

Critical remarks on archaeological research in the 19th and 20th centuries on the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in the Southern Caucasus

Nourida GADIROVA-ATESHI

Abstract

This paper examines aspects of early archaeological research in the southern Caucasus, especially Azerbaijan, during the tsarist and Soviet periods. It argues that the imprint left by the early antiquaries was profound and Eurocentric, influencing later investigations. It also argues that these early collections, now mostly held in European museums, should be re-investigated in their own right and in light of recent archaeological discoveries.

Research History and Historiography of the Caucasian Archaeology: The Early Years

Problems in the research history and historiography of Caucasian archaeology related to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages began to appear as early as 1829. While in work of the Soviet period, under the ruling ideology, the nature of these problems was obvious, they began to take new shapes after the fall of the Soviet Union.

The history of Caucasian archaeology is thought to have begun in 1829, when a professor from Hessen, 28-year-old Friedrich Eduard Schulz (1799–1829), visited the Caucasus and voiced his views, and his interpretation of the archaeological data. Carl Ritter, the founder of modern historical geography had called the attention of Schulz, a philosopher and scholar of Oriental studies, to this field of research, with the promise of a reasonable chance of success in obtaining new scientific results.¹ The French supported Schulz financially and thus he was able to visit Turkey and Iran, including their Armenian regions, several times during 1828 and 1829. The Société Asiatique, a society of French scholars who had devoted their lives to the study of Asia, assisted Schulz in conducting his research in the city of Van in this period.

While carrying out research with a German friend, Schulz's focus on prehistory at Kelishin, a mountain village in northern Iraq, near the border with Iran at the Kelishin Pass, led to the discovery of the Kelishin Stele, with its famous and important cuneiform inscriptions in a Urartian-Assyrian bilingual text, dating to 800 BC. However, Schulz was perceived not only as a scientist

¹ Lehmann-Haupt 1910, p. 6.

in the countries he was visiting. In 1829, he fell victim to the greed of the then Kurdish leader.² He was killed in the mountains near Chelemerik (Hakkari) after the head of Bashkali, Nurullah Bey, ordered his killing, having erroneously taken him for a spy. In the same year, the Russian researcher A. Yanovsky was sent from Moscow to Azerbaijan. The purpose of his trip was to search for the traces of Caucasian Albania described by Roman and Greek historians such as Pliny and Strabo. He published all the information he collected in his monograph, *Ancient Caucasian Albania* (1846).³

From the 18th century onwards we can observe growing interest among the European public in those ancient cultures which are documented in the scriptures. This concerns all the Mediterranean littoral, as we can see from the military and scientific endeavour of Napoleon Bonaparte between 1798 and 1801, but also regions such as the Caucasus. From the 1830s, more and more foreigners began to show interest in the history of the Caucasus and to visit the region from France, Switzerland, Germany and Austria. Cultural monuments belonging to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in the southern Caucasus are known in the archaeological literature under the following three names: Central South Caucasian culture, Genje-Karabakh culture and Khojaly-Gedebe culture. At first these antiquaries sold their excavated finds to European museums, thereby initiating interest in archaeology in the Caucasus. In 1834, the French researcher Frédéric Du Bois de Montpéreux travelled from Shusha (Nagorno-Karabakh) to Tbilisi. On his way he stopped for a while in Helenendorf (today Goygol in Azerbaijan), where he conducted excavations, collecting bronze items and black ceramics. He excavated 30 kurgans (burial mounds) in today's territory of Nakhchivan, and sent the finds to France. He published the results of his research by 1839, in the monograph *Voyage autour du Caucase, chez les Tcherkesses et les Abkhases, en Colchide, en Arménie et en Crimée*.

In the last third of the 19th century, ancient finds were no longer automatically transported to Europe. In 1867, Gustaf Radde (1831–1914), a biologist and geographer from the city of Danzig (today Gdansk in Poland), founded a Caucasian museum and library in Tbilisi; he also became its first director. Furthermore, a scientific centre for the study of the history and culture of Caucasian ethnic groups was established there. Both institutions were later merged into today's Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi.

In 1871, the Caucasian Archaeological Committee was founded in Tbilisi.⁴ Its task was to organise, evaluate and inspect scientific archaeological excavations. In 1881, the Fifth Archaeological Congress was held in Tbilisi, with Caucasia as its main topic. It declared thorough archaeological research in the Caucasus to be an important objective and decided this goal should be met under the surveillance of the Caucasian Department of the Imperial Russian Archaeologic Society. As a consequence of the congress, many years after the first investigations in the region, the interest of Russian and foreign researchers in this region decisively increased. A. A. Ivanovsky, a geographer, conducted many excavations in the territory of North and South Azerbaijan on the orders of the Archaeological Society in Moscow. Finds from over 72 stone cist graves were handed over to the Historic Museum in Moscow and published under the title *Materials of Caucasian Archaeology*.

² Lehmann-Haupt 1910, p. 6.

³ Yanovskiy 1846.

⁴ Bünyadov 1960, p. 9.

Because the scientific and methodological approach of this publication is now somewhat outdated it can no longer be used as a standard reference.

In 1896, an inspector of the local state school in Elizavetpol, A.Y. Yoakimov, conducted a number of excavations and his finds were sent to the State History Museum in Moscow, together with various artefacts which had been found by local residents during construction work. A mining engineer of German origin, B. Schultz, and a pharmacist, B. Rosendorf, together with his brother, conducted archaeological expeditions in Western Azerbaijan without registering their finds. Among the finds thus illegally obtained, those considered to be commercially valuable were sent to Europe by the excavators, while they destroyed the rest of the artefacts.⁵

The French researcher Jacques de Morgan (1857–1924) conducted archaeological excavations for several years in Iran, Armenia and Azerbaijan. In 1890, he explored and studied a considerable number of caves and dolmens in the Talysh Mountains (Azerbaijan) and opened more than 230 graves, where he found artefacts belonging to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. In one of these graves, de Morgan discovered up to 16 kg of bronze items. Some of the most valuable artefacts he sent to the Museum of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, close to Paris.⁶ De Morgan, as well as Belck, who will be discussed below, should be considered illegal excavators, whose profession was looting artefacts and robbing graves rather than conducting scientific research.⁷ De Morgan and Belck bluntly expressed their views about their actions in writing; thus, from de Morgan: “My people who are collecting prey (sic!) for me, have conducted some excavations.”⁸

Most of the abovementioned excavations were more commercially than scientifically motivated.⁹ So it is no surprise that it is no longer possible to reconstruct the original excavation results, as information about the finds is difficult to locate in excavation reports, if such reports were written at all.

In 1896, in Nakhchivan (Gizil-Vank, N. F. Fyodorov excavated many Bronze and Iron Age monuments on the orders of the Archaeological Commission. Today, his finds are kept in the State Museum of History in Moscow.¹⁰

In recent times, it was thought possible to relocate archaeological finds obtained through excavations in the Caucasus in the Caucasian museum which had been established by Radde in Tbilisi; however, it has become clear that exceptional finds were dispersed over quite a number of collections and museums. This situation is illustrated by the history of some sensational finds from a burial mound at Redkin Lager, further discussed below, located today on Armenian territory; these finds are scattered all over the world and are testimony to the dispersion of Caucasian heritage. Early authorities were well aware of this problem. A branch of the Moscow Archaeological Society was established in Tbilisi in 1901. The authorities tried to stop the transfer of prehistoric archaeological finds from the Caucasus to Europe, believing they should be kept in the society’s archives. After the foundation of the society, excavations could only be conducted with its permission and under its control.

⁵ Safarov 1989, p. 9.

⁶ Bünyadov 1960, p. 9.

⁷ Mahmudov 2008, pp. 10–12.

⁸ Mahmudov 2008, p. 215.

⁹ Bünyadov 1960, pp. 7–8.

¹⁰ Bünyadov 1960, p.10.

In 1905, B. A. Skinder, a reserve officer, opened two stone cists and seven burial mounds near Chovdar in Elizavetpol (Genje, Helenendorf). In 1906, he published a monograph *Experience of Archaeological Expedition*.¹¹ In 1908, Ferdinand Lasso, a mining and construction engineer, opened seven stone cists in Dashkasan, in the village Gushchu. Only a small part of the finds was transported to the Ethnological Museum in Helenendorf; the whereabouts of the rest is still unknown.¹² In 1904, the Armenian ethnologist E. Lalayan conducted excavations in the remains of ancient settlements in Gizil-Vang (Nakhchivan) on the bank of the river Aras, where he found examples of cultural heritage from the Neolithic period and from the Bronze and Iron Ages; but only an (undefined) percentage of these finds reached the Caucasus museum in Tbilisi.¹³

Other European researchers ignored the requirement of obtaining permission and conducted their excavations as before, which subsequently led to the division of finds. An example of this bad behaviour can be seen in the actions of the teachers of German origin O. Wenzel and D. Bermann. They opened some burial mounds near Helenendorf and sent the best pieces to Germany, while finds they considered unremarkable were destroyed.¹⁴

From 1908 to 1920, V. Ter-Gusakov excavated near Genje. He handed several of his discoveries over to the newly established National Museum of History of Azerbaijan and tried to systematically catalogue those and all his other finds as well. In 1913, he properly catalogued the archaeological finds from the Bronze Age stone cist graves found in the village of Gushchu, along with bronze and ceramic objects collected by villagers, and he donated them to the Georgian National Museum.¹⁵

From 1914 to 1922, during World War I and the Russian Civil War, institutionalised excavations came to a halt. Despite this, many local grave robbers continued to hunt for trophies. A number of cultural treasures from the Caucasus today adorn famous museums in Germany, France and Austria. In most cases, their exact origin is not specified.

Hereinafter, we will focus on the history of excavation between the second half of the 19th century and World War I. This history is related to the Siemens brothers, amongst others.

In 1843, Immanuel Nobel's sons, Alfred, Ludwig and Robert, travelled from Sweden to Russia. They started producing weapons for the tsarist Russian Army which were used in the Crimean War (1853–1856). For them, it was a profitable business. In 1873, Robert Nobel came to Lenkoran in the south of Azerbaijan in order to make rifle butts from ironwood trees that grew there. From Lenkoran he went to Baku, where he noticed that the oil wells made the coffers ring and therefore decided that it could be worth opening a new business for the family there. In 1875, the Nobel brothers founded the “Nobel Bros. Oil Producing Company” (Fig. 1). Subsequently, they signed a contract with the Siemens brothers which stipulated that they were entitled to receive all copper and pyrite (sulphur pyrite) that arose as a by-product of the quarries. As a result, the Siemens Brothers for quite some time had exclusive mining rights to almost all the copper mines near Gedabey in Azerbaijan.

¹¹ Skinder 1906, pp. 9–10.

¹² Safarov 1989, p. 10.

¹³ Bünyadov 1960, p. 11.

¹⁴ Safarov 1989, p. 10.

¹⁵ Safarov 1989, p. 10.

As early as 1847, the company Siemens & Halske had founded a subsidiary company in Russia dedicated to setting up a telegraph network. In order to mine and process the copper needed for the wires, in 1864 the Siemens brothers bought a copper mine in Gedebej, where they built a factory. Ernst Werner Siemens laid the first stone but he tasked his brother Walter with construction and the factory was open by August 1865. Unfortunately, Walter Siemens was not involved in the further expansion of the company, because in November 1868 he fell from his horse during a riding excursion and shortly thereafter, passed away due to his severe injuries. Like his brother Otto, Walter he was buried in the Catholic cemetery in Tbilisi. After Walter's death, his brothers Werner and Carl took over direction of the factory (Figs 2–4).

Even while building the factory, construction workers had come across archaeological remains and finds like stone cist graves, skeletons, weapons and bronze jewellery. The artefacts were sent to Rudolf Virchow (1821–1902) in Berlin, who was a close friend of the Siemens family. Virchow, a medical doctor and an anthropologist by education, had varied interests, especially in domestic and extra-European archaeology. He was a co-founder of the Berliner Gesellschaft für Anthropologie, Ethnologie und Urgeschichte (Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory [BGAEU]). One of the members and sponsors of the BGAEU was Werner Siemens. When he came into contact with the Caucasian artefacts he was engaged in other tasks, so he forwarded the finds to a confidant. This was the abovementioned Waldemar Belck, who also settled in Gedabey. Particularly seen in retrospect, Belck's excavations must be considered illegal, and motivated predominantly by financial gains. Belck did not care about archaeological layers and tore apart the archaeological record. He accumulated quite a large collection of finds over many years, most of which were sent to Rudolf Virchow in Berlin.

There were also others in the Siemens enterprises from whom Virchow received finds from the Caucasus. For example, in 1883 Siemens Brothers employed an engineer called Koch in Shamkhor (today Shemkir) who gave the Siemens brothers 40 artefacts made of flint as a gift. Some more

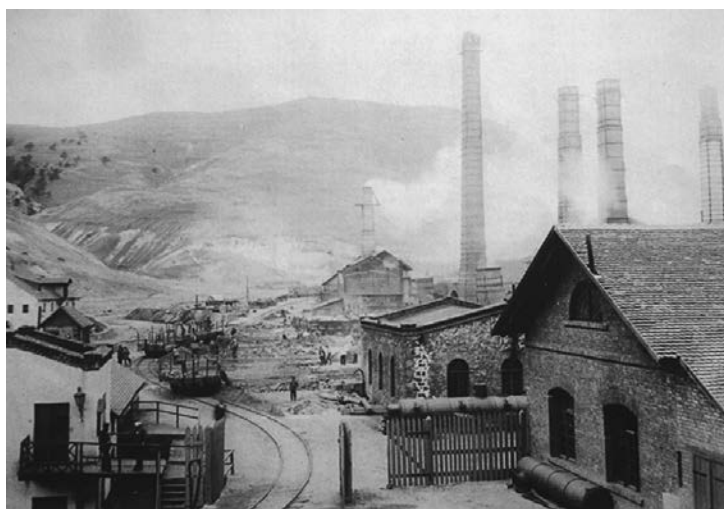


Fig. 2



Fig. 3.



Fig. 4.

firestones were added to the collection and donated again to Rudolf Virchow, who was interested in the Caucasus from an anthropological, archaeological and historical point of view.¹⁶ In 1884, during construction work, another employee of Siemens, Kirchhof, came across a few stone cist graves when performing some construction work in the yard of the factory. Over the course of his employment he acquired a private collection, which he showed Belck when he visited Gedebey for the first time. Belck “allowed me to select the best pieces of his collection for Mr Virchow who had a good reputation everywhere I came to, in the Russian as well as in the Turkish part of Armenia (sic!).”¹⁷

Rudolf Virchow’s scientific interest in the Caucasus was based on a dispute between two factions, one anthropological and one archaeological, which Virchow had committed himself to resolving. On the anthropological side, we may quote the theory of Friedrich Blumenbach (1752–1840), who considered the Caucasus the place of origin of the “white race”; on the archaeological side, following the Greek tradition, the Caucasus was considered the region in which metallurgy originated. The BGAEU, co-founded by Virchow, and the Rudolf Virchow Foundation supported Waldemar Belck from 1888–1891, because they hoped to get an answer from his excavations to the questions concerning the origins of the Indo-Europeans. At this time, the matter was intensively discussed amongst philologists, anthropologists and archaeologists, all of whom supposed it to be in the regions of the Caucasus.¹⁸ From his anthropological research on skeletons originating from the Southern Caucasus, Virchow concluded that based on the shape of their skulls they were “Caucasians”, which he defined as a “race”. He considered the Armenians the ethnic group with the closest relationship to them.¹⁹

All skeletons related to the Caucasian anthropological type were subsequently classified as Armenians, without considering additional information such as the age of the graves they were found in or additional archaeological finds in those graves. Nothing more specific was noted in relation to the different Caucasian peoples. This incautious classification has been the root of

¹⁶ Safarov 1989, p. 7.

¹⁷ Belck 1893, p. 67.

¹⁸ Kohlmeyer and Saherwala 1893, p. 15.

¹⁹ Virchow 1895, p. 4.

many incorrect scientific interpretations, right up until today. Unfortunately, the error in the conclusion “Caucasian equals Armenian” or “Caucasian finds are Armenian finds” is not always highlighted, and it can be presumed that not all researchers working in this region are aware of the background information. We must underline at this point that it is of utmost importance to discuss these interpretations — which were the product of their historic contexts — in order not only to understand their causes, but also to be able to rewrite the historiography of the Caucasus as recorded over the hundred years that followed them, especially in the light of the results of recent research.

Mainly known as a medical doctor, Virchow was also a passionate collector of archaeological finds from the Caucasus. He first stored these at the Museum of Pathology of Berlin University, where they were kept until his death in 1902. Those of his bronze finds which had been sent to Berlin were transported to the Department of Prehistory of the Royal Museum of Ethnology in Berlin after his death.²⁰

Virchow generously financed and supported many — mainly illegal — excavations, conducted by various assistants, Germans or locals of German origin, in the Northern and Southern Caucasus. Vassily Dolbezhev also received financial remuneration from Virchow. The Imperial Archaeological Commission founded in 1895 in St Petersburg conducted excavations in all Russian regions including the Caucasus and the finds were sent to Moscow and St Petersburg. The head of the official archaeological expedition in Ossetia, Vassily Dolbezhev, also State Council and senior teacher in the Vladikavkaz high school, was “a very resolute and intelligent man,” according to Virchow.²¹ Both the head of the local Ossetian clan, Khabosh Kanukhoff, who controlled grave robberies in Koban, and Dolbezhev were selling their finds, preferably to wealthy foreigners. Dolbezhev was authorised by Virchow, in addition, to deal in duplicates and triplicates at his discretion, and this gave him extra incentive to continuously increase the number of finds.

Virchow’s methods led to a loss of important information about cultural layers at the sites, which were destroyed while digging out only pieces of obvious value. Finds of this kind formed the basis of collections developed in European national states. The finds commissioned by Virchow were sent to Berlin, Ernest Chantré and Jacques de Morgan’s to France (to the museums of Saint-Germain-en-Laye and Lyon), and Franz Heger’s to Austria and the Museum of Natural History in Vienna.

Friedrich Bayern was one of Virchow’s principal “assistants”, called by Virchow the “founder of Caucasian prehistory.”²² Bayern was born in 1817 in Kronstadt in Transylvania (today Brashov, Romania) and died in 1886. He profited through generous financing from Virchow and conducted excavations in the Caucasus which could hardly be considered archaeological, especially in such areas as Marienfeld (1869), Sartashli (1869), Mtskheta-Samtavro (1872), Kazbek (1879) and Redkin Lager (1879).

The Caucasian Museum in Tbilisi was designated as the collection centre for archaeological finds from throughout the Caucasus in tsarist Russia. One part of Bayern’s Redkin Lager collection was sent to Tbilisi, another to Moscow, and the rest to Virchow in Berlin. Today, only a small part of this collection is preserved in the Museum of Prehistory and Early History (MVE) in

²⁰ Motzenbäcker 1996, p. 7.

²¹ Virchow 1881, Suppl. pp. 411–427.

²² Virchow 1895, p. 21.

Berlin. These finds have not been studied and nor have they been published to date. In 1925, the Caucasian museum in Tbilisi handed over a part of the Redkin Lager exhibits to the newly established National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan in Baku (Figs 5–18).²³



Fig. 5.



Fig. 6.

²³ Halilli 2006, pp. 238–239.



Fig. 7.



Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.



Fig. 10.



Fig. 11



Fig. 12.

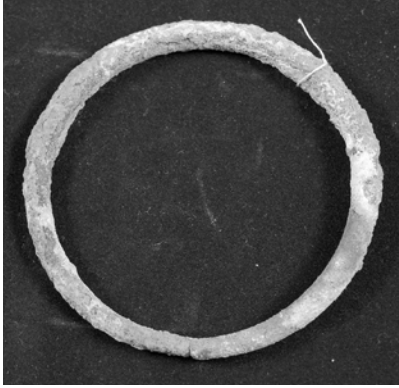


Fig. 13.



Fig. 14.



Fig. 15.



Fig. 16.



Fig. 17.

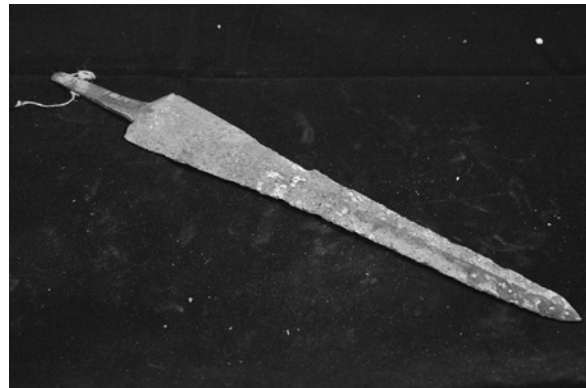


Fig. 18.

The Cemetery At Redkin Lager

The collection of Redkin Lager consists of finds from the eponymous necropole, located on the right bank of the headwaters of the river Aghstafa, at a distance of 6.3 km from the town of Dilijan, today situated in Armenia. The territory of the necropole historically belonged to the ancient Genje khanate. Later, in 1868, during tsarist times, Dilijan was part of the Elizavetpol Governorate. The necropole is located on a small plateau at an altitude of 150 feet above sea level and was laid out close to the river; it extended over all the area up to the Lesser Caucasus mountains, connecting the valley with the slopes of those mountains.

The name of the burial field originates from the name of an engineer, Redkin, who set up camp in this area in the 1850s when building a road. The builders found traces of burial places when laying the foundation of a house for the engineers. At the time, no one placed great importance on these traces; only later it did it come to light that the road and buildings had been constructed over a necropole. It must therefore be assumed that during the construction work a great number of graves were destroyed. It is also likely that quite a few of the graves had previously been looted.

Not until 20 years later, in 1876, when the engineer and army colonel Weiss von Weissenhof was appointed supervisor of road construction, did it become obvious to scientists that there was a prehistoric burial site at this place. Colonel von Weissenhof, together with his brother-in-law, opened some graves and gave the finds to Bayern's museum. In March 1879, Bayern together with von Weissenhof excavated five graves in Redkin Lager within a few days. They sent their finds to the Anthropological Society in Moscow,²⁴ which remunerated Bayern for his efforts.²⁵ Thereafter, Bayern continued the excavations for two months with the financial support of von Weissenhof, and this brought him into possession of a great number of valuable artefacts. Also in 1876, Bayern sent prehistoric finds to the museum he built himself in Tbilisi and to Berlin. Furthermore, part of the finds from Redkin Lager were preserved in the museum of the Society of Amateurs of Caucasian Archaeology, which existed from 1874 to 1878.²⁶ Later, G. D. Filomonov, as well as the Count and Countess Uvarov, carried out research on the Redkin Lager necropole. There are reports claiming Bayern's sister was also involved in that research and that she discovered another remarkable grave.²⁷ In Soviet times B. B. Pyatrovsky carried out research on the necropole, especially focusing on his own finds, which he documented in 1942.²⁸

Due to the efforts and merits of Friedrich Bayern, the necropole was systematically studied and scientifically described. He published a monograph detailing the excavations in the 1885 yearbook of the BGAEU.²⁹ Virchow edited the monograph, wrote an introduction to it, and published it after Bayern's death. He published Bayern's occasionally abstruse theories despite distancing himself from some of them.

²⁴ Bayern 1885, p. 49.

²⁵ Uvarova 1900, pp. 23–48.

²⁶ Piatrovskiy 1949, p. 6.

²⁷ Uvarova 1900, p. 48.

²⁸ Areshyan 1974, p. 193.

²⁹ Bayern 1885, p. 1–50.

Bayern was intensively involved in the study of the necropole at Redkin Lager, but he also excavated other archaeological sites in the Caucasus. As mentioned, in 1859 the first meeting of the Imperial Archaeological Society was held in St Petersburg. In 1872, the Caucasian department of the Imperial Archaeological Society was opened in Tbilisi. After having temporarily worked as a teacher in Odessa, Bayern moved to Tbilisi where, due to his efforts, in 1873 the Society of Archaeologists of the Caucasus and, later, the Society for History and Archaeology of the Caucasus were founded. At the same time, Bayern was a member of the BGAEU. Under the commission of the aforementioned societies, Bayern purchased a great number of finds from territories which today belong to Armenia and Georgia, and sold them to, amongst others, Russia and Germany.³⁰

Parts of the collection of Redkin Lager can be found in the Museum of Prehistory and Early History (MVF) in Berlin, the Moscow State Historical Museum, and the National Museum of Georgia. Today, only a few exhibits found at Redkin Lager are kept in the MVF: IIIId 5377 and 5378: hollow pendants made of bronze (2 pcs.); IIIId 5381: latticed bronze pendants; IIIId 5382: a rectangular piece of bronze; IIIId 5644–5650: balls of antimony (7 pcs.); and III 5850: a small bronze pipe. According to information provided by the museum regarding materials from Redkin Lager, the remaining collection is registered as war damage; nevertheless, it is likely that a proportion of the artefacts are kept in museums in Russia.³¹

Furthermore, we can assume that artefacts stored during World War II in the Martin Gropius Building were destroyed when the building was bombed in an allied air raid. Another theory states that up till today, a part of the collection of Redkin Lager is still in the MVF, possibly among the finds which could not be assigned places of origin because of war damage, and which are stored in a disorderly fashion in boxes.³² We hope that a considerable part of this collection from Redkin Lager can be re-identified and made available to researchers. Another part of the collection of Redkin Lager is preserved in the National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan. The collection was given to the museum by the Caucasian Museum in 1925. Davud bey Sharifov, who was the director of this museum from 1923 till 1928, rendered great service in the relocation of the collection to Azerbaijan and its transmission to the State Museum of Azerbaijan SSR (today the National Museum of the History of Azerbaijan).³³ Materials from other sites were mixed with the collection of Redkin Lager due to the fact that in tsarist times, archaeological finds excavated at various places in the Caucasus were regularly transported to the Caucasian Museum in Tbilisi.

The material from Redkin Lager held today in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan is listed in two inventory books (nos. 1 and 2). It consists mainly of pottery, bronze ornaments and bone fragments. In 1944, some of the clay jugs from Redkin Lager were relocated to the museum of Shamakhi and in 1958, to the museum of Nukh. Overall, the collection from Redkin Lager has been registered under 351 inventory numbers. The author noticed that material from Redkin Lager is fortunately still preserved in the National Archaeological Museum (France)

³⁰ Kohlmeier and Saherwala 1983, p. 12.

³¹ Archival information of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History Berlin by H. Junker (2014-01-27).

³² Archival information of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History Berlin by H. Junker (2014-01-27).

³³ Halilli 2006, p. 238.

in Saint-Germain-en-Laye; it has not been investigated to date. The material found in Redkin Lager is a good example of how Caucasian cultural heritage has been scattered across museums all over the world (the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan in Baku, the Georgian National Museum in Tbilisi, the State Museum of History in Moscow, the Museum of Prehistory and Early History in Berlin, and the National Archaeological Museum (France) in Saint-Germain-en-Laye).

Waldemar Belck and Others

Waldemar Belck, as mentioned above, was an important excavator, working for Virchow. In 1888, having been sent as an electrical engineer to Gedebeby by Siemens, Belck (in his own words) “excavated” between two and five graves per week.³⁴ As a reward, in addition to financial remuneration, Belck asked Virchow in their correspondence to appoint him a Corresponding Member of the Society of Ethnology and Prehistory. According to a letter addressed to Virchow, this request was met.³⁵ Virchow was quite aware of the illegality of Belck’s excavations, but continued, nevertheless, to support him financially, even allowing him to send finds to several museums in Germany,³⁶ including at Danzig (now Gdansk, Poland).

Altogether, it is possible that Belck looted *c.* 350 kurgans and prehistoric graves between 1888 and 1891. It is quite likely that State Council von Siemens was aware of these activities. Belck noted in a letter he wrote to Virchow: “I take this occasion with pleasure to thank my boss in those times, our immortalized Werner von Siemens, for not only most willingly allowing me to carry out these works, but also for supporting me most generously through William Bolton, the general manager in Gedebeby.”³⁷ The sometimes obscure activities of the Siemens brothers in the Caucasus are as yet not well known. An extensive report on this issue can be found in another publication by the current author.³⁸

In 1891, Belck returned to Germany, after the Imperial Archaeological Commission prohibited him from conducting further excavations.³⁹ He was succeeded by Emil Roesler, who served Virchow for 11 years from 1892 till 1903.⁴⁰ Thus the excavations were ongoing on, despite the prohibition issued by the highest authorities. To this end, Virchow invented a secret language with Belck, which we find in Belck’s letter:

Unfortunately, I have to inform you that State Councillor von Siemens wrote me from Tbilisi that he and his brother wanted to avoid any friction with the authorities because of the excavation (from which, obviously I would be the only one to suffer). I was told to stop my work temporarily. It was at the beginning of October; but I peacefully continued to work until 9 November.⁴¹

³⁴ Belck to Virchow from Kalakent, letter of 19 April 1889.

³⁵ Belck to Virchow from Kalakent, letter of 11 February 1890.

³⁶ Nagel and Strommenger 1985, p. 32.

³⁷ Nagel and Strommenger 1985, p. 11.

³⁸ Ateshi 2015.

³⁹ Belck to Virchow from Kalakent, letter of 28 June.1891.

⁴⁰ Belck to Virchow from Kalakent, letter of 7 September 1893.

⁴¹ Belck to Virchow from Kalakent, letter of 19. November 1890.

Despite the prohibition, Belck excavated 45 graves within 28 days.⁴² Having lost one of his sources of finance, Belck asked Virchow “to ensure that the prohibition will be lifted, which should not be difficult for you.” However, Belck had obviously overestimated Virchow’s influence on Siemens as well as his own position, for Virchow was either not able or unwilling to meet this request. Belck had to leave Gedebej. Nevertheless, he was still able to travel to Shusha and to invite Roesler, with the consent of Virchow, to work for him. Belck wrote: “I am pleased to see that Mr. Roesler continues to work so hard, and I hope that a great part of this collection will come to Berlin this time.”⁴³

Thus, the high school teacher of German origin from Helenendorf (today Goygol, Azerbaijan) was a culprit and a victim at the same time of Virchow’s treasure hunt in the Caucasus. Virchow praised him in his publications as an archaeologist, and even presented him, against his better judgment, to the German science community as an anthropologist.

In 1891, upon Belck’s return to Germany after being banned from carrying out further excavations,⁴⁴ Roesler was receiving medical treatment in Germany. Virchow took the opportunity to meet with him to discuss his schedule of excavations for the coming years.⁴⁵ Up until 1895, he would conduct excavations in Nagorno-Karabakh and Genje. He came under the influence of Belck’s and Virchow’s scientific theses about ancient peoples, their cemeteries, churches and tribes and adopted their dubious views and opinions. His excavation reports were quite different from other publications; they were published both in St Petersburg⁴⁶ and in the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* in Berlin (ZfE).⁴⁷ These papers must now be reviewed in the context of contemporary scientific knowledge and they need to be re-evaluated (Fig. 19).

In 1894, the Imperial Archaeological Commission was informed about Roesler’s excavations and prohibited him from working for Virchow, as according to Russian legislation all finds had to remain in the Russian Empire.⁴⁸ Unlike Belck, Roesler (as a Russian citizen) complied with that legislation, and he worked until 1899 in agreement with the commission’s directives. In a letter addressed to Virchow, Roesler informed him that in 1894 he obtained an authorisation from the commission to excavate in Nagorno-Karabakh (Shusha, Khojaly, Dovshanly and Avchadzorda).⁴⁹ Most of Roesler’s excavation reports were archived as reports of the commission,⁵⁰ but their contents can also be found in the Azerbaijani language; unfortunately they were modified, amended and even falsified.

All Roesler’s reports exist in a Russian and a German version (both written by Roesler himself). Reading them in both languages it can be noted that they have been studied and quoted by important archaeologists from Germany, Russia and the Caucasus. But none of those archaeologists considered it necessary to compare those bi-lingual reports to each other. Experts like E. Poxomov (12 September 1955), I. I. Iessen (1 September 1958), Ione (20 May 1954), K. Aliyev

⁴² Belck to Virchow from Kalakent, letter of 19. November 1890.

⁴³ Belck to Virchow from Kalakent, letter of 19 November 1890.

⁴⁴ Nagel and Strommenger 1985, p. 124.

⁴⁵ Jafarov 2000, p. 6.

⁴⁶ Jafarov 2000, p. 7.

⁴⁷ Rösler 1893, pp. 213–241.

⁴⁸ Mahmudov 2008, p. 13.

⁴⁹ Rösler 1896, Verhandlungen, 77.

⁵⁰ Archiv IIMK AN SSSR, Fond 1, Dela Archeologiceskij Komissi Nr. 130/1891; 54/1894, 60/1895, 36/1896, 48/1897; OAK za 1894–1897 gg.



Fig. 19.

(25 May 1958), I. Q. Narimanov (18 December 1953), T. Bünyadov (1 February 1954) and H. Jafarov (24 July 1987) referred to the reports in their research, but their conclusions reflected nationalist interpretations which are not at all based on Roesler's original texts.⁵¹ Therefore, the author has compared Roesler's original reports in the German, Russian and Azerbaijani publications for the first time. Roesler's original reports and archived documents, preserved in the St Petersburg branch of the Institute for the History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences, were comprehensively investigated, and with the permission and very generous support of the management of the institute the author was able to publish a part of them for the first time in 2015 in her monograph, and another part in her textbook of 2016.

The Collections

The Caucasus Collection in the Museum of Prehistory and Early History (MVF) in Berlin comprised at least 6563 inventoried items and object groups up until World War II.⁵² To this number at least 500 to 2000 objects should be added which were not recorded in the inventory books until 1939.⁵³ After the end of World War II, the major part of this collection was transported from Berlin to the USSR. The exhibits are preserved in Russian museums but have not been studied; they are mainly in the State Museum of History and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow, and in the Hermitage in St Petersburg. In 2003, all objects registered with "place of origin Caucasus" in the handwritten collection catalogues in the MVF were recorded in an electronic database.

⁵¹ Jafarov 2000.

⁵² The addition "at least" is due to the fact that all original copies of the collection catalogue *Southern Russia* were lost in 1945 because of war damage and the microfilms made in 1942 are partially incomplete.

⁵³ Archival information of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History Berlin by H. Junker (2013-11-02).

In 1903, the year after Virchow's death, Belck's and Korthaus' collections from Gedebej (for Korthaus, see below), including Belck's other artefacts, were transported to Berlin from Turkey and Armenia and relocated in the Department of Prehistory and Early History of the Ethnological Museum of Berlin. Albert Voss, the first director of the department (established in 1886) stated that:

the Royal Museum of Ethnology would receive a complete representation of the Caucasus due to this significant gift, which has not been acquired by any other museum to date, with the exception of the museums of St Petersburg and Moscow. The small museum in Tbilisi, of course, would still remain richer in these finds.

"The material collected by W. Belck is not only characterised by the diversity of shapes and the number of objects, but in particular by the fact that he excavated most of the finds himself and there are excavation reports written by himself."⁵⁴ This quotation shows us that the German scientific community took Belck's excavations very seriously at that time, and even accepted the documentation as "excavation reports he exactly wrote himself.

From a present-day perspective, this assumption has caused several problems in the archaeological research of the Caucasus.

The registers of the Caucasus collection of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History (MVF) were brought to the Soviet Union in 1945 and 1946, and they are still in Russia today. Because of the absence of the originals, black and white copies of the collection records are used in Berlin, made from microfilms taken in 1942. But some pages were not filmed, and the contents of those pages are today missing from the inventory books in Berlin. It must be assumed that further objects and groups of objects from the Caucasus were named and described on those pages, but how many of them there were will remain unknown until the original collection records of the Berlin Caucasus collection have been examined.

A relatively large number of artefacts belonging to the Caucasus collection from the MVF in Berlin were sent to safe places during World War II. By 1941, some valuable gold finds had already been brought to the Prussian state bank in Berlin and to the so-called Flak Tower near the Berlin zoo.⁵⁵ From 1944 to 1945, a great part of the collection was relocated to the basement of the Berlin City Castle and to the salt mines in Graslleben near Helmstedt and Schoenebeck near Magdeburg. After the war ended, the parts of the collection preserved in the Flak Tower and the Berlin City Castle were transported to the Soviet Union, while those that had been stored in the salt mines were temporarily relocated to the British storage area for cultural treasures at Celle Castle. Between 1956 and 1958 these objects were returned to Berlin, while the artefacts which had gone to the Soviet Union remained in Russia, in several museums in Moscow and St Petersburg, where they are still not possible to access for scientific research.

Future joint research with Russian scientists in the Russian museums — mainly the Hermitage in St Petersburg, and the State Museum of History and the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow — should be dedicated to searching for objects bearing inventory numbers of the

⁵⁴ Nagel and Strommenger 1985, pp. 11–12.

⁵⁵ Archival information of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History Berlin by H. Junker (2013-11-02). The objects of Caucasian provenance made out of precious metal which had been stored in the Flak tower at the Zoo are nearly identical to the objects on this list of the contents of the so-called three gold crates of the MVF. Compare Goldmann and Reich 1996, p. 42.

MVF. Furthermore, more than 50 war-time boxes containing broken pottery in the MVF have not yet been identified. We must also assume that a considerable number of objects were lost forever during World War II.⁵⁶

The author learned that in 1945, after the victory over Nazi Germany, several boxes containing finds were transported from Germany to the USSR as looted art, by order of the Committee of Arts of the Council of Ministers of the USSR, under inventory nos. 6 and 7, Fundus No. 962.⁵⁷ They were brought to the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts in Moscow and later, in 1946, to the Oriental Department of the Hermitage Museum for temporary storage. At the moment, around 158 exhibits from Gedebej and its surrounds are preserved in the MVF. It seems promising to look for further traces in other German museums. As mentioned above, the registers of the Caucasus collection from the MVF were brought to the Soviet Union in 1945 and 1946, and they remain in Russia today but are inaccessible.⁵⁸

A part of the exhibits in the MVF belong to the collection of Frank Korthaus,⁵⁹ who was at Gedebej with Belck. His collection contains about 130 artefacts belonging to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages which he discovered close to Gedebej. Korthaus obtained these items over a long period, then finally handed them over to Belck for processing and financial evaluation.⁶⁰ This process is documented in one of the reports referring to the origin of the collection which Belck handed over to Virchow in Gedebej.⁶¹ The collection was purchased by Belck with the consent of Virchow and therefore the objects from Korthaus' collection came to the prehistoric department of the Berlin museums together with Belck's archaeological finds from Gedebej.

A German officer, Hans-Hermann Graf von Schweinitz who was a member of the BGAEU, handed over about 180 objects to the MVF.⁶² As far as can be seen from the purchase documents, he had not excavated these objects himself.⁶³ When the collection was sorted it came to light that, in 1901, some artefacts were lost in a fire at the Institute of Pathology of the university where Virchow had stored them until his death. Hans-Hermann Graf von Schweinitz had been trying to put 29 graves in Dzegama in chronological order, with the help of primitive drawings. In accordance with the style of those years, he referred to the whole area between the Dzegama railway line and the copper plant in Gedabey as "Armenia". Although this reference is obviously wrong, his notes and his collection of photos will be useful for further studies of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. They must, however, be critically examined. Graf von Schweinitz, like his predecessors Belck, Haupt, Bayern and Roesler, believed Virchow's anthropological and archaeological theses and followed them unquestioningly.

⁵⁶ Nagel and Strommenger 1985.

⁵⁷ Documents are kept in the Russian State Archive for Literature and Art, RGALI, in Moscow.

⁵⁸ Archival information of the MVF by H. Junker (2013-11-02) For single backup and displacement measures, see also Goldmann and Reich 1996, pp. 11–19; 24–25.

⁵⁹ Archival information of the Museum of Prehistory and Early History Berlin by H. Junker (2014-02-10)

⁶⁰ Nagel and Strommenger, 1985, p. 11.

⁶¹ Nagel and Strommenger 1985, p. 13.

⁶² Acquisition file for the collection of Count H.-H. von Schweinitz in the MVF: SMB-SPK /MVF, IA 14, Bd. 23, E 2051/13.

⁶³ Archival information of the MVF by H. Junker (2013-11-02)

The author of this article published the excavation reports of Graf von Schweinitz for the first time in her monograph.⁶⁴ She also published the Azerbaijani translation of the reports in her textbook.⁶⁵

Many collections belonging to the Khojaly-Gedebe Culture which were found in the region of Gedebe, in the “Paradise Castle” (Cennet Qalasi) and its surroundings, are preserved in the State Museum of History in Moscow. There we can find the excavation material of A. A. Ivanovsky. A small number of items originate from the regions of Gedebe, Mirzik, Qizilburun and Helenendorf in Azerbaijan are displayed in hall number five. In this exhibition, there is also material from grave no. 91 in Qarabulagh.

There is great merit in Graf Alexander Sergeyeovich Umarov’s having established the Caucasus collections in Russian museums, including the Moscow’s State Museum of History. But it remains impossible to investigate the materials thoroughly and in an objective way, because a great part of them were either acquired from graves and burial mounds through looting or purchased from local collectors.

After the October Revolution on 7 November 1917, the Bolsheviks aimed at the development of a socialist culture in the new Soviet republics, based on their respective national traditions. Archaeological monuments were declared the cultural heritage of the people of the Soviet Union as a whole. In the following years, many administrative and scientific activities were developed. In Azerbaijan, in 1920, the State Museum of Azerbaijan was founded, and in 1923 the Archaeological Committee of Azerbaijan was established.

Terminology and Soviet Studies

Today in the archaeological literature cultural monuments from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in the Southern Caucasus are known by the following names: Central South Caucasian Culture, Genje-Karabagh Culture and Khojali-Gedabey Culture.⁶⁶ In 1929, A. V. Schmidt divided the monuments from the Bronze Age in the Kuban region into three groups: Early, Middle and Late Kubanian.⁶⁷ In the 1930s, A. A. Iessen introduced the term “Culture of the North Caucasus” for the first time, in which Bronze Age finds from that region were included; he assigned them to a “second stage of metallurgy.”⁶⁸

In the Soviet period, excavations were carried out at several places. In 1930, Jakob E. Hummel excavated in several places near Helenendorf (today Goygol in Azerbaijan).⁶⁹ E. I. Krupnov carried out excavations in North Ossetia until 1940.⁷⁰

A. M. Apakidze published a valuable paper on the development of archaeological science in Georgia in Soviet times, relating to the local achievements.⁷¹ He described all stages of human

⁶⁴ Gadirova and Ateshi 2015.

⁶⁵ Gadirova and Ateshi 2016.

⁶⁶ Göyüşov and Martinov 1990, p. 114.

⁶⁷ Schmidt 1929, pp. 9–21.

⁶⁸ Iessen 1935.

⁶⁹ Hummel 1940.

⁷⁰ Krupnov 1960.

⁷¹ Apakidze 1972.

history in the territory of Georgia, from the Stone Age to the late Middle Ages. The book contains investigations of all archaeological expeditions conducted in Georgia in Soviet times,⁷² provides lists of all significant publications,⁷³ and shows the activities of the museums.⁷⁴ The work of the prominent Georgian archaeologist O. D. Lordkipanidze was also devoted to the development of archaeology in Georgia.⁷⁵ Important publications in this area of archaeological science included: *Archaeology of Georgia* (1959);⁷⁶ *Archaeology of Georgia* (vol. 1, 1991; vol. 2, 1992);⁷⁷ a textbook for students written by O. M. Djaparidze, *Archaeology of Georgia. Stone and Bronze Ages*;⁷⁸ and *Essays on the History of Georgia* (in Georgian and Russian⁷⁹).

The following scholars have made important contributions to the historiography of the Caucasus: A. M. Apakidze, G. E. Areshian, A. B. Arjikovsky, T. Bunyatov, V. V. Bunyanin, R. M. Vakhidov, R. B. Geyushev, M. I. Diyakonov, O. M. Japaridze, I. M. Jafarzadeh, A. A. Iessen, S. M. Kazieyev, E. I. Krupnov, B. A. Kufin, B. A. Latinin, A. A. Martirosian, I. I. Meshaninov, A. A. Miller, G. K. Nioradze, G. Orudzhev, T. S. Passek, B. B. Piotrovsky, Kh. F. Fyodorov, O. N. Khabibulayev, E. V. Khanzadian, T. N. Chubinishvili, and others.

These Russian, Georgian, Armenian and Azerbaijani scientists frequently quoted de Morgan, Chantré, Virchow, Belck, Bayern and Roesler in their publications. The papers of the latter group were quoted as reliable sources and their theses were considered trustworthy. We can clearly notice the influence of those excavators on the authors who came after them. But sometimes their papers were also critically reviewed and corrected. B. B. Piotrovsky frequently referred to them, but he corrected, for example, incorrect place names and geographic assignments.⁸⁰ The publications of de Morgan,⁸¹ Chantré,⁸² Virchow, Belck, Bayern and Roesler must be thoroughly examined and critically evaluated, as must Piotrovsky's more recent publications on South Caucasian history, especially as far as Urartu is concerned. This, as well as conducting further on-site international research, is one of the crucial tasks of the for the study of the prehistory and archaeology of the Caucasus.

Previous Work on Caucasus Collections in European Museums

Recent research on the Caucasus collections located in Germany and Austria has been insufficient. The quite extensive collections of bronzes, predominantly of North Caucasian provenance (for example, from the Koban burial ground), which are kept in museums in Vienna, are yet to be scientifically processed and published. The majority are still to be examined closely; the exception is Franz Hančár's sometimes idiosyncratic interpretations of selected artefact groups from the 1920s–1950s, and the resulting essays.

⁷² Apakidze 1972, pp. 10–116.

⁷³ Apakidze 1972, pp. 123–147.

⁷⁴ Apakidze 1972, pp. 116–122.

⁷⁵ Lordkipanidze 1989, 1991.

⁷⁶ *Archäologiya Gruziiya* 1959.

⁷⁷ *Archäologiya Gruziiya* 1991.

⁷⁸ Djaparidze 1991.

⁷⁹ *Ocherki istorii Gruzii* 1970 (Georgian); 1989 (Russian).

⁸⁰ Piotrovsky 1944, 1949.

⁸¹ Morgan 1889.

⁸² Chantré 1886.

The Berlin collections have more often been presented to the public, *inter alia* by Virchow himself, but also more recently by others. The MVF presented a small part of the Berlin Caucasus collection in the exhibition *Caucasus and Luristan*, which took place in the Langhans Building next to the Charlottenburg Castle from 12 September to 30 November 1958. No catalogue was published. A catalogue was, however, released for another MVF exhibition in the same venue. This exhibition, titled *Early Tribes in the Mountains of Armenia and in the Caucasus - Berlin Investigations of the 19th Century*, was developed and implemented by the Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory and shown from 9 March till 8 September 1983. It then toured several other German cities. The information included about the collections of Belck, von Schweinitz and Korthaus was brief and of a general nature. No more complex studies were associated with this exhibition. Another important part of the Berlin Caucasus collection, the collection of Kossnierska, has been investigated and published by Ingo Motzenbäcker from the DAI. His work contains a thorough investigation of the material and makes a valuable contribution to research on the collections.

The most recent exhibition of material from the Caucasus opened in 2008 in the Ethnological Museum of Berlin under the title *Azerbaijan - Land of Fire - History and Culture in the Caucasus*. This exhibition also travelled to Dresden. Further research, however, was not conducted within the framework of the exhibition, and the material was presented in a traditional way. The MVF loaned the exhibition 16 objects, all of them originating from Kalakent, Azerbaijan. Some decorated bronze belts were the most important of the artefacts from the MVF. According to the current state of research, the museum keeps ten bronze belts of Caucasian origin, some of which were unknown to the scientific community until recently. The author issued the first publication showing them, in 2013.

Overall, there have been a number of publications on the Caucasus collections in Germany — longer and shorter articles, catalogues, and monographs. However, their quality and their significance to the study of the history of the Caucasus vary greatly, as we can see in the following example. In 1985, Wolfgang Nagel and Eva Strommenger published a catalogue called *Kalakent*, which listed the finds and included the majority of relevant letters written by Belck to Virchow. However, the publication contains no scientific evaluation of the material, the editors only noting: “For many reasons the authors will withhold themselves from a scientific evaluation.” Several problems emerge; for example, in the published letters as well as in earlier reports, the historic monuments in Kalakent (Gedebeby Area) and the Djennet Galasi (Paradise Fortress) are incorrectly assigned to Armenia instead of Azerbaijan. In addition, more recent Albanian churches are labelled “ancient Armenian churches,” which assigns them to both the wrong region and the wrong time period. It is the unreflective acceptance of Belck’s documents that has led to the adoption of these historical, archaeological geographical, anthropological and political misperceptions. These erroneous interpretations are then passed on in turn. They have been adopted by German and Azerbaijani universities, museums, and research institutes, as well as by German historians and archaeologists in various publications, which gives the impression they are valid, correct and scientifically proven.

This book was translated into Azerbaijani in 1999, thus multiplying the errors. The Azerbaijani version is not only incorrect in substance, it is also filled with coarse grammatical and transcription errors. Some parts were not translated correctly, and there are instances of contents having

been changed, distorted, twisted and fabricated. The “translated” writings of Belck reflect a reinterpretation in an Azerbaijani national spirit which does not correspond to the original sources. The editors of the translation were the Caucasian archaeologist R. B. Goeyueshov and the Russian archaeologist A. I. Martinov, the latter the author of the major work *Archaeology of the USSR*. The translation is not a simple transcription of the original text, but a new interpretation, and a major part of the history of the culture of the Central Southern Caucasus was rewritten for the period of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. In subsequent years, articles, monographs and dissertations have been written based on this dubious work, as the publication was considered an important and scientifically reliable source.

As a result, a great part of the history of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Gedebej has been knowingly or unknowingly misinterpreted. Azerbaijani and Russian publications reproduce Virchow’s and Roesler’s articles in combination with other scientific papers which incorporate — based on those original sources — the same incorrect assumptions. It is important to understand that the primary sources written by Belck and Virchow that later authors repeatedly rely on are incorrect, and that, therefore, it is legitimate to demand that the German archaeological literature and historiography of the Caucasus written over the past 185 years should be re-examined in order to provide a reliable scientific basis for future research.

Of the thousands of irreplaceable Caucasian artefacts that were transferred to Russia, many are presented inattentively and in antiquated ways in the Hermitage Museum. The Urartian finds from Armenia, however, are exhibited seemingly with particular attention and diligence. Requests by individual researchers to access the collection are mostly left unanswered by the Hermitage. Access to the archaeological finds is therefore generally impossible, although there is no longer any reason to keep the South Caucasian artefacts and documents secret.

Another very important Caucasus collection resides in the Vienna Museum of Natural History.

This collection is considered the largest after that of the Russian museums. The Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age materials are kept under inventory numbers up to 5000. They consist of various pottery, weapons and jewellery collected from the Ossetia, Koban, Faskau, Kumbulta, Chmi and Kamunta regions. Many valuable artefacts identified as being from Chechnya and Azerbaijan are kept in the museum at present. In 1881 and 1893, these materials were collected and deposited in the museum by F. Heger, who worked as director of the Department of Anthropology and Ethnography in the museum. Some finds belonging to the Khojaly-Gedebej-Culture are a particularly important part of the Vienna collections. They were brought to the museum by the famous Austrian explorer Hans Leder in 1898 and were found in the Goygol (formerly Helenendorf) region of Azerbaijan and purchased from local collectors.

French museums play a special role among the European institutions where the Caucasus collections are kept. The Louvre in Paris and the museum in Saint-Germain-en-Laye have especially rich collections, comprising pottery, various types of weapons, jewellery, tools made of stones and bones, and much more. Some of the exquisite artefacts were found during archaeological excavations carried out in the Southern Caucasus or purchased by the local collector J. de Morgan, who worked in various parts of Egypt, Iran and the Caucasus in the 1880s and 1890s. Of particular note here are more than 1000 graves he excavated, together with German archaeologists, from 1888 to 1891. In the course of these excavations he collected countless examples of material culture

in Lelvar, which is situated between Tbilisi and Alagoz in Georgia. De Morgan and Hančar categorised these materials as belonging to “Lelvar culture”, and the results of their research have appeared in various publications in France.

De Morgan started excavations in the Talysh Mountains in 1890 and discovered up to 230 caves, tombs and graves. He collected a large number of precious artefacts belonging to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages (as well as from some other periods), including 16 kg of bronze materials from one grave alone. He deposited most of these, including the most exquisite examples, in the Saint-Germain-en-Laye museum. Although some artefacts belonging to the Khojaly-Gedebey Kultur culture are found in the collection, the materials belonging to the Talysh-Mugan culture of Azerbaijan predominate. De Morgan found these materials at Joni, Tulum, Hovil, Keraveladi, Razgov and other regions of Lerik (a town in the south of Azerbaijan). Among the earthenware materials, jugs, hemispherical bowls, glass, vases and other dishes attract attention because of their antiquity and beauty. The jewellery includes items for the head, chest, arm, toes and feet: gold discs, bronze earrings, pins, bracelets, rings, beads and various other jewellery items of particular note. Most of the metal objects were chosen for restoration and protection in 1980, but have not yet been comprehensively studied. Regardless of their form, content and structure, all the materials in the museum that belong to the Talysh-Mugan Culture are worthy of study so as to better understand the material and spiritual culture of the people who lived in the Talysh region at the end of the second and the beginning of the first millennium BC.

It is fortunate that the materials from Redkin Lager have been kept in the National Archaeological Museum of Saint-Germain-en-Laye, since researchers have been able to benefit from the finds through international studies. These finds are considered vivid examples of the cultural heritage of the Caucasus that is scattered in museums across the world.

The Khojaly-Gedebey Culture, which was prevalent over vast areas of the Caucasus in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages has been researched under several names, but no comprehensive investigation has as yet been completed. The first scholar to work in this area was Franz Hanchar, who consolidated the finds for the first time in 1934 under the name “Genje-Karabakh-Culture”. Soviet archaeologists used several names for this culture. B. Kuftin followed Hanchar’s terminology, but in the later Soviet scientific literature we find the term “Culture of the Bronze Age in Transcaucasia”, used by, for example, A. A. Iessen, B. B. Pyatrovsky, and A. L. Mongayt. Piskhalauri labelled it “Central Transcaucasian Culture”, and M. Huseynova finally called it “Khojaly-Gedebey-Culture”. The author of this article proposes the name “Khojaly-Gedebey-Culture” should be used from now on and all other designations dropped. It should then be investigated anew as the South Caucasian Khojaly-Gedebey-Culture of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Former investigations should be taken into account and analysed, but any nationalistic approaches should be ignored and the research should focus on scientific matters only.

It cannot be said how long access to certain materials will remain impossible, and it should also be taken into account that the artefacts are subject to aging and corrosion, leading to a continuous loss of information. Hopefully, the problems can be resolved in the medium term. Access for individual researchers could be an important first step in investigating the Caucasus collections as a whole and in detail, especially within the context of a long common history.

Results, Prospects, Objectives

In this article, a critical analysis of the research history and historiography of Caucasian archaeology in the 18th and 19th centuries has been presented to the international scientific community, together with an overview of associated problems for modern researchers. Before the Soviet era, under the influence of Rudolf Virchow, the main objective of Caucasian archaeology was to search for the origin of the Indo-European peoples in the Caucasus. In the Soviet era, Marxist-Leninist thinking strongly influenced Soviet archaeology. In the post-Soviet era, the small independent republics developed new historiographies, which were strongly nationalised within the separate republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

After the Iron Curtain was lifted, numerous foreign research groups came to the Caucasus. But they overlooked many problems. Of course, in a lot of cases local co-operation with foreign scholars was quite useful for both sides, but there were also obstacles related to inexperience and lack of language skills. Although local scholars appear as co-authors in publications abroad, their own articles at home read quite differently. Not all local scholars have experience in the latest techniques of Western science, and foreign heads of projects do not always co-operate with their local partners on an equal footing. They excavate with their own people, bring their own anthropologists, and take samples to their own countries to examine them. When it comes to publishing results, they mention the names of their partners only as a courtesy. Sometimes the local scholars do not have sufficient knowledge of English or French, and they hardly understand what is published in their names. In their native tongues, they publish their own different ideas and if we read these publications, we can see that the writing of different historiographies continues. In some cases, this has serious consequences for the contemporary historiography of the Southern Caucasus. This is an important problem which should be raised for international discussion in order to achieve positive change and joint solutions to finally stop the writing of incorrect historiography.

The historiography of the Caucasus is quite fragmented, as becomes apparent when considering the studies published to date on the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. There are considerable differences between the German, Russian, Azerbaijani, French and Armenian historiography, so that we find concurrent but totally divergent versions of the history of the Caucasus and its material culture. This is a result of research having been conducted for more than 185 years using different methods and research traditions, and under the influence of different ideologies. It is also the product of contemporary history; for example, the breakdown of the Soviet Union, and the subsequent emergence of new states and new national myths.

A change of paradigm for research on and in the Caucasus that takes into account all these factors is urgently needed. In order to evaluate the Caucasus collections in a scientific way, papers published to date in different languages must be compared, and the original documents and excavation reports of German, Russian and Caucasian scientists that are now kept in different places must be critically re-evaluated. This work has commenced, but we are only at the starting point of a comprehensive research strategy.

These problems and prospects, future projects and suggested solutions have been presented to the scientific community together with an appeal for co-operation at several international

conferences since 2013,⁸³ as well as in the current author's postdoctoral thesis, and a number of scientific publications and papers. Concurrently, the author has developed an international project to investigate the Caucasus collections in European museums. The initial plans relate to investigating the material from Azerbaijan which is currently kept in the Museum for Prehistory and Early History (MVF) in Berlin. Negotiations have been underway for some time with the museum and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Azerbaijan. Finally, a memorandum of understanding has been contracted between the MVF and the National Art Museum in Baku.

The author now proposes that the following steps are taken:

- All publications written by German and other European scientists over the past 185 years of research on the Caucasus should be re-evaluated as part of a broadly based international discussion. This is particularly necessary in regard to university and museum publications, including catalogues, and the reports published in the abovementioned volumes of the *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* (Journal for Ethnology);
- The research activities of the former Berlin Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistory (BGAEU) on the Caucasus must be re-examined and re-evaluated in the light of recent scientific findings. Special attention should be paid to the influence of R. Virchow on Caucasian archaeology and historiography;
- Finds from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages in the Caucasus collections that are at present kept in Russian museums should be made accessible to the scientific community, and should be examined, catalogued and published within the framework of international co-operation;
- The Caucasus collections and archives in German and other European museums should be re-examined, catalogued and published. This particularly concerns the objects in the MVF, where the material is accessible to researchers. A similar project within the Caucasus should benefit the local museums, as many of them do not currently meet international technical and organisational standards;
- Existing gaps in research must be identified and closed within the framework of international co-operation; for example, in the research on the Khojaly-Gedebey-Culture;
- Roesler's original excavation reports, currently kept at the Institute of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St Petersburg, and the related publications in German, Russian, Azerbaijani and Armenian should be cross referenced. Roesler's incorrect statements should no longer be cited;
- Sites in the South Caucasus that were looted rather than methodically excavated should be re-visited and re-examined using contemporary methods;
- Historiographies of the Caucasus produced after the fall of the Soviet Union in several languages should be thoroughly cross referenced. Falsifications of the history of the Caucasus and manipulations of maps of the ancient world should be critiqued in an objective way and stopped;

⁸³ "Azerbaijani Archaeology and Ethnography in the Years of Independence," Baku 2013; "Contemporary Problems of Caucasian History," Genje 2015; "Spaces and Territories along the Caspian Sea during the Bronze and Iron Ages," Paris 2015; "International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East (ICAANE)," Vienna, 2016.

- The spectacular Khojaly-Gedebey Culture which prevailed over the greater part of the Caucasus in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages should be investigated collaboratively by the international scientific community. Although there are some obstacles due to the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, foreign scholars could make a huge contribution by organising joint excavations and discussing problems at international conferences so that ways towards joint research and publications can be found.

Joining the past together in international teams creates the basis for a joint future.

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Nourida GADIROVA-ATESHI

Khazar University, Baku; Institute for Caucasus Research, Berlin

E-mail: Nateshi@khazar.org