

History

Pontic Greeks of the Black Sea Villages of Georgia: Migration Routes and Socio-Political Reasons

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A certain part of the Greek-speaking population living in the Black Sea region of Georgia, especially Adjara, is a descendant of the Asia Minor Greeks. The migration of the Greeks in the Caucasus was of different directions and content in different periods. The migration of the Anatolian Greeks in the Black Sea region was due to religious processes in the Otomman Empire as well as socio-political processes. Therewith, the reason for migration of Greeks in Georgia was not heterogenous. In this context, Batumi was especially distinguished. Here, the commercial and industrial type of the city appears rather late from the second half of the 19th century. Many of them even sold their ancestral homes to move to cities and improve their living conditions. The group of migrants who settled in Ajara, in the territories near Batumi, has made significant changes to the ethnic portrait of Georgia. The Pontic Greeks brought historically developed cultural values to Georgia, which were reflected in the system of traditional and social relations, economic life, material and spiritual culture, sectoral vocabulary. Over time, the Greek diaspora developed its own culture in the Georgian ethnic environment and, accordingly, influenced the local environment from the point of view of culture. The Greeks also learned a lot from the locals. © 2020 Bull. Georg. Natl. Acad. Sci.

Greeks, Pontic Greeks, Anatolian Greeks, Adjara, Batumi, Kobuleti, settlement, migration

A certain part of the Greek-speaking population living in the Black Sea region of Georgia, especially Adjara, is a descendant of the Asia Minor Greeks. The migration of the Greeks in the Caucasus was of different directions and content in different periods. The migration of the Anatolian Greeks in the Black Sea region was due to religious processes in the Otomman Empire as well as socio-political processes. The history of the settlement of modern Greeks in the Caucasus leads to the 15th-18th centuries when the Ottoman Empire conquered most of the Middle East and occupied Byzantium.

The politically and economically oppressed Christian population was in an intolerable situation at that time because of the situation in the world. Therewith, the reason for migration of Greeks in Georgia was not heterogenous [1-4].

Migration routes and socio-political reasons.

The process of the migration of the Greeks in Ajara especially intensified after the Russia-Ottoman Empire war in 1877-1878. The resettlement was forced in this case too. Most of the Pontic Greeks who were resettled to Ajara come from the Asia

Minor, especially from the village of Santa in the high Alpine Zone as well as directly from the city of Trabzon, the provinces of Rize, Fatsa, Ordu, Giresun and Samsun. The territory inhabited by the Greeks in Trabzon was called Santa. It consisted of seven villages which were called as Zurnachidebi, Poshtopidebi, Chakalidebi, Pinacidebi, Koslaridebi, Ternazidebi and Ishkhanidebi. Also, these villages were known as Zurna-Chando, Pishtafinti, Katekhorio, Kozlarando, Piniantandoni, Ikhshanantdo, Keteankhorio where the most Greeks lived.

In November 1881, the first group of 253 Greek families moved towards Georgia. They settled in the village of Dagva, Ajara. 20-21 families consisting of 2107 people who came from the Ottoman Empire also settled in Dagva. By 1907, the number of the Greeks in the village of Dagva reached 602 people. After the establishment of the Soviet Union, the village of Dagva grew and reached 170 households, respectively 940 people. After the World War II, the population of the village was 1540 people since 1946 and by the end of 1900, there were 1900 Greeks in the village [5].

Akhalsheni was one of the first villages on the coast of Ajara where the Greeks settled. Their names mostly were Ishkhanidi, Avgopulo and Asanidi [6]. Refugees from Turkey mostly settled in the mountainous villages of Ajara, since malaria was spread in the lowlands. These villages were Dagva, Akhalsheni, Chaisubani, Achkva, Zeda Kvirike and Chakvi. Part of the Greeks settled in the cities of Batumi and Kobuleti. In this context, Batumi was especially distinguished. Here, the commercial and industrial type of the city appears rather late from the second half of the 19th century.

Families lived in houses scattered along the coast and forest suburbs. Already by 1873, there were 4,970 inhabitants in Batumi and 8,671 – in 1884. There were 1,166 Greeks among them, but the population dropped to 3,000 after the Russian army occupied the city [7]. According to the census of 1882, 8,971 people of different both lived in

Batumi consisting of 6,931 men and 1,740 women; this number increased to 12,000 by 1889 and reached 18,123 by 1900. There were 14 180 men and 3,943 women among them. According to Gifford Palgrave, by 1872 there were 350 Greeks in Batumi, and according to a census conducted on March 19, 1882, their number was 1,106. 38 Greeks among them were the subject of Greece. According to the materials stored in the Manuscripts Foundation at Khariton Akhvlediani Ajara State Museum, by 1886, there were 2,982 Greeks in Batumi. According to the information provided by N. Dakishevitch, by 1880s, 15,400 people of different sexes lived in Batumi and 510 Greeks of them were subjects of Russia, and 174 Greeks were subjects of Turkey. According to Vladimer Lysovsky, the number of Greeks in Batumi was 3,797. He also talks about 4,000 Greeks. According to the census, conducted on June 17, 1890, there were 1955 Greeks in Batumi and according to the census of January 28, 1897-2762 Greeks. And by 1924, total 1031 Greek men and 852 Greek women lived in Batumi. By 1907, the number of Greeks in the city of Batumi was 3,500 [8]. According to the statistics by I. I. Kalpoglu, the number of the Greeks in the Batumi region gives the following picture: Sarpi and Gonio – 33, Batumi – 3,500, Akhalsheni – 582, Korolistavi – 52, Achkva – 500, Dagva – 602, Kvirike – 4,002. According to the agricultural and urban census of the whole Russia, held in June 1917, the number of Greeks in Batumi reached 4,008 people, and according to the census conducted in April 1918 after the occupation of Batumi by the Ottomans, the number of Greeks was 4,878. Even during the English occupation of Batumi in April 1920, the number of Greeks was 8,598. By 1922, when the census of the entire population of Georgia was conducted, 7,629 Greeks lived in Batumi [9]. As can be seen from the censuses, total 43,348 people lived in Batumi by 1920 and 8,598 of them were Greeks indicating a decrease in the growing number of Greeks by 1922 [10]. Political processes in Georgia in 1917-1922,

possible perspectives of the field of war between Russia and the Ottoman Empire in the territory of Ajara, the restoration of independence of Georgia and internal and external obstacles associated with the proclamation of Georgia as a young democratic republic, apparently, caused concern of the Greek diaspora and, most likely, provided a reduction in their numbers [For the concrete statistics see.: 11].

Many of them even sold their ancestral homes to move to cities and improve their living conditions. The group of migrants who settled in Ajara, in the territories near Batumi, has made significant changes to the ethnic portrait of Georgia. The Pontic Greeks brought historically developed cultural values to Georgia, which were reflected in the system of traditional and social relations, economic life, material and spiritual culture, sectoral vocabulary. Over time, the Greek diaspora developed its own culture in the Georgian ethnic environment and, accordingly, influenced the local environment from the point of view of culture. The Greeks also learned a lot from the locals.

Conclusion. The tolerant nature of the Georgian and Greek people is well exposed based on

consideration of the Greek-Georgian Relations. Religious factor-orthodoxy used to be one of those grounds that used to define their migration to Georgia where the migrants found the second homeland. Pontic Greeks had a big influence of the lifestyle and culture of the local population of Ajara-Georgian Black Sea coastal area; however the local community used to acquire the empirical knowledge and experience of Greeks gained through centuries. The main activities of Greeks included farming, cattle breeding, viticulture, bee keeping and other secondary fields of economy. Although these people also acquired Georgian customs and traditions, however they did not abandon theirs. Almost all Greeks living in the villages could speak Georgian and all Georgians – the Greek language. Pontic Greeks who brought their traditions to Georgian, turned out to be the subject of the economic and cultural-psychological adaptation in the conditions of the long-term co-existence with the local Georgian community. The process of adaptation to the new environment was accelerated partly by their religious compliance that played an important role in making these people coming close to each other.

ისტორია

საქართველოს შავიზღვისპირა სოფლების პონტოელი ბერძნები: მიგრაციის მოდელები, მარშრუტები და სოციოპოლიტიკური მიზეზები

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საქართველოს შავიზღვისპირეთში, კერძოდ, აჭარაში მცხოვრები ბერძნულენოვანი მოსახლეობის გარკვეული ნაწილი მცირე აზიის ბერძენთა შთამომავალია. კავკასიაში ბერძენთა მიგრაცია სხვადასხვა დროს სხვადასხვა მიმართულებისა და შინაარსის იყო. ანატოლიელი ბერძნების მიგრაციას საქართველოს შავიზღვისპირეთში სოციალურ-პოლიტიკურთან ერთად ოსმალეთში განვითარებული რელიგიური პროცესებიც განაპირობებდა. საქართველოში ბერძენთა მიგრაციის მიზეზები ერთგვაროვანი არ ყოფილა. აჭარის ზღვისპირეთში ბერძნული დიასპორები გვხვდება სოფლებში: ახალშენში, ყოროლისთავში, ფერიაში (ხელვაჩაურის რ-ნი), დაგვაში, კვირიკეში, აჭყვაში (ქობულეთის რ-ნი). ბერძენთა დასახლებით განსაკუთრებით ბათუმი გამოირჩეოდა. აქ, ახალი ტიპის სავაჭრო-სამრეწველო ქალაქი საკმაოდ გვიან, XIX საუკუნის მეორე ნახევრიდან დაარსდა. პონტოელი ბერძნების შავიზღვისპირეთში დასახლების შემდეგ, ბევრმა მათგანმა, პირველსაცხოვრისი დატოვა და ქალაქებსა თუ ქალაქების ახლო-მახლო ადგილებში დამკვიდრდა, ძირითადად, ქობულეთსა და ბათუმს მიაშურა. შიდა მიგრაციები რეალურად აჭარის ბარის საზღვრებს არ სცილდებოდა. უკეთესი პირობების შექმნის მიზნით, ბევრი ქალაქში დამკვიდრებისათვის მამა-პაპისეული სახლების გაყიდვასაც არ ერიდებოდა. მიგრანტთა ჯგუფები, რომლებიც აჭარაში, ბათუმის მიმდებარე ტერიტორიებზე განსახლდა, საქართველოს ეთნიკურ პორტრეტში სერიოზული ცვლილებები შეიტანა. პონტოელმა ბერძენებმა საქართველოში ისტორიულად ჩამოყალიბებული კულტურული ფასეულობები ჩაიტანეს, რაც ტრადიციულ სოციალურ ურთიერთობათა სისტემაში, სამეურნეო ყოფაში, მატერიალურ და სულიერ კულტურაში, დარგობრივ ლექსიკაში გამოიხატებოდა. დროთა განმავლობაში, საქართველოს შავიზღვისპირეთში – ქართულ ეთნიკურ გარემოში ბერძნულმა დიასპორამ საკუთარი კულტურა განავითარა და, შესაბამისად, ადგილობრივ გარემოზე მოახდინა გავლენა. ამასთან, კულტურული თვალსაზრისით, ბერძენებმა დამხვედური ლოკალური გარემოცვისგანაც ბევრი რამ შეიტვისა.

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