



North West Caucasian

George Hewitt

*School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh St., Russel Square,
London WC1H 0XG, UK*

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1. Introduction

1.1. The small N[orth] W[est] C[aucasian] family takes its name from the geographical region, viz. NW (Trans) Caucasia, in which the speakers of the relevant languages lived compactly until 1864. The family consists of three branches: Abkh[az]-Aba[za], Circ[assian], Ub[ykh]. The Abkhazian homeland is roughly the triangle formed by the Black Sea, the main Caucasus range and the lower reaches of the R. Ingur, which forms the traditional border with the Kartvelian speaking areas of Mingrelia and Svaneti(a)—in the 14th century a migration occurred across the Klukhor Pass giving rise to the population of T'ap'[anta] Abaza speakers along the Greater and Lesser Laba, Urup, and Greater and Lesser Zelenchuk rivers, a further wave of migrants in the 17th to 18th centuries producing there today's Ashkhar(ywa) Abaza speakers; the hinterland around Sochi was home to the Ubykhs; to their north along the coast and in the NW Caucasian foothills lived the various Circassian tribes, who constitute(d) the largest of the three groups. When the Great Caucasian War came to an end in 1864 with the sadly inevitable surrender of the NW Caucasian alliance at Krasnaja Poljana, Russia finally gained control of the whole Caucasus, and, rather than be resettled away from their mountain-strongholds, all the Ubykhs together with the majority Abkhaz-Abaza and Circassian populations preferred exile in Ottoman lands. Their descendants can be found (predominantly in Turkey) from the southern Balkans to Israel, Jordan, Syria, and Iraq.

E-mail address: gh2@soas.ac.uk (G. Hewitt).

Nomenclature

A	agent
Abkh	Abkhaz
Aba	Abaza
Ab(d)z	Ab(d)zakh/Abadzekh
Abs	absolute
Absol	absolutive
Abzh	Abzhywa
Adv	adverbial
Aff	affirmative
Aor	aorist
Bes	Bes(le)ney
Bz	Bzyp
Bzh	Bzhedugh
Caus	causative
Circ	Circassian
Class	classifier
Col	column
Condit	conditional
Conv	converb
Dyn	dynamic
Dir	direct
E	east
Emph	emphatic
Fem	feminine
Fin	finite
Fut	future
Hab	habitual
Imper	imperative
Imperf	imperfect
Indir	indirect
Indef	indefinite
Infin	infinitive
Instr	instrumental
Intrans	intransitive
lit.	literally
Kab	Kabardian
Masc	masculine
Masd	Masdar
Neg	negative
N-Hum/N-H	non-human
NWC	North West Caucasian
O or Obj	object

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