; a drink made of barley, millet and other ingredients” (*ker-pet'vta da sxvatagan sasmelni rame*, Sulxan Saba Orbeliani, ed. 1966: I, 119, 125) can hardly be separated from Oss. (I.) *biræy* “a kind of small beer, made of millet, bouza”. The Ossetic word seems to be an early adoption of Slavonic (Russ., Ukr., Byelo-Russ.) *braga* “thin beer”, probably a migratory word (ultimately of Celtic origin, cf. M.Ir. *braich, mraich* “malt”, a derivative of IE **merk-* etc.- “to rot”, Pokorny 1959: 739? – Vasmer: I, 116).

3.2.5.8.6. Georg. *doyi* “horse race”, ultimately of Turkic origin, but transmitted through Ossetic (*duy / duγ*), has been treated above (cf. 3.2.3.4.).

The Georgian dialectal (Mokhebian, Mtiulian) term *čonga* (Mtiul. also *čogna*) “beim Spinnen um den Arm gewundene zu spinnende Wolle” (Tschenkéli: III, 1943) has been connected with Oss. *cong* (I., D.) “arm” (< **čanga-*; Andronik'ašvili 1966: 121; IES: I, 313 ff., where the Georgian word is not mentioned). If this is correct, the borrowing must be later than the Ossetic development *an* > *on*. The palatal affricate of the Georgian word is in agreement with the old South Ossetic pronunciation of the ancient Iranian affricates (in modern South Ossetic they have become palatal sibilants; Thordarson 1989a). But as South Ossetic may have retained a pronunciation that was formerly widespread in the North, this is not conclusive.

3.2.5.8.7. Less certain is Georg. *ormo* “pit, hole”, which has been explained as an adaptation of Oss. *uærm / orm, uærmæ* < **warmā-*, a derivative of an IE root **wer-* “to cover, obstruct, cp. Phl. *warm* “pool, reservoir” (Pers. *barm*), Bal. *gwarm* “pool” (Andronik'ašvili 1966: 102; IES: IV, 95; Bailey 1946: 28 f. and 1981, 250 f.). According to Abulaze (1973: 334), Georg. *ormo* occurs in the Ošk'i Bible (10th cent., Tarchnišvili 1955: 321 ff.) in Jeremiah 38.6 (45.6), whereas the Bakar edition (Moscow 1743) has *μγνιμε* “cave” (Greek, *λάκκος* LXX). The Iron monophthongisation *uæ-* > *o-* is probably a recent development.

3.2.5.8.8. The derivation of Georgian dialectal (Mokhebian) *čapxat'i* “a kind of sandals”, *čapxat'a* (Mtiulian) “a big leather hat” from Oss. (I., D.) *caḡxad* “horseshoe” (< **caḡ-fad*, lit. “ring-foot” = “foot-ring”, an inverted *tatpuruša*; IES: I, 294 ff.; Andronik'ašvili 1966: 120) carries conviction, although the Mtiulian word is somewhat puzzling (a humorous designation? – or a variant of *čapxut'i* “helmet”?).

3.2.5.8.9. Georg. *xabizgina, xabizgina* “a kind of cheese pie, *xac'ap'uri*“, Sulxan Saba Orbeliani (ed. 1966: II, 410) s.v. *xabizgini: xavic'ivit rayc*, cannot be separated from Oss. (I.) *xæbizžin* “cheese pie, *xac'ap'uri*“ (Andronik'ašvili 1966: 128; IES: IV, 149; KEGL: VIII, 1310, where the Ossetic word is mentioned; Kartuli dialekt'ologia 1961: 565 (Mox.: *xac'ap'uri*).

Oss. *-žin / -gin* is a productive suffix forming adjectives of quality and possession (< **ka-ina-*, cf. Phl. *-gēn*, NPers. *-gīn*, Sogd. *-kyn* < **kēn*). Unfortunately, no Ossetic noun **xabiz* has been identified; an adaptation of Georg. *xavic'i* “flour fried in butter” (cf. Sulxan Saba Orbeliani, l. c.) seems likely.

⁶⁸ For the most recent remarks on this subject cf. J. Gippert, *Narcotica Nartica* II; in: B. Hoffmann e.a. (Hgg.): *Iran und iranisch geprägte Kulturen: Studien zu Ehren von B.G. Fragner überreicht an seinem 65. Geburtstag* (Beitr. z. Iranistik 27), Wiesbaden 2007 [S.F.].

3.2.5.8.10. Andronik'ašvili (1966: 111) suggests Oss. *fætæn* “broad” (< **paðana-*, cf. Av. *paðana-* “broad, wide” etc.) as the source of Georg. *pateni* “broad, wide” (? – Sulxan Saba Orbeliani, ed. 1966: II, 180 s.v. *pateni*: *partosavit*). The word is not found in the KEGL, nor is this etymology mentioned in IES: I, 464 ff.

3.2.5.8.11. Various scholars have suggested Oss. *kæsag* / *kæsalgæ* (with an intrusive *l*) “fish” as the source of Georg. *kašaq*’i “herring” (Sköld 1925: 27 ff.; Bailey 1946: 23 and 1981: 245; IES: I, 568; Andronik'ašvili 1966: 117). The Ossetic word may be connected with Wapetsi *kəžə* “fish” (< **kašā-*, with *š* < *k*'s), and thus be of Iranian origin (Morgenstierne 1930: 168; reprint in Morgenstierne 1973: 199). Regarding the occurrence of this word in the Finno-Ugrian languages cf. Sköld, o.c.; Joki 1973: 270).

3.2.5.8.12. Georg. *arni* “wild sheep” (Sulxan Saba Orbeliani, ed. 1966: I, 63, 69: *gareuli cxovari*) is derived by Andronik'ašvili (1966: 78) from Old Oss. **arna-*, cf. Av. *auruna-* “wild”, Oss. *ærnaæg* “untilled, wild (of animals, plants), common pasture” (IES: I, 179). The Georgian word occurs in several mediaeval texts such as the Visramiani (p. 155, ed. Gvaxaria / Todua 1962), the translation of the Hexaëmeron (*ekvsta dyetatvis*) of Basil the Great, and De opificio hominis (*k'acisa šesakmisatvis*) of Gregor of Nyssa (Abulaze 1973: 10; Tarchnišvili 1955: 164; 360 ff.). If this derivation is correct, the word must have been borrowed at an early date from a source where the ancient form **arna-* was still in use.

3.2.5.8.13. Sulxan Saba Orbeliani (ed. 1966: I, 77, 83) notes *ayralebis kva* with the following explanation: *zoc'i, amart'a, broli, lažv(a)rdi, karva da mistanani kvebi* (“coral, jasper, crystal, lapis-lazuli, amber and similar stones”). It is tempting to connect this word with Oss. *ærjæu* “mother-of-pearl, nacre”, as is done by Andronik'ašvili (1966: 78). But as the Ossetic word has no clear Iranian etymology, the direction of the borrowing cannot be settled. The Georgian word, which seems to be a plural form, occurs in no other source than Sulxan Saba's dictionary, as far as I can see.

3.2.5.8.14. Žiziguri (1977: 117 ff.) deals shortly with some ten Georgian dialectal words which he presumes to be of Ossetic origin. The majority of these words are names of farm tools and agricultural and culinary products; in part they are migratory words which may have been transmitted to the dialects of the Georgian highlanders by their Ossetic neighbours. Most of the words are found in other languages of the Caucasus. Accordingly, the way of the borrowing is not always clear. In the case of Georg. *mužira* (Rachan), *mužuro* (Lechkhumian), Svan *mužira*, Oss. *mižira* / *muzura* “mountain stock, a wooden stock with an iron point”, Oss. also “spear, bayonet” (cf. MF: II, 830; IES: II, 137) we have to do with an Arabic-Persian-Turkic migratory word found in various languages in the North Caucasus.

3.2.5.8.15. Khevsurian *apšina* is a *man's* name (cf. Važa Pšavela's poem *Gogotur da Apšina*). A borrowing of Oss. *æfsin* / *æfsinæ* “hostess, housewife, lady, mother-in-law” (< **abi-šaiθni-*, a term of respect, originally “resident”, from **abi-šay-*; cf. Benveniste 1959: 19 ff.) is therefore unlikely. A more convincing explanation of the Khevsurian name was given by Šanize (1968, in his review of Andronik'ašvili 1966), who suggests a derivation from Pers. *Afšin*, a well attested man's name (Justi 1895: 252 ff.; Av. *Pisina-*). If the Ossetic origin of the Khevsurian name is acceptable, it would reflect an ancient honorific title, “lord”, or the like (cf. Žiziguri 1977: 121; Andronik'ašvili 1966: 140; IES: I, 110).

3.2.5.9. Today the Ossetic-speaking areas are not contiguous with the areas of the Svans and the Mingrelians. Lexical items common to Ossetic and either one of these two Kartvelian languages date back to ancient (mediaeval) contacts or were transmitted by some third language.

Abaev (1949: 323 ff.; cf. also IES, s.vv.) lists a handful of Ossetic words which he (in part tentatively) explains as “Mingrelisms”. Most of these words are found in other languages of the Caucasus, a fact which may cause difficulties in determining the immediate source of the words or the direction of the borrowing. In some instances the Mingrelian word suggested by Abaev is hypothetical.

3.2.5.9.1. I. *dur*, D. *dor* “stone” is explained by Abaev as deriving from Mingrelian (Zan) **t'or-*, corresponding with Georg. *t'ali* “flint”. The word is evidently old in Ossetic, as it occurs in a number of place names in the former Ossetic-speaking areas of the Northwest Caucasus (examples in IES: I, 376).

3.2.5.9.2. I. *sič'i*, D. *sik'e*, *æsk'e* (with svarabhakti vowels) “chamois” is connected by Abaev (IES: III, 192 ff.) with Mgr. *sk(w)eri* “id.” (= Georg. *šveli* “roe”), with a secondary suffix *-er/el-*, cf. also Svan *jersk'än* “roe” (Kipšidze 1914: 322; Gudjedjani / Palmaitis 1985: 238; Čikobava 1938: 91). Ultimately the Kartvelian word may be cognate with Circ.-Kab. *шчІә šč'ä / уклә šk'ä* etc. “calf” (a migratory word?); cp. Šagirov 1977: II, 140, who, however, mentions neither the Kartvelian nor the Ossetic words.

3.2.5.9.3. D. *k'ela* “bench, seat” is probably an adaptation of Mgr. *k'vela* “a rustic bench” (Kipšidze 1914: 255), as suggested by Abaev (IES: I, 632); cf. also Laz *k'uli* “bench, chair” (Marr 1910: 159), Svan *k'vil* “log, block” (Gudjedjani / Palmaitis 1985: 130).

3.2.5.9.4. I. *c'upp* “top, summit”, D. *c'opp* “flock, tuft of wool” is connected by Abaev (IES: I, 337 ff.) with Mgr. *č'obi*, *c'ab(r)i* “eyebrow” (Kipšidze 1914: 377); but cf. also Georg. *c'op* “top, summit; conical” (sound symbolism: *c'/č'-p/p'/b?*).

3.2.5.9.5. It is tempting to derive Oss. (I., D.) *cæxær* “fire, glowing ember” from a Kartvelian word belonging to the root **c₁xē-* “hot, heat” (Klimov 1964: 231); cf. Georg. *cx-eli*, *cx-ari* “hot”, *cx-ar-obs* “is irascible”, “flies into passion”, Laz *čēcxuri* “heat, fever” (Marr 1910: 210), Mgr. *čxe*, *čxana* “heat” (Kipšidze 1914: 367). Abaev (IES: I, 308) posits Mgr. **čxar-* with the regular development of *a* < Proto-Kartvelian *e*, as the source of the Ossetic word. But cf. also Yidgha *cərox* “spark”, (common Hindukush word; Morgenstierne 1938: 200) and Shughni *cirax* “sunrise” (Morgenstierne 1974: 24); cf. Paxalina 1983: 104. – IE **ker(ə)-* “to burn, glow” (Pokorny 1959: 571), with reduplication: Aryan **čak/xara-*?

3.2.5.9.6. Abaev explains I. *cæžinž*, D. *cæginžæ* “column, post, pillar” (IES: I, 297 ff.) as a “Mingrelism”, positing a proto-Mingrelian form **čxi(n)ži*; cf. Georg. *čxiri* “stock, knitting needle”. A corresponding word is found in Abkhaz *čxənž* “stick for hanging a kettle”, Balk. *čiginži* “post, pillar”. Non liquet.

3.2.5.9.7. I. *c'ænud*, D. *c'ænodæ* “sedge, carex” is derived by Abaev (IES: I, 332) from a hypothetical proto-Mingrelian form **č'(i)noži*, **č'inodi*, cf. Georg. *c'nori* “willow, osier”.

3.2.5.9.8. It may be tempting to connect I. *ænzalm*, D. *ænzalæ* “beam, perch” with Mgr. *ža-* “tree” (plur. *žalepi*, Kipšidze 1914: 411; IES: I, 158), cf. Georg. *zeli* “tree, beam”. But the initial *æn-* of the Ossetic word makes difficulties, and so does the final *-m* of the Iron form.

3.2.5.9.9. For I. *cænd*, D. *cændæ* “a heap of stones” cf. Mgr. *c'wanž-*, *c'wand-* “top, point” (Kipšidze 1914: 378), Georg. *c'veri-* “top, point, beard” (Klimov 1964: 242; IES: I, 300).

3.2.5.9.10. I. *c'irin*, *c'irin*, D. *c'erun* “to suck” is to all appearances an adaptation of Mgr. *c'ir-* “to filter, squeeze out”, rather than Georg. *c'urva* “to press” (Kipšidze 1914: 379; Klimov 1964: 246; IES: I, 335).

In modern Mingrelian *alani* is used of the Karachays, but it is also found in the sense “a valiant, brave (man)”. *Alanuroba-malanuroba* is the name of a game or contest between two groups of young men which takes place on the 20th – 21st of August, in the presence of two old men who represent the kings of Imereti and Mingrelia (Samegrelo); the victorious party are those who succeed in seizing a banner.

3.2.5.10. Lexical affinities between Ossetic and Svan are dealt with by Abaev (1949: 291 ff.; materials collected during an expedition in 1944). Not all of his comparisons are repeated in the IES. Andronik ašvili (1966: 54 ff.) mentions some few Svan words which she presumes to be of Ossetic origin. In most instances these affinities consist of common Caucasian words, which makes the immediate source or the direction of borrowing difficult to determine.

For the following Svan words an Ossetic source has been suggested with some degree of certainty. Not all of the Svan words are registered in the dictionaries.

3.2.5.10.1. Svan *čirt* “pile of stones” (Gudjedjani / Palmaitis 1985 – hereafter G/P: 275), cf. Oss. *cirt* / *cirt* (IES: I, 325 f.), Alanic (Zelenčuk inscription; cp. Zgusta 1987 and chapter VI of the present book) *τζηρθε* “tomb, monument” (< Olran. **čivtra-*, Av. *čivtra-* “visible, evident, manifestation”). The Svan word seems to have no religious connotation.

3.2.5.10.2. Svan *woraš* (noted by Wardrop 1911: 595 as the equivalent of English “beer”), *waräš*, cf. Oss. (D.) *uæras* “small beer” (Abkhaz *a-waraš* “beer”). The word may be of Uralic origin (Komi-Zyryan *yröš* “kvass”: Joki 1973: 213 f.). If this is correct, Ossetic is likely to be the connecting link.

Regarding Svan *räng* “strong mead” (G/P: 255) from Oss. *rong* (**rang-*) cf. 3.2.5.8.5. above (Rachan *rangi*).

3.2.5.10.3. Oss. *kæržin* / *kæržin* “(barley, millet, maize) bread” is to all appearances the source of Svan *kæržin* and Rachan *karžina* “bread baked in the ashes”; cf. also Kab. *чыржын čäržən*, Adyg. *чэржын čäržən* “maize cake” (Šagirov 1977: II, 131). Regarding the occurrence of this word in other languages of the Caucasus and the etymology of the element *kær-* I refer to IES: I, 585; as to the suffix *-žin* / *-žin* (not to be confused with *-žin* / *-gin* as in *xəbizžin* “cheese pie”, cf. 3.2.5.8.9. above), cf. IES: I, c.

3.2.5.10.4. For Svan *kærdæn* “rag, strip of cloth” (IES: I, 583) cf. Oss. *kærdæn* “headscarf”, from *kærdin* “to cut” (cf. ib., 584).

3.2.5.10.5. Svan *buwāsd* “world”, in *ambuwāsd* “this (i.e., not the yonder) world” (G/P: 44, cf. *amaw* “till here, up to now”); Abaev (IES: I, 255) derives *eče bwast*’ [sic], = *ečebuwāsd* “that, the yonder world” from Oss. *bæstæ* (< **upá-st(h)aya-*) “place”.

3.2.5.10.6. Svan *səlxər* “mad, turnsick (of sheep)” most likely derives from Oss. *səlxər* (I., D.) “silly, turnsick; fool” < **sær-xæld* “with a damaged head”, an inverted bahuvrīhi (*xæld*, past participle of *xəlin / xəlun* “to go to ruin”); cf. also Kar.-Balk. *səlxər* “id.”, *səlxərbaš* “bungler, muddler”, and a number of other compounds. The common form of the Svan and the Karachay-Balkar words indicates that the latter is the immediate source of the former (cp. IES: III, 63).

3.2.5.10.7. Svan *zad* “sprouting grain of barley used for making whisky (G-P: 104), “malt” (IES: IV, 283) can hardly be separated from Oss. *zad* (I., D.) “id.” (past participle of *zaiin / zaiun* “to grow”).

3.2.5.10.8. Svan *cæg* “stepbearing of a mill” (Russ. “подпятник мельницы”, IES: I, 296) is probably connected with Oss. (I., D.) *cæg* “link, ring, a ring-shaped object”. The word, which is found in various languages of the North Caucasus (Kar.-Balk. *čək* “loop, noose”, etc.), is probably a Eurasian migratory word, ultimately of Uralic origin(?).

3.2.5.10.9. Svan *gurana* “pestle, stamper of a handmill” (IES: I, 612), *gurna* “round stone” (G/P: 94) may be connected with Oss. *kuiroi / kuroinæ* “mill” (probably of Iranian origin, cf. IES: I, 611 ff.). Oss. **kurāna-* is found e.g. in D. *kuron-gæs* (= I. *kuiroi-gæs*) “miller”, D. *kuron-fid* (= I. *kuiroi-fid*) “millstone”, in I. *don-guiron* “water mill”, and in the Balkar place name *Kuran-dan* “mill water, stream”. Laz *γurni* “mill gutter, drain” (“мельничный желоб”, Marr 1910: 202), mentioned by Abaev (IES: I, 612), does not belong here, cp. Laz *γar-a* “furrow”, Mgr. *γar-i* “furrow, channel, tube”, Georg. *γari* “id.”, *na-γari* “wrinkled; the soil left unploughed between the furrows” (Sulxan Saba Orbeliani, ed. 1966: I, 578, 584: *qnelt šua darčomili k’ordi*; cf. Čikobava 1938: 140).

3.2.5.10.10. Svan *darg* “kid, six months to one year old” is to all appearances identical with Oss. I. *dærk*’ “heifer”, D. *dærk’æ* “one-year old kid”, which is connected by Abaev (IES: I, 358 and 655) with OInd. *dāraka-* “boy, son” (cf. also *dārikā-* “girl, daughter”; but cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: II, 35, who regards the Indian words as derivatives of *dārāḥ* “wife, wives”). As the Indo-Iranian etymology of the Ossetic word is uncertain, the direction of the borrowing is difficult to determine.

3.2.5.10.11. The same applies to the relation between Oss. D. *ninæy* “raspberry” (< **næniγ?*) and Svan *inγa*, *inəγa* “id.” (G-P: 114; IES: II⁶⁹, 184; cf. also Balk. *nanəq* “id.”) and also between Oss. *dalis / dalis* “one-year old lamb” and Svan *dalisw*, *dališ* “lamb from six months to one year old” (IES: I, 342).

3.2.5.10.12. If Oss. *biron / buroinæ* “litter, dung” is the source of Svan *buran* “id.” (IES: I, 282), the borrowing must be old, previous to the common Ossetic change of *ān* > *on*. The Ossetic word has undeniably an Iranian look but lacks a convincing etymology.

⁶⁹ Abaev, l.c. has *inğa*, *inağa* [sic; S.F.].

3.2.5.10.13. The connections between Svan *mak'wšdäg* “hip, thigh”, Balk. *muguštuk* and Oss. *mæk'uistæg* / *mæk'ustæg* “id.” are not clear either (cf. IES: II, 86). Is the Ossetic word a compound, consisting of D. *mæk'ur* “back of the neck, nape” (cf. Shughni etc. *māk* “id.”, Morgenstierne 1974: 44) and *(æ)stæg* “bone”?

3.2.5.10.14. Abaev (IES: II, 92) derives Svan *manāš* (G/P: 211: *manāš*) “rye” from Oss. *mænæu* / *mænæuæ* “wheat”; cf. the Yass word list, I. 5: *manauona* “furmentum (for frumentum) = **manawā* plus *-ān(a)-* (Németh 1959: 29), with the addition of a Svan suffix *-š*. Abaev’s explanation of the Ossetic word as **mæn-iæu* “corn, grain”, i.e. “my millet”, finds some support in similar botanic terms (I. *mæn-ær(i)* “raspberry”, if from *mæ-næn(i)ʔ* as supposed by Abaev, IES: II, 91 f.; cp. D. *ninæy*); cp. further I.D. *mæ-zæræu* “name of an eatable herb” (IES: II, 110); I. *mæ-tatik* (likewise the name of an eatable plant), beside D. *tatuk* (cf. IES: II, 108). The occurrence of the Ossetic word in the Yass word list testifies to its old age in the Ossetic language.⁷⁰

3.2.5.10.15. Svan *məršk'* “ant” (G/P: 223; Wardrop 1911: 592: *morshk*, *myshk*) is possibly a distorted form of Oss. *mæljig* / *mulzug* “id.” (< OIran. **marwi-čuka-*, rather than **-čaka-*; cf. IES: II, 87 f.).

3.2.5.10.16. Svan *arsän* “rope, thick cord” (IES: II, 382) probably derives, through some intermediary, from Arm. *aṙasan* “rope” (cf. also *erasan* “bridle”), from Pers. *rasan* “id.” (Hübschmann 1897: 107; 148), rather than from Oss. (I., D.) *rætæn* “Kette aus gewundenen Birkenruten, Strick oder Riemen, mit dem man das Ochsenjoch zum Hakenpflug oder Pflug anbindet” (MF: II, 1005) as suggested by Abaev (IES: II, 382 f.). As to the derivation of the Ossetic word from the Old Iranian verbal root **raθ-* (but cp. Av. *rāθ-*, Bartholomae 1904: 1521) “to stick, adhere to”, cf. Benveniste 1959: 107 ff.

3.2.5.10.16. Svan *sk'el* “shin” (G/P: 259) may be connected with Oss. *sč'il* / *(æ)sk'elæ* “pleat, bend; bent, heel”. The derivation of the Ossetic word is uncertain, however; *(s)k'elæ* etc., if it is Iranian, points to *(*s*)*kairyā-*. Such a word is not likely to be cognate with Greek σκέλος “leg” etc. (IE *(*s*)*kel-* “to bend; crooked”, cf. Pokorny 1959: 928) as proposed by Abaev (IES: III, 124 ff.). Note also the glottal *k'* of the Ossetic word.

3.2.5.10.17. Svan *kan* “hemp” (G/P: 266) is obviously cognate with Oss. *gæn* / *gænæ* “id.”. Oss. **kæn-* is attested in *kættag* (I., D.) “linen” < **kæntag-* (I. *mardī kættag* “grave-clothes”, etc.; cf. also Kab. *žanā*, Adyg. *žan* “shirt”; cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 158). Whatever its ultimate origin may be, this is a widespread culture word, found in various languages of Central Asia, East and Central Europe and the Caucasus, in part extended by a suffix *-ap/b* (Joki 1973: 270 ff.; IES: I, 512; 590 ff.; Vasmer: I, 615; Chantraine 1968-80: 493). A word of this family occurs for the first time, as it seems, in the *Skythikoi logoi* by Herodotus (book IV, ch. 74: κάμβαϋς), a fact which indicates that the word was native in Scythian in the 5th century B. C. Ossetic is to all appearances the source of the Svan word; Georg. *k'anapi* “hemp, string, cord” rather derives from Arm. *kanap⁶*, which can be traced back to Pers. *kanab*. The Ossetic alternation *kæn-* /

⁷⁰ *manauona* < **manawān(a)*: is *-o-* due to an umlaut under the influence of *-w-*? Or an early example of *ān > on*? The Hungarian Yass no doubt lost contact with their fellow tribes-men in the Caucasus after their emigration in the 13th cent. We therefore expect their language to represent a stage of development prior to that time. On the other hand, we cannot preclude that the narrowing of *ā* in front of nasals is an early tendency (cf. 2.6.1. above).

gæn- probably reflects a prehistorical dialectal difference (ultimately two different sources of a loanword?). As to the affinity of this word family with the Sumerian plant name *kunibu*, cf. Joki 1973, 271.

3.2.5.10.18. A number of plant names and other botanical terms are common to Svan and Ossetic. Most of these words are found in other languages of the Caucasus area, which makes their provenance difficult to determine. To those already mentioned the following can be added.

Svan *mōg*, Oss. *mugæ / mogæ* “medlar” (IES: II, 131) seems to be a migratory word which has entered the Caucasus from the south, cf. early NPers. *mux* (Phl. *muγ*) “date-palm”. The final *-æ* of the Iron form may indicate a recent borrowing, later than the merger of the two declensions (cf. 4.12.1. below), but previous to the narrowing of *o* to *u*.

Oss. *tægær* (I., D.) “maple” can hardly be separated from Svan *tek'er, tek'ra* “id.” (IES: III, 250 ff.), cf. also Balk. *təkər* “id.” and, possibly, Chech. *stajr* “id.” (if from **stagar-*), as well as the Ossetic homonym *tægær* “hard, solid”, now apparently obsolete; originally the same word? The Iranian origin of the word is uncertain. OInd. *tagara-* (ntr.) “Tabernaemontana coronaria, fragrant powder prepared from it”, and *sthagara-, sthakara-* (ntr.) “fragrant substance or powder”, quoted by Abaev (IES: ib.), are probably borrowings from Dravidian (cf. Mayrhofer, KEWA: I, 468 ff. and EWAI: I, 614). – Wardrop (1911: 614) translates Engl. “maple” (*Acer campestre*) by Svan *pychvra*.

Oss. (D.) *zætxæ* “oats” is no doubt identical with Svan *zəntx* “id.” (G/P: 105; IES: IV, 306). The word, which is found in various languages of the Northwest Caucasus, is supposed to be of Circassian origin (Adyg. *зəнтхъ zəntx*; cf. Šagirov 1977: I, 206). This, of course, does not preclude Ossetic as the immediate source of the Svan word.

Svan *yeder* “field-pea” (G-P: 268) and Oss. *qædur / qædoræ* “haricot” have their counterparts in various languages of the Caucasus; cf., e.g., Georg. *qnduri (xnduri)* “bean” (Sulxan Saba Orbeliani, ed. 1966: II, 440; IES: II, 285).

3.2.5.10.19. Among Ossetic words of Svan provenance we may mention *k'æi / k'æiæ* “slate, shale” from Svan *k'a* “id.” (G/P: 128; IES: I, 623 f.), and *zæi / zæiæ* “avalanche of snow” from Svan *žäh, zäj* “id.” (G-P: 254; IES: IV, 293; Klimov 1964: 90 s.v. **zjawaw-*, cf. Georg. *zvavi* “avalanche”). Both words seem to have been borrowed before the merger of the two declensions in Iron (cf. 4.12.2. below and Svan *mōg* etc. above).

Although the above list of words is far from being exhaustive, it is no doubt indicative of the kind of lexical contacts which have existed between the Svan and Ossetic languages: words relating to husbandry, agriculture, vegetation and natural conditions peculiar to the highlands of the Caucasian world.

The existence of the Nart epic cycle among the Svans, the Mingrelians and the Georgian highlanders testifies to a kind of cultural community extending across the mountain barrier and encompassing both certain Kartvelian tribes and the peoples of the North Caucasus (cf. also Abaev 1949: 300 ff.; Žizguri 1977).

3.2.5.11. A final judgement of the lexical interferences between Ossetic and the Kartvelian languages has to be postponed until we possess an etymological dictionary of Georgian and its sister languages comparable with Abaev's etymological dictionary of Ossetic (the IES). But all available lexical information clearly indicates that the Ossetic contributions to the lexical stock of the Kartvelian languages has been fairly modest, mostly limited to technical terms and, as far as Georgian is concerned, dialectal

vocabulary, without affecting the basic core vocabulary of these languages. Nor seems the Kartvelian influence on Ossetic to have been profound.

As the vocabulary, after all, is the part of language that is most open to lexical intrusion, these facts make it doubtful that Ossetic might have exerted any influence of importance upon the grammatical structure of the Kartvelian languages. Thus it is highly improbable that Ossetic acted as an intermediary between Kartvelian and the Slavonic languages in introducing grammatical features, e.g. the perfectivizing function of the local preverbs, from the latter into the former group of languages, as sometimes has been maintained (cf. Thordarson: 1982).

3.2.5.12. The conclusions of the preceding sections can be summed up as follows:

In its vocabulary Ossetic shows numerous traces of long-standing symbiotic relations with the contiguous languages of the Caucasus area. The Turkic influence seems to have been stronger and more profound than that of the Caucasian languages. Likewise, Ossetic has contributed its share to the lexical stock of its neighbour languages. The loanwords of Ossetic are largely confined to nouns, words for concepts peculiar to Caucasian conditions; they have been acquired from neighbouring languages together with the knowledge of the objects designated. The basic vocabulary, words for the elementary experiences of human life, are mainly of Iranian origin. The borrowing of verbs was probably impeded by inflectional devices, the structure of the Ossetic verb being both more coherent than that of the noun and less similar to the verbal grammar of the neighbour languages.

Loanwords belonging to the basic vocabulary, like *зix* / *зux*, *c'ux* “mouth”, *k'ax* “foot”, *k'ux* / *k'ox* “hand”, were probably introduced as emotionally charged expressions which gradually lost their emotive connotations and replaced the ancient neutral terms for these conceptions (*kom*, *fad*, *arm*).

3.3. Calques

3.3.1. In addition to the outright borrowing of lexical units from adjacent languages, Ossetic possesses a number of calques, nouns formed from native elements on the model of a contact language. In the case of such loan translations, however, the direction of the transfer may be more difficult to determine.

3.3.1.1. I., D. *cæs-kom* “face” (from *cæst* “eye” and *kom*, the ancient word for “mouth”) belongs to a non-productive type of compounds (dvandva; cf. Abaev 1964: 115; Axvlediani 1963: 116). Similar compounds are found in various neighbour languages: Bats *marl'-baki* (*marl'õ* “nose”, *bak* “mouth”; D. / N. Kadagize 1984: 406); Kab.-Adyg. *нанэ нарă* (lit. “eye-nose”, cf. Šagirov 1977: II, 9); Ubykh *fāla*, *falā* “visage” (cf. *fač'á* “nose”, *blá* “eye”, Vogt 1963: 118; 117; 89; further examples in IES: I, 304). Equivalent expressions are found in many languages of the Eurasian continent: cf. Tocharian *akmal* (Tokh. A *ak* “eye”, *malañ* pl. “nose”); Hungarian *arc*, *orca* (*orr* “nose”, *száj* “mouth”, etc., Lewy 1934; cp. IES: ib., quoting Bouda 1932: 95 ff. and 1934). It is tempting to believe that this particular type of compounds was introduced into the Caucasian languages from the north through the medium of Ossetic.

3.3.1.2. *nart-xor* / *narti-xuar* is the Ossetic word for “maize”, lit. “Nart(ic) grain”. Similar compounds are found in other languages of the North Caucasus; cf. Kab. *нартыху* (sic: Kardanov e.a. 1957:273) *nartəx*^o “maize”, cp. Kab. *хыби х'ə* “millet”; cf.

Šagirov 1977: II, 108); Abaz. *nartæx*^o; Ubykh *nāitǎf*, *nartǎf* (Vogt 1963: 152). Cf. also IES: II, 160 f. and Balkarov 1965: 57.

3.3.1.3. In modern Ossetic the ordinal *ficcag* / *ficcag* “first” (also “anterior”) is formed from the noun for “nose”, *fīnʒ* / *fīnʒæ*, *fīi*, to which the suffix *-ag* is attached. This formation may be comparatively recent; at least we find traces of OIran. **(f)ratama-* in Scytho-Sarmatian proper names: Παῖταμο-φουρτος “the first son” (Zgusta 1955: 136 ff.; Abaev 1979: 288 ff.; IES: I, 487). Similarly, the corresponding Circassian ordinal is derived from the word for “nose”, cf. Adyg. *anəpə apārǎ*, from *pǎ* “nose”, with a suffix *-rǎ* and the possessive prefix *a-* (*apǎ* “in front of”, lit. “their nose”, Rogava / Keraševa 1966: 81; cf. furthermore Colarusso 1992: 160, mentioning Kab. *japǎ* /*yah-pa*/, *japǎrej* /*yǎh-pa-rǎy*/). – Typologically related is Georg. *p’irveli*, from *p’iri* “mouth, face, edge” (Svan *p’irveli*, Mgr. *p’ri(v)eli* have been borrowed from Georgian; likewise Laz *birinʒi* from Turkish).

3.3.1.4. In both Ossetic dialects the colour term *c’æx* (probably a loanword from a Northwest Caucasian language, Bielmeier 1977: 280) covers a comparatively large area of the spectrum and can be translated into English as “grey, green, (light, dark) blue”: *arvi c’æx* “the blue sky”, *c’æx kærdaeg* “green grass”, *c’æx miŋ* “a grey fog”, *bælcæstæ adardtoi c’æx* “the trees became green”, *bon ærbac’æx is* “the day dawned”, *C’æx denʒiz* “the Caspian Sea” (IES: I, 333 ff.; MF: III, 1695 ff.). More specific terms can be formed as compounds containing the lexical item *xuiz* / *xuz(æ)* “shape, appearance, colour”; cp. *kærdaeg-xuiz* “grass-green”, *ærv-xuiz* “sky-blue”, *mid-xuiz* “honey-coloured, blond (of hair or beard)”. In various languages of the Northwest Caucasus this particular lexical field is organised in a similar way: Kab. *uŋxʷyð* *šx°ǎ* (Adyg. **uŋxʷyð* **šx°ǎ*) “green, blue, violet”; Kab. *κβIauwʷxʷyð* *q’a-šx°ǎ*, Adyg. *κβauwʷyð* *qásx°* “(dark, light) blue, green” (Šagirov 1977: I, 221); Ubykh *ǰaq’á* “blue, green” (Vogt 1963: 230). In Karachay-Balkar *kök* “blue” denotes the colour of early spring-time grass. In Svan *jərʒi* can be translated as either “green” or “dark blue” (G/P: 239).

As to D. *æxsin* “dark-grey”, *xæræ* “grey, dark (*xæræ miŋ* “a thick fog”)), inherited Iranian words which in part cover this area of the spectrum, I refer to IES (I: 220 and IV: 175).

3.3.2. The above remarks about colour-terms lead us to the intricate and exciting question of the influence of adjacent languages on the semantic content of Ossetic words and the structure of lexical systems: To which extent is the Ossetic vocabulary, or a part of it, isomorphic with that of other languages of the area? In culture the Ossetes of the North Caucasus hardly differ essentially from their neighbours; the same applies to the relations between the South Ossetes and their Kartvelian compatriots. A great part, or even the majority, of the North Caucasian populations are bilingual (or multilingual); language shift must have been common down through the ages. Differences in environment and conditions of life are not coterminous with differences in language. It seems legitimate to speak of the North Caucasus as a fairly homogeneous cultural area. We must therefore assume a high degree of cultural overlap between the language communities. Accordingly, we expect that the world of experience in which the speakers live is reflected in a similar way in their languages and that similar or equivalent forms have been imposed upon a common physical, social and intellectual substance. Metaphorical usages of native words are no doubt frequently due to linguistic interference. This is, of course, relevant to syntax and the morphological categories used for expressing grammatical functions as well. A discussion of these questions would carry us far beyond the scope of this study (and the

limited capabilities of the present author). For the investigations of these matters a native knowledge of the languages involved and an intimate acquaintance with the local conditions are an obvious advantage.

3.4. Grammatical features

Among the grammatical features which Ossetic seems to have acquired through contacts with neighbouring languages, the following shall be mentioned:

3.4.1. Glottalic consonants and uvulars

One of the interference phenomena most commonly quoted as an example of foreign influence on Ossetic are the glottalic stops and affricates: *p'*, *t'*, *c'*, *č'*, *k'*, (*q'?*). The two-term pattern which we assume for the Scytho-Sarmatian dialects – an unaspirated (half-)voiced lenis vs. a voiceless aspirated fortis (*d* : *t*, etc.) – has been replaced by a three-term pattern: a voiceless aspirated fortis vs. a voiceless unaspirated glottalised fortis vs. a (half-)voiced unaspirated lenis: *t*, *t'*, *d* etc. The glottalics are mainly found in loanwords, but also in words of Iranian derivation, most commonly after *s*; cf. *xuisk'* / *xusk'(æ)* “dry”, Av. *huška-* “id.”, *st'ali* / (*æ*)*st'alu* “star”, Av. *star-* “id.”, etc. Their introduction may be due to some kind of fashionable speech, possibly during the heydays of Kabardian feudalism in the 17th – 18th centuries.

It is, however, worth noting that the glottalised phonemes are comparatively rare and carry an insignificant functional load; minimal pairs like Georg. *k'ari* “door” vs. *kari* “wind” are exceptional, at least within one and the same dialect (Job 1977: 74 ff.; Thordarson 1973: 88 ff.; 1989: 462). There is also some fluctuation between glottalics and lenes as in D. *zux*, *c'ux* (I. *zix*) “mouth”; I. *gabaz* “limb, hand”, I. *k'abaz*, D. *k'abazæ* “extremity, branch”; I. *gærax* “a shot”, D. *k'eraxo* “pistol” (I. *č'iraxo*); I. *k'uidili*, D. *gudeli* (cf. Georg. *k'vint'ali* “pimple?”); cf. also I. *færsk*, D. *færsk'æ* “rib” (of Iranian origin). In some loanwords a glottalic of the source language is rendered by an homorganic lenis: I. *got'osi* “oxhorn used as a medical instrument for drawing out blood” from Georgian *k'ot'osi* “id.”; I. *dič'i* “wine-skin”, from Georg. *t'ik'i* “id.”; I., D. *zala* “sedge”, cf. Georg. *č'ala* “riverside copse, flood meadow”; I. *garač'i* “fresh butter”, from Georg. *k'araki* “id.”; I., D. *goc'obi* “jug, a little pot”, cf. Georg. *k'oc'obi* “id.”, Mgr. *k'oc'obi* “an earthenware saucer”; I. *gæl-dar* “belly”, cf. Georg. *k'ardala*, *-i* “a small earthenware pot?”; I. *bil*, D. *bilæ* “lip, bank, shore”, if from Kartv. **p'iv-* “id.”, Svan. *p'il*, Georg. *p'iri*; (cf. Klimov 1964:153; Bielmaner 1977: 133 ff.). In some of these words the loss of glottalisation may be due to dissimilation according to the Lex Axvlediani.⁷¹ From these facts it seems natural to conclude that the ancient two-term pattern is still more basic than the three-term pattern of the modern language, the glottalics remaining, so to say, parasitic phonemes. In loanwords from Russian the voiceless stops and affricates are usually rendered as glottalics; in the long run this may strengthen the position of the glottalics in the phonological system of Ossetic. It is also noteworthy that Ossetic, like Kartvelian and Nakh, has no glottalised spirants, thus standing in contradistinction to the Northwest Caucasian languages.

The voiceless uvular stop *q* (in part at least pronounced with glottalisation) has been brought into Ossetic through loanwords, and into Iron through a “Verschärfung” of ancient initial *γ-* (< **g-*). In Digor *q-* is found in loanwords only, with the possible exception of *qæiun* (MF: I, 438; I. *qæiin*) “futuere”, from OIran. **gāy-*; cp. NPers.

⁷¹ Cf. the respective article in Axvlediani 1960: 136 ff.: “Диссимилятивное озвончение смычных в осетинском языке” [S.F].

gādan, Pashto *ɣowal*, Sogd. ’γ’t *āyāy-, etc.; (Horn 1893: 197; Morgenstierne 1927: 24). If the information in MF is correct, either the Digor verb was borrowed from Iron or the “Verschärfung” is here connected with an expressive connotation. Corresponding consonants are found in the Caucasian as well as the Turkic languages of the area.

3.4.2. Vigesimal counting system

The vigesimal counting system (20 x 2 = 40 etc.) is an areal phenomenon which Ossetic shares with the adjacent Caucasian languages and, in part, with Karachay-Balkar. To be sure, vigesimal counting is usual in the Indo-Iranian languages of the Hindukush and Pamir area (Edel’man 1990: 181; Emmerick 1992: 311 ff.) and has developed independently in various other languages.⁷² But I see no reason to doubt that it was introduced into Ossetic through bilingual contacts with neighbouring languages. Decimal counting is found in varieties of Digor, in the idiom of herdsmen (*æsson nimæzæ* “Balkar (As) counting” – used for counting sheep? – cf. Abaev 1949: 282 and 399), and has in recent times been introduced into the standard literary language, probably on the model of the Russian numerals, although it is still uncommon in the spoken language.

3.4.3. Preverb system

The primary function of the Ossetic preverb is to mark spatio-directional relations, to direct the attention to some point in the course of the action expressed by the verb. Through unpredictable metaphorical usages it may change or modify the basic meaning of the verb; in part these semantic changes probably reflect older, now obsolete, usages of the preverb. Secondly, the preverb has a grammatical function, viz. that of distinguishing the perfective from the imperfective aspect. In the latter function the preverb may, at least up to a certain point, lose its concrete sense and become an “empty” aspectual marker. The perfectivizing use of the preverb is most probably due to an internal Ossetic development, resulting from its function as a spatial or directional marker. Similar developments have taken place in various languages independently of each other. Therefore I see no reason to ascribe the aspectual force of the Ossetic preverbs to linguistic interference, all the more since all Ossetic preverbs have indisputable Iranian etymologies (Bielmeier 1981: 27 ff.; Thordarson 1982: 251 ff.).⁷³

3.4.3.1. In its directional function the preverb expresses the orientation of the action or movement from the point of view of the speaker (or someone else whose role he or she adopts). This is particularly clear in the case of verbs denoting movement. Thus in Iron

⁷² Thus, both French and Danish have developed a vigesimal system of counting independently of each other. A vigesimal system is occasionally used in Faroese (in the counting of sheep; T. Skomedal, University of Oslo, oral communication). – It is perhaps worthy of note that in Bats the expression for “100” is 20x5: *pxauzt’q’*, cf. Oss. *fonzissæzi* (IES: I, 478). Like Kartvelian and the Northwest Caucasian languages, the other Nakh languages possess a separate word for this numeral (Ing. *b ā*, Chech. *b ē*). Is this peculiarity of Bats a conservative feature, a relic of – or retained through – old contacts with the Ossetes?

⁷³ *a-* “out, away from” can hardly be separated from OIran. **ā-*. *ba-* “into” is either from **upá-* or, better, a combination of **upa-* and **ā-*. *ær-* “down” most likely derives from **awar-*. *ær-* and *ba-* are combined in *ærba-* “into”. *ra-* “out, away from” derives from **frā-* (but *ræ-*, an unproductive preverb without an orientational meaning, goes back to **frā-*). *ni-* / *ni-* “down” derives from OIran. **ni-* (rather than *niš-*). For *s-* “up”, cf. OIran. *us-*, *uz-*. *fæ-*, marking movement from the speaker, is probably to explain as **pa-*, not as **pati-*. The unproductive preverb *cæ-* “down” is enigmatic; a derivation from oxytone **hačā* is possible (Morgenstierne 1927: 17 s.v. *camlāstəl* “to lie down”; Emmerick 1968: 231).

the horizontal dimension “out, away” is marked by *a-* or *ra-*, according to the location of the speaker: *a-cidi* “he went out, away” (the speaker is inside) vs. *ra-cidi* “he came out” (the speaker is outside). Likewise, the meaning “in, into” is expressed by *ba-* or *ærba-*: *ba-cidi* “he went in” (the speaker is outside) vs. *ærba-cidi* “he came in” (the speaker is inside). The vertical dimension “down, downwards” is expressed by *ni-cidi*, *ær-cidi* respectively. For the dimension “up, upwards” both dialects use one preverb only, *s-* / *is-*: *s-cidi* / *is-cudi* “he went / came down”, regardless of the position of the speaker. This gap in the otherwise symmetrical system reflects in all likelihood an ancient linguistic stage prior to the rise of the orientational use of the preverbs, rather than a secondary neutralisation. Similarly, *ra-* is used in Digor for the direction “out, away”, irrespectively of the position of the speaker: *ra-cudæi* “he went, came out”. It seems most natural to regard this as an archaic feature of the Digor dialect.

Another archaism peculiar to that dialect is the possibility of intercalating enclitics between the preverb and the verbal base (tnesis): *ra-mæ-maræ* “kill me” (imperative).

The preverb *fæ-* (< **pa-*, rather than **pati-*) stands apart from the orientational preverbs mentioned above. As a directional preverb it expresses motion away from the speaker in any direction: *fæ-xæssin* “to take, carry away”, *fæ-cæuin* “go away”, *fæ-lizǝn* “to run away, remove to, emigrate”. Cp., e.g.: *Fæxæsson-ma ... fæstæmæ mæ iunæʒi sær næ Irmæ, mæ raigurdæn bæstæm* “Now shall I bring my lonely head to our Ossetia, to my native land” (K’osta, the poem Rakæs, ed. 1960: I, 44).

3.4.3.2. In connection with two- and three-place verbs, the orientational preverbs correlate at the same time with the respective persons (1st, 2nd, 3rd person) involved in the action and, furthermore, with the position of the speaker at the time of the action. This can be illustrated by the following examples where the verb *ærvitin* (I.) is used:⁷⁴

<i>æz arviston uimæn činǝg</i>	“I sent him a book”;
<i>uui ærbarvista mænæn činǝg</i>	“he sent me a book”;
<i>æz din arviston činǝg</i>	“I sent you a book”;
<i>di min ærbarvistai činǝg</i>	“you sent me a book”;
<i>uui din ærbarvista činǝg</i>	“he sent you a book”.

When the verbal action or movement is directed from the 2nd or 3rd person towards the 1st person, a “hither” preverb is evidently the rule. If the action is directed from the 1st person towards the 3rd person, a “thither” preverb is chosen. The same seems to be the case when the action is directed from the 1st person to the 2nd person. On the other hand, if the action is directed from the 3rd person towards the 2nd person, a “hither” preverb seems to be the natural choice. These rules are, however, not mechanically applied.

In St. John’s Gospel (Siʒdæg evangelie, 1902 (1923),⁷⁵ we read (3.17): *cæmæi-dæridtær Xuicau næ ravista Iæ Firti dunemæ tærxonkænin-mæ* “οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλεν ὁ Θεὸς τὸν υἱὸν εἰς τὸν κόσμον ἵνα κρίνῃ τὸν κόσμον “. Here a “hither” preverb (*ra-*) marks the movement towards the speaker (or the group he identifies himself with, “this world”). The situation is the same in Jo. 4.34, 5.23, 24 and 37, and 6. 38, 39, 40 and 44, where the verb *ærvitin* is used with the preverb *ra-*.

Similarly, in sentences with a one-place verb the action is marked from the point of view of the speaker:

⁷⁴ Private notes from South Ossetia, 1969.

⁷⁵ The Gospel translation of 1902, reproduced in 1923 and again in 1973 (Stockholm) is apparently identical with the translation of 1864. I cannot decide from which language the translation was made (Russian or Georgian?).

biræ afontæ næma racid “a long time had not passed” (IAA 1960: 109), and:
iu k'ord bontæ iil kui racidis “when some days had passed” (NK 1946: 148).

Under the given conditions of the limited space available, I cannot enter a detailed investigation of the intricate interplay in the choice of orientational preverbs. It seems likely that the option is partly individual and that the speaker is at liberty to choose his position at the time of speaking in relation to his position at the time of action. The choice may imply subtle stylistic nuances which are difficult to grasp for others than native speakers.

For details regarding the functions and meanings of the preverbs I refer to Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 235, and Abaev 1964: 76 ff.

3.4.3.3. The orientational function of the Ossetic preverbs is clearly an innovation. The gaps in the bidimensional system, particularly conspicuous in Digor, suggest that it represents a comparatively recent development that has not yet been carried through into detail.

The orientational meaning of the Ossetic preverbs has a typological counterpart in the Kabardian preverbs *q'a-* (*q'ə-*) “hither” and *na-* (*nə-*) “thither” (Colarusso 1992: 92 ff.; Abitov & al. 1957: 101). In Adyge *na-* has become rare; instead, the unprefixed verb is now used in the sense of “thither” (Rogava / Keraševa 1966: 112 ff.). In a similar way, the Abkhaz preverbs *aa-* and *na-* (Abaza *a-*, *na-*) mark the “hither” and “thither” orientation, resp. (Hewitt 1989: 212 ff.). In Ubykh, the orientational preverb *y-* is used to mark the direction “hither, towards the speaker”. There is no particular preverb expressing the opposite direction “thither, away from the speaker” (Dumézil 1975: 131 ff.).

3.4.3.4. It is worth noting that Ossetic uses orientational preverbs to mark the directions “in”, “out”, “upwards” and “downwards”. In this respect Ossetic differs from the Northwest Caucasian languages, where the orientational preverbs only mark the directions “hither”, “thither”, “upwards” and “downwards” (cf. Dumézil: *ib.*; Hewitt: *ib.*; Deeters 1959; Rogava 1979; Allen 1956).

On the other hand, Ossetic has nothing of the plethora of preverbs indicating spatio-directional relations found in the Northwest Caucasian languages (and evidently also in Mingrelian).

As regards the system of orientational preverbs, Georgian seems to be the closest typological relative of Ossetic. The “hither” – “thither” opposition, as expressed by the Ossetic preverbs, corresponds fairly well with the *mi-* – *mo-* opposition of Georgian, although the possibilities of mechanical translations are limited:

I. <i>a-cidi</i>	=	Georg. <i>ga-vida</i> , but also <i>c'a-vida</i>
I. <i>ra-cidi</i>	=	Georg. <i>gamo-vida</i> , <i>c'amo-vida</i>
I. <i>ba-cidi</i>	=	Georg. <i>še-vida</i>
I. <i>ærb-a-cidi</i>	=	Georg. <i>šemo-vida</i>
I. <i>ær-cidi</i>	=	Georg. <i>ča-vida</i>
I. <i>ni-ccidi</i>	=	Georg. <i>čamo-vida</i>
I. <i>s-cidi</i>	=	Georg. <i>a-vida</i> and <i>amo-vida</i> .

Concerning the choice of preverbs for marking the direction towards the 2nd person, Ossetic is apparently closer to Old Georgian than to Modern Georgian. In the modern language, *mo-* marks the direction towards the 2nd as well as the 1st person. In the old language, *mi-* indicates the direction away from the 1st person towards the 2nd

and the 3rd person, whereas *mo-* is used for marking the direction from the 3rd person towards the 2nd and the 1st person (Vogt 1971: 172 ff.; Šaniže 1982: 82).

3.4.3.5. In addition to the orientational preverbs, Ossetic possesses numerous vestiges of ancient verbal prefixes which have been solidified with the verbal base, so that the prefix and the verb constitute a lexical unit. Such verbs can be connected with orientational preverbs.

Thus, from the ancient root **daiš-* “to show” the following verbs have been derived: *æv-disin / æv-desun* “to show, announce” (**apa-* or **abi-*), *fæl-disin / fæl-desun* “to consecrate to the land of the dead, a funeral rite” (**pari-*), D. *ræ-desun* “to show signs of approaching calving or lambing” (of domestic animals; **frǎ-*); cf. also *fidis / fedes, fedis* “reproach”, if from **pati-daiša-* (IES: I, 472). A number of verbs with initial *ræ-* (< **frǎ-*) belong to this type; cp. *rævdauin / rævdauun* “to caress, console”, D. *rædažun* “to pour, shed tears”, D. *rædæžun* “to flow”, *rædiin / ræduiun* “to be mistaken”, etc. (Thordarson 1982: 254; as to the etymologies, cf. IES. s. vv.).

3.4.4. Gerund

Ossetic possesses a verbal adverb (gerund, absolutive) with a variety of functions. The formative element is *-gæ*, which is added to the present stem of the verb: *xær-gæ / xuær-gæ*, from *xærin / xuærun* “to eat”, *uæv-gæ / uo-gæ*, from *uævin (væiin, uin / un)* “to be”.

3.4.4.1. In the first place, the gerund marks an action concomitant with, and logically subordinate to, the action expressed by a finite main verb. In this function it frequently takes the ending of the ablative, the case marking manner or concomitant circumstances: I. *-gæ-iæ*, D. *-gæ-i* (with dissimilation).

The implied agent of the gerund may be co-referential with the subject of the finite verb or some other noun phrase in the clause. The action may be simultaneous with or prior to the action expressed by the finite verb; cp. the following examples:

- (1) *læppu kæugæ bacid iæ xæžarmæ* “the boy entered his house crying” (*kæuiin* “to cry”); example in Abaev 1964: 48.
- (2) *kafgæiæ Æxsarbeg fæstæmæ rakast* “Æxsarbeg looked back while dancing” (*kafin* “to dance”); example in Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 272.

The gerund may be connected with the privative prefix *ænæ-* “without”:

- (3) *Murtaz ænæ-xongæ nigguirsti* “Murtaz burst in without being invited” (*xonin* “to invite”).
- (4) *ænæ simax bafærsgæ kuid*
ænæ simax bafærsgæ kuid
 without you (gen.pl.) asking (ger.) how
 “why did they not ask you”; the object is intercalated between the privative prefix and the gerund (*færsin* “to ask”); examples (3) and (4) in Abaev 1964: ib.

The agent may be co-referential with the object of the superordinate finite verb:

- (5) *c’iu, am dælæmæ čizg æmæ læppu ližgæ næ fedtai?*
c’iu, am dælæmæ čizg æmæ læppu ližgæ næ fedtai
 bird here downwards girl and boy running (ger.) not you-saw
 “bird, did you not see here a girl and a boy running downwards” (*ližin* “to run”); IAS 1961: II, 94.

- (6) *Æxsærtæg rast bonivaiaeni æfsæn-k'æbot mærytæ.*
Æxsærtæg rast bonivaiaeni æfsæn-k'æbot mærytæ ærbatæxgæ fæiidta
 proper name right dawn (iness.) steel-beak birds (nom.pl.) flying-hither (ger.) he-saw
 “at dawn *Æxsærtæg* saw birds with steel-beaks come flying” (*tæxun* “to fly”);
 Narti kadʒitæ, 1990: 84 (Digor text).

The implied agent of the gerund may be co-referential with a dative (in possessive function):

- (7) *sæ exsi cælqitæi æmæ sæ bæxti k'æxti qæræi Narti zæronð lægtæn nixasi badgæiæ sæ zærdæ.*
sæ exsi cælqitæi æmæ sæ bæxti k'æxti qæræi
 their whip (gen.) cracks (abl.pl.) and their horses (gen.pl.) feet (gen.pl.) beat (abl.)
Narti zæronð lægtæn nixasi badgæiæ
 Narts (gen.) old men (dat.pl.) assembly place (iness.) sitting (ger.)
sæ zærdæ nißæxxætt lasta
 their heart flare-up he-drew
 “at the crack of their whips and the hoofbeat of their horses the hearts of the old men of the Narts, who were sitting in the assembly place, flared up” (*zæronð lægtæn* “old men”, dat.pl.; *sæ* poss. 3rd.pl.; *zærdæ* “the heart of the old men”; *sæxxætt lasin* “get excited”; *badin* “to sit”); Narti kadʒitæ, 1990: 82.

The gerund may be unattached and not related to any noun phrase in the clause (pendant, “dangling”, gerund):

- (8) *uæð ðin iu bon amaigæ- amaiin dur raxaudta æmæ æfsimærtæi sæ iui sær asasta.*
uæð ðin iu bon amaigæ- amaiin dur raxaudta æmæ
 then you (dat.) one day building (ger.) to build (inf.) stone (nom.) it-fell and
æfsimærtæi sæ iui sær asasta
 brothers (abl.pl.) their (poss. 3rd.pl.) one (gen.) head (nom.) it-smashed
 “then one day, during construction, a stone fell down and smashed the head of one of the brothers” (*amaiin* “to build”); example in Abaev 1964: 49.
- (9) *aiquisti duneii, zæygæ, Narti Uæræxægæn raqomil i qæbatir firttæ, fazzættæ – Æxsar æmæ Æxsærtæg.*
aiquisti duneii zæygæ Narti Uæræxægæn
 was-heard (past 3 sg.) on-world (sup.) saying (ger.) of-Narts (gen.) for Wæræxæg (dat.)
raqomil i qæbatir firttæ fazzættæ Æxsar æmæ Æxsærtæg
 grew-up (3 sg.) brave sons (nom.pl.) twins (nom.pl.) Æxsar and Æxsærtæg (nom.)
 “the news spread in the world, saying that there grew up with (lit. for) Wæræxæg the Nart brave sons, the twins Æxsær and Æxsærtæg” (NK 1946: 4; the gerund *zæygæ* is correlated with the intransitive verb *aiquisti* “was heard”).
- (10) *Uirizmæʒi zærdæ fæfidar is, uæðæ ta binton sæft næ ðæn, kæð min aci ran ðær æmcekkæ æmæ, mæ uindmæ çi bælli, axæmtæ axæmtæ razindis, uæð, zæygæ, æmæ sin razirdta, kuid æydaucæi æræftidis Donbettirti bæstæm, uii.*
Uirizmæʒi zærdæ fæfidar is uæðæ ta binton sæft næ
 of-Uryzmæg (gen.) heart (nom.) was-strengthened then but wholly lost not
ðæn kæð min aci ran ðær æmcekkæ æmæ, mæ uindmæ
 I-am if for-me (dat.) this placetoo relatives (nom.pl.) and my to-sight (all.)
çi bælli axæmtæ axæmtæ razindis uæð zæygæ æmæ sin
 who wants such (nom.pl.) turned-up then saying (ger.) and for-them (dat.)
razirdta kuid æydaucæi æræftidis Donbettirti bæstæm uii
 told (past) how rightly (abl.) arrived of-Donbettir (gen.) to-place (all.) that
 “Uryzmæg’s heart recovered its courage, saying ‘I am not totally lost if I have relatives in this place, and if they turn out to want to see me (lit. the sight of me)’, and he told them how he arrived at Donbettir’s place” (NK 1946: 36-37;

the gerund *zæygæ*, used as a quotation particle, refers to *Uirizmæg*, notionally the subject of the main verb).

- (11) *uælabæel k'umæl cæydgæi, k'umælgor bacæugæi k'umæl næ lævardta.*

uælabæel *k'umæl* *cæydgæi* *k'umælgor*
 on-upperworld (sup.) small-beer (nom.) striking (ger.abl.) small-beer-seeker
bacæugæi *k'umæl* *næ lævardta*
 coming (ger.abl.) small-beer not gave

“in the upper world she used to filter (lit. strike) small beer, but when somebody came asking for small beer, she did not give small beer” (IAS 1961: II, 400-401, a Horse Consecration (funeral) sermon in Digor); the implied subject of *cæydgæi* is co-referential with the subject of the super-ordinate verb (*lævardta*), whereas *bacæugæi* has *k'umælgor* (“the one asking for small beer”) as its subject – a kind of absolute construction.

3.4.4.2. As a noun the gerund can have the function of a modifier (participle function):

kærdgæ dur / dor “a cutting stone”, *kærdgæ kard* “a sharp knife” (*kærdin / kærdu* “to cut”); *cæugæ don* “running water” (*cæuin / cæuun* “to move”); *ducgæ qug / docgæ yog* “milk cow” (*ducin / docun* “to milk”); *kælgæ fingæ* “*ma izag sinon uo* “may you have an exuberant (lit. flowing) table and a full cup” (IAS 1961: II, 395; a traditional religious text on *Bæx fældisin* “Horse Consecration”) (in Digor); the gerund *kælgæ* (from *kælun* “to flow, pour forth”, intr.) seems to be the prior member of a bahuvrīhi “may you be the one possessing...”.

The gerund can be used substantively: *xæd-tulgæ / xuæd-tolgæ* “bicycle”, lit. “self-rolling” (*tulin / tolun* “to roll”, *xæd- / xuæd-* “self-”); *dimgæ / dungæ* “wind” (*dimun / dumun* “to blow”), etc.

A compound verb can be formed from the gerund plus the verb *kænin / kænun* “to do” used as an auxiliary. Such verbs may express a habitual action, e.g. *kæm xærgæ kænīs?* “where do you eat (where do you take your meals)?” But they may also have an emphatic meaning (for examples cf. Abaev 1964: 75 ff.).

Finally, the gerund may take the place of a finite verb, cf. *cæugæ, cæugæ-ut* “go” (sg., pl.), with an imperative sense; also in rapid, lapidary style: *ældar sidgæ æma nuazgæ, mæguir læg dær aftæ* “the chieftain pronounced toasts (shouted) and drank, and likewise the poor man” (example in Abaev 1964: 76).⁷⁶

3.4.4.3. I have previously explained the gerund ending *-gæ* as a petrified oxytone instrumental of an action noun in **-aka-*, with a syncope of the pretonic vowel: **-aká > -gæ* (Thordarson 1986a: 504; 1990: 264; cf. also 1986b: 279). If this explanation is sound, the function of the gerund as a noun must be secondary. Action nouns (infinitives) in **-aka-* are widespread in the Iranian languages; cf. Sogd. (B.) - *'k*, - *'y*, Yaghn. -*ak*, Wakhi -*ak*, -*yk*, Ishk. -*uk*, Yazgh. -*aj* (< **-ači*), Parachi -*o*, Ormuri -*ak*, Balochi -*ag*, etc. (cf. Benveniste 1935b: 111; Édel'man 1990: 145 ff.; Morgenstierne 1938: 370 ff.; 508).

For semantic reasons, this explanation seems to be preferable to a derivation from an agent noun in **-aka-*. In the modern language agent nouns in *-æg* are formed from the present stem: *fissæg / finsæg* “writer” (*fissin / finsun* “to write”), *fellōi-gæneg / fællōinæ-gæneg* “worker” (*fellōi / fællōinæ* “work” plus *kænin / kænun* “to do”), etc.; occasionally also from the past stem: *xuindæg / xundæg* “invited (as a guest)”, an old social term, used of a married woman temporarily living with her family: *xuindæži badin / xundægi badun* (*xonin, xuind / xonun, xund* “to call, invite”; IES: IV, 265);

⁷⁶ For further details I refer to Abaev 1964: 48 ff.; Isaev 1966: 89 ff.; Axvlediani 1963: I, 273 ff.; Gagkaev 1956: 237 ff.

sīydæg / suydæg “pure, holy”, (*sužin, sīyd / sožun, suyd* “to burn”; IES: III, 188); *cadæg* (I., D.) “still, slow” (from the obsolete verb *caiiin* < *čay- “to rest, repose”; IES: I, 284); *cærdæg* (I., D.) “agile, vivacious” (*cærin, card / cærun, card* “to live”; IES I, 303); note the vowel weakening *a* > *æ*. Cf. Abaev 1964: 86; Axvlediani 1963-69: I, 268 ff.

3.4.4.4. The use of verbal adverbs or non-finite verbal forms for building complement predicates instead of adverbial clauses with finite verbs is a speech fashion widespread over a great part of eastern Europe and western and southern Asia. It is characteristic of both the Turkic and the North Caucasian languages. In these languages syntactic subordination is expressed by non-finite verbal forms (except for the cases where Persian *ke* is used; this is not relevant to Ossetic). It is therefore tempting to ascribe the development of this particular embedding procedure (morphemic hypotaxis) in Ossetic to interference from one or more of the languages of the North Caucasus area. It is, however, worthy of note that the Ossetic gerund shows neither tense, as do the subordinating verbal forms of both the Turkic and the North Caucasian neighbouring languages, nor agreement with any of the actants of the clause, as do the non-finite forms of the Northwest Caucasian languages.

Interference from Russian is less likely here. Until quite recent times Russian has played a negligible part in the development of Ossetic grammar (if any part at all). Typological similarities found in the two languages are either an Indo-European inheritance or phenomena belonging to a larger area. If my explanation of the gerund suffix is correct, the syncope of the pretonic vowel in the suffix *-*aká* must be prior to the present prosodic rules of Ossetic. This means that the creation of the gerund form dates back to a comparatively remote antiquity. This contradicts any theory of Russian influence upon the forming of the Ossetic gerund.⁷⁷

It is significant that Ossetic, in spite of a certain typological resemblance to the neighbouring languages in this matter, still primarily marks syntactic subordination by finite verbs in association with conjunctions which are almost exclusively derived from the interrogative-relative pronominal stem, and predominantly prefixed to the verb.

3.4.4.5. The gerund of the verb *zæγin / zæγun (zæγun)* “to say”, *zæγæg*, is used as a quotation particle for embedding reported speech or thought; cf. examples (7) and (8) in 3.4.4.1. In narrative texts, when a proper name is introduced for the first time, *zæγæg* is usually added:

- (12) *raži zamani card Axsaqtemir, zæγæg, iu fidlæg* “once upon a time there lived a monster called Axsaqtemyr” (IAA 1959-62: II, 33);
 (13) *cardis æmæ uidis iu læg – Torezæ, zæγæg, iæ nom* “there lived and was a man called Torezæ” (ib.: 196); here the gerund is combined with the appositional noun phrase *iæ nom* “his name”.

The use of *zæγæg* to express purpose or cause is an interesting areal phenomenon:

- (14) *læppu, midæmæ baxizon, zæγæg, kuid zayta, aftæ iu zdæxt fækodta Satanamæ.*
læppu midæmæ baxizon zæγæg kuid zayta aftæ iu zdæxt
 boy (nom.) into I-shall-go saying (ger.) when he-said thus one turn (nom.)
fækodta Satanamæ
 he-did to-Satana (all.)

“when the boy was about to enter, he turned around to Satana” (lit. “the boy, saying ‘I shall enter’, when he said, made a turn towards S.”; NK 1946: 46).

⁷⁷ The question of the role played by contacts with Turkic languages in the development of the Russian gerund is beyond the scope of this study.

- (15) *sayæſ kænin baididtoi, ci kænæm, zæygæ*
sayæſ kænin baididtoi ci kænæm zæygæ
 thought (nom.) to-do (inf.) they-began what (nom.) we-shall-do saying (ger.)
 “they began to think what they should do” (NK 1946: 80).
- (16) *baididta quidi kænin Uirizmæg, uædæ ci amalæi airvæzon aci fidbilizæi,*
zæygæ, æmæ ta iin ær-quidi kodta xinʒinad.
baididta quidi kænin Uirizmæg uædæ ci amalæi
 he-began thought (nom.) to-do (inf.) Uryzmæg then what by-means (abl.)
airvæzon aci fidbilizæi zæygæ æmæ ta iin
 I-shall-escape this from-trouble (abl.) saying (ger.) and again for-this (dat.)
ær-quidi kodta xinʒinad
 thought-he did trick
 “Uryzmæg began to think by which means he should get out of this trouble,
 and found a trick” (lit. “U. began to think, saying ‘by which means shall I get
 out of this trouble’, and he found a trick”; – NK 1946: 51).

3.4.4.6. In the North Caucasian and Turkic languages, gerundial (infinite) forms of verba dicendi are used in a similar way as quotation particles in order to convey reported speech or thought:

Kab. *ʒi ʾari* (from *ʒə ʾan* “to speak”, Abitov e. a. 1957: 230 ff.; cf also Šagirov 1977: I, 198. Kab. *жылын ʒə ʾan*), Adyg. *ə wi* (from *wan* “id.”, Rogava / Keraševa 1966: 395 ff.; cf. Šagirov ib: *Ĵəh ʾən*), Abkhaz *hʾa* (from *a-hʾarə* “to say”, Hewitt 1989: 5, 43), Ubykh *qʾan, a-qʾan* (*qʾa* “speech”, Vogt 1963: 164); Chech.-Ing. *boxuš* (present gerund of *bāxa* “to speak”), Chech. *ällä* (past gerund (participle of the perfective past) from *āla* “to say”, Jakovlev 1940: 242 ff.).

In Abkhaz, the quotation particle *hʾa* – originally a past gerund (absolute) of the verb *a-hʾa-rə* “to say”, functions as an indicator of purpose (Hewitt 1987: 38 ff.). As to the possibility of interpreting the Abkhaz particle as a conjunction of purpose, I refer to Hewitt (l. c.).

The function of infinite forms of verba dicendi as quotation particles and markers of syntactic subordination is to all appearances a phenomenon that has developed independently in languages spoken in various places of the world, without any demonstrable contact (cf. Johanson 1992: 116). But the occurrence of this particular feature in the North Caucasus, in geographically contiguous languages whose longstanding contacts are also otherwise attested, makes it natural to regard it as a North Caucasian areal phenomenon. Its appearance in the Turkic languages, where it is a common inheritance, can hardly be ascribed to direct influence of the North Caucasian languages. It therefore seems attractive to explain its existence in the North Caucasian area as due to contacts with the neighbouring Turkic languages – unless we prefer to treat it as a common Eurasian phenomenon.

The Ossetic use of the quotation particle in order to express the cause or purpose of an action, has its counterpart in the Turkic languages, where the gerund of the verb *te/de-* is common in this function; it is already attested in Old Turkish (*tep-* etc.; ESTJa, buk. v, d, g, 1980: 222; Drevnetjurkskij slovarʹ 1969: 545) and common to most Turkic languages (except Kashqay, spoken in Iran; Johanson 1992: 113 ff.).

3.4.4.7. In this connection it is tempting to mention the use of *kæsgæ* (*gæsgæ*, with a sandhi voicing), the gerund of *kæsin* “to look”, as a kind of postposition with the allative meaning “according to”: *barʒirdmæ gæsgæ* “by order”, *mænmaæ gæsgæ* “in my opinion”. This usage is reminiscent of the postpositional function of the Turkic gerund in *-a/e* of the verb *kör/gör-* “to see”: OTurk. *ögütügä körä* “according to his advice” (Drevnetjurkskij slovarʹ 1969: 317); Kar.-Balk. *bolumya köre* “in view of the circumstances”, Noghay *avirganga köre* “considering the disease”, also Anatolian

Turkish *saatima göre* “by my watch”, etc. The postpositional use of Oss. *kæsgæ, gæsgæ* (both I. and D.) is evidently deep-rooted in the language, which makes it improbable that it has originated under the influence of Russ. *смотря*.

3.4.4.8. If these comments are sound, there is reason to assume that the development, if not even the origin, of this particular type of hypotaxis in Ossetic is, at least in part, due to the influence of the neighbouring languages of the North Caucasus.

However, similar typological features are found in the Iranian sister languages as well. In New Persian the past participle in *-te/-de* (< **-ta-ka-*) is used as a gerund to mark an action as subordinate and, as a rule, anterior to the action of the main verb (Lazard 1957: 161 ff.; 197 ff.; 210). The subject of the gerund is not necessarily identical with that of the finite verb (absolute construction). The gerundial function of the past participle is already found in early New Persian; in the modern language it is particularly characteristic of Tajiki. As to the possible interference from Turkic languages, I refer to Windfuhr 1979: 75.

In Pashto the past participle in *-əl-ay* (m.; *-əl-e* f., etc., < **-ta-ka-*) can be used in a similar way as a gerund (Trumpp 1873: 359 ff.; Persian influence?).

The gerundial function of the present participle in *-ān* (< **-āna-*), marking an action happening simultaneously with that of the main verb, is common in early New Persian but has become rare in modern Farsi (Lazard 1963: 352; 1957: 159); for Middle Persian, cf. Henning 1933: 158 ff. (= 1977: I, 65 ff.).

Typologically related features are also found in other Iranian languages, where participles, in addition to their function as adjectives or substantives, can be used as the equivalents of adverbial clauses.

Thus, in Sogdian the ancient present participle of the middle voice in *-ān* (**-āna-*) can be used to mark an action concomitant and simultaneous with the action expressed by a finite verb. The following examples from the Vessantara Jātaka (ed. Benveniste 1946) will illustrate this function:

- (17) *rty zy'rt γw γwyštr pyδp'k 'kw γwt'w s'r r'y'n wytr* “and the head elephant guardian went speedily to the king crying” (49b, p. 15); *r'y-* “to cry”.
- (18) *rty č'n'kw 'γw šβ'y γwt'w ZKw pyδp'k r'y'n wyn rtyšw w'n'kw 'prs* “and when the king Šivī saw the elephant guardian crying, he asked him” (62b, p. 15); *r'y-* “to cry”.
- (19) *'nyt'kw n'β 'wyn wyspyδr'k nm'čyw βr'nt rty ZKH r'y'nt zyw'rt'nt rtyms* “the whole people brought honour to the king and returned crying” (385-6, p. 24); *r'y-* “to cry”.
- (20) *rty 'γw wyn ZKw mnt'r'yh nystčh r'y'n* “and he saw *Mandrī* sitting in tears” (789-790, p. 52); *r'y-* “to cry”.
- (21) *zyw'rt'nt 'γw šβ'y γwt'w ZY ZKH γwtynh ZY ZKH 'ynškth 'kw šβk'wšh knδh s'r r'yr'y'n* “the king Šivī, the queen and the women of the gynaeceum returned crying to the city of Šivaghosa” (397-9, p. 25); *r'yr'y-*, a reduplicated form of *r'y-*.

In examples (17), (19) and (21), the implied agent of the participles (*r'y'n, r'y'nt, r'yr'y'n*) is co-referential with the subject of the finite verb. In examples (18) and (20) it is co-referential with the object. In example (19) the participle shows number agreement with the plural of the subject, whereas in (21) it does not (cf. Gauthiot/Benveniste 1914-29: II, 54 f.; Gershevitch 1961: 249).

The participle in *-y, -k* (< **-aka-*) may express the concomitant circumstances of the main action:

- (22) *y'β'k 'PZY š'β'k šwt* “(who) goes out wandering and straying” (SCE 28, ed. MacKenzie 1970).

It seems more doubtful whether this participle was used predicatively with the verbs *k'm* “to want”, and *s'c* “must”: *k'mt ny'wš'k* “wants to hear” (SCE 82); *k'mtt ny'wš'y* “likes to hear” (SCE 56-7); *k'mt y'β'y* “prefers to wander” (SCE 300). The last form is interpreted by MacKenzie as a present participle, the others (*ny'wš'k*, *ny'wš'y*), as infinitives (cf. Glossary, s.v.; but also Gershevitch 1961: 249).

Yaghnōbi possesses two gerundial forms: *-on* (< *āna-) and *-ki* (oblique case of an *-aka- participle?). These forms are used exclusively as adverbials (Xromov 1972: 46 f.).

3.4.4.9. The predicative use of the participles dates back to Aryan (and Indo-European) times. In Vedic, the participles, in addition to their original attributive and substantival function, serve to mark attending circumstances of the action expressed by the main verb (cause, purpose, location, time, condition, concession, etc.) The implied agent of the participle may be co-referential with the subject of the finite verb, or with other nominal members of the clause (direct / indirect object, genitive, ablative, etc.); the participle may also be unattached and not related to any noun phrase:

- (23) *ásurānām vā iyām ágra āsīd, yāvad āsīnaḥ parāpśyati tāvad devānām* “in the beginning the earth belonged to the Asuras, to the Devas so far as the sitting one (so far as one who is sitting) sees” (TS 6.2.4.4; example in Delbrück 1888 (= 1968): 372; cp. 368 ff.).

In the Avesta, the participles are used in a similar way as markers of concomitant circumstances of the action expressed by the main finite verb. As in Vedic, the implied agent of the participle may be co-referential with either the subject of the finite verb or another nominal member of the clause. For examples I refer to Reichelt 1909: 325 ff., and, in particular, to Kellens 1984: 327 ff.; 425 ff.

As to Young Avestan, Bartholomae (1901: 141 ff.) thought to have discovered some examples of an absolutive in *-am*. These forms are verbal nouns and participles, active and middle, which appear in the accusative singular, and which Bartholomae compares with the Old Indic absolutives in *-am*. His interpretations were later reexamined by Benveniste (1935a: 393 ff.) who argues, in most instances convincingly, that there is no textual evidence for such forms.

There are, however, some Young Avestan passages where it seems near at hand to interpret the accusatives of participles as adverbs denoting concomitant actions:

- (24) *vaēnəmnəm ahmaṭ para daēuua pataiən vaēnəmnəm maiiā frāuuōiṭ vaēnəmnəm apara.karšaiiən jainiš haça mašiiākaēbiiō* “before this the demons, being seen (visible), plunged forward, being seen, the pleasures disappeared (?), being seen, they wrenched the women from men” (Yt. 19.80).
- (25) *yaṭ aēte yōi mazdaiiasna pāda aiiaṇtəm vā taciṇtəm vā barəmnəm vā vazəmnəm vā taci.apaiia nasāum frajasən* “if the Mazda-worshippers, walking or running or riding or driving, found a corpse in the running water” (Vd. 6.26 = Vd. 8.73).
- (26) *yezi nōiṭ sūnō vā kərəfš.xvarō vaiiō vā kərəfš.xvarō aētaṇham astəm auui apəmca uruuarənmca barəntəm frajasən* “otherwise (if not) the carcass-eating dogs or the carcass-eating birds would carry off these bones to the waters and the plants (... carrying these bones would come to the waters and the plants)” (Vd. 6.46 = Vd. 6.47).

In all these cases the participles (*vaēnəmnəm*; *aiiaṇtəm*, *tačiṇtəm*, *barəmnəm*, *vazəmnəm*; *barəṇtəm*) seem to function as absolutes or gerunds.⁷⁸

The Avestan usage (if it is genuine natural language) has, no connection with the Old Indic absolutes in *-am*, however, with which they were compared by Bartholomae (1901: l.c., cf. above). The latter forms, which are especially found in the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Sūtras*, are originally accusatives of action nouns, not participles, and evidently a development peculiar to Indic.⁷⁹

A detailed discussion of gerundial constructions and related phenomena in the Iranian languages would carry us far beyond our present purpose. Suffice it to say that Ossetic has inherited both types of hypotaxis:

– *phrasemic hypotaxis*, where subordination is carried out by a conjunction in association with a finite verb (a verbal form sufficient in itself to produce a sentence), and

– *morphemic hypotaxis*, where subordination is marked by an infinite form of the verb (gerund, participle).⁸⁰ In modern Ossetic the former procedure is still predominant. But it seems likely that the language shows some tendency away from this typology, towards that of morphemic hypotaxis. In the competition between these two methods of subordination the latter may have been strengthened and intensified through the influence of neighbouring Turkic and North Caucasian languages. However, as the written evidence available for the Ossetic language is of a recent date (the mediaeval Alanic documents are silent in this matter), a conclusive judgement is difficult to pronounce.

3.5. Verbal composition

Verbal composition is extremely common in Ossetic and the most – or even the only – productive device of the language for creating new verbs. A compound verb consists of a nominal part and an auxiliary verb; together they constitute a semantic and a syntactical unit. Various classes of nouns (substantives, adjectives, numerals, gerunds, participial forms) serve as nominal parts; they can be inflected for case and number. Both native words and loanwords occur in this role. Onomatopoeic words are common. The most currently used auxiliaries are *uin / un* “to be” and *kænin / kænun* “to do, make”. In addition, there are their semantically and phraseologically defined substitutes, such as *lasin / lasun* “to draw, carry”, *marin / marun* “to kill”, *mælin / mælnun* “to die”, *darin / darun* “to hold”, *kæsin / kæsun* “to look”. The semantic content of the auxiliary verb may be reduced and the meaning of the compound unpredictable from the meaning of its constituents. The question arises whether such verbs as *marin* and *mælin* are used metonymically rather than as auxiliaries proper in syntagms where they are regarded as forming compounds by the native grammarians.

3.5.1. The orientational and perfectivizing preverbs can be prefixed either to the nominal part or the auxiliary. There is agreement between the native grammarians whom I have consulted, that in the latter case an emphasis falls on the noun. (cf. Abaev 1964: 67 ff.; Axvlediani 1963-69: II, 105 ff.; Gagkaev 1956: 62 ff.; Isaev 1966: 84 ff.).

Examples:

⁷⁸ Cf. also Kellens 1984: 331 ff.; 334 ff.

⁷⁹ Cf. Renou 1968: 130 ff.

⁸⁰ Other devices for expressing syntactical subordination, such as infinitive constructions and surface parataxis, have here been left aside. – As to the terminology used in this paragraph, I refer to Bossong 1979 and Hewitt 1987: 257 ff.

(1) *nælxui qamili midæg fæ-cidæ* “the wild-boar disappeared among the reeds” (lit. “came to something”: MF: III, 1681). Here the preverb, *fæ-*, is placed in front of the nominal part. In the same phraseological expression the preverb is found prefixed to the auxiliary in a Nart text:

(2) *iæ fat cidæ fæ-c-i* “his arrow disappeared” NK 1949: 207).

But:

(3) *cidæ ærba-isti cæsti fænik’uildmæ* “they disappeared in the twinkling of an eye” (ibid.).

(4) *tærqus amardton, s-uængtæ iæ kodton, iæ igærtæ iin s-fizonæg kodton* “I killed a hare, I divided it, I fried the liver” (lit. “... made the liver shashlick”; NK 1946: 76).

But in the same text we also find (NK 1946: 77):

(5) *stæi fizonžitæ s-kodtoi* “then they made a kebab”.

In the following example the preverb is prefixed to the auxiliary:

(6) *æmæ kad æmæ radæi lævar kui fæ-kænæm* “when we give a present with honour and in a proper manner” NK 1946: 78).

But compare also:

(7) *Guimag læg in ba-lævar kodta iæ sayadaq; noži iin ba-lævar kodta saži carm* “the man from Gum gave him his quiver; in addition he gave him a deerskin” (NK 1946: 79). Here the preverb is placed in front of the noun.

This seems to indicate that there is no clear-cut difference between compound verbs and syntagms consisting of *kænin* plus an (internal and external) object, or *uin* with a subjective complement. The native grammars are not very clear in this matter. The following circumstances indicate the same thing: As appears from example (4) above, an enclitic pronoun or adverb can be intercalated between the nominal part and the auxiliary: *s-uængtæ iæ kodtoi*. In (7) the enclitics (*in*, *iin*) are placed in front of the noun.

Other examples:

(8) *ra-arfæ iin kodta* “he thanked him” (Gagkaev 1956: 67).

But:

(9) *arfætæ iil ba-kodta* “he thanked for that” (IES: I, 63).

(10) *a-gæpp æm kænnon, zayta* “I shall leap there (thither), he said” (K’osta: Iron fændir, 1960: 130).

(11) *ba-lævar in kodta iæ bæx dær* “he also gave him his horse” (NK 1946: 79).

But:

(12) *Pavel ibæl xodgæ kodta, urussagau læyuz ke zorui, uoi tuxxæi* “Pavel laughed at him because he speaks Russian badly” (D.; Isaev 1966: 86).

(13) *figæ iæ xorz s-kodta* “she boiled it (the beer) well” (Axvlediani, 1963-69: II, 106). Notice the place of the adverb (*xorz*) and the enclitic (*iæ*) between the gerund (*figæ*) and the prefixed auxiliary.

The negation is invariably placed in front of a verbum simplex. With compound verbs it can be placed either in front of the auxiliary or the nominal part:

(14) *iæ mard ta uælmærdtæm næ xæccæ kæni* “his dead body does not come to the cemetery” (K’osta, Iron fændir, 1960: 80)

But also:

- (15) *qærzǵæ næ kodta* “he did not moan”; *Temir xuisǵæ nal kodta* “Temyr did not sleep longer”; *tærsgæ ma kæn* “don’t be afraid” (examples in Axvlediani, o.c.: II, 106).

Relative pronouns and most subordinating conjunctions are as a rule placed immediately in front of the verb. With compound verbs, such subordinators can be placed in front of the nominal part:

- (16) *kæi koi kænai – k’æsarǵæ (I.) / ke koi kænai, k’æsarǵæ cæui (D.)* “he whom you mention, is at the threshold”, a proverb in which the relative pronoun *kæi / ke* (gen. sg.), the object of *koi kænai*, is placed in front of the compound verb (MF: II, 691 and 728).

The same applies to the following:

- (17) *ci diyuil-diyuil kodtoi, uimæn çi ci zidta* “what they were mumbling, nobody knew” (example in Abaev 1964: 73). Here the relative-interrogative *çi*, the object, is prefixed to the compound verb.

But compare also:

- (18) *sappi særti tærræstǵængæ uici zivvitt kui fælasta* “when it (the horse), making a jump, rushed over the mound” (example in Abaev 1964: 74). Here the conjunction, *kui*, is placed immediately in front of the auxiliary.

It seems natural to conclude from this that there is a certain tendency to include the nominal and the adverbial part of the clause in the body of the verb.

3.5.2. Similar devices for forming derivative verbs are, as it seems, widespread, occurring in languages which are not known to have been in contact with one another; thus, e.g., in Yiddish as well as Kalam and other Papuan languages of New Guinea (Foley 1986: 117). They are particularly characteristic of a large group of languages spoken in a contiguous area in Central and Western Asia, where they may be regarded as an areal phenomenon.

In the Turkic languages new verbs are formed from nouns with a limited number of single verbs which serve as auxiliaries. This feature dates at least back to Old Turkish (*qil-*, *et-* “to do, make”, *kör-* “to see”, *bol-* “to be, become”). In the Turkic neighbour languages of Ossetic this process of creating new verbs is common, especially from loanwords: Kar.-Balk. *qawga et-* “to quarrel”, *namaz et-* “to pray”, *žyly bol-* “to become warm”; Noghay *kullyk et-* “to work”, *sav bol-* “to become strong, healthy”, *xajyr kör-* “to profit by something”, *xarž et-* “to spend”, *qabul et-* “to consent”, *ač bol-* “get hungry”; etc.

Similar derivational devices are common in the Daghestanian and Nakh languages. In Ingush-Chechen, e.g., *dan* “to do”, *dala* “to give” are used for creating verbs from nouns: *paida + dan* “to profit by”, *namaz + dan* “to pray”, *dov + dan* “to scold”, *puram + dala* “to agree”. Periphrastic verbs consisting of a nominal part and an auxiliary (*š’an* and others) are also found in Adyge (Rogava / Keraševa 1966: 296 ff.; Kumaxov 1989: 212 ff.). They seem to be less common in Kabardian and Abkhaz (cf. Dumézil 1975: 213 ff.).

In Old Georgian, compound verbs are formed from nouns and adverbs with a verb so that they constitute a semantic and a syntactical unit together; both transitive and intransitive verbs are created in this way. The most productive auxiliary is *q’opay* “to make, do”, but other verbs may also be used (*cemay* “to give”, *yebay* “to take”, *debay* “to put, lay”, *k’lvay (k’vlay)* “to kill”, etc.): *qma-q’o* “he shouted”, (*qma* “voice”), *šen muclad iyo* “you will become pregnant” (*muclad yebay* “to conceive”: *muclad*, the adverbial case of *muceli* “womb”), etc. (Šaniže 1982: 139 ff.).

There is great variation in the realisation of this typological feature and its adaptation to the predicative pattern of each language. But this is a matter which needs separate studies, and would be beyond the reach of individual effort.

3.5.3. In the modern Iranian languages verbal compounds of this type are common. In modern Persian *kardan* “to do”, *šodan* “to become” and their phraseological substitutes serve as auxiliaries for forming new verbs. In Pashto *kavəl* “to do” and *kedəl* “to become” are used in a similar way (cf., e.g., Lorenz 1882: 86 f.). The same type of constructions is found in the Pamir languages; cf. Yaghnōbi *kun-* “to do”, *dih-* “to strike”, etc. (Xromov 1972: 96); Wakhi *car-* “to do”, *di-* “to strike” (Grjunberg / Steblin-Kamenskij 1976: 592; Steblin-Kamenskij 1999: 113; Paxalina 1975: 78 ff. and 90 ff.), just to mention a few examples. In all these languages the number of *verba simplicia* is limited; for the creation of new verbs, verbal composition is the regular device.

In Khwarezmian *'k-* “to do, make” is used for verbalizing nouns (“caused by the influence of Persian”, Henning 1971: 23; a calque?): *βynd* + *'k-* “to take a husband, marry”, etc. (Samadi 1986: 94 ff.; MacKenzie 1990: 102).

The Persian process for deriving verbs from nouns can be traced back to Middle Persian where *kardan* “to do”, *dādan* “to give”, *burdan* “to carry”, *zadan* “to strike”, and some other verbs functioned as auxiliaries: *zan kardan* “to marry”, *stēzag burdan* “to quarrel”, etc. (Rastorgueva / Molčanova 1981: 135; Telegdi 1951: 315 ff.; Windfuhr 1979: 113; Sheintuch 1976).

In several Avestan passages, where the verbs *kar-* “to make”, *varəz-* “to act, work, bring about”, *gan-* (*jan-*) “to strike” take two accusatives, the one as the inner, the other as the affected object, we probably see the first signs of the verbal composition here under discussion.

- (19) *yō narəm vīxrūməntəm xvarəm jaiṅti kā hē asti ciṅa* “he who gives (lit. strikes) a man a bloody (? Bartholomae 1904: 1436 “unblutig”) wound, what is his penalty” (Vd. 4.30 and 33; – *xvara-* + *jan-*).
- (20) *yō narəm frazābaodaṅhəm snaṅəm jaiṅti* “he who gives (strikes) a man a mortal blow” (Vd. 4.40 and 42; – *snaṅa-* + *jan-*).
- (21) *āaṭ tā snaoḍəntiš gərəzānā hazō niuarəzaiṅan daēuua* “and to them, the crying, wailing (women), the daevas did violence” (Yt. 19.80; *hazah* + *niuarəz-*).
- (22) *skəndəm šē mano kərənūdi* “derange his mind” (Y. 9.28; *skənda-* + *kar-*).⁸¹

3.5.4. It is difficult to believe that constructs of this type might have originated in Ossetic independently of similar constructions in the sister languages. The Avestan passages quoted above (which can be amplified with further examples) indicate that they existed *in nuce* already in early Common Iranian. Their beginning seems to have been a syntactic shift, a reinterpretation of the role of the (affected or inner) object or the objective complement of generic two- or three-place transitive verbs – and, correspondingly, of the role of the predicative of intransitive verbs like “to be, to become”; cf.:

*X made a translation (of) Y > *X translation-made Y

Oss. (I.) *uii ra-tælmac kodta* “he translated it”;

*their thoughts became one > *their thoughts united-were

Oss. (I.) *sæ quiditæ ba-iu sti* “their opinions coincided”.

⁸¹ Cf. also Reichelt 1909: 228 ff.; Sheintuch 1976.

This does not preclude the possibility that verbal composition developed in Iranian under the influence of neighbouring languages where similar devices already existed (some Central Asian language(s)? – prehistoric Turkic?). And it seems likely that in Ossetic this kind of verbal composition received an impetus through bilingual contacts with other (probably, chiefly Turkic) languages of the North Caucasus area. The relatively great optionality of the arrangement of the nominal part within the verbal compound may indicate that this feature has not yet been fully integrated into the Ossetic grammar.

Whatever its ultimate origin, verbal composition permits the language to enlarge the range of events which it can express without increasing its inventory of verbal stems. As verbs are less easily borrowed than nouns, it has become a convenient process for creating new verbs from foreign (in part also native) lexical material.

3.5.5. In a few Old Persian passages the verb *kar-* “to do” is found with the past participle in *-ta-*, both forming a phraseological unit:

(23) *aurumazdāmaīy upastām abara yātā kartam akunavam* (the Daiva inscription, Xerxes, Persepolis H, l. 45-46).

Kent (1953: 152) gives the following translation: “Ahuramazda bore me aid, until I completed the work”.⁸² According to Benveniste (1954 = 1979: 287 ff.), these constructions express potentiality: “... jusqu’à ce que j’aie réussi à le faire”. Similar constructions for expressing potentiality are found in Sogdian, Khotanese and various modern Iranian languages (Gershevitch 1961: 130 ff.; Emmerick 1968: 111; Benveniste 1954).

In Ossetic, verbal compounds consisting of a past participle and the verb *kænin* are used without the notion of potentiality: *fæ-mard kænin* “to kill”. This meaning is expressed by *færazin / færazun* “to be able to” and *mæ bon u / æi* “my strength is”.

3.5.6. Our conclusion is that the type of verbal composition discussed in the preceding paragraphs is a native inheritance, rooted in prehistoric Iranian, which has developed in Ossetic in its own peculiar way under the influence of neighbouring languages. Only a few of the questions regarding this feature have been touched on. Among matters which need thorough examination is the order in which the individual members of the verbal complex appear, their possibilities of exchanging places, and which parts of speech can be included in the verbal body. This is relevant for the question whether Ossetic tends towards a syntactic structure where the nominal parts of the clause are incorporated in the verb. As it seems, the optionality shown in the arrangement of the nominal part of the compound is still stylistic to a large extent. Investigations such as those here suggested would therefore in all likelihood need a native speaker.

In his treatment of the Persian compound verbs Windfuhr makes the following comment (1979: 113): “The continuous development in Persian from a formerly inflectional to an increasingly synthetic [sic] language has brought with it the expansion of compound verbs, virtually the only source of verbal innovation for many centuries.” This seems to say that in Persian there is a correlation between the development of compound verbs and the decline of the relatively complex inflection system of Old Iranian.

This can hardly apply to Ossetic which shows, at least in a large part of its grammatical system, a clear inclination to expand its use of morphological devices. I have argued above that the incorporation of nominal parts into the body of verbal compounds can be regarded as the indication of a tendency towards a polysynthetic

⁸² Cf. also Bisotun I, l. 49-50 (Kent, o.c.: 117) and Xerxes, Van, l. 22-23 (Kent, o.c.: 153).

typological structure. As a corollary, the expansion of verbal adverbs (gerunds) in order to mark syntactical subordination (a feature that Persian shares with Ossetic), is followed by an increasing importance of the morphological processes at the expense of syntactical constructions.

3.6. Conservative vs. innovative features

3.6.1. In the preceding sections, the attention has been drawn to some grammatical and lexical features that Ossetic shares with the adjacent languages. It seems natural to attribute these common features to bilingual contacts. The exposition, however, is not meant to be exhaustive. Most of the matters having been discussed here will need a much more detailed investigation than that presented above. But I hope to have shown that the languages of the Caucasus area are likely to have exerted a considerable influence upon both the phonetic and the grammatical system, as well as the vocabulary, of the Ossetic language.

Lexical borrowing has been largely limited to nouns. The fact that languages borrow nouns more easily than verbs is to all appearances due to the more complex structure of the latter word class; furthermore, from the outset the Ossetic verbal system is fundamentally different from that of both the Turkic and the Caucasian languages. The resulting reluctance to the borrowing of verbs has been compensated for by a productive verbal composition.

As already repeatedly mentioned, loanwords in Ossetic mainly consist of nouns relating to the Caucasian conditions of life, and belong to those parts of the vocabulary which are least structured and most open to foreign intrusion. At the same time it must be stressed that Ossetic has made considerable contributions to the lexical stock of its neighbour languages, in particular those of the North Caucasus.

Three of the areal features of grammar discussed above are of special interest, as they have an important bearing on the grammatical structure of the language: the orientational function of the preverbs, gerundial constructions, and verbal composition. But all these devices have been shown, I believe, to have originated in the language at previous stages of its development, although they have been preserved and stimulated, and also partly changed their functions, under the influence of adjacent languages. In all three cases the morphological materials used are of native origin.

3.6.2. Several scholars have brought up the question of the strength and impact of the Turkic grammatical structure; for a summary of these views cf. Johanson 1992: 199 ff. If this is anything but mysticism, it means that the Turkic languages are supposed to possess certain properties which make them easy to learn (easier, e.g., than languages with a high typological index of fusion), and thus fit to facilitate communication in bilingual situations. Such a property would be the agglutinative morphology, with its symmetrical relations between the form and the content of grammatical morphemes, and their juxtapositions and relatively invariant shape, which makes them easy to identify.

It is, however, unlikely that psycholinguistic mechanisms of this kind can alone play a decisive role in such matters. But I would not rule out the possibility that these properties, in association with social factors, have had effects at some time in the past. As already pointed out (cf. 3.2.3. above), Turkic languages have been a highly important part of the linguistic map of the North Caucasus for more than a millennium, both in bilingual daily communication and as *linguae francae* and languages of prestige. The sound systems of the Turkic languages are comparatively simple (particularly in

comparison with the North Caucasian languages), and from the outset not very different from those of Old Iranian. This may have made the acquisition of a Turkic dialect easier to an Ossetic-speaking population (and vice versa).

In view of these facts, it is a reasonable hypothesis that the Turkic languages of the area have exerted a strong influence not only upon the vocabulary but also the grammatical structure of Ossetic.

3.6.3. The impact of contact languages in various periods of its history notwithstanding, Ossetic has up to this day maintained to a large extent the character of an Iranian language. With regard to vocabulary, sound system and grammatical structure it has been remarkably resistant to change.

Lexical studies have demonstrated that the greater part of the “basic core vocabulary” is of native origin, even if it has developed some peculiar features (Bielmeier 1977; Thordarson 1984; 1986a; 1989: 477 ff.).

Productive grammatical morphemes are of Iranian origin; even where foreign structures were copied, native morphological material has been used.

In declarative clauses Ossetic has SOV as its basic word order. This is also the preferred order in both the Caucasian and Turkic languages of the area. SOV may to all appearances be assumed for Old Iranian (and Indo-European) as the unemphatic word order. In Ossetic, however, the functional load of clause word order is low; the relatively great optionality for permutations of the clause constituents is no doubt an ancient inheritance, VSO order being, e.g., quite common in narrative prose style.

Ossetic is predominantly premodifying and postpositional (AN, GN), with some traces of a freer word order in nominal compounds (cf., e.g., inverted *bahuvrīhis*). Premodification and postpositions are also predominant in the Turkic and the Northeast Caucasian (Nakh, Daghestanian) languages, as well as the modern Kartvelian languages (in Old Georgian adjuncts as a rule followed their head).⁸³

The structure of the noun phrase will be examined in some detail in the subsequent sections. Here I shall content myself with stating that the two last-mentioned features are to all appearances rooted in Old Iranian tendencies, which have probably been strengthened and generalised, in part at least, through bilingual contacts with neighbouring languages.

3.6.4. The conservatism of the Ossetic grammatical system is particularly pronounced in the inflection of the finite verb.

The tense system is based on two stems, the present and the past. The present stem represents various Old Iranian conjugational classes. All past stems derive from the ancient verbal adjective in **-ta-*. In the past tense the category of transitivity is expressed morphologically. Intransitive verbs are formed from the past stem in association with the present tense of the verb “to be”; cf. *cid-tæn / cud-tæn* (*cæuin / cæuun* “to go, come”). The origin of the transitive inflection (e.g. *mardton* I, D.; *marin / marun* “to kill”) is still unclear. Its derivation from an old past subjunctive, as suggested by Abaev (1964: 59), is unlikely as the subjunctive primarily marks a future event or activity (with or without the notion of will).

The present system differentiates four moods: the indicative, subjunctive, optative and imperative. Their functions are largely those of the corresponding Avestan moods. The formatives are evidently transformations of Old Iranian suffixes, although there are some details which still need an explanation (e.g., the *k*-forms found in the plural of the optative in Iron: *kæn-ikk-am*, pres. opt.; *kodta-ikk-am*, past opt.). An optative, but not a

⁸³ For a summary cf. Hewitt in Comrie 1981: 222 ff.; for Turkic cf. also *ibid.*, 77 ff.

subjunctive, has been formed from the past stem. Another innovation is the future tense in **čanah-*, which is derived from the present stem. This formation has its etymological counterpart in the use of the Sogdian particle *-kām* in order to express the future tense. An archaic feature is the Digor use of the present optative to mark repeated action in the past; in Iron it is the past optative that has this function.

Quite like Old Iranian, Ossetic differentiates three persons in singular and plural. The expression of this category is of the Old Iranian fusional type; the Iranian origin of the personal endings is mostly clear. The verb shows agreement with one actant only, namely the subject. An interesting feature is the use of enclitic pronouns and adverbs as anticipating exponents of various nominal constituents of the clause: *is æm axæm qazt dær Soslanmæ* ‘‘Soslan has such a game, too’’ (lit. ‘‘there is with him such a game also with S.’’, NK 1946: 87). The same expression – but without the anticipating *æm* – is found on the same page of the text in question: *is Soslanmæ axæm qast*.⁸⁴ To a certain point this is reminiscent of the polypersonalism of the Northwest Caucasian (and in part also the Kartvelian) languages. But while the pronominal prefixes (and suffixes) that correlate with various actants of the clauses are basic in these languages, the anticipating enclitics are optional in Ossetic. It is also worthy of note that the enclitics are not incorporated into the verbal body but adjoin the first word or syntagm (prosodic unit) of the clause.

Similar phenomena have developed in various languages independently of each other, e.g. in French as well as Modern Greek and other Balkan languages. The anticipating force of enclitics is found in Khwarezmian, too:

h'βrriydi' y' δγ°da'mi py sid δyn'r k'byn ‘‘I have given you my daughter for a hundred dinars marriage portions’’, lit. ‘‘I gave her thee ...’’ (MacKenzie 1990: 48; 46; – cp. also Henning 1955, a: 48 = 1977: II, 454).

There is hardly any reason to see a historical connection between the Khwarezmian and the Ossetic constructions, though; they may easily have originated independently in each language. On the other hand, I would not preclude the possibility that the occurrence of this feature in Ossetic is due to an impetus from the adjacent Northwest Caucasian languages.

3.6.5. Even if we allow for such tendencies as those discussed in the last paragraph, Ossetic has nothing comparable with the extreme complexity of the Northwest Caucasian verb where virtually the whole syntactic structure of the clause finds an expression in the morphology of the verb. Nor has Ossetic anything corresponding to the verbal structure of the Turkic languages, with their complex systems of suffixes which can be added to the verbal stem – morphemes marking diatheses, modality (including possibility, interrogation, negation), aspect, tense, person and number.

The nominal category of classes, widespread among the Northeast Caucasian languages and particularly characteristic of Nakh, is totally alien to Ossetic. The Ossetic elimination of the gender distinctions, which is in agreement with the general tendencies of the Iranian languages, will be treated in a later chapter (cf. 4.12.1. ff., in particular 4.12.3.).

Ergativity, commonly regarded as a characteristic trait of Caucasian languages, has no counterpart in Ossetic, neither in the verbal inflection nor in the case system. In actual fact, Ossetic has abandoned the ergative (or agentive) construction which must be assumed for an earlier stage of its history. In the past tense of transitive verbs, the agent was marked by the genitive and the patient by the nominative (the absolutive case), the past participle agreeing with the latter in gender and number (the **mana*

⁸⁴ For further examples cf. Abaev 1964: 127.

krtam construction, “my doing” > “I did”). A relic of this is still found in the personal pronouns of the first and second person plural where the genitive has taken over the role of the nominative, at the same time retaining its genitive functions; cf. I., D. *max* “we, us, our” < **ahmāxam*, I. *simax*, D. *sumax* “you, your” < **xsmāxam* (**yušmāxam*?).

As stated earlier, the verb agrees with one noun phrase (actant) only; this noun phrase, the subject, stands in the nominative, whether the verb is transitive or not. Three – in Digor even four – verbs take the primary actant in the genitive, viz. I. *fændi*, *qæui*, *uirni mæ* “I want, must, believe”, D. also *ænyezui mæ* “I may”; the verb stands in the third person. This implies that the actant (the “logical subject”) has little or no control over the verbal action.

Apart from this, Ossetic does not know inverted verbs as found, e.g., in Georgian (*m-i-q'var-xar* “I love you”, where *m-*, the first person singular, marks the indirect object, and *xar* “you are” correlates with the grammatical subject). Verbs of feeling and perception, which in the Nakh languages take their “logical subject” in the dative, are not treated differently from other verbs in Ossetic.

In the morphological structure as well as the functions of the finite verb, Ossetic has largely retained the character of a Middle East Iranian verb. This will clearly appear from a comparison with the verbal systems of Sogdian and Khotanese.

3.6.6. In contradistinction to the other Iranian languages, which show a general tendency to reduce the ancient nominal inflection, Ossetic has developed a comparatively complex case system. For Iron, nine case forms are usually assumed, for Digor, eight. In addition to these, which may be labelled “primary cases”, a series of “secondary cases” are formed by the addition of nouns or particles to one of the cases of the former group, mainly the genitive.

The inflection is of the agglutinative type. In nouns the case ending invariably follows the plural ending. The inflection of pronouns, and in Digor also of cardinal numerals, shows some peculiarities.

The Ossetic case system has been the subject of a number of studies and has been approached from various points of view. Apart from the expositions of the grammars written by native scholars (first of all Axvlediani 1963-69; Abaev 1964; Isaev 1966; Gagkaev 1956), the following studies are particularly relevant to our discussion: Vogt 1944 gives a synchronic analysis of the case system, inspired by the school of glossematics and Hjelmslev’s case theories. Weber 1980 and Bielmeier 1982 treat the case system from a historical point of view. A few comments have been made by the present writer (1989 and, in particular, 1985). In the subsequent chapters the thread of these comments will be resumed and the whole matter will be subjected to a more thorough examination.