

Specific Influence of the Mountain Landscape on the Level of Intelligence, Worldview and National Character of the Mountain Peoples in the South Caucasus

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Abstract. Today, against the backdrop of the rapidly growing globalization process, the study of ethnogenesis, lifestyle, mentality and worldview of the peoples of the world, as well as the establishment of their role in the development of human civilization has become extremely relevant. Scientific research conducted in recent years in the field of ethnography and ethnology have proven that among the many components involved in the formation and cultural development of the peoples of the world, the landscape of the area plays a special role and is of decisive importance. This article discusses this most important factor, which, using the example of the South Caucasus, predetermines the specificity of the highlanders in terms of their cultural and intellectual characteristics. In this regard, the article conducts relevant analyses that reveal the essence and significance of the natural and geographical components that form the specific appearance and way of thinking of the highlanders individually and the unique mentality of the ethnocultural community as a whole. In the conducted analyses, special attention is paid to those elements of the mountain environment that in various ways influence the psyche, views, passions, critical and creative thinking of the mountaineers. The article also reveals the subtle mechanism of the fusion of the soul of the mountaineer with his native nature and its components. The article also reveals the subtle mechanism of the fusion of the soul of the mountaineer with his native nature and its components. The identification of the unique features of the mountain peoples and the indication of the main reasons for this uniqueness are the leitmotif of this article.

Keywords: Azerbaijan, mountain, people, Strabo, South Caucasus, modernity

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1 Introduction

1.1 The creative power of mountains and their influence on human consciousness and energy

One of the majestic places on the earth's surface is the mountain landscape. By their appearance and structure, mountains are intended not only for the natural and organic regulation of the spatial characteristics of the lower layers of the atmosphere, in order to create an adequate climate and corresponding atmospheric components. He also clearly and consistently plays the role of a certain distributor of spiritual and physical energy for the formation of a specific way of life, spiritual characteristics, philosophical worldview and socio-cultural consciousness, which has a unique style. All this biological and mental potential ultimately manifests itself in applied abilities, musical talent, visual, literary and philosophical views, predetermining the individual and collective destiny, life purpose and historical mission of the mountaineer and mountain peoples. Thus, a certain standard of human hard work and a specific image of Homo sapiens is historically formed, the main formation and transformer of which are the mountains, with their fantastic and bewitching views, harsh conditions and magnetic force that makes you think about existence, about the purpose and meaning of life, about well-being, eternity and simple human happiness.

When it comes to the bewitching, magical power of mountains, many questions arise about “how is the mountain landscape structured, where does this natural phenomenon get its life-giving power, and what exceptional qualities does it attract, enchant and captivate people?” It should be noted that, being the result of a tectonic collision, underground plates, volcanic eruption of the upper layer of the earth's lithosphere and erosive deformation of the soil, mountains initially act as a dynamically developing large-scale object, having different external features and internal structure, and, therefore, carrying dynamic activity and extreme explosive energy. It is precisely this natural activity and restless energy constantly striving to move that, under certain conditions, is transmitted to a person.

Today, only 24% of the Earth's surface is mountainous. In addition, only 10% of the mountainous mass of planet Earth is inhabited by people. A significant part of the mountainous landscape on the earth's surface is in Asia (approximately 64%), and the remaining 36% is in other parts of the world. For example, only 3% of the land surface of the African and Australian continents is mountainous. This fact allows us to conclude that a significant part of civilizations is the result of physical and spiritual contact between the mountains and Oriental people or Asians. All the rivers that gave rise to the first civilizations, such as the Nile, Euphrates and Tigris, Kerche and Karun, Indus and Ganges, Yellow River and Yangtze, Jeyhun and Seyhun, etc.), were the result of elements occurring in the mountains - melting glaciers, heavy rains, washing away mountain soil, etc.

Despite all the above arguments, historically the mountains were not always favorable to people and cruelly tested them with their harsh disposition. In fact, only those people who represented one or another ethnic community, who withstood all the tests and truly loved the mountains for what they are, became an organic part of this majestic element. Opening “warm embraces” to a person who had already become her family, mountain nature generously revealed to her chosen one the secrets of her exclusivity and consistently taught him true being and existence in extreme conditions. Thus, a person who knew not only the external greatness, but also the internal splendor of the mountainous terrain, presented as a living organism, and bearing a certain intelligent code, connected and completely trusted it with his fate and the fate of future generations. At the same time, it steadily and irrevocably merged with it, forming a single whole of natural and social existence. It becomes obvious that the mountains do not like strangers, especially those who treacherously come into their fold, destroying centuries-old foundations, traditions and natural balance. In this regard, the

mountains act as a vindictive avenger and with even greater effort they hide their progressive strength and energy from the arrogant enemy and persistently refuse to assign him the status of a true mountaineer.

Mountains, in an amazingly miraculous and intuitive way, clearly, consistently and deliberately determine and establish the presence of mind, intelligence, skill and enterprise in a person who claims to be an integral part of them. If for one reason or another the natural genius, represented by the mountains, does not in any way coincide with the mental and mental characteristics of the people who settled them and appropriated their landscape and resources, a certain magnetism inherent in the mountains does not charge these people with positive energy and creative power. Under these conditions, people who settled in the mountains, but did not receive spiritual signals from them and the corresponding friendly response, gradually experience spiritual and mental inferiority and subsequently an ever-deepening cultural degradation. It turns out that in this situation they cannot claim the status of “conqueror of the mountains”, and also cannot bear the affectionate name “children of the mountains”, gradually turning into degenerating persons and outcasts.

Just like cities and towns that have unique, deeply and persistently urbanized principles, a specific way of life, economic relations and culture that elevate their inhabitants to the rank of true burghers, the mountains also have a certain way of life, unique customs and a specific attitude towards life and social relations. When mountain morals are combined with liberalism, modernization and democracy, the birth of a unique person, exceptional charisma and even a genius is possible.

True mountaineers are made, as it were, from a different matter and mental shell. Their individual and collective character is distinguished by extreme severity, subordination and excessive patriarchy. It is these qualities that define the exemplary unit of a highlander, in which loyalty in friendship, truthfulness and honesty in relationships of various kinds (financial, economic, domestic, household, etc.), devotion in love and family relationships prevail. In this regard, the mountains with their austere grandeur decisively influence the mind, behavior and actions of the mountaineers. It is these exceptional advantages, as well as the reliable preservation and transmission of traditions to subsequent generations that are the main form and way of their existence.

True representatives of mountain peoples are always distinguished by their sharp mind and ingenuity. This is due to specific reasons, among which of particular importance are clean, naturally balanced air, healthy food guaranteed by an unspoiled natural environment, water with a special mineral composition that has a healing and rejuvenating character, and finally, a landscape that constantly arouses positive feelings, emotionality and special inspiration in terms of life and creativity. As for the resourcefulness and ingenuity of the mountain people, they are clearly the result of the constant need for technical devices in the conditions of a complex economic system and the search for ways to facilitate their daily lifestyle. Yes, indeed, a mountain landscape, with its magnificent view and mountain landscapes fragmentarily representing the beauty and majesty of the elements of mountain relief, have a certain inspiring, ennobling and actively transforming power. It is no coincidence that creative people living in other places that do not have protruding massifs from the earth with a corresponding natural shell (Rocky Mountains, mountains covered with dense vegetation, bald mountains, etc.) settled in places with the corresponding mountain landscape for inspiration. For example, the Russian writer, thinker and traveler Nicholas Konstantinovich Roerich (1874-1947) in search of the mythical country of Shambhala [1], spent a significant part of his life traveling and living in Tibet, India and ended his life in a foreign land, in India, in the state of Himachal Pradesh in the village of Naggar among the majestic mountains, at the foot of the Great Himalayan Range. At the same time, until the end of his life he was happy that he was constantly surrounded by such splendor. Many poets, writers and thinkers were either mountaineers, or subsequently often visited the mountains,

even settled in the mountains for a long time, choosing a place of power and inspiration. Almost all the greatest minds of antiquity were mountaineers or came from settlements located in the foothills. Representatives of ancient Greek philosophy Plato, Aristotle, Socrates, etc. are natives of an area with a mountainous landscape and naturally, this state of affairs significantly influenced the mind and philosophical consciousness of the thought giants of classical antiquity.

The famous scientist, ethnologist and philosopher of the 20th century Lev Nikolaevich Gumilyov (1912-1992), in his famous concept called “Passionary Theory of Ethnogenesis”, among the many factors influencing the ethnocultural activity of society, especially notes the landscape of the area. He believes that the ethnos, and its individual representatives, as a certain organism, presented as an integral combination of biological and social components, and as a geographically determined process, is the result of the interaction of landscape and cosmic energy. It must be emphasized that this concept is based on the objective theory of ethnicity or primordialism (lat. *primordialis* - beginning, basis), according to which social groups with racial and ethnic characteristics were formed and existed initially, under the influence of various external factors, including landscape and geographical components of existence [2]. This means that the formation of ethnic groups is not only a social and historical process, but also an act of merging of man with nature, as a result of which a person’s identification occurs, established by his belonging to the landscape. A cosmic force emerges, having constant connections with various objects of the earth, through which it transmits vital signals, strength and energy to a person.

2 Methods

2.1 Landscape uniqueness of the South Caucasus and general characteristics of autochthonous and aboriginal peoples of the region

One of the majestic places on planet Earth, exuding endless strength and energy, is the South Caucasus. It has a unique relief landscape, in which the mountain ranges of the Greater and Lesser Caucasus surround on three sides the vast Aran Plain, where from time immemorial autochthonous and aboriginal peoples with different ethnic, cultural and religious affiliations lived. Even in ancient times, when the ecumene was extremely limited in comparison with the entire earth’s surface of the planet, the South Caucasus dominated among the most convenient spaces for the habitation and population of ancient humans. Ancient settlements such as Azykh, Taglar, Tash Salakhly, Damdzhily, Gobustan, etc. were discovered as a result of archaeological research. Dating back to various periods of primitive society, once again confirm the protective and life-giving power of mountains and mountain landscapes. The fact is that all of the above and many not listed ancient settlements were located precisely in the mountains and foothills of the South Caucasus.

The mountain atmosphere and mountain landscapes surrounding the entire South Caucasus, visually presented to the eyes of the inhabitants of the region and creating a majestic and sacred aura, form in the minds and consciousness of the natives feelings about their natural involvement in this splendor. Some inner force binds them with strong threads to this magnificent episode of the original universe. It is in the image of mountains that a person sees and realizes the creative power of nature and intuitively feels the absolute involvement and constant presence of the Creator in the life process. Thus, a certain non-verbal, internal and spiritual communication of man with nature occurs. Such communication, which has an amazing sacredness and deep mystery, gradually assigns a person and a team a special status, a natural identity, and at the same time puts on them the stamp of belonging to one or another culture, to one or another worldview, giving them the

legitimate status of a “highlander.” In this status, mountains and mountain landscapes nurture the spirit of man and community, gradually turning individual elements of everyday life and social relations into habits, traditions and commandments. Thus, a person with exceptional morals, which are based on narratives and collective consciousness, develops a specifically codified temperament and a special character that constitute ethnic and cultural values. The totality of these values, as a rule, is reflected in special charters, the so-called “codes of honor.” The code of honor that many nations have, for example, the Pashtuns “Pashtunwali” (in the Pashto language “Pashtunwali” means “Pashtun way of life”), the Japanese “Bushido” (translated from Japanese means “the way of the warrior”, Bushido is a whole a set of specific rules according to which a warrior must constantly regulate his behavior, thoughts, attitude towards himself and others and become an example to follow for others), etc. usually presented orally. Thus, a code of honor that has a stable character and harsh content and its fundamental elements in the thoughts, behaviors and actions of people is passed on from generation to generation. As you can see, the peoples (Japanese, Pashtuns, Indians, Ingush, etc.) who have a code of honor are exclusively mountaineers. Of course, their belief in traditional values and specific morals has a long history, ahead of all the actions of fundamental religious doctrines, such as Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Christianity and Islam. In each historical era, the highlander’s code of honor, under the influence of newly created religious and moral ideologies, acquired new features, while persistently maintaining an indelible, traditional national connotation. In this regard, many peoples inhabiting the South Caucasus, in various historical eras and for various reasons, are no exception. The ancient Greek and Roman historian Strabo (lat. Strabo - 64/53 BC - 23/24 AD) in his 17-volume book “Geography” describes in detail the areas of Caucasian Albania (Fig. 1) life, employment, appearance, anthropological and anthropometric features of the ancient Albanians.

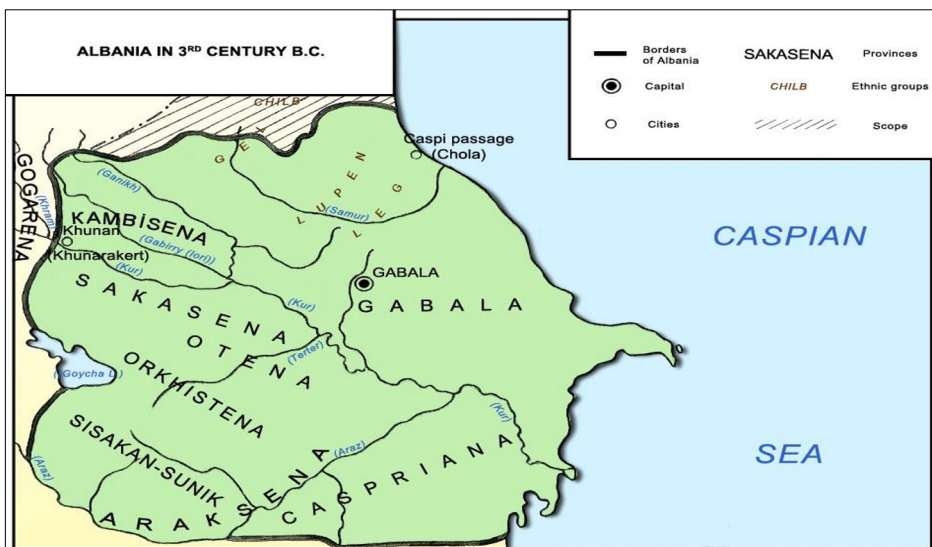


Fig.1. Regions of Caucasian Albania.

He also conducts a clear analysis of their specific temperament, mental and mental exclusivity, their unique attitude to the economy, to military affairs, to war and peace. Strabo especially emphasizes their tolerant attitude towards each other and neighbors, their ability to live in one big family, called “Alpans” (Translated into the Turkic language as “heroes”)

Strabo pays close attention to the most important factor, which reflects the ideal favor of each individual community towards the integrating “Albanian” idea and the unshakable faith in the monolithic unity of the highlanders belonging to different linguistic and ethnocultural communities. He pays close attention to the most important factor, which reflects the ideal favor of each individual community towards the integrating “Albanian” idea and the unshakable faith in the monolithic unity of the highlanders belonging to different linguistic and ethnocultural communities. Regarding this situation, Strabo notes that there are 26 ethnic groups in Albania, speaking different languages, but constituting a great and unshakable strength and unity [3]. Strabo also talks about the ethnocultural ties of Caucasian Albania with Ancient Europe, mainly with the ancient Balkan or ancient Greek civilization.

Strabo, describing in detail the anthropological features (tall, blond hair, blue eyes, etc.) of the ancient Albanians of the Caucasus, likens them to the Thessalians, who in ancient times had almost similar anthropological features, national character, temperament, attachment to military affairs, constant desire for leadership and political will. Strabo, as the most truthful historian and scientist, having visited Caucasian Albania and overcome it from west to east, and from north to south, personally met with many representatives of various ancient Albanian nationalities and personally studied their character, behavior and appearance. He perfectly described the careless attitude of the average Albanian man, essentially a born warrior-ascetic, and his deep dislike of luxury, cowardice and comfort. Strabo himself was an ethnic Greek from modern Amasya (northern Turkish Republic) and knew very well the character, ethnic and genetic characteristics of every Greek and Hellene.

During the life period (64/53 BC - 23/24 AD) of Strabo, a huge territory located from the Iberian Peninsula to the South Caucasus was under the military-political control of the Roman rulers (princes), leading the early empire or principate. But the great historian and geographer, due to his belonging to the Hellenistic culture, paid special attention to the study of ancient Greek history and culture, which by that time had fallen into decline. We, in turn, based on the historical facts presented to us by Strabo, as well as other ancient historians, can draw appropriate conclusions regarding the ethnic, cultural and family connections between the ancient Greeks and the ancient Albanians of the Caucasus. We, in turn, based on the historical facts presented to us by Strabo, as well as other ancient historians, can draw appropriate conclusions regarding the ethnic, cultural and family connections between the ancient Greeks and the ancient Albanians of the Caucasus. The rich historical information provided to us by ancient Greek and Roman historians often suggests the kinship of the ancient Dorians or Spartans with the ancient Albanian tribes and peoples. To give this version the right to exist, let us consider some important points from the life and history of the ancient Dorians and establish a hypothetical connection between the ancient Dorians (Spartans) and the Albanians. A well-known hypothesis suggests that the Dorians originally lived in Northern Greece, more precisely in the historical region of Thessaly. At the end of the 2nd millennium BC, they left Thessaly and spread throughout the Balkan Peninsula, the islands of the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas, Asia Minor and Asia Minor. Figure 2 shows the spread of the Dorians. In all likelihood, it was at that time that one branch of the Dorians went to the South Caucasus and the ethnic type that Strabo describes, calling them Albanians, are the descendants of the ancient Dorians, who, merging with the ethnic elements of the autochthonous and aboriginal peoples of the Caucasus, formed a new ethnic substrate [4]. Consequently, the ancient Dorians and Albanians had a whole similarity, manifested in various aspects: heroic character, rejection of luxury, comfort and coziness, high morale and, of course, appearance and physical characteristics. One branch of the Dorians, in 1004 BC, conquered the Peloponnese created here powerful state of the Ancient world. The main ethnic substrate of Albanians in the Caucasus, which has European roots, also created a powerful Albanian state in the 4th century BC, a tradition that lived until 1538. Gradually, a huge number of peoples and ethnic communities moved and settled in the South Caucasus, which

was located at the junction of Europe and Asia, at the crossroads of the clash of civilizations, adopting the culture, language and traditions of local ethnic groups and nationalities [5].

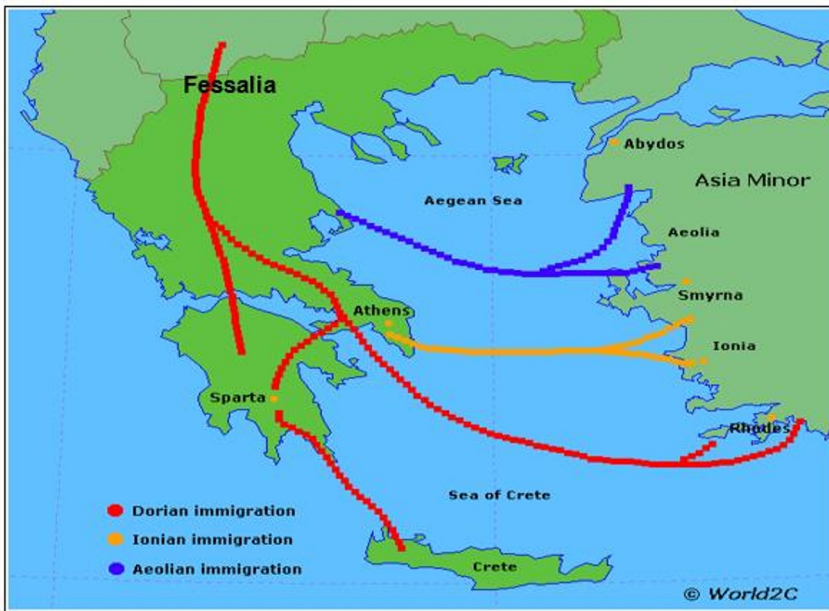


Fig 2. Immigration of the Dorians from Thessaly.

Much water has passed under the bridge since the time when various peoples and ethnic communities learned to live in a common family with moral principles and cultural ties. However, the sociocultural experience acquired then, passed on from generation to generation and presented as a natural organization of sociocultural and social components, today works clearly and smoothly in the new and modern Azerbaijani family. In it, “Azerbaijanism”, as the strongest integrating idea, brings together all peoples and ethnic minorities into an indestructible monolith, where the Azerbaijani Turks acquire the status of a state-forming, titled status [6].

3 Results and discussions

3.1 Our majestic mountains, modernity and us: new and ethno political and ethno cultural studies of Azerbaijan

For thousands of years we have been living in the Caucasus Mountains, surrounded by peaks in plains and valleys. During this time, mountains have become an integral element of our life and existence, as well as the main symbol of our national identity. Our native mountains, which nourished us with physical strength and spirit, have also witnessed our struggle and passivity, freedom and dependence, victories and failures, triumph and fall, joy and sorrow for centuries. And today, in our majestic mountains, among the mountains in the plains and valleys, in a friendly family live various peoples with their own identity, religious, ethnocultural and linguistic characteristics.

Modern Azerbaijan, where old and new, archaic and modern, progressive and patriarchal live and interact side by side, is the result of the direct influence of morals, beliefs, education and, of course, the creative, protective and inspiring forces of nature, a specific feature of the

landscape. In this monolithic unity there is no alien, separate or isolated, and each element of this integral phenomenon considers the existence of another element a necessary condition for its own existence and a way of large-scale manifestation of existential fullness. In social terms, this is also good, which from time immemorial humanity has strived for and continues to strive for. Ethnocultural elements in a monolithic society called “Azerbaijan”, as a rule, inhabiting the mountainous parts of the South Caucasus and Azerbaijan, spiritually and morally enrich the Azerbaijani nation. Each of them acts as a bearer of a progressive cultural code, which does not have any aggression, intolerance or arrogance. Due to the fact that today the eastern part of the South Caucasus, where our native and sunny Azerbaijan is peacefully and majestically located, has received full sovereignty within its legal borders for the first time in 200 years, the peoples who have made an invaluable contribution to the national cause are experiencing special exaltation and inspiration [7].

Today in Azerbaijan, where autonomous cultural codes form an integral national culture, a policy of multiculturalism is being actively pursued at the state level, and this is not accidental. The fact is that tolerance and multiculturalism are two important phenomena, a priori inherent in the Azerbaijani and determining his way of life, today they are the most important character and national idea, based on the strong pillars of “Azerbaijanism”. Despite the fact that many peoples and ethnocultural communities live in the South Caucasus and in Azerbaijan in particular, having significant differences in spiritual, ideological and mental terms, they are all steadily and reliably united by common values:

1. Faith in the Creator in its various manifestations.
2. Respect for universal human values and submission to traditional principles.
3. Tolerance, mercy, compassion, love and respect for all creatures of the Almighty.
4. Solidarity, like-mindedness, mutual understanding and mutual assistance.
5. Freedom, independence, honesty, truthfulness.
6. Respect for other people's opinions.
7. Equality in rights and responsibilities.
8. Love and respect for traditional and patriarchal values.
9. Rule of law.
10. Compromise, compliance, justice, the ability to forgive.
11. Respectful attitude towards oneself.
12. Family values, honor and dignity.
13. The fight against evil and the spirit of rebellion.
14. Love for the Motherland and willingness to sacrifice for its sake.
15. Return to nature and unity with it.
16. Positivism, progress and the desire for innovation.

4 Conclusion

Today we have become the rightful owners of the majestic mountains that were in captivity for 200 years, with which some magical force connects us. It stubbornly did not reveal its secret to the enemy, in fact, the rapist and invader. All this time, our native mountains were waiting for us, calling for help, were subjected to ecocide. Finally, we came and won. And the next important task is to educate modern Azerbaijani highlanders who will be able to restore the creative and unifying power of the mountains, rekindle the extinguished flame of their homes, be reborn as great people, such as Vagif, Uzeyir Hajibeyov, Khurshudbanu Natavan, Bulbul, Khan and others. Who were created by the creative aura of our mountains, the grandeur of the mountain landscape, with its mesmerizing view and magnetism.

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