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One Thousand Years of Islam in Kabarda

An Experiment in Periodization

Historian Sufian Zhemukhov describes the periodization of Islam in Kabarda (and among Circassians of the North Caucasus) in thirteen stages, beginning with initial proseletyzing by Arabs in the eleventh–thirteenth centuries among the Cherkess. Focus is on degrees of practice of the “pillars of Islam” at the various stages, with key religious figures in each period named.

This article is an initial attempt to divide the history of Islam in Kabarda into periods. The chronological framework of the periodization encompasses a thousand years and is divided into thirteen periods. The history of Cherkess Islam covers an entire millennium: from the eleventh through the twenty-first century.^a Islam has ancient roots in Kabarda, and in various periods it has appeared in different ways in practically every sphere of the society’s life. Until now, no

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etie Islama v Kabarde: opyt periodizatsii.”

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Translated by James E. Walker.

attempt has been made to develop a scientific periodization of the history of Islam's establishment among the Cherkess as a whole and in Kabarda, in particular. On the one hand, numerous studies describe Cherkess Islam and historians have advanced a great many interesting concepts and hypotheses. On the other hand, the general history of the Cherkess has been divided into periods in many different ways, as has their political and economic history, the history of Cherkess thought, Russian–Cherkess relations, and so on. Thus, both the factual and methodological basis of Adygei historical science suggests the possibility of developing a scientific periodization of the history of Cherkess Islam.

This periodization applies to the region that is more broadly called eastern Cherkessia. For the sake of brevity, we use the term “Kabarda,” although, strictly speaking, this was not the name of the region in all historical eras. It was more often called the territory of the Piatigorsk Cherkess, Lesser and Greater Kabarda, *Nal'chik okrug*, and later the Kabard Autonomous Oblast, the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Oblast, the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kabard Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the Kabardino-Balkar Soviet Socialist Republic, and [in the post-Soviet period] the Kabardino-Balkar Republic. For numerous reasons, it is entirely natural to examine the history of Islam in Kabarda separately from the general history of Cherkessia. Due to historical and geographic conditions, Kabarda was a unique part of Cherkessia, and later of the Cherkess world dispersed over dozens of countries. Thanks to a developed class structure, a state structure was established in Kabarda sooner than in other parts of Cherkessia. And because foreign policy developed in a different way there in the fourteenth–nineteenth centuries, Kabarda felt a different degree of influence from cultures of the Middle East, Asia Minor, the Mediterranean region, Europe, and the Far East.

Another purpose of this article is to trace the basic transformations during the thousand-year history of establishment of Islam in Kabarda from the eleventh through the twenty-first centuries. The need for such comparative analysis stems from the novelty of the way the problem is stated. Even the point that the scope of the proposed periodization is millennial should be substantiated. The

absence of other attempts at periodization also makes it necessary to enumerate basic historical facts to clarify the validity of identifying various stages of the history of Islam in Kabarda.

The establishment of Islam in Kabarda is neither a linear nor a cyclical process, but can be more aptly characterized as a series of flows and ebbs. While it certainly has its own internal logic, nevertheless this process depended largely on external factors, like the history of Kabarda itself. External events sometimes augmented and at other times blocked certain spiritual channels of Kabard society. Such a pattern was first noted by Shora Nogma, who explained the decline of Christianity among the Adygei by the fall of the Eastern Roman empire and the end of Greek missionaries coming to the Caucasus.) This explains the point that the traditional procedure of linear and cyclical periodizations that was developed to explain global historical processes is generally not applicable to more local processes. To describe these, the researcher must constantly digress to address outside factors. Therefore, some quantitative analysis that would make it possible to trace the intensity of various stages is a necessary element of periodization of the history of Islam in Kabarda.

As we can see from the periodization, the time between the fifth and tenth periods can be considered the most Islamicized era: spanning the *shari'a* reform movement of the late eighteenth century to the “red *shari'atists*” [of the early twentieth century].^b Until 1794, Islam was heavily subjected to the influence of paganism; and from 1928 through the present, to the influence of atheism. To determine the intensity of Islamization of Kabarda in various periods of history we analyze data on observance of the five pillars of Islam. This criterion lends itself to historiographic analysis in many ways. For example, the first pillar of Islam—profession of monotheism—is found in Kabard foreign policy documents of the sixteenth century. The second pillar of Islam—performance of the five daily prayers—we find in the fourteenth century in the Piatigorsk region, on the basis of the presence of a grand mosque there. There is also occasional information from various eras about the third and fourth pillars of Islam—fasting and alms-giving. The most systematic facts at our disposal are in regard to the fifth pillar

of Islam—the pilgrimage (*hajj*) to Mecca, which generally involved crossing borders and completing official written documents.

First stage: Eleventh–thirteenth centuries. Islam reached the Cherkess. Islamic burials.

Islam began to reach the Cherkess at the beginning of the second millennium, as a result of the spread of Arab influence in the Caucasus, as indicated by archeological excavations near the Kuma River in Karachai-Cherkessia, where three eleventh–twelfth-century tombstones with Arabic/Islamic Kufic inscriptions were found.¹ However, indirect evidence indicates that the spread of Islam among the Cherkess was slight at that time and does not provide any basis for assuming that the Cherkess observed all the pillars of Islam.

Second stage: 1312–1569. Islam spread among the elite of the Piatigorsk Cherkess, who were close to the throne of the Golden Horde. A grand mosque was constructed in Piatigorsk.

Islam came to the Cherkess thanks to the closeness of the Cherkess elite to the Tatar-Mongol elite, after Uzbek Khan ascended to the throne of the Golden Horde in 1312 and declared Islam the state religion. In his childhood, Uzbek Khan was sent to be raised by Cherkess princes, and after he ascended to the throne he drew part of the Cherkess elite closer to himself. Being the state religion under Uzbek Khan, Islam also spread to the Piatigorsk Cherkess loyal to his authority.² Later, the interaction between the Tatar-Mongol and Cherkess elites became so strong that in 1367 Khan Hajji Cherkes took the Golden Horde throne. The name Cherkes indicates a very close relationship with the Cherkess, and the prefix Hajji indicates his adherence to Islam and that he observed one of the five pillars of Islam, pilgrimage to Mecca. This implies that the Cherkess princes adopted Islam and accompanied the khans on their pilgrimage to Mecca, making the *hajj* with them.

Archeological excavations have shown that in the fourteenth century there was a grand mosque in the Piatigorsk region.³ It suggests

that by that date there were Cherkess clergymen who performed the five daily prayers and observed the other pillars of Islam.

After the collapse of the Golden Horde, the Cherkess elite preserved close political and dynastic ties with its successors the Nogai Horde and the Crimean Khanate, and also with the Ottoman empire, whose influence in the region steadily grew. By the mid-sixteenth century, Islamic terminology was widely used in the interrelations of Kabarda with the Islamic states of Turkey and Crimea, and later with Christian states as well. In 1561, contemporaries noted that the Kabard princess Guashanei Temriukovna professed Islam before her marriage, but when she married the Moscow prince Ivan IV she was baptized and took the Christian name Mariia. In 1588, her brother, the Kabard prince Mamstriuk Temriukovich, established relations with the Russian tsar Fëdor Ivanovich “by his faith according to Islamic law.”⁴

Nonetheless, it cannot be said that the Piatigorsk Cherkess fully accepted Islam during the period of the Golden Horde’s influence in the region. Foreign travelers of that time noted that the religious beliefs of the Cherkess were an odd mixture of “paganism,” Christianity, and Islam.

Third stage: 1569–1708. (A. Shogenukov was a significant figure in this stage, although he was not a religious leader.)

Islam was established in Kabarda as a result of military and political contacts with other Islamic peoples. Pagan and Christian temples were turned into mosques.

Systematic penetration of Islam into Kabarda affected not only the elite but also the Kabard people as a whole. This process began in 1569 with the unsuccessful campaign of Turkish forces to take over the whole territory of the Caucasus, all the way to Islamic Astrakhan, and make it part of the Ottoman empire. The Kabard prince Kazi Psheanpshokov defeated the Turkish forces.

In 1615, Kazi Psheanpshokov was killed in the Battle of Kul’kuzhin (K’ul’k’uzhyn, Qwlhqwzhin), fighting against the forces of the Kabard prince Sholokh Tapsarukov, who led the forces of *murzas*^c of the Great Nogai Horde into Kabarda.⁵ The

head of Kazi Psheanpshokov was cut off and taken by the Nogai for the purpose of suing for peace. Fearing revenge, they agreed to return the head only if Prince Kazi's daughter married a Nogai *murza*. This marriage was the occasion for making peace: "And the marriage was performed according to Mohammedan law," writes Shora Nogma.⁶ Kazi was replaced by his nephew, Prince Aleguko Shogenukov, who won over the Nogai to his side. In union with Khan Hajji-Berdy, he defeated Karashai Sholokhov (the son of Sholokh Tapsarukov, who had died by that time) at the Lower Julat fortress.⁷ Sholokhov fled to Jilyakhstan Kabarda. The Nogai Horde settled at the site of the battle, at the border of Kazi and Jilyakhstan Kabarda. A later Nogai khan, Zhanbek, turned the pagan and Christian buildings of Lower Julat into mosques and minarets. By the seventeenth century the greater part of Kabarda had already been converted to Islam.

A definite role in the creation of a unified clerical administration in Kabarda was played by the Crimean khans, some of whom in 1703 "placed a *mullah* in each *aul* [village] to teach the people Islam."⁸

Fourth stage: 1708–94. Islam was established peacefully in Kabarda. (Zh. Kazanoko was a significant figure.)

After Kabarda's victory in the Battle of Kanzhal' (Qenzhalischhe, K"enzhalyshchkh'e), the Crimean Khanate's influence in the region weakened somewhat, and the spread of Islam became more peaceful.

The pilgrimage to Mecca of the most prominent Kabard public figure, Zhabagi Kazanoko, was an important event. He made the *hajj* in 1748, at the age of sixty-four, two years before his death. On the way to Mecca, in Bakhchisarai, Zhabagi Kazanoko met with a Crimean khan as an ambassador of the supreme prince of Kabarda, Magomet Kurgokin. When he returned to Kabarda, Kazanoko retired from military and political affairs.⁹ On his tombstone is this inscription in Arabic: "Here lies Hajji Zhabagi Kazanoko, may Almighty Allah have mercy on him."

The name Zhabagi Kazanoko is associated with reforms in

Kabarda that facilitated the expansion of Islamic spiritual and moral standards into the customary law of Kabards and laid the foundation for the *Adygé khabze* social code, which the Cherkess observe to this day. Legends about Zhabagi indicate that the Kabards had a practice of performing more than one *hajj*, of women making the *hajj*, and also of people making the *hajj* in their youth (accompanied by an older person).¹⁰

Fifth stage: 1794–1822. Shari’a reform of 1794–1807. Hanafi madhhab [school of law] established in Kabarda. (A.-G. Atazhukin and I. Abukov were influential.)

This *shari’a* movement was one of the most significant events (if not the most significant) in the establishment of Islam in Kabarda. A conference of Kabard princes and nobility was held in 1799 at the Baksan River, and the participants swore on the Koran to institute equality between the princes and the nobility. In response, Russian forces were brought into Kabarda, giving the *shari’a* movement even more of a tone of protest and strengthening it. The movement’s initiator, Adyl’-Girei Atazhukin, was forced to move to Kuban, together with five Islamic religious leaders. Their dependents were moved there the following year, setting the stage for the first wave of *hajret*. The term came from the Islamic *hegira*, emphasizing the religious motives of the migrants, and also the inevitability of their return to Kabarda, like that of the first Muslims to Mecca.

The *shari’a* reform in Kabarda had a big effect on all spheres of the society’s life. Assessing the influence of the second leader of the *shari’a* movement, Iskhak Abukhov, on the thinking of his contemporaries, one of the highest Russian officials in the Caucasus reported to Emperor Alexander I, “Most of all, Effendi Iskhak tried to win the people over to his side with piety in the guise of outstanding virtue. And he has achieved his desired goal so skillfully that in a short time he has managed to perfect the whole Kabard nation in Mohammedan law. Now many noblemen who are almost forty years old are studying Tatar grammar so they can understand the Koran! He has taken things so far that everyone has changed their style of clothing: instead of the short *cherkeska* worn formerly,

they have begun to wear long ones. They put turbans on their hats, grew beards, stopped drinking strong wine, smoking, and taking snuff, and they do not eat anything from livestock not slaughtered by a Muslim.”¹¹

The *shari'a* reform resulted in the adoption in 1807 of the “People’s Conditions Abolishing Former Customs.” This document became a kind of constitution of Kabarda reflecting the Kabards’ allegiance to *hanafi madhhab*.

***Sixth stage: 1822–60. Hanafi madhhab was secured.
(Ia. Shardanov and U. Sheretlokov were significant.)***

The annexation of Kabarda by Russia in 1822 was marked by a prohibition of the *hajj* for six years.¹² The Russian administration in the Caucasus initially had a negative attitude toward pilgrims going to worship the grave of Mohammed, which is how the *hajj* was described in contemporary documents. “Caucasian Muslims going on the pilgrimage strengthens their fanaticism, which supports their continuing hostility toward the government and serves as the sole obstacle to reconciling them to the existing order,” noted one Caucasus administration document.¹³

The chief *qadi* [judge] of Kabarda, Umar Sheretlokov, did not simply add the epithet Hajji to his name, but used it as part of his name, signing himself Hajjumar. In 1838, the well-known Kabard public figure Iakub Shardanov made the pilgrimage to Mecca. In the process of formation of the two trends that Sheretlokov and Shardanov represented, Kabarda definitively changed over to *hanafi madhhab*. In his religious views, Umar Sheretlokov was oriented to Islamic trends practiced in the East Caucasus, and he was exiled to Siberia for his support of Imam Shamil’s campaign in Kabarda.^d Iakub Shardanov was an active opponent of *tariqa* [Sufi path] and even proposed organizing a religious debate with Dagestani Sufis, claiming that he could prove to them that “*tariqa* has the force of law only in relation to religion, overseeing preservation of the purity of the faith and all Islamic spiritual rites, but in no way applying to secular, much less military, affairs.”¹⁴

More often it was the elderly who went on the pilgrimage, in

hope of dying and being buried in holy ground. It was common in Kabarda for those who died [before reaching Mecca] to bequeath sums of money for distribution to the poor in Mecca. Such money was given to a *mullah*, who took it to Mecca or turned it over to other pilgrims.

The Russian government forbid the *hajj* during the Crimean War of 1853–1856.

In 1857, there were 124 *effendi* and *mullahs* in Kabarda, of whom 16 had the status of *hajji*.¹⁵

Seventh stage: 1864–93. The hajj in 1860 and 1861 as the first stage of resettlement of Cherkess to Turkey. (K. Shogenov was significant.)

The mass exodus from Kabarda began in 1860 under the pretext of the *hajj* and was the first stage of resettlement of Cherkess to the Ottoman empire. The residents of *auls* expressed a desire to make the pilgrimage with their whole *aul*. In addition to the point that whole families came together to make the pilgrimage, which had happened before, this time the pilgrims sold off all their property and residences.^c The number of those who left increased in 1861. In all, 10,343 people from 81 *auls* emigrated to Turkey in these two years, under pretext of making the *hajj*. This was about 20 percent of the whole population of Kabarda.¹⁶ Among those who left was the whole *aul* of Hajji Kaisyn Shogenov, the former chief *qadi* of Kabarda.

The tsarist administration decided to take advantage of what was happening to prevent emigrants who had second thoughts from returning. This time, the usually slow legislative and bureaucratic machine went into action quickly, and in short order the “Rules Regarding Migrants Returning from Turkey” were issued in September 1861. All returning pilgrims were ordered loaded onto steamships, sent to Orenburg krai in Siberia, and enrolled as state peasants. However, the law was ill considered, because, due to the discontinuation of steamboat travel in the wintertime, it was impossible to take the returned pilgrims to Siberia. After being interrogated, several hundred people who had returned were able to remain in

Kabarda. All Kabard officers who went on the *hajj* in 1860–61 were dismissed from the service and deprived of their rank.¹⁷

Eighth stage: 1860–64. Pan-Islamic feeling intensified in Kabarda during the period of the Russian Great Reforms. Anti-Islamic projects were sponsored by the Russian government. (B. Atazhukin was significant.)

The second wave of emigration from Kabarda to the Ottoman empire under the pretext of a pilgrimage took place in 1865. The reason for it was the major reforms carried out in Russia: municipal, court, estate, and military reforms. In Kabarda, these were perceived as a process of russification of the Caucasus through unification of various Russian regions. The response was unrest in Kabarda and emigration to Turkey under the pretext of the *hajj*. In 1865, about one-third of the people emigrated to Turkey.¹⁸ The organizers of popular unrest were deported to Russian provinces. The leader of the movement, the Kabard Prince Bekhmurza Atazhukin, was exiled to Kaluga and lived in the same house where Shamil had previously been kept. The exiles were later returned to their native land.¹⁹

After the cholera epidemic in Jidda in 1871, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs came up with the idea of prohibiting the *hajj*, using the epidemic as a pretext. However, the Caucasus administration objected that prohibiting the *hajj* would complicate the situation in the Caucasus and suggested doing nothing more than tightening the procedure for issuing foreign passports. A compromise solution was adopted to make it more difficult to visit Mecca with various formalities so as to discourage pilgrims.²⁰

Ninth stage: 1893–1918. Religious feeling intensified after a cholera epidemic in Kabarda; the idea spread that this was a punishment of the Kabards for not moving to Turkey and that Muslims who die in Russia will not go to paradise.

The third wave of emigration from Kabarda to Turkey under the pretext of the *hajj* was in 1893. Two ideas became widespread: that

Muslims who die in Russia will not go to paradise, and that the cholera in Kabarda was sent from above as punishment for failing to move to Turkey. It was published in the *Terskie vedomosti* newspaper that anyone who wanted would be allowed to resettle in Turkey. This caused another rumor that Russia would forcibly deport the Kabards. These rumors so upset the population that people ceased working and stopped building houses.²¹

In the nineteenth century it became more common for women to make the *hajj*. Most often they made the pilgrimage with their husbands or relatives. Widows also went on the pilgrimage with their sons. Male and female names with the roots *kh*"*ezhy* (*hajji*), *Chebe* (Kaaba), *meche* (Mecca), and *Madina* (Medina) became quite popular. Neologisms denoting the items of clothing of a *hajji* entered the Kabard language: *kh*"*ezhsaryk*"—the *hajji*'s headgear and *kh*"*ezhytsei*—the *hajji*'s outer garment. A term denoting the *hajj* appeared: *chebakIue*, which also means "pilgrim" (literally, walking and walker to the Kaaba). Then the word *chebekh*"*arzh* came into use, meaning funds for the *hajj*; now it is obsolete and rarely used.²²

Tenth stage: 1918–28. The shari'a-Bolshevik movement took hold in Kabarda. (N. Katkhanov was significant.)

Having affected Kabarda, in a certain stage the Bolshevik revolution in Russia contained an Islamic component. In the early period, there were 157 mosques in Kabarda. In 1918, the so-called First *Shari'a* Column took *Nal'chik* with the slogan "Long live Soviet power and *shari'a*!" Authority in *Nal'chik* okrug was turned over to the Military-*Shari'a* Revolutionary Council. After the revolution, the leader of the "red *shari'atist*" movement, *Nazyr Katkhanov*, became a member of the executive committee of the Kabard Autonomous Oblast and held a number of government posts until 1928, when he was arrested and executed by firing squad.

With the establishment of Soviet power, the Muslim clergy was gradually displaced by government agencies that deprived it of the opportunity to fulfill its functions of registering births, marriages,

and deaths, performing religious rites, education, legal proceedings, and so forth. In 1925, the *shari'a* courts were eliminated, and before that they were taken off government support. In 1926, ten *madrassas* [religious schools] were in operation in Kabardino-Balkaria and as many as 100 Islamic elementary schools, 1,000 clergy, and 250 *murids*.²³

Eleventh stage: 1928–1990. Society was de-Islamicized and mosques were destroyed in Kabardino-Balkaria. Islam was more open during the German occupation. Restrictions on Islam were eased in the perestroika years. (K. Khotekov and T. Kazhokov were significant.)

The anti-Soviet actions known as the Baksan events occurred in 1928. After this, open persecution of Muslims began. In the 1930s, mass repressions were carried out against the Islamic clergy. By the beginning of the Great Patriotic War [World War II], all mosques in Kabardino-Balkaria had been closed. During the German occupation of Kabardino-Balkaria in 1942–43, the office of *qadi* of Kabardino-Balkaria was instituted and was held by Hajji Koze Khotekov. Anti-Soviet proclamations announcing freedom of religion appeared over his signature.²⁴

At the end of the war, the pilgrimage to Mecca was permitted; however, cases of making the *hajj* were rare. After the Germans left, in 1944, the office of *qadi* was restored in Kabarda. In 1946, nine Muslim communities and mosques were registered in the Kabard Autonomous Soviet Socialist Republic, the number falling to five by 1955.²⁵ There was no *qadi* in Kabardino-Balkaria after 1961. In 1967, the Islamic Clerical Administration of the North Caucasus appointed Tarkan Kazhokov, from Baksanenok, to the office of *qadi* of Kabardino-Balkaria, but he declined to take the office because of his health.

In 1966, a branch of the Rodina society was opened for cultural relations with compatriots abroad, and its activity fostered development of relations in the religious sphere.

Antireligious Soviet propaganda was regularly conducted against the five pillars of Islam, especially during fasting and the holiday

of Qurban Bayram, when lectures were given on subjects such as “Pillars of Islam and Their Reactionary Essence.”

As the Soviet Union’s state religion, atheism weakened only in the 1980s, when official permission was given to open houses of prayer. By 1986, on the wave of perestroika reforms, nineteen Muslim religious associations were registered in Kabardino-Balkaria.²⁶

Twelfth stage: 1990–2000. Islam was revived in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic and mosques were constructed everywhere. The Koran was translated into the Kabard language. (Sh. Pshikhachev and Sh. Balag were significant.)

The enactment in 1990 of the law of the Soviet Union “On Freedom of Conscience and Religious Organizations” and the law of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic “On Freedom of Religion” [in 1997] fostered unprecedented growth of Islamization. From 1990 through 2000, about 100 mosques were built with money from believers. By the beginning of 2000, 140 Islamic communities in 96 population centers were registered in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic. Then the first major conflict in the Muslim community occurred; this involved a loss of money collected by citizens of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic for construction of a mosque in Nal’chik and was one of the reasons for a subsequent split in the community.²⁷

Three congresses of the Islamic Clerical Administration of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic (ICA KBR) were held (1990, 1992, and 1998), and Shafit-Hajji Pshikhachev was elected president.

In 1991, the first *madrassa* was opened in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic, headed by Shauki Balag, a repatriate of Adygei origin from Syria. In 1993, the *madrassa* became the Arab Language Institute, which existed until 1996. Then the Islamic Institute of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic was created that same year.

One of the first groups from the Kabardino-Balkar Republic made the *hajj* in 1997, described in a book by one of the pilgrims, Doctor of Philosophical Sciences M.Sh. Shekikhacheva.²⁸ Other

memoirs about the pilgrimage appeared later. The Koran was translated into the Kabard language by Mukhamedkher Khuazh, Mustafar Boli, and Zauar Nalo(ev).²⁹

Thirteenth stage: Since 2000. The Muslim community in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic splits. Law enforcement agencies take a harder line on young Muslims. Mosques are closed. There is an armed confrontation on 13 October 2005. (A. Pshikhachev is an active leader.)

The first half of the 2000s was characterized by two crisis trends in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic. First was a split in the Muslim community between supporters and opponents of the ICA KBR. Law enforcement agencies took a harder line toward young Muslims, who officially began to be considered supporters of extremism. For instance, in 2000, there were 382 people on the list of supporters of “Wahhabism” registered in the Kabardino-Balkar Republic, 149 of whom were put on the list in 2000.³⁰ These developments were a consequence not only of internal processes, but also of the overall negative situation in the North Caucasus that had taken shape since the early 1990s. After 2003 came harsher measures against Muslims of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic: all mosques were closed; law enforcement agencies began to compile lists of believers, which were used for conducting searches of their homes; and there were cases of beatings of Muslims, forced shaving of beards, and even shaving of crosses on Muslims’ heads.

In 2002, Anas-Hajji Pshikhachev became the president of the ICA KBR. Its fourth congress was held in 2004. Islamization affected the republic’s elite. For example, the spouse of the first president of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic sponsored pilgrims who made the *hajj* to Mecca. The grand mosque in Nal’chik opened in 2004. It was built by Arsen Kanokov, who later became president of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic.

On 13 October 2005, the crisis situation in the Islamic community spilled over into an armed conflict between law enforcement agencies and Islamic youth. More than 130 people died (among them were 35 law enforcement officers).³¹ The republic’s new

leadership called the event “a national tragedy” and took a number of conciliatory measures. Mosques were opened, and persecution of Muslims diminished.

The Imam Abu Khanify North Caucasus University opened in 2007, on the basis of the Islamic Institute of the Kabardino-Balkar Republic.

* * *

Currently, there is a split among Muslims in Kabardino-Balkaria represented by three ideological trends—radical, moderate, and traditional forms of Islam. Followers of radical Islam suggest that the law and spirit of Islam should reach all spheres of society. This ideology takes its historical roots in the fifth stage and rather strict and judgmental of those who do not develop themselves in the five pillars of Islam. The followers of radical Islam are not inherently extremists but within this ideology they might develop what usually is called an insurgency ideology.

The religious leaders of moderate Islam usually oppose radical Islam and regard its followers as heretics. They openly support and are supported by the state authorities. Moderate Islam expands its number of followers to include all who identify themselves as Muslims whether or not they observe the five pillars of Islam. A leader of moderate Islamists in Kabardino-Balkaria, A. Pshikhachev, explained that “everybody who acknowledges Allah, the Koran, Sunna, and the Prophet is a Muslim even if he does not exercise any practices.” Thus, it is not a question of active faith but rather a passive acknowledgment of Islam. The clash between insurgency ideology and moderate Islam culminated on December 2010 with the death of A. Pshikhachev, who was shot in his own home.

Many local scholars and intellectuals understand traditional Islam as the ideology of local traditions mixed with Islam with the emphasis on the firsts. This ideology takes its historical roots in the strong moral codex of Adyge Khabze, developed during the fourth stage. The first debates between radical and traditional Muslims took place at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The prominent Circassian scholar S. Khan-Girei wrote in his “Notes

about Circassia” in 1835 that Islamic laws were supposed to give preferences to the local customs but the new generation of religious leaders “breaks the old customs.” In December 2010, anthropologist Aslan Tshipinov was shot in his own home for his public activity and academic works in promoting ethnic values before Muslim ones.

The gap between ideological trends in local Muslim community widened during 2005–10 and led to tension of the political situation in Kabardino-Balkaria.

Notes

1. *Istoriia narodov Severnogo Kavkaza s drevneishikh vremen do kontsa XVIII v.*, ed. B.B. Piotrovskii (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), p. 178.
2. *Adygskaiia (cherkesskaia) entsiklopediia*, ed. M.A. Kumakhov (Moscow: Fond im. B.Kh. Akbasheva, 2006), p. 109.
3. *Istoriia narodov Severnogo Kavkaza*, p. 234.
4. *Adygskaiia (cherkesskaia) entsiklopediia*, p. 163.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 1031.
6. Shora Nogmov, *Istoriia adykheiskogo naroda*, ed. T.Kh. Kumykov (Nal'chik: El'brus, 1994), p. 133.
7. *Adygskaiia (cherkesskaia) entsiklopediia*, p. 192.
8. Nogmov, *Istoriia adykheiskogo naroda*, p. 143.
9. *Skazaniia o Zhabagi Kazanoko*, ed. Z.M. Naloev and A.M. Gutov (Nal'chik: El'-Fa, 2001), p. 13.
10. *Zhabagi Kazanoko*, ed. A. Shortanov (Nal'chik: El'brus, 1984), p. 157 (in Kabard).
11. V.Kh. Kazharov, “O vremeni i obstoiatel'stvakh uchrezhdeniia ‘dukhovnykh sudov’ v Kabarde,” *Istoricheskii vestnik IGI*, no. 3, pp. 408, 422.
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14. R.U. Tuganov, *Istoriia obshchestvennoi mysli kabardinskogo naroda v pervoi polovine XIX veka* (Nal'chik: El'-Fa, 1998), pp. 103, 113.
15. A.Kh. Karov, *Religii i gosudarstvenno-konfessional' otnosheniia v sovremennoi Kabardino-Balkarii* (Nal'chik: El'-Fa, 2008), p. 54.
16. N.F. Grabovskii, “Prisoedinenie k Rossii Kabardy i bor'ba ee za nezavisimost',” in *Sbornik svedenii o kavkazskikh gortsakh* (Tiflis, 1876), p. 210.
17. *Tragicheskie posledstviia Kavkazskoi voiny dlia adygov. Sbornik dokumentov i materialov*, ed. R.U. Kuganov (Nal'chik: El'-Fa, 2000), pp. 42–48, 122–23.
18. *Istoriia narodov Severnogo Kavkaza (konets XVIII v.–1917)*, ed. A.L. Narochnitskii (Moscow: Nauka, 1988), p. 207.

19. *Tragicheskie posledstviia Kavkazskoi voiny dlia adygov*, p. 316.
 20. *Problemy Kavkazskoi voiny*, pp. 428, 430, 434–44.
 21. *Tragicheskie posledstviia Kavkazskoi voiny dlia adygov*, pp. 316, 327
 22. *Slovar' kabardino-cherkesskogo iazyka*, ed. P.M. Bagov (Moscow: Digora, 1999).
 23. *Adygskaia (cherkesskaia) entsiklopediia*, p. 614.
 24. Karov, *Religii i gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nye otnosheniia v sovremennoi Kabardino-Balkarii*, p. 80.
 25. *Adygskaia (cherkesskaia) entsiklopediia*, p. 615.
 26. Karov, *Religii i gosudarstvenno-konfessional'nye otnosheniia v sovremennoi Kabardino-Balkarii*, pp. 15, 102–3, 129.
 27. M.Kh. Khokonov, "Sotsial'no-politicheskie prichiny sobytii 13 oktiabria 2005 goda v Nal'chike," in *Problemy musul'manskoi obshchiny: natsional'no-kul'turnye faktory. Materialy nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii* (Nal'chik, 2007), p. 61.
 28. M.Sh. Shekikhacheva, *Putevye zametki polomnika* (Nal'chik: El'-Fa, 1996).
 29. *Koran*, trans. into Kabard by M. Khuazh, N. Boli, and Z. Nolo [also Naloev] (Nal'chik, 2001).
 30. *Kabardino-Balkarskaia pravda*, 1 November 2000.
 31. *Ibid.*, 18–19 October 2005.

Editor's notes

a. Reference is to the Cherkess people, also termed Circassians in the historical literature. The Kabard-Cherkess language is considered as one by linguists, although the two groups were divided into separate "autonomous" regions in the early Soviet period. Kabard-Cherkess is a Northwest Caucasian language distinct from the Turkic Karachai-Balkar language of their neighbors.

b. The author uses the word "paganism" (*iazychestvo*) without quotes, meaning diverse pre-Islamic beliefs and rituals of the region. His choice of 1928 for the strong influence of atheism reveals the significance of the "red *shari'iatists*" in the North Caucasus in the early Soviet period, when some Muslim leaders thought it would be possible to merge Islamic law with communist ideals. See also www.portal-credo.ru/site/?act=news&id=8338.

c. The *murza* (or *mirza*) was a hereditary title in Persian and Turkic societies. For more on the battle, see www.circassianworld.com/pdf/Kabardinian_History.pdf. For further references, see www.circassianworld.com/pdf/bibliography.pdf.

d. This reveals a less well-known aspect of the famed Avar military leader Imam Shamil's (Shamyl's) influence throughout the North Caucasus. The literature on Imam Shamil's resistance against the Russian Empire in the first half of the nineteenth century is vast. See for a start: John F. Baddeley, *The Russian Conquest of the Caucasus* (Mansfield Centre, CT: Martino, 2005 [reprinted from 1908]); Thomas Barrett, "The Remaking of the Lion of Dagestan: Shamil in Captivity," *The Russian Review*, 1954, 53, pp. 253–66; Lesley Blanch, *The Sabres*

of Paradise (New York: Viking Press, 1960); Paul Chavchavadze, *Mountains of Allah* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1952.); Nicholas Griffin, *Mountain Men and Holy Wars* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2003); Bruce Grant, *The Captive and the Gift: Cultural Histories of Sovereignty in Russia and the Caucasus* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009); Austin Jersild, "The Chechen Wars in Historical Perspective," *Slavic Review*, 2004, vol. 63, no. 2, pp. 367–77; Michael A. Reynolds, *Myths and Mysticism: Islam and Conflict in the North Caucasus: A Longitudinal Perspective* (Washington, DC: Kennan Institute, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 2004); Leo Tolstoy, *Hadji Murad* (New York: Modern Library, 2003 (from the 1850s serialized original, based on Count Tolstoy's experience in the Russian army).

e. For perspective, see Seteney Khalid Shami, "Prehistories of Globalization: Circassian Identity in Motion," *Public Culture*, Winter 2000, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 177–204. Seteney, a cultural anthropologist, is of Circassian background, born in Jordan.

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