

Roman-based alphabets as a life-line for endangered languages

Brian George Hewitt, FBA

Professor of Caucasian Languages

SOAS, London University

Perhaps it was Sasha Kibrik's years of studying the languages of Daghestan (E. Caucasus), many of which are spoken by only a few thousand natives (indeed Hinukh is reported to have only 400 speakers), that aroused his interest in threatened languages. Undoubtedly, one of the best ways to provide at least an initial foundation for the potential protection of endangered languages is to create for those of them (surely the great majority) which have never been written a convenient orthographic system. Though this question may overlap with the need of linguists for an acceptable transcription-system (see Kibrik & Kodzasov 1970), it is not necessarily the case that one and the same solution would meet these two independent requirements for any given language.

The vast majority of Circassian speakers have lived in former Ottoman territories since the mass-exodus from the Caucasian homeland post-1864, and of these the bulk reside in Turkey, where, although they do not learn to read or write Circassian, they are literate in Turkish with its Roman-based alphabet. Within the Caucasus itself the two Cyrillic-based Circassian literary scripts (for W. Circassian Adyghe and E. Circassian Kabardian) are somewhat unwieldy and often mutually contradictory. Faced with these facts the German specialist in Circassian, Monika Höhlig, devised in 1983 a method for writing (West) Circassian in a Roman-based script employing as a starting point the phonetic values of the letters as used for Turkish itself, so as to facilitate the learning-process for the denizens of Turkey; an additional restriction she imposed on herself was that there should be no sign that was not reproduceable on a Turkish typewriter. After I was shewn her scheme at the VIth biennial meeting of the *Societas Caucasologica Europæa* in Maykop in 1992, I began to consider how suitable it might prove for Circassian's sister-language Abkhaz. In the course of these deliberations I decided to make a few adaptations and published my ideas in 1995. My scheme is set out in the table below against both (to its left) the Cyrillic-based script in use in the Republic of Abkhazia (former USSR) -- the recent spelling-reforms to regularise the representation of labialisation are given in brackets -- and (to its right) the International Phonetic Alphabet values for the sounds in question. One of my motives for adapting Höhlig's original idea was to introduce consistency in the marking of phonetic features, which is one of the objections to the official post-1954 Cyrillic-based script. And the table below differs in two respects from that presented in my 1995 paper: firstly, the voiceless retroflex fricative I think would be better indicated by ʃ̤ than ʃ , as I

at first thought (even though in that same article when I demonstrated how the script could be used for the divergent Abaza dialect, I was guilty myself of inconsistency and did in fact utilise this § on p. 340!). This slight revision has the advantage of establishing an exact parallelism with the corresponding voiced pair, namely palato-alveolar /ʎ/ vs retroflex /ʎ̣/. Secondly, I should like to accept the proposal given to me in Turkey in 1997 by a native Turkish Abkhazian, Hayri Ersoy, that the special Turkish character *ğ*² be used for the voiced back fricative. I personally treat the back fricatives of literary Abkhaz as basically velars, recognising their point of articulation may move back towards the uvular region depending on the phonetic environment. I then treat the extra back fricatives of the Northern Bzyp dialect as uvular. Some (?most) people treat literary Abkhaz's back fricatives as basically uvulars, in which case their representation in the orthography being proposed would have to be altered accordingly; for those who take this view, the extra fricatives of Bzyp would presumably be treated (and marked) as pharyngalised uvulars.

As may be seen, there are digraphs with the character / used for palatalisation, and /ʌ/ for labialisation. The circumflex (^) indicates alveolo-palatals, and the macron (ˉ) signals the feature of retroflexion. One new component, not suggested in my original proposal, but which I deem to be necessary in any satisfactory representation of Abkhaz, is the introduction of the grave accent to mark the stressed syllable.

<u>Abkhaz Script</u> ¹	<u>Roman version</u>	<u>IPA</u>	<u>Abkhaz</u>	<u>Roman</u>	<u>IPA</u>
а(а)	a(a)	a/a:	б	b	b
в	v	v	г	g	g
гь	gi	g̊	гʌ (rə)	gu	gʷ
ҕ	ğ	ɣ	ҕь	ği	ɣ̣
ҕу (ҕə)	ğʌ	ɣʷ	д	d	d
дə	du	db	е	e	ɛ
ж	j	ʒ	жь	j	J
жə	ju	Jʷ	з	z	z
з	dz	dz	зə	čʌ	dʒʷ
и	y/y1/1y	j/jə/i:	к	k'	k'
кь	k'i	k'	кʌ (kə)	k'ʌ	kʷ'
қ	k	k	қь	ki	k

¹The table is to be read according to the pattern:

1	2
3	4
5	6

кы (кә)	ku	k ^w	k	q'	q'
кь	q'i	q'	ky (kə)	q'u	q ^w '
л	l	l	м	m	m
н	n	n	о	o	o
п	p'	p'	п	p	p
р	r	r	с	s	s
т	t'	t'	тә	t'u	t'p'
т	t	t	тә	tu	tp
у	w/w1/1w	w/wə/u:	ф	f	f
х	x	x	хь	xi	x̣
ху (хә)	xu	x ^w	х	h	Ĭ
хә	hu	Ĭ ^w	ц	ts	ts
цә	ç'u	t _ɔ ^w	ц	ts'	ts'
цә	ç'u	t _ɔ ^w '	ч	ç	tS
ч	ç'	tS'	ч	ç̣	tS4
ч	ç'	tS4'	ш	š	š
шь	š	S	шә	šu	S ^w
ы	l	ə	џ	yu	ŷ
џ	č	dʒ	џь	c	dJ
ь	i	.	ә	u	w

In order to give readers, especially native speakers, an impression of how this suggested script would reflect an actual Abkhazian text, there follows a short folk-tale taken from the collection published by S. Zuxba (Zıxuba) in Tbilisi in 1976 and entitled 'Abkhazian Stories' (page 14), which I have re-written according to the system set out immediately above. In order to help native Abkhazians who also know English identify the story and/or certain words within it, I have appended an English translation.

Ajakuà zıçuşuàz

Xuılpazık' anxayui abıtsa ılsxweyf' hua àbna daxınılagılaz jak' ılafuan. Abnıy ajà abıtsa ılızxwaz anxayui danabà, yaayçuşuàn, yıyuàts'qıan açınanaxeyf'. Anıy abıtsa ılızxwaz lak' yıman, ajà şnèywaz alà anaapıla, eyhagıl yışuanı yıyuatrısın naç' daçàcara axı rxanı yıtsèyf'. Apsı àmanı açàçıuaxf' yàlıwxıy²?

Ajà ak'ır yanınaskıa, anıçıuaşua armàç'f'. «Axumıçıxan aşuàrakua sıkuşut', wajuştà wàha szıkuşuarızey?» -- hua àbna yaxınılts'ızçıuqıa bgak' àakuşuaxın wıygıl yarşuèyf' şıuşuàla. «Q'oh, yıkusxwàzey adıwnèy, adıwnèy yıkuıw zegıl

²The text prints *yálıwxıy*.

harà, ajakuà, hdirşuòyť. As adıwnèy àkuzaara ak'agì yapsàm» -- ahuàn arìy ajà ayuizçua ajakuà zegì aayznagàn yiràçuaıueyť.

-- Warà, yaxià matsàra abriy àçara aşuàra sàkuşuaxieyť: anxayuì dızbàn sıyçuşuèyť, alà zban saçuşuèyť, àbga zban saçuşuèyť, şuargì sa şuisyuizçuowp', şuàrtgii wıs sa seypş şuakuımşuàkua şuıçam, abırjuì ak'ì aadzbaş' yàawlakgii -- hua rànahueyť yèyznagaz ayuizçua.

-- İ, harà wıs ançua hayşàn hàçowp', yàadzbaranı yìçowzey? -- rhueyť egiirt ajakuà.

-- Yàadzbaranı yìçow wıy awp', as eypş apstàzaara ak'agì yapsàm. Adzì hçàhtap' naç! -- ahuèyť arìy ajà.

-- Nes warà wıs wıdzbàzar, adzì hçàhtozar, waalà, warà àpxia winahapàs -- rhueyť egiirt ajakuà.

-- Yıbzıyowp'! -- ahuàn anıy àpxia yızhuàz rapxia yınagılan, ajakuà eytsrıpsàs adzì rçàrtarts yişnèywaz, dzıyas dıwk' apàyu yınxıkugılť. Adzì apàyu aç'ì yannıkugıla, wa dağ'ık' ìkufuazaarın, ajakuà yıdrırhan, àfıç hua yıyuàpan adzì yàlapalt.

-- Qoh, warà, arıy yìçanats'o jubow, arıy àçara hxıst' harà, axà harà yıhaçuşuàzgiı ak' ìçowp', açşrà yahzapsàm, arà hgıajıp' -- ahuèyť ajakuà rıwàk. Egiirtgii àkuşahatxeyť. Adzgiì rçàrımteyť, egiıyť, yış'ıjubo eypş, ajakuà yaxıagii yìçowp'.

Translation

What Rabbits Feared

One evening a rabbit was sitting down there on the ground where a peasant had stepped into the forest intent on selecting brushwood. When this rabbit saw the peasant who was choosing brushwood, he took fright of him, lept up and headed off. That one who was choosing brushwood had a dog; when the dog suddenly came upon the rabbit as it was going on its way, in even greater alarm did it shoot off thither and went away headed in a different direction. Still alive, it hid itself, as you'd expect!

When the rabbit had gone some distance, it slowed its pace. Right there where it emerged from the forest thinking to itself: «This evening I encountered terrors; what more am I to encounter hereafter?», it went and suddenly ran across a wolf also, and that terrified it greatly. «Oh, what's in the world for me? Everything in the world makes us rabbits afraid; we are afraid of everything. There is no point at all being in the world like this,» said this rabbit and, having quickly gathered all the rabbits together, it spoke with them.

«Do you know, only today I have already encountered this amount of terror: I saw a peasant and became afraid of him; I saw a dog and became afraid of it; I saw a wolf and became afraid of it. You too are like me; you lot too find

yourselves encountering this sort of thing, just like me. Let's now make a decision on whatever it is we shall do!» he said to his friends gathered together.

«Eh-eh, we exist as God created us; what is there for us to decide?» said the other rabbits.

«This is what there is for us to decide -- this sort of life has no point. Let's cast ourselves in the water there!» said this rabbit.

«Then, if you have so decided, [and] if we are going to cast ourselves in the water, come on, you give us the lead!» said the other rabbits.

«Fine!» said that one who had spoken first and stood up in front of them. As the rabbits were proceeding in formation to hurl themselves in the water, they came to a halt beside the bank of a large river. At the moment they came to a halt at the water's edge, a frog was apparently seated upon it there; the rabbits alarmed it, and, jumping quickly up with a croak, it plopped into the water.

«Hey, mates, do you see what this thing is doing? We have experienced this much, but there is one thing which was actually afraid of us! There is no point in us killing ourselves, let's return [from] here,» said one of the rabbits. And the others agreed with it. And they did not hurl themselves in the water, or anything else -- as you see, there are rabbits even today. [End]

Two other proposals have recently been made to romanise the Abkhazian alphabet: Kandzharia (1995) -- readers should note that there are typographical errors which cause some mismatches between the Cyrillic and phonetic representations in this article! -- and Chirikba (To appear). The only advantage of Kandzharia's scheme to which the journal's editorial board draw attention is the ease with which it may be printed without adaptation to any computer-programme. This is certainly true, but I would argue that its internal inconsistency speaks against its adoption: labialisation is indicated by both *ʃ* and *ʃ̣* (e.g. *gʃ̣* is the labialised voiced velar plosive, whilst *ʃ̣* is the labialised voiceless pharyngeal fricative). But phonological labialisation is also indicated quite differently: if the articulatory process justifies the use of the digraph *ʃʃ'* for the voiceless labialised alveolo-palatal affricate with its voiced counterpart shown by *ʃʃ*, the same cannot be said for the ejective member of the triad being represented by *ʃʃ̣*, for *ʃ* in the immediately preceding item was associated with voicing, but here this cannot be the case. Again, for the phonologically labialised dental plosives, which from an articulatory point of view are co-articulated bilabial and dental plosives with labial trill, we have the understandable *ʃʃ* vs *ʃʃ'* for the voiced vs voiceless members, whilst the ejective member again has *ʃ* in the digraph *ʃ̣ʃ̣*. We have seen in two representations here that there is no specific marker of glottalisation, and this is true throughout Kandzharia's system, for example: *ʃ* is the voiceless ejective velar plosive, whilst the voiceless non-

ejective is ʎ . But when we come to the labialised and palatalised velars, the difference between ejective and non-ejective no longer resides in the absence vs presence of ʎ for in neither case does this graph appear, but in the marker selected for the secondary feature of articulation -- ʎ is the palatalised and ʎ the labialised ejective velar plosive, whilst the equivalent non-ejective voiceless plosives are respectively indicated by ʎ and ʎ . Such sequences as ʎ for the voiced retroflex affricate, ʎ for the voiceless retroflex fricative, ʎ for the voiceless palato-alveolar fricative, ʎ for the voiceless non-ejective retroflex affricate, ʎ for the voiceless ejective retroflex affricate, and ʎ for the voiced retroflex fricative look decidedly odd.

Chirikba's approach was closer to that of Höhlig and myself, for his main principle 'was to make the alphabet convenient, practical, sometimes at the expense of the principle of consistency, and acceptable psychologically for those West Caucasians who are used to reading mainly in Turkish'; he also sought to avoid anything longer than a trigraph. The general marker of labialisation is ʎ and of palatalisation ʎ whilst glottalisation is usually indicated by the expected apostrophe (equally naturally used for the glottal stop), in the uvular series this phonation feature is unmarked, and ʎ is used for the voiceless non-ejective, thus: ʎ vs ʎ and ʎ vs ʎ . The sequences ʎ and ʎ represent VELAR fricatives plain and labialised as against ʎ , ʎ and ʎ for the plain vs labialised vs palatalised UVULAR voiceless fricatives. Perhaps the most unusual feature of the proposal is to use ʎ for the plain voiced pharyngeal fricative (as in Abaza) with ʎ serving as its labialised counterpart (also doing service for the labialised palatal continuant of standard Abkhaz). The numeral '2' Chirikba would write ʎ which would, thus, be read by Abazinians as [ʎ^wba] but by Abkhazians as [ʎba]. Chirikba closed his short paper with example-texts in Abkhaz, Abaza, West Circassian Adyghe, and Kabardian.

Would it not be possible to devise a universal writing-system that would fit not just the North West Caucasian languages but all of the North Caucasian tongues? This would provide a practical linguistic basis of unity to match the striving on the political level which characterised the admirable intentions that lay behind the founding in August 1989 of the Assembly of Mountain Peoples of the Caucasus (later transformed into the Confederation of [Mountain] Peoples of the Caucasus). It is easier to accommodate in such a system the rich variety of consonants. In my 1995 paper I did discuss the possible extension of my proposed scheme for Abkhaz to Abaza. But I now wish to re-address the whole question, which necessitates a reconsideration of the representation of the voiceless pharyngeal fricative of Abkhaz. Since Abkhaz lacks an opposition between (voiceless) pharyngeal and laryngeal fricatives, nothing is lost by selecting

h for the purpose. But, for those North Caucasian languages where such an opposition does exist, we would need a barred *h* (\bar{h}) for the pharyngeal vs simple *h* for the laryngeal. I, therefore, propose that the Abkhaz system should henceforth incorporate \bar{h} and $\bar{h}w$ in place of *h* and *hw*.

Using, as stated above, *x* and *g* for the voiceless vs voiced velar fricatives, I suggest *X* and *G* for the corresponding uvular pair; the voiceless and (if necessary) voiced uvular plosives would obviously be shewn by *q* and *G* respectively. Using the apostrophe, like Chirikba, to mark both glottalisation and the glottal stop, I earlier suggested incorporating the question-mark for the voiced pharyngeal fricative, but this is open to the clear objection of being counterintuitive (given that in the IPA system an undotted question-mark serves to indicate the glottal stop itself). Keeping to the principle that characters should be those found on a basic Turkish typewriter, I now wish to propose the voiced pharyngeal fricative be indicated by the reversed apostrophe (or its nearest equivalent on a Turkish typewriter, namely *'*), which will produce the digraph *ʼ* for the labialised voiced pharyngeal fricative. The secondary feature of pharyngalisation (as in the now extinct Ubykh and some Daghestanian languages) can be marked by superscript dot (e.g. *ʼ̇*, *ʼ̇w*, *ʼ̇ʰ*, *ʼ̇ʷ* etc...). Strong consonants (or non-aspirated voiceless obstruents in Bzhedugh/Shapsugh Circassian) will be marked by the colon (e.g. *x:*, *k:*, *ʰ:*, *g:* etc...). This really only leaves the multiplicity of laterals that are associated especially with the Andic/Avaric family. Since the dead macron-key on Turkish typewriters would strike through the middle of an *l* to give something approaching the IPA representation of the voiceless lateral fricative, namely [ɬ], let us employ this for this sound, so that *l'* will be the ejective equivalent, as in Circassian. The *ʁw* lateral fricative will naturally be *ʁ* whilst plain *l* will be the voiced lateral continuant, and I suggest *L* for the voiced lateral fricative. For the lateral affricate series, since they seem to be pronounced with a combination of voiceless velar plosive plus lateral fricative, the following sequences would seem most fitting: *kʁ*, *kʁ'*, *kʁ̇*, *kʁ̇'*. This last is the only quadrigraph needed in the now complete list of consonantal representations.

As to the vowels, length follows the same pattern as for the strong consonants, being marked by a colon; similarly, pharyngalisation will be universally indicated by superscript dot. Nasalisation in Nakh can be shewn by a double quotation-sign, which has the advantage of being visually somewhat similar to a raised small *ɿ* itself regularly used for this purpose (e.g. *ɿ'*, *ɿ̇*, etc...). Unrounded (umlauted) front vowels can be most conveniently marked by the diæresis (umlaut), to give *ɿ̈*, *ɿ̈̇*, *ɿ̈̇'* (for this last vowel one would presumably have to write *ɿ̈̇'* on a Turkish keyboard). The only infelicity I see in this scheme

relates to the representation of long high vowels (front and back). The starting point for this discussion was the idea of representing one or another North West Caucasian languages in romanised scripts. Since phonetic [u:] and [i:] in these languages are morpho-phonemic /ɪw/ and /ɪy/ respectively, I kept these latter sequences for the orthography, where in any case there is no need for the short vowel equivalents. And so, there is a problem for those languages with the contrast /u/ vs /u:/ and /i/ vs /i:/. The easiest solution would be to adopt Chirikba's suggestion for marking labialisation and palatalisation (viz. *ɨ* and *ɨ̣* respectively) and use the normal vowel-signs for the vowel phonemes, thus: *u* vs *ụ*, *i* vs *ị*, *ɨ* vs *ɨ̣*, etc., though I would still keep the morpho-phonemic sequences for N. W. Caucasian. The problem with this solution, however, is that the diacritic *̂* now has up to three functions. Perhaps the wide phonetic range manifested by the totality of the North Caucasian languages is just too large to be accommodated by a single writing system without some degree of local flexibility.

I close with a sample text (to wit the International Phonetic Association's preferred fable of Æsop, 'The North Wind and the Sun') in N. W. Caucasian Abkhaz, Abaza, Temirgoi (Circassian), N. E. Caucasian Avar and, from Nakh, Bats; the first four of these versions I discussed in four of my earliest articles (see 'Bedi Kartlisa' 1978, 1979, 1978, 1981 respectively) and then repeated with some adaptations the first three on pp. 25-30 of 'The Indigenous Languages of the Caucasus, 2: North West Caucasus' which I edited in 1989 for Caravan Books. The Bats version is based on Dee Ann Holisky's discussion of the text on pp. 17-20 of 'Georgica 12' (1989). Rather than represent reduced final vowels by the relevant capital letter, as Holisky did in her transcription, I have followed her statement on Bats phonology in her grammatical description (in collaboration with Rusudan Gagua) of the language in 'The Indigenous Languages of the Caucasus, 4: The North East Caucasian Languages, Part 2' (ed. R. Smeets) pp. 147-212, and have marked the labialising/palatalising effects of these reductions on the preceding consonant. Where Holisky offers alternative readings, I have arbitrarily taken the first.

Abkhaz

znɪ ɔyʷadətʷɪy apʒɛy ɔmrey eysɛyt' rɪwa eyfɔ ɪgʒʷgʷow fʷɔa. yarɔ wɪbrɪy
 ɔmtazɕʷɪqʷɪa wɪrt dgʷɔrteyt' anɪqʷayʷ zwɔp'a ɪtɔʒʒɪ ɔmyʷa yanɪlanɪ yɔyɔw.
 wɪrt ɪrɪɔzɔbɪyt' rɪwa eyfɔ ɪgʒʷgʷow wɪbrɪy ɪowp' anɪqʷayʷ ɔpxɪa ɪwɔp'a
 ɪʒʷɪxra zɪʒʷɔ fʷɔa. ɔyʷadətʷɪy apʒɔ ɔmɕ zɛgʷɪ ɔtanɪ yɔswa yɔlageyt', ɔxɔ apʒɔ
 ɔɕarʒʷgʷɔtsɪpxɪadza, anɪqʷayʷ yafagʷɪ ɪwɔp'a ɪɕɪɪeyfʷɔn. yanɔmɪwdza
 ɔyʷadətʷɪy apʒɔ ɔdts'ɔ map' ɔɕʷnak'ɪr ɔkʷxeyt'. wɪs yaɕʷɪrts'ɪyt' ɔmra,
 anɪqʷayʷ xʷɕ'ɪxʷɕ'ɪlɔ dɪpxɛyt', yɔrlasɪngʷɪ ɪwɔp'a ɪʒʷɪyxeyt'. ɔbɔsala

àyûadatûiy apşà wàña psixûa àmamizt' yakûimşafàtxarts àmra yarà àts'k'is³
yafà yışiğ'ûğ'ow.

Abaza

znik' amarìyştıy apşabaştàwıy baz yatsàst' -- rits'a yix'ix'ûıwda fûa. awiy
azamàn bîrdzak' apnî awàt 'am'ûàysi'ûk'⁴ awàp'a dak'ûırşàta dış'am'ûàyswaz
dınarbàt', wats'iqûan awàt baz yatsàst' aràsa -- awiy a'am'ûàysi'ûı yapqaxàwata
yiwàp'a yışûızirixwa awiy rits'a dış'ix'ix'ûıwla. àra'a apşabaştàw ç'ûğ'îàta
yıç'ûfûàwa yàlagat'. awiy rits'arits'a dîwta yıç'ûfûàp'xadza(k'ğ'ıı) a'am'ûàysi'ûı
ràñag'ıı bağ'îàta awàp'a ç'ak'ûıyırşıwn. apşabaştàw añaysàp ç'pàra yaç'ûits'ra
ataçın. wadır'ûàna àmara 'àpxat', a'am'ûàysi'ûı dak'ûa'apxàt' ıy şàrda mts'wàta
yiwàp'a ş'ûıyxt'. abàrawıy àpşta apşabaştàw ç'àts'naxxt' awıla, àmara rits'a
yış'ix'ix'ûıaz.

Temirgoi (Circassian)

zeg'ûerem tıRejımrı tıRemrı anafı ðeşır yazeremRaş'ow zeneq'ûeq'ûıRex. a ðeXan
dedem tyefow zek'ûe g'ûere ç'ak'ûer tyeX'ûaRow R'ûeg'ûım qırık'ûow aR'ûıR
ıç'ıy raX'ûıñar; t'ûım⁵ yazow R'ûeg'ûırık'ûem yıç'ak'ûe zışyezRexırer anafı ðeşow
ahtenow. aş dejım tıRejım zerıfeleç'ow qyepşow qırıyRejaR aw ar nafı ðeşow
yepşe qesmıy, R'ûeg'ûırık'ûem ç'ak'ûem nafı zık'ûets'ıyşıñaştıRe; ıwıjıpqem
tıRejır yımıwrad ıwıjı yıç'ıjın faye X'ûıRe. ye'ane tıRer qyepsıR,
R'ûeg'ûırık'ûer fabe qepaR, ıç'ıy aş hpıtow ç'ak'ûerıy zışıyxıR ca(wı)ştow
tıRejım tıRer yej nafırıy nafı zerıleşır qıg'ûırımı'ûeme mıX'ûınow X'ûıRe.

Avar

tso nuXat seweriyab horots:a wa baq'uts:a hork'ob jo baleb buk'ana, kinab
hezda hork'osan q'uwatab bugeban. hele heb zamanalda hezda wix'ana
plaş:atukt jemaraw nuXlulaw, nuXdas:an unew wuk'araw, wa fiukmu habuna,
hezul biş:un q'uwatabın rik'ine bugilan, kinas:da ts:ebe k'oleb nuXlulas:das:a plaş:
baq:izabize. hanib seweriyab horots:a bay bix'ana hwize bugeb-heç'eb ruñat,
amma q'uwatañ huna'an, hedı'ango jindago plaş: jemuleb buk'ana nuXlalas;
hedin'idal aXirgi seweriyab horots:a jindirgo mas'ala teze k:oleb buk'ana. Xadub
gwanğ'ana baq', nuXlulaw dahab-dahab kun Xinłana wa X:eX:go baq:ana jindirgo
plaş:⁶ heb kutsat seweriyab horots:a rik'ine k:ana, baq' jindas:a q'uwatab bugilan.

³It is an unfortunate feature of the font used in this article that a diacritic placed over an i (or j) sits somewhat back and thus merges here (and below) with the apostrophe (plain or reversed).

⁴This indefinite article (k') is missing in ILC 2.

⁵For Circassian the sequence *kk'* is realised phonetically as [tʷ(?)], differently from Abkhaz and Ubykh.

⁶Mistakenly written *paş* in BK 1981.

Bats

ts'q'e matxona, maxana bufi ba'e" menux upr zora" da vai-ainû. ts'airko" tsfia nabdare" st'ak' vagi" oqarn, naq'mak vot'uiñi. vaşbigû ahi" o upr zora" xiñû menxuiçova duifireluçov bapxitû nabad dafi is st'ak'oguinû. cer maxav fiaqi", uis zoraış mofie mak'ritsî magram vune upr zoraış fieqritsî oqumple" st'ak'ov upro mak fiarçbie" nabad maxav maq[û] ba'e". qe" matx fiaç'e" n'aiñi, fial bupxbaliñi st'ak'ov nabad dafi bapxi". maxan xaqi" me matxov (dafi) toldie".

In view of the use of some capital letters and the colon in the basic romanised pan-North Caucasian script delineated above, I suggest that both the colon and upper-case forms should not otherwise be employed.

I hope this publication will arouse sufficient interest for the matter to be given serious consideration by both specialists and native speakers keen, like me, to see the languages survive in a context of North Caucasian unity.

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