

On Determining the Position of the Khinalug Language Within the Dagestan Language Family¹

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Annotation

In the scholarly literature, two principal viewpoints exist regarding the genetic affiliation of the Khinalug language. According to a number of researchers (R. Erkert, G. Dumézil, E. Bokarev, B. Talibov, G. Klimov, A. Kibrik, S. Kodzasov, I. Olovyannikova, B. Gigineishvili, A. Mahometov, G. Topuria, F. Ganieva, M. Kurdiani, and others), Khinalug should be classified within the Lezgian subgroup. In contrast, other scholars (N. Trubetskoy, R. Lafon, R. Shaumiani, I. Desheriev, M. Alekseev, V. Schulze, and others) argue that Khinalug constitutes an independent subgroup within the Dagestan (or Nakh-Dagestan) language family.

The Khinalug language exhibits a range of distinctive features, particularly in its morphological structure and lexical inventory. Furthermore, certain phonetic developments suggest that Khinalug did not emerge as a result of the fragmentation of a common Lezgian proto-language. With regard to B. Gigineishvili's hypothesis—that Khinalug separated from the pre-Lezgian unity after Archib and Udi—it should be noted that this claim rests solely on the phonetic change *b > *ʃ. It is therefore plausible that this phonetic process developed independently and in parallel in both Khinalug and the Lezgian languages.

Keywords: the Khinalug language, Dagestan languages, comparative studies

¹The study was carried out with the financial support of the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia (grant project No. FR-24-10850).