

## History

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### ყივჩაყები საქართველოში

ალასანია გიული  
საქართველოს უნივერსიტეტი

საქართველოში ყივჩაყთა გადმოსვლას მეცნიერთა უმრავლესობა 1118 წლით ათარიღებს. ყივჩაყთა ჩამოსახლებას საქართველოში როგორც დადებით მოვლენას აფასებს დავითის ისტორიკოსი. ძირითადად ასეთივე თვალსაზრისია ქართულ ისტორიოგრაფიაში. ამასთანავე, ყივჩაყების საქართველოში ყოფნასთან დაკავშირებით ლიტერატურაში აზრთა სხვადასხვაობაა. ნაშრომში განხილულია ჩამოსახლებულთა რაოდენობა, მათი განსახლების ადგილი, ინტეგრაციის ხარისხი და ურთიერთობა ადგილობრივ მოსახლეობასთან. ნაშრომში გაზიარებულია აზრი მათი სამხრეთ და სამხრეთ-დასავლეთ საზღვრებზე დასახლების შესახებ; გაზვიადებულად არის მიჩნეული დავითის ისტორიკოსის ნაშრომში მითითებული რიცხვი 40, 000 და მცდარად შეხედულება მოგვიანებით მათი რიცხვის გაზრდის შესახებ. სტატიაში უარყოფილია შეხედულება ყივჩაყთა სწრაფი ასიმილაციის შესახებ ზოგიერთი გამონაკლისის გარდა, გამოთქმულია აზრი მათი ძირითადი ნაწილის სამშობლოში დაბრუნების შესახებ დავითის გარდაცვალების შემდეგ. ნაშრომში განხილულია ყივჩაყების სტატუსი საქართველოში თამარისა და მის შემდგომ ხანებში.

## Kipchaks in Georgia

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The Turkic peoples who settled in the North Caucasus had active communication with those who lived in the North as well as the South Caucasus including Georgians. Since the Early Middle Ages, various kinds of relations can be traced between them: cultural and economic interactions as well as frequent wars. Since the North Caucasus had been densely populated and frequently filled up by newcomers, migration to the South was a regular process. Search for new fertile lands—not always a peaceful activity—was accompanied by invasions and onslaughts, resistance from natives, massacres or expulsions of people on both sides. However historic memory has preserved some positive experience in relations between the Turkic migrants and the Georgians, frequent alliances of whom against their common opponents contributed a lot to their survival.

A new flow of Turkic people moved westward in the 11<sup>th</sup> c. The newcomers occupied a vast territory between the Volga and the Danube including the Crimean peninsula, the coasts of the Sea of Azov and the Caspian Sea, the Lower Volga and the left bank of the Yayk. The later interpolation of a related excerpt from the Georgian chronicle *Kartlis Tskhovreba* states, “Pachaniketi bordered on Ovsetia. Jiketi was located there. Much later the Pachaniks and Jiks were put to flight by the Turks, and Pachaniks went westward and the Jiks fortified themselves in the extremes of Abkhazeti” (Life of Kartli, 1958, pp. 156-157, 36, 52).

The source referred to above is a sort of an exception. All other Georgian written sources mention those newcomer Turkic people by their self-name - Kipchak, since Georgians, because of frequent contact with those people, knew their ethnic name very well. The same Kipchaks are known as Comans (Cumans) in the Byzantine and European sources, while in Slavic sources they are named “Polovtsi” (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 13).

The newcomers turned out a big threat for their close and not so close neighbors. Evidence of some 34 incursions by the Kipchaks into the territory of Eastern Slavs and 22 campaigns by Russian princes against them in the course of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. can be found in the sources from the second half of the 11<sup>th</sup> c. and the 12<sup>th</sup> century (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 62). Defeated by Russians several times, one part of the Kipchaks led by “Atraka, son of Sharaghan,” moved 750 km eastward (1095-1106) (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 72). The Georgians’ relationship with the Kipchaks dates from this event.

Evidence about the Kipchaks is preserved in the chronicles written by contemporaries. These include the relevant parts of *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, and firstly, the chronicle written by David the Builder's historian. Some additional information is preserved in Arabic and Armenian sources. For comparative analysis purposes, one may also refer to the evidence from Byzantine and Hungarian sources. It is noteworthy that in some rare cases Georgian chroniclers mention the Kipchaks already in connection with the events of the ancient times. For instance, according to Leonti Mroveli, who lived in the mid- 11<sup>th</sup> c., some ruthless tribes called Bun-Turks and Kipchacks had settled on the bank of the Mtkvari prior to the coming of Alexander the Great to Kartli (Life of Kartli, 1958, p. 17). According to recent scholarly studies, Bun-Turks of the Georgian sources are to be interpreted as Scythians. The reference to the Kipchaks in this chronicle is actually one of the arguments for placing its author in the 11<sup>th</sup> c. (Biro, 1973, p. 168). In a later interpolation of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. manuscript of *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (in the part dedicated to Vakhtang Gorgasali, who reigned in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> c.), attributed to Juansher (6-8<sup>th</sup> cc.), we can see that Vakhtang Gorgasali "subdued the Ovses and the Kipchaks" (Life of Kartli, 1958, pp. 156-157). It has been widely accepted that the use of ethnic names in both above-mentioned cases is anachronistic.

It has been mentioned that the Georgian sources mostly use the term Kipchaks, as evidenced in the quoted cases. However, there are some other exceptions. For instance, the later version (12<sup>th</sup> c.) of metaphrastic hagiography of "Martyrdom of David and Constantine" (737), refers to "the country of Comans", who are explained as those "who are the Kipchaks." The Georgian scholar S. Jikia connected with the same word the name "Guman", mentioned in the Turkish defter, made in the late 16<sup>th</sup> c. for southern Georgia (Jikia, 1958, p. 464).

In the late 12<sup>th</sup> c., the Georgian king David the Builder, taking advantage of the start of the Crusades, stopped paying tribute to the Turk-Seljuks and began to deal with domestic problems; he defeated the domestic opposition and repulsed the invaders. According to the evidence of David's chronicler, after he stopped paying tribute, the Turks apparently were no longer able to spend winter in the Georgian lands where "[i]n Havchala and Dighuami and along the Mtkvari and the Iori they had settlements" (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 168). However, we can see that the Turks did continue to camp in those regions; evidence to that effect is provided on several occasions (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 76). For instance, recounting the events of 1110, the chronicler says: "They made camps in Gachiani, on the banks of the Mtkvari river, from Tbilisi to Bardavi and on the banks of the Iori, in all the beautiful winter places" (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 177). After that follows a detailed description how they [the Turks] came in winter and returned in summer, "their power and numbers were big" and nobody could dare "to expel them and harm them" (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 178).

According to the chronicler, since Georgians took Rustavi, “the Turks had no winter camping” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 189). But later the Turks also used to camp in Georgian lands: “As soon as the Turks learned that the king was far away, they camped along Mtkvari” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 188).

In 1105, after the reconquest of Kakheti-Hereti, the Georgian king defeated the Turks near Ertukhi. In 1110, the Georgians regained control over Samshilde and Dzerna in Lower Kartli. They took Rustavi in 1115 and fortress Gishi in 1116, launched a campaign into Shirvan and Kaladzori in 1117 and into Agarani and Lore in 1118. All this was accomplished with a small number of troops. This is attested to by the chronicler who says that “[t]hey took Samshilde either with skill” or “with a small army” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 172) that was led by the king personally.

But in all those years the main goal was still not achieved, as the Turks again spent winter in Georgian lands and the threat of loss of the territories was still in place. By that time the Georgian king had an ambitious goal “to join [to his kingdom] many and countless lands” - “if not so, what will be in my possession?” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 82) asked the King. To accomplish all that, the King’s army alone was not sufficient; however, he found a way out – an alliance with the northern neighbors – the Kipchaks, who, as David’s historian attests, had many attractive characteristics, such as “bravery in war, quickness in marching, fierceness in attacking inducing [their opponents] to submit” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 183; Biro, 1973). Thus, the Georgian chronicler convincingly demonstrates the need for bringing the Kipchaks to Georgia and settling them there.

By 1116, the Georgian king David IV (1089-1125) divorced his first wife, Armenian by origin, and married the daughter of a Kipchak prince Atraka, the son of Sharagan. There is a supposition that it have taken place in late 1104-early 1105. (Tsurtsunia, 2012). Reconquest of Tbilisi, which was still beyond the united Georgia, and liberation of the whole of the country from the domination of the Turk-Seljuks (“didi turkoba”) was now on the agenda of the king.

P. Golden mentions the reasons and goals why alliance with the Kipchaks was attractive to the Georgian king. “The marriage alliance with the Kipchaks reflects a broad, strategic outlook... . Like all medieval rulers struggling to create a form of government with minimal limitations placed on his authority (especially by the aristocracy), David expected to have the Kipchaks as a pliant tool for royal policy” (Margishvili, 2006, pp. 61-62). Firstly, the fact should be adduced that the Kipchaks had no property in Georgia and no clan interests, which would make them more loyal to the king. The king needed foreign warriors to restrict the power of the

Georgian aristocracy or, according to P. Golden, "to offset the power of the aristocratic clans" (Margishvili, 2006, pp. 36, 62).

A number of sources confirm that the Kipchaks easily established contacts with various peoples even those hostile to them. The Russian princes frequently married their women. Marital alliances between them are confirmed in 1163 and 1205. There are several other similar cases with no dates available for them (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, pp. 62-63).

After sending envoys and receiving a preliminary consent, the king together with the prime vezir, the Mtsignobartukhutsesi - Giorgi Chqondideli (bishop of Chqondidi) - went to Kipchaks and held negotiations with Ossetians to ensure a safe passage of the Kipchaks to Georgia. From the Georgian sources, we know that the king took hostages from both sides: "He established peace and love between them, as between brothers: [he took] control over the Darial fortresses and the Ossetian gates and the Caucasian mountains, and ensured a safe road for the Kipchaks"... (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 184).

The precise date of bringing the Kipchaks to Georgia is not clear to the chroniclers. However the majority of scholars date this event to 1118 (I. Javakhishvili, Sh. Meskhia, M. Lordkipanidze, R. Metreveli, K. Chkhata-raishvili, G. Anchabadze, J. Stepnadze, P. Golden). This date is based on a succession of events according to David's chronicler. I. Javakhishvili dated the "settling, training and arrangement" of the Kipchaks back to 1118-20 (Javakhishvili, 1983, p. 200).

According to David's chronicler, bringing the Kipchaks to Georgia was a positive step. The same opinion dominates the Georgian scholarly literature. However, one may also discern a certain trend of underestimating the importance of the event. An example is served by P. Golden's remark, who does not share the opinion of Sh. Meskhia and tries to downplay their [the Kipchaks] role (Margishvili, 2006, pp. 62).

There are some disagreements in the scholarly literature about specific issues concerning the Kipchaks' settling in Georgia.

One such disputable issue is the locations of their settlement. According to I. Javakhishvili, the Kipchaks had both winter and summer camps in Georgia. Proceeding from the following evidence given by David's chronicler, I. Javakhishvili supposes that Kipchak's winter settlements were in Kartli: "The king came into Kartli and established winter settlement, food and supervisors for Kipchak families and managed all affairs in Kartli" (Javakhishvili, 1983, p. 209). In fact, according to the context, ("the king managed all affairs in Sharvan, granted a lot of gifts to Kurds, Lezgins, Tarass, went around Kartli, established winter settlement, food and supervisors for Kipchak families and managed all affairs in Kartli, Somkhiti and Anisi") the settlements of the Kipchaks were not limited to Kartli only. However, Sh. Meskhia, R. Metreveli and M. Lordkipanidze, all shared I. Javakhishvili's suggestion in this respect. According to R. Me-

treveli, the Georgian king was interested in the assimilation of the Kipchaks so much that he settled them on the territory of Kartli (Metreveli, 1990, p. 178).

There is also a difference of opinion as to whether the Kipchaks were settled along the south and south-western borders, were conditions are more favorable for a nomadic way of life based on cattle breeding (“he settled them with their families in more suitable places for them”) (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 184) as well as more opportunities for pillage (Chkhartishvili, 1966, p.169; Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, pp. 150, 151). According to M. Lordkipanidze, the Kipchaks were settled in Shida Kartli, northern Armenia, Hereti, on the borders of Georgia (Lortkipanidze, 1979, p. 127). The Kipchaks used to raid the neighboring areas; this becomes obvious from the following evidence of David’s chronicle, where envoys of foreign countries come with gifts “seeking peace and love, and the end of Kipchak raiding” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 198). S. Eremyan published materials, which confirmed the settling of the Kipchaks in Armenian lands. In 1206, Zakaria Mkhargrdzeli constructed a monastery called Ghfchakhvank, near Harwich. There was a village Ghfchakh. The people mentioned in the Harwich inscription, in the scholar’s opinion, are the Kipchaks; and in one inscription, there is a reference to Qubasar’s family members (Chkhartishvili, 1966, p. 169). There is a town Kipchak and a river Kipchak-Chay in Saingilo (Chkhartishvili, 1966, p. 169), at the border of historic Georgia, which is part of Azerbaijan at present. There are no Kipchak traces remaining on the Georgian territory except for the mentioning of Demetra Kipchakidze as an inhabitant of the village Chkhari in the document of 1621 (Chkhartishvili, 1966, p. 169). A. Yunusov thinks that “a center of the Kipchaks in the Middle Asia was the town Sighnaghi. The Kipchaks who were exiled to the Caucasus brought the name to a new place. That is how the village Sighnaghi in Azerbaijan and town Sighnaghi in eastern Georgia appeared” (IUnusov, 2000, p. 36). The same argument made by the Turkish scholar M.F. Kirzioghlu (1992, p. 21) is however doubtful, as it is known that the first time Sighnaghi as a town in Georgia is mentioned in the sources from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> c. (1762). In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> c., it became a royal town. N. Murghulia and V. Shusharin think that prior to that the place had been a winter camp, where Turks would come earlier along the rivers Mtkvari and Iori (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 150).

The number of Kipchak settlers is disputable as well. The main source for this information is David’s chronicler: “He settled them with their families in more suitable places for them; 40,000 were selected for the army” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 184). The manuscript of *Kartlis Tskhovreba* attributed to Queen Mariam (the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> c.) and the manuscript attributed to Queen Anna (15<sup>th</sup> c.) both give the

number 40,000 (Life of Kartli, 1906, p. 304; Life of Kartli, 1942, p. 214). One may see the same number in the Armenian version of *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (13<sup>th</sup> c.) (Old Armenian Translation of Life of Kartli, 1953, p. 245).

I. Javakhishvili considered the issue in different times. In his opinion, David the Builder first resettled “40,000 selected for the army” together “with their families.” Except for them, there was a slave force of 5,000, and “each [of them] became Christian, reliable and tested for bravery.” Since that time, the king had “45,000 permanently provided, deliberately trained cavalry” (Javakhishvili, 1983, p. 200). The same chronicle contains the following evidence: “David the Builder established 40,000 Kipchak warriors in Georgia”... (Javakhishvili, 1983, p. 214). If we allow at least five people for one family and recall that “40,000 plus 5,000 slaves were cavalry, we can presume then that David the Builder resettled in Georgia, at least, 225,000 Kipchaks of both genders” (Javakhishvili, 1983, p. 215). Bringing 225,000 Kipchaks to Georgia at a time when the country led by the ambitious commander and king was moving forward ceaselessly and growing, can be considered a big acquisition” (Javakhishvili, 1983, p. 215). It should be noted here that one may agree with N. Murghulia and V. Shusharin who argued that adding the slave troops to Kipchaks was not acceptable (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 123). However, P. Golden suggests that the slave army “consisted of Kipchak and other Turkic tribesmen... together with North Caucasian mountaineers” (Margishvili, 2006, p. 62).

The estimate of 40,000 Kipchaks who together with their families settled in Georgia is repeated in the works by M. Lordkipanidze, R. Metreveli and K. Chkhataishvili (Lortkipanidze, 1979, p. 226; Metreveli, 1990, p. 178; Chkhataishvili, 1996, pp. 161-187). According to K. Chataishvili, “simultaneously 40,000 warriors fought” from 40,000 families settled in Georgia. J. Stefnadze repeated the same figure - 225,000 - suggested by I. Javakhishvili (Stepnadze, 1999, p. 207). G. Anchabadze says that the total number of the settled reached 200,000-250,000 (Anchabadze, 1990, p. 106). S. Margishvili had a different opinion: “A more realistic assumption would be that the number of Kipchak warriors who came to Georgia was 5,000, together with the families about 25,000; that would be more in agreement with the scale” (Biro, 1973, p. 98).

Based on the above-mentioned figure (40,000) and the chronicles by Vakhushti Bagrationi and Ioanne Bagrationi (18<sup>th</sup> -19<sup>th</sup> cc), the scholars are able to calculate the number of the king’s regular army. According to M. Lordkipanidze, “Except 40,000 Kipchaks, David had 20,000 Georgian regular warriors, and that makes 60,000 warriors” (Lortkipanidze, 1979, p. 228). According to R. Metreveli, “if there were 40,000 Kipchaks, it is natural that the remaining 20,000 were Georgians.” The scholar refers to Ioanne Bagrationi: “There were provided 60 thousand warriors on

wages" (Metreveli, 1990, p. 178). The suggestion by I. Shaishmelashvili was not much different: "While conducting strategic operations, except the personal guard and 40 thousand Kipchaks regular army, David the Builder summoned the royal army frequently and for protracted periods of time. It seems this part of the armed forces [the royal army] was not different from the above-mentioned regular army. Otherwise it is not possible to explain the gathering of 60 thousand army in just three days after issuing an order" (Shaishmelashvili, 1973, pp. 53-59). This opinion was not shared by G. Anchabadze. "It is doubtful that Georgia could ever have economic resources for keeping such a regular army. To our mind, the resettled Kipchaks provided a light regular cavalry, while small numbers of warriors led by their military elite, could always be with the king" (Anchabadze, 1990, p. 110). The scholar refers to the Armenian chronicler of the 12<sup>th</sup> c. Matheos Urkhaetsi about the composition of the army, which was fighting at the Didgori battle (1121).

It has been mentioned both above and noted in the scholarly literature that numbers 400, 40,000, and 400,000 are traditional in connection with the Turkic world. The evidence of Anna Comnena from 1091 is worth attention. The evidence refers to "almost 40,000 warriors, the leaders of whom were Togortak and Maniak (Boniak) and others..." (Komnina, 1996, p. 223). Roger gives the following information about the coming of the Kipchaks to Hungary, which is based on verbal sources: "As they say, they were about 40,000 without family members" (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 95). Indeed, the same number is preserved in verbal sources. There is related evidence in the scholarly literature; after all, it was noted that Anna Comnena, Roger, and David's chronicler all give the number of 40,000 troops, taking into consideration Kipchaks' self-perception" (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 95).

One may also recall here the evidence of the encounter of the Byzantine emperor Heracles and the Turks close to Tbilisi. The Turks too brought 40,000 men. The same number in connection with the north is mentioned in *Kartlis Tskhovreba* in another case, when Bagrat IV "brought 40,000 warriors from Ossetians." Hereby one may recall the evidence of the chronicler of Queen Tamar about the number of Rum warriors brought by Rukn ad-Din Suleiman-Shah II against the Georgians in 1202: "He summoned all his army and gathered warriors of 40 times as many, which is 400,000" (Life of Kartli, p. 367).

N. Murgulia and V. Shusharin have some doubts about the number 40,000, which was indicated by David the Builder's chronicler; they suppose that the number was much bigger (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 96). They base their opinion on the evidence of the same chronicler, which is, in fact, misinterpreted in scholarly literature.

I. Javakhishvili indicates 50,000 in his "History of the Georgian Law": "To empower himself, the king created an army of 50,000 warriors



from the resettled Kipchaks, trained them well and had them always ready for fighting”(Javakhishvili, 1984, p. 106).

In G. Anchabadze’s opinion, “[i]n order to ascertain the precise number of the military forces, a census was held periodically. According to the evidence of David’s chronicle, the census of 1123 showed that the number of Kipchaks who carried arms reached 50,000. Since the natural growth of population couldn’t be 20 %, it is suggested that in 1119-23 new groups of nomads from the North were resettled” (Anchabadze, 1990, p. 111).

P. Golden refers to I. Javakhishvili and shares his suggestion that the number of the settled foreigners was 225,000 (Margishvili, 2006, p. 62).

By F. Kirzioghlu, the number 225,000, which was introduced by I. Javakhishvili, was a rather low estimate. Allowing for six people in a family and counting a total of 50,000 families, he determined that the total number was as high as 300,000 (Kirzioghlu, 2002, p. 125). A. Yunusov shares this opinion (Unusov, 2000, p. 32).

N. Murghulia and V. Shusharin concluded that for determining the total number of the warriors that came to Georgia, one has to rely on the data of a census by David’s chronicler (50,000) (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 96). Such an interpretation of the text is reflected in the Russian translation of the Georgian chronicle: “He instantly summoned all his troops. By his order, all came from his kingdom. He rose against the Sultan; and the Kipchaks, who were counted over again that time, were 50,000” (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 215). The translation is not faithful to the Georgian original text. Before launching a campaign to Shirvan the Georgian king gathered the army and, as David’s chronicler notes, “[h]e quickly summoned all his army and by his order an army from all his kingdom gathered before him and came forward against the Sultan; the Kipchaks were counted over again; the fighters that he found, were 50,000. When the Sultan learned of their arrival, the power and size of his [the king’s] army, he was scared, left the place where he camped and sheltered himself in the city” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 194). In this context, the number 50,000 refers to the army as a whole and not only to Kipchaks. This also seems to be confirmed in the following excerpt of the same chronicle. Before taking Anisi, David once again called up his army: “He quickly sent written summons and on the third day 60,000 warriors were before him. He moved and on the third day took the city” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 197). As one can see, there is no big difference between those two numbers – 50,000-60,000. The indication of the 60,000 (in Georgian “samotsi” means “three twenties”) in the latter context can probably be explained by the desire to repeat the number “three”, which is preferable in *Kartlis Tskhovreba* because of its sacral meaning: “On the third day “samotsi” (three twenties) thousand warriors stood before him. He moved and on the third day easily took the town of

Anisi and its fortresses and villages and the lands around Anisi” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 197).

The evidence of Matheos Urkhaetsi, in which the participants of the Battle of Didgory are named one by one, seems to be more correct: “...With 40,000 strong and courageous men and warriors, experienced in warlike activities; He also had 15,000 other troops from the Khapchakh (Kipchak) king; 500 bold and selected men from the Ossetian tribe, 100 Franks” (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 134). The evidence of the Armenian chronicler of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. Smbat Sparapet, according to which the king “gathered all his army, invited for help 40,000 Kipchaks, 18,000 Alans, 10,000 Armenians, 500 Franks” (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 83-84), seems less reliable.

According to the Georgian chronicler, the resettlement of the Kipchaks contributed to David’s successes. Just after that, the Georgian king “began to raid Persia, Sharvan and Great Armenia” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 185). After their resettlement, the Kipchaks supposedly participated in all the king’s campaigns, no matter whether the Georgian chronicler mentions them or not.

The Arab chronicler Ibn al-Athir (13<sup>th</sup> c.) indicates that in the Battle of Didgori in 1121, which was followed by the reconquest of Tbilisi in 1122, Kurjs (Gurjs) came out jointly with the Kipchaks. This record alone is sufficient to make it obvious that the Kipchaks were the advanced guard of the Georgian army. That is why before the battle “200 men from Kipchaks came forward, entered the midst (of the Moslems) and shot arrows” (Ibn al-Athir, 1966, p.567).

An issue which draws our attention is the process of assimilation of the Kipchaks who were settled in Georgia and their relationship with the local population. According to P. Golden, “[t]he use of a large foreign army (the Kipchaks) to be settled in the country was a daring move which, had the arrangements soured, could have had a disastrous, perhaps fatal, effect on Georgia” (Margishvili, 2006, p. 61).

The evidence of David’s chronicler that “the bulk of the Kipchaks day by day became Christians and their big number was added to Christianity” (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 185) in the Georgian scholarly literature is interpreted with some exaggerations. According to I. Javakhishvili, the Kipchaks who were resettled in Georgia, “learned Georgian and became Georgians and no one from their descendants was left as a Kipchak, but everybody without any compulsion became Georgian voluntarily” (Javakhishvili, 1983, p. 216).

The opinion above was shared by other scholars. However, related records fail to confirm this suggestion and present a different picture.

David’s chronicler emphasized that from the very beginning, right after the settlement of the Kipchaks in Georgia, the king tried to assimilate them; he started the process by their conversion to Christianity.

However, the process of Christianizing as well as Georgianizing of the foreigners was not so successful and their relationship with the local population as well as with the king himself was rather complicated. The chronicler does not hide the fact that the Kipchaks frequently took prisoners from among the local population, and the king was forced to pay a ransom for them: "Who can count the prisoners who were liberated by Him and were ransomed from the Kipchak relatives by fee" (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 210). P. Golden suggests that problems came from Kipchaks who were not in the Georgian service and were not allies of the Georgians (Margishvili, 2006, p. 74-75). Indeed, "the Kipchaks of Daruband" are also mentioned in the source. However, this argument is not entirely convincing, since one can see that the Kipchaks, who were settled in Georgia, did not spare the Georgian king himself, frequently betraying him and organizing plots against him. "How many times the Kipchaks planned treason, installed leaders, bold, some with sword, some with spear, and others with arrows - and this was not done just once or twice or thrice, but many times. However, God never allowed to approach the crosier upon the truthful" (Life of King of Kings David, 1992, p. 222).

The foreigners were not always reliable in battles either. According to Ibn al-Athir, in 1223-4 during the siege of Shemahya, there was a confrontation between the Kipchaks and the Georgians. That is why the king was forced to raise the siege of the town just in time when the Sultan, who came to help [the besieged], intended to leave: "God gave them release... . A dispute and enmity occurred between the Kurj and the Kipchaks. They battled each other that night and departed as if they retreated" (Ibn al-Athir, 1966, p. 615-616), as Ibn al-Athir tells. It is noteworthy that there was another occasion connected with the Kipchak-Georgian alliance which took place later. As the Iranian chronicler of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. Juveyni relates, in 1228 at the battle near Bolnisi, when the foes "saw the flags of Kipchaks and 20 thousand selected men, the Sultan called Qoshkar, gave him one loaf and some salt and sent to the Kipchaks. He reminded him of the case, which took place during the reign of his father - times, when they were enslaved and humiliated... and the Sultan liberated them. For that reason the Kipchak troops retreated" (Juvein chronicles about Georgia, p. 36). However similar incidents were rare in times of David the Builder and positive relations between the Georgians and the Kipchaks prevailed.

According to David's chronicler, it is obvious that the assimilation process was not as fast, as planned and desired by the Georgian King. The chronicler credits the King with the establishment of order in the army and notes that many "multi-lingual ethnic groups with different languages" (King of Kings David, 1992, p. 208) were part of it. One may draw a parallel with the Turk-Seljuk troops, in which, according to Nizam ul-Mulk, the participation of representatives of different ethnic groups was

mandatory, since such a diversity created a competitive environment (Nizamu'l-Mulk, 1999, pp. 72-73).

P. Golden also noted that Georgian scholars overemphasized the number of the Kipchaks, who settled and remained in Georgia (Golden, 1984, p. 65). However, there are also some Georgian scholars, who came to the same conclusion. By their suggestion, the Kipchaks returned to the northern steppes after the death of David the Builder (Chkhartishvili, 1966, p. 173; Stepnadze, 1999, pp. 201-210; Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, p. 152). Along with others, this argument is based on a Russian source – specifically, the evidence introduced by the chronicle of Daniel of Galicia, which informs us that after the death of Vladimir Monomakh the northern relatives of Atraka, the son of Sharekhan, sent envoys urging him to return to his lands: "Volodimir is dead... return, brother, come back to your own land. Say my words to him, sing him Cuman songs and if he will not want [to return], give him the grass called evshan to sniff." Nevertheless, he wanted neither to return, nor to listen. And he [envoy] gave him the grass and he sniffed [it] and broke into tears. He said: 'It is better to lay down one's bones in one's own land than to be famous in a foreign [land]'. And he returned to his own land" (Margishvili, 2006, p. 69). According to J. Stepnadze, a plot against Demetre, the eldest son of David, in 1130 could also be the reason for the return of the tribal followers of Atraka to their homeland. The goal of the plot against King Demetre was to enthrone his younger brother, born from a Kipchak princess. According to the evidence of the Armenian chronicler of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. Vardan, the participants of the plot were ruthlessly punished; among them was the brother of Demetre, who was blinded (Vardan, 2002, p. 142). That the Kipchaks might have participated in the plot is suggested by the fact that the claimant to the throne, Vakhtang, was a grandson of Atraka, the son of Sharaghan.

It seems that only a minority - those who were promoted to high positions and were close to the throne - remained in Georgia. Among them was Qubasar, who supported king Giorgi III (1156 -1184) later to quell a revolt of the Orbeli clan. For that, Qubasar was promoted to the positions of Mandaturtuhkutsesi (Interior Minister) and Amirspasalar (commander-in-chief). The Georgian chronicler says nothing about his ethnic identity; however, Stepanos Orbelian, the Armenian chronicler of the 14<sup>th</sup> c., notes that Qubasar was Kipchak (Orbeliani, 1978, p. 46). According to the same chronicler, when Orbeli rebelled against the king, the latter "summoned" Qubasar and jointly they hardly managed to gather 5,000 troops (Orbeliani, 1978, p. 46). Stepanos Orbelian reports, "[They] found about 5,000 troops and nobody else was of a helper" (46). It means that the Kipchaks, except for some of them, were not in Georgia by that time and the Armenian chronicler knows that very well. As for the indicated 5,000, this number was seemingly taken from David's chronicler, who gave this number for the slave troops who were at the king's disposal. We can not share in this case the suggestion of P. Golden that at

this time the Kipchaks were still there, in Georgia, and those 5,000 could be *mona-spa* (slave army), or, in his opinion, some Kipchak guards (Margishvili, 2006, p. 78).

The Kipchaks are mentioned in the Georgian history later as well. However, they were not residents of the country and came just at the invitation for a temporary military service. The Georgian anonym of the 13<sup>th</sup> c., "Chronicler from the Time of Giorgi Lasha," whose work is included in *Kartlis Tskhovreba*, notes at the end of his chronicle: "When he ordered some thousand men of the Ovses and the Kipchaks, they came, similarly the house of Sharvan" (Life of Kartli, p. 298). Unlike David's historian who was well-disposed towards the Kipchaks, this chronicler does not have a positive opinion of them: "The Ovses, Mtiuls (mountaineers), the Kipchaks and the Suans did not dare to engage in thievery" (Life of Kartli, p. 300), he notes referring to the reign of Tamar.

According to the so-called "first chronicler of Queen Tamar," it is clear that the Kipchaks in those times were in Georgia for a temporary military service, and they were paid for that: "In that time Savalat (Vsevolod), the brother of Sevinj, the Kipchak King, was here for service." His coming to Georgia was something new, since when the issue of Tamar's marriage was being considered, the Russian prince was mentioned, who was in the North by that time, at his uncle Savalat ("in the town of the Kipchak king, Sevinj") (Georgian Historic Documents, p. 64; Life of Kartli, p. 347). In those times, the Kipchaks were no longer a core force of the Georgian army; they were just an additional force: "Hers and Kakhs, nobles and aznaurs, with enclosed Kipchaks." They were still an advanced guard of the Georgian army as before. While describing the Battle of Shamkor (1195), the chronicler uses the terms "chalash" and "dasnach". The first - "chalish-savash" - meant war, fighting (Murghulia & Shusharin, 1998, pp. 1000-101). At the same time, fighting of advanced guards was "chalib fighting," which is mentioned by the anonym of the 14<sup>th</sup> c., the so-called "zhamtaaghmtsereli" or the "describer of the times," whose chronicle is included in the same collection *Kartlis Tskhovreba* (Silagadze, 1987, p. 34, 148-151). As to "dasnachta," according to M. Beladze, this is distorted "da sanjakta" ("and of sanjaks").

Tamar's first chronicler mentions the term "new Kipchaks" ("Ovses and new Kipchaks") (Georgian Historic Documents, p. 65; Life of Kartli, p. 348). Some scholars think that the expression "new Kipchaks" means Kipchaks who were newcomers (Stepnadze, 1999, p. 209). Along with that, some scholars introduce the expression "old Kipchaks" (Kirzioghlu, 2002, p. 122). According to these scholars, those who came in times of David the Builder, were the "old", while others who came in times of Tamar were the "new Kipchaks." This opinion is based on a wrong assumption that the Kipchaks were continuously coming to Georgia and staying there. This perception in its turn followed the wrong interpretation of the number 50,000 in the text of David's chronicler. The expression "old Kipchaks" is not found in the chronicles; it appeared in the scholarly litera-

ture. These two expressions are not equal and there is a considerable difference between them. The "new Kipchaks" did not live in Georgia and came there for a while, for a military service. The suggestion of P. Sikharulidze that the expression "new Kipchaks" probably meant the Kipchaks who converted to Christianity, just as in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. "new Kartvels" (new Georgians) meant the Georgians who converted to Christianity -- should also be taken into consideration. One may recall Ingilo "yeni gelen," which too refers to new converts, but this time the Georgians who converted to Islam (Stephnadze, 1999, p. 219). The assimilation process is reflected in the term "nakipchakari," which means "former Kipchak," early arrivals, which according to P. Golden, were "denomadized, becoming a kind of a Cossack-type force" (Margishvili, 2006, p. 64).

It seems that right from the times of Giorgi III there was established a special tribute "Sakipchake" ("for Kipchaks"). One can see evidence about this tribute in the deed issued by David VIII (1297/8) (Enukidze, 1973, pp. 183-4). According to the opinion dominating in the Georgian scholarly literature, this tribute was established by David the Builder (Gandzaketsi, 1976, pp. 33-35). However, the need for such a tribute seems more obvious in times of Giorgi III (in order to pay wages to the Kipchak mercenaries).

Later on, the relations between the Kipchaks and the Georgians became tense. The Armenian chronicler of the 13<sup>th</sup> c. Kirakos Gandzaketsi has preserved evidence about further relations between the Kipchaks and the Georgians. During the events of 1221-22 the chronicler relates that the Georgian King Giorgi Lasha (1207-1123) and his Amirspasalar (commander-in-chief) Ivane Mkhargrdzeli refused to give the Kipchaks the land for residence, in exchange for a military service. Rejected, the Kipchaks went to Ganja, which was frequently attacked by the Georgians. They were welcomed there and got the land they needed. A little later they defeated the Georgian army led by Ivane, and seized many Georgians, while the others fled. Later on, Ivane attacked them once again, defeated and took their children prisoner to Georgia (Bunyatov, 1978, p. 139).

Ibn Al-Athir gives some additional information on those years. Among the events of the year 619 (15 November 1222 - 3 November 1223), he presents information that 50,000 Kipchaks came to Daruband from the North and twice asked for a land. After their request was denied, the Kipchaks seized Daruband with trickery, devastated it, left and moved to Qabala, which was under Georgian control. They could not take Qabala, but plundered its surroundings and retreated. After that they moved to Ganja, where they somehow got land for settling. Soon the ruler of Ganja, Qoshkar, accused them of organizing some turmoil and expelled them. The Kipchaks again went to Shirvan, where they were pursued by Moslems, Georgians and Lezgins, defeated them and took prisoners. According to this evidence, the leader of the Kipchaks tried to convince the ruler of Ganja that the Georgians were their enemies and that if they had good

relations with the Georgians, they would not choose the Daruband Pass, but instead would pass through their country, as it had happened before (Ibn al-Athir, XI, 1966, pp. 406-410; Silagadze, 1987, pp. 67-78; Stepnadze, 1971, pp. 118-120).

The Kipchaks appeared in Georgia once again in David VIII's reign (1293-1311) when eastern Georgia was under political control of the Ilkhans, who had been waging incessant wars against the Golden Horde. In this situation anyone who was at odds with the Golden Horde was a natural ally for the Ilkhans and thus a subject of their concern. Just for that reason, the Ossetians came from the North and settled in Georgia. The situation was similar in the case of the Kipchaks.

As David VIII refused to obey the Ilkhans, they let his brother Vakhtang III (1298-1308) ascend the throne; in some cases Vakhtang III was forced to act against David. The Mongols allowed the Kipchaks to settle on the Georgian territory. A related evidence about this incident is preserved in the chronicle of an anonymous author of the 14<sup>th</sup> c. One can find here the evidence of the fighting between David VIII and the Kipchaks who were en route to their summer camp. David's brother Vakhtang came to help the Kipchaks. Together Vakhtang and the Kipchaks pursued David's troops and killed many. The chronicler tries to justify Vakhtang's behavior: "Actually, Vakhtang was not his brother's enemy, but was fighting him, because he was afraid of the Tatars" (Life of Kartli, p. 544). Arguably, the famous "Ballad about a Kipchak" – where a Kipchak is preserved in Georgians' memory as a negative personage - dates to these times.

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