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THE COLCHIAN 'HERITAGE' OF HELIOS AGAINST THE BACKGROUND OF LINGUISTIC DATA

The genealogy of Helios and his Colchian descendents are very important for the understanding of the formation of the Argonaut legend. In this regard, the question on what kind of historical or mythopoetic information could have been reflected in proper and place names connected with the legendary Aia may have several answers: a. The myth, as well as its component connected with Aia, was developed in the Greek tradition and is the result of the Hellenic mythopoetic imagination. b. This episode of the myth and the associated characters reflect the story of the Mycenaean expedition undertaken somewhere to the east and is related to the facts and events connected with the so-called legendary Aia. c. Although the story of the Argonauts' voyage to Aia was developed in the Greek tradition, it more or less reflects the information related to the supposed target of the Argonauts' expedition. As concerns the popularity of this part of the myth in ancient Colchis, this could have resulted from the influence of Greek mythology over the Eastern Black Sea region.

The present paper has a specific objective: try to decide which linguistic facts are reflected in the proper and place names associated with the so-called Colchian descendents of Helios – the names which does not seem to have Greek etymology but must be connected with the earliest versions of the myth.

Let us start with the name of Ἥλιος. According to Homer, it is ἥλιος, while its Dorian, Aeolian and Arcadian versions are ἀέλιος and ἄλιος (Cf. IG IV 760).¹ In Hesichius, it is ἀβέλιος (Hesych. ἀβέλιον ἥλιον Κρήτες. -

¹ Cf. F. Bechtel, *Die griechischen Dialekte*, I-III, Berlin 1921-24, II, 667.

ἀβελίην ἥλιακὸν Παμφύλιοι). It is interesting whether the deity is inherent in the Greek religious or mythological system or not. Although the cult of sun was an intrinsic element in the mythological thought of many various peoples; it holds quite a modest place in the hierarchical system of Greek deities proper. Admittedly, it must not have a Greek origin and presumably belongs to pre-Greek world.² And in fact, Helios can be identified as a second-rate god in the Greek Pantheon, whom people address with humbleness. Remarkably, he often even acts at the behest of Greek Gods (Hom. Il. XVIII, 239; Od. XII, 374 ff. 415; XIX, 276; Apollod. I. 3). Homer mentions him not as a god, but as – ἐπιείκελος ἀθανάτοισιν (equal to the immortals) (Hom. Hymn. XXXII, 7). It is also interesting that according to Aristophanes, barbarians esteem Helios more highly than the Greeks. (Aristoph. Aereine, 406 ff. Schol. 406, 407, 410).

As concerns the etymology of the term Ἥλιος, part of scholars believe that the god bore this name from the very start, while according to Schmitt-Brandt, Helios is a Greek appellative, and its pre-Greek equivalent must have been τιτάν.³ Evidently, this viewpoint is based on the idea widespread in the Indo-European studies that the term Ἥλιος has an Indo-European origin. Ἥλιος is reconstructed to the common Indo-European level as *S(a)uHel- / n-, *sūl; ancient Indic tongue, Ved. – sūryah (sun, sun deity), suvar (sun, light, sky, brightening), Avestian – hvar (sun), Lithuanian – saulė (sun), Prussian – saule (sun), Old Slavic – slūnīce (sun), Gothic – sauil (sun), old upper Germanic – sunna (sun), old English – sunne (sun), Latin – sōl (sun). Cf. old Irish – súil (eye).⁴ Another part of scholars links the term to an Indo-Germanic root *suēl* – burn, light.⁵

In 1986, Furnée questioned the assumption that the name Ἥλιος can be reconstructed to the common Indo-European name. According to the scholar, it must have entered the late Indo-European linguistic environment from the Kartvelian, while the Indo-European roots denoting the sun are presumably derived from the Georgian *šū-/ *šw- root (Cf. Kartvelian *mšweneba*

² M. P. Nilsson, *Geschichte der Griechischen Religion* (Erster Band, Die Religion Griechenlands bis auf die griechische Weltherrschaft), Verlag C. H. Beck, München 1992, 34.

³ R. Schmitt-Brandt, *Zur Etymologie von Μήδεια*, *Phasis, Greek and Roman Studies*, VII, 2004, 88-92.

⁴ Т. Б. Гамкрелидзе, Вяч. Вс. Иванов, *Индоевропейский язык и индоевропейцы*, II, Тбилиси 1984, 684; E. Benveniste, *Origines de la formation des noms en indo-européen*, Paris: Adrien Maisonneuve 1935, 12. Cf. Kuhn, *Ztschr. f. vergl. Sprachforsch.* XXVI, 9 (J. Schmidt). XXXI, 351. 452 (Kretschmer). XXXVI, 278 (Pedersen); H. Frisk, *Griechische etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1960, I, 631-632. RE, VIII. 1, 58, Roscher 1993-2025.

⁵ H. Frisk, *Griechische etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg 1960, I, 631-632. RE, VIII. 1, 58.

(beauty), šwenis suits, mšwenieri (beautiful). The term ἥλιος itself could have been derived from the pre-Kartvelian *šew-el- or *šw-en-.⁶ If we follow Furnée's viewpoint, we may assume that late Indo-European as well as pre-Greek versions could have been derived from the Kartvelian linguistic environment. Naturally, in this case the following question comes up: how can we explain the fact that the root borrowed from the Kartvelian language is *šw- and not the one denoting the sun?

If the etymology of the name of Helios itself causes dispute, it is quite clear that the names of his descendents, at least the names of those related to the legendary Aia or Colchis, are derived from the roots having the meaning of the "lighting", "brightening" and so on: Παισιφάη, Χαλκιόπη, Πέρσης, Πέρση, Φαέθων, Αἰγιάλευς (the versions of the name of Aietes' son). Part of these names can be regarded as the so-called speaking names and they were obviously composed on the basis of the Greek language, while the Greek origin of other names invites doubts. Let us consider the names of our immediate interest:

Αἰήτης is undoubtedly among the most important names. According to ancient sources, it must have been very popular in the historical Colchis. According to Xenophon, the name Aietes was widespread among the kings of Colchis (Ksen. Anab. V, 8, 36-37), while according to Strabo, the name Aietes is local among the Colchian population (Strab. I, 2, 39). Therefore, part of scholars believes that the name Aietes has a Colchian origin. However, more acceptable is the assumption according to which Αἰήτης must have been derived from Αἶα within the Greek proper, and the name can be understood as the man from "Aia" or the "Aian".⁷ If the Mycenaean a₃-wa-ta (KN Vc 7612) truly corresponds to the name of Aietes⁸, then we can assume that the Hellenized version of the name was known as early as the Mycenaean period. Therefore, it is possible that the popularity of the name in Colchis was caused by the influence of the Greek myth itself. As concerns Αἶα, I will dwell on it later.

The name of Aietes' son, Ἀψυρτος, is found in early Greek sources. It could have been mentioned as early as in the naupactic texts (the 7th c. B.C.). Interestingly, the etymology of Apsyrtus is not unambiguous. Some scholars consider it to be a speaking name and connect it with the Greek verb ἀποσύρω "tear up", or with the Semitic root basâru "cut, turn into pieces",

⁶ E. J. Furnée, *Paläokartvelisch-Pelasgische Einflüsse in den indogermanischen Sprache. Nachgewiesen Anhand der spätindogermanisch-griechischen Reflexe urkartvelischer Sibilanten und Affrikaten*, Leiden 1986, 181.

⁷ Cf. A. Lesky, *Aia*, *Wiener Studien* 63, 1948; *RE*, I, 942-944.

⁸ St. Hiller, *The Mycenaeans and the Black Sea. Thalassa. L'Egee prehistorique et la mer*, Liège 1991, 207 ff.

consequently, the name Apsyrtus should denote "torn".⁹ I agree with Mr. Gordeziani in that such an assumption would have been acceptable if the Greeks or the Semites had given the name to the character after his death.¹⁰ According to another viewpoint, "Αψυρτος was derived from a geographical name connected with the character in the mythological tradition. According to some scholars, "Αψυρτος implies reference to the Caucasian root abs-/aps attested in the tribal name of the Apsils and the Colchian geographical name Apsarus.¹¹ In Mr. Gordeziani's opinion, the Greek derivative -τος suffix was added to a certain initial local root (presumably, "Αψαρ-), and as a result a mythological name "Αψυρτος was formed from the geographical name within the Greek tradition.¹²

Especially interesting is the name Μήδεια, the etymology of which was beyond any doubts for a long time. Many scholars consider it to be a speaking name and relate it to the Indo-European root *mēd- (μήδομαι – I think, I invent). Consequently, Μήδεια was believed to denote "clever, giving advice". mēd- / mēd- is relevant in terms of Mycenaean onomastic studies as well: a-pi-me-de, e-u-me-de, pe-ri-me-de. *mēd- is found in many Greek male and female names: 'Αγαμήδη, 'Αλιμήδη, 'Αμφιμήδης, Εὐμήδης, Περιμήδης, Διομήδης. However, in the overwhelming majority of the cases, it is the second component. The exception is Μήδειος (Hesiod. Th. 1001), which has only one root – *mēd-, and occurs only as a Masculine form. The female form of this name is found neither in Mycenaean texts, which include only masculine me-de-i-jo (KN B 8004).

The first scholar to question the Indo-European origin of Medea was Schmitt-Brandt, who believes that in this case a foreign name was Hellenized and included in the group of names with *mēd- root. The scholar focuses on the Georgian female name Mzia derived from the Kartvelian mze- root, denoting the sun (through the suffix -ia which has diminutive and identifying function. Cf. Bidzia – uncle, Ghvinia – of wine-color). The Mengrelian parallel of Georgian mze (sun) is bža and the Svan parallel is miž < *məž with the main South-Caucasian syllabic m in the anlaut.¹³ The Greeks must have perceived Kartvelian z as ζ, pronounced as zd. Consequently, Georgian Mzia must have sounded in Archaic Greek and Mycenaean as mzdia > mezdia. ζ/δ interchange is widespread in Greek. According to

⁹ M. C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica. An Ethnic and Cultural Study in West Semitic Impact on Mycenaean Greece*, Leiden 1967, 295.

¹⁰ R. Gordziani, *Mediterranea-Kartvelica*, III, 485-86, Tbilisi 2007 (in Georgian).

¹¹ III. P. Инал-Ипа, *Абхазы, Сухуми* 1965, 98.

¹² R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 486-87.

¹³ Cf. Th. Gamkrelidze, *Sonantensystem und Ablaut in der Kartwelsprachen* Günter Narr-verlag, Tübingen 1983.

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reduplication: $\text{kar-kal} > *k\text{ir-kal} > *k\text{ir-al} > *k\text{r-i-al} > *k\text{rial-i}$.¹⁹ R. Gordeziani does not rule out that the $*k\text{ir}\text{-}$ element (meaning "shining", "sparkling") resulted from the reduplication of the $*k\text{ir-}$ version of the root could have formed the name of one of the descendents of Helios in the hypothetical Greek tradition.²⁰

Evidently, proper names including the root or stem περσ- are related to the earliest versions of the tradition. On the one hand, the root is included in the name of Helios' wife Πέρση (Περσηΐς), and on the other hand – in the name of his son Πέρσης. According to Schmitt-Brandt, pe-re-^*82 (perswā) attested in the Linear B texts must be the Mycenaean version of Πέρση, the name of Helios' son.²¹ The semantics of the root περσ- stirred disputes from quite an early period. Although there are many names including the root, it is very difficult to argue whether the root found in the proper names of Helios' descendents and other historical or mythological (either proper or geographical) names have the same origin. In fact, despite their similarity, it is not clear whether the name of the mythical hero Perseus Περσεύς, the ethnonym Persian (περσέα), the names Helios' wife Πέρση, Περσηΐς and of his son Πέρσης have the same root. Since the περσ- root is admitted to have ambiguous etymology, it is very difficult to say anything specific. Perhaps, it is reasonable to share the assumption that in the case of Helios' descendents περσ- root is associated with the meaning of lighting up, shining, dazzling, brightening.²² Some scholars link it to Pelasgian $*b\text{herek}$ (shining).²³ According to quite an interesting opinion, περσ- root can be related to the Georgian $*b\text{r}\check{c}q\text{-}$ root.²⁴ Recently, Fenrich suggested that there existed alternative roots at the common Kartvelian level: $b\text{r}\check{c}q\text{inva}^*b\text{er}\check{c}q\text{-}/^*b\text{r}\check{c}q\text{-}$ or $*b\text{er}\check{c}q\text{-}/^*b\text{r}\check{c}q\text{-}$.²⁵

Evidently, the name of Phrixus, Κυτίσσωρος/Κυτίσσωρος must be related to the earlier layers of the tradition, which is indicated by two facts: a. The mythological character is known to Herodotus. b) Homer names Κύτωρος among Paphlagonian cities, which were associated with the name of Cytisorus as early as ancient times. It is likewise remarkable that this proper

¹⁹ F. Ertelishvili, *The Issues of the Phonematic Structure and History of Verbal Roots*, Tbilisi 1970, 214 (in Georgian).

²⁰ R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 485.

²¹ R. Schmitt-Brandt, *Zur Etymologie von Μήδεια*, *Phasis. Greek and Roman Studies*, VII, 2004, 88-92.

²² Hes. περσος , περσευς – the name of fish, red-born fish.

²³ See: P. Gordeziani, *Αἶα* в древнейших греческих источниках, *Λεκτά*, *Selected Works*, Tbilisi 2000, 125-143, 133.

²⁴ See: P. Gordeziani, *Αἶα*, 133.

²⁵ H. Fähnrich, *Beiträge zur Kartvelologie*.

name included the same root as the name of the principle city of Colchis *Κύταια*. Later I will consider this point in detail. Georgian scholars suggest that this is the case of double suffixation – *Κυτ-ισσ-ωρος*.²⁶ Both of these suffixes are typical of the Kartvelian linguistic environment.

If the etymology of proper names is rather disputable, I believe that geographic names are far more unambiguous. I mean those names, which are doubtlessly related to the earliest versions of the tradition.

It is beyond any doubts that *Αἶα* as the target of the Argonauts' voyage was found in the earliest versions of the tradition. Homer is not aware of the name Colchis. He merely mentions the land of Aietes which, according to the name of the king (*Αἰήτης*), must have been called *Αἶα*. Supposedly, legendary Aia became synonymous of *Κολχίς* from a certain period.²⁷ However, some scholars find these names different and believe that such identification was made in the later period. Some even categorically reject the parallel between Aia and Colchis,²⁸ while others exclude the actual existence of Aia and regard it as a fabulous city.²⁹

Admittedly, the etymology of the name invites many diverse interpretations: Since Homer uses *αἶα* form along with *γαῖα*, there is an assumption that *Αἶα* was derived from *γαῖα* as a result of aphairesis (the etymology of *γῆ* and *γαῖα* is not clear). Some associate Aia with the roots attested in the Semitic, Hittite, Assyrian nor Kartvelian languages. According to Et. M., the glossa *αἶα* denotes the closest female relative (mother, aunt, sister), as well as a spring in Peonia, or a certain plant or fruit. Some associate *Αἶα* with the root attested in Semite 'ayya formative (hawk, bird of prey). Consequently, *Αἶα* must be a symbolic designation of the sun-land.³⁰ According to one of the assumptions, *Αἶα* must be related to "the World Tree" of the Hittite ritual tradition *GIS³¹ eja*, on which the ship-skin used to hang.³¹ Some scholars associate the "Colchis" of the Argonaut legend with Hittite *Hayasa* or Assyrian *Dayeaen*.³² Aia is found in some compounds preserved in the Kartvelian languages: Megr. *aia-žešxa* "The name of the

²⁶ See: P. Гордезиани, *Αἶα*, 133.

²⁷ R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea-Kartvelica*, Tbilisi 2007, III, 469, 473.

²⁸ P. Dräger, *Argo Pasimelousa. Der Argonautenmythos in der griechischen und römischen Literatur. Teil I. Theos Aitios*, Stuttgart 1993, 315; A. Lesky, *Aia*, *Wiener Studien* 63, 1948, 22ff.

²⁹ M. C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica*, 283; V. Haas, *Magie und Mythen im Reich der Hethiter. I. Vegetationskulte und Pflanzenmagie*, Berlin, Hamburg 1977, 114.

³⁰ M. C. Astour, *Hellenosemitica*, 283ff.

³¹ Т. Б. Гамкрелидзе, Вяч. Вс. Иванов, *Индоевропейский ...*, II, 582. Cf. V. Haas, *Magie und Mythen...*, 117.

³² Cf. G. Kavtaradze, *The Ancient Land of the Taokh and the Origins of Georgian Statehood (Language and Culture, 5-6, 2005)*, 92 ff. (in Georgian).

fifth Sunday of the Lent",³³ Svan. aia-mišladeg.³⁴ There also exists an opinion that Aia must have been formed within the Greek tradition from the name of the Colchian city Kjutaia owing to the transformation of its second element Aia into an independent root.³⁵

Aia is also related to the name of the island of Circe Αἰαίη. According to Lesky, νῆσος Αἰαίη should be interpreted as the island of Aia³⁶. More than that, a₃-wa-ja (PY En 74/ Eo 160) of the Mycenaean documents may correspond exactly to Αἰαίη.

Admittedly, the collocation Τιτηνίς Αἴη found in the work of Apollonius Rhodius must go back to quite an early period. The Scholia of the Argonautica offers the following explanation: "River Titanus, owing to which the land is called titanic, is mentioned by Eratosthenes in the *Geographica*" (IV, 131). Apparently, Apollonius referred to an early record, where Titenis must have had a particular function. Remarkable, Titan is the name of one of the tributaries of the Enguri River, associated with the glory of obtaining gold in Colchis (Strabo, XI, 2, 19).³⁷ According to Mr. Rismag Gordeziani, this very name must have been reflected in the work by Apollonius Rhodius.³⁸

Another important name is Κύταια. The fact that the name appears in the Greek records no earlier than the Hellenistic period may indicate its later origin. However, the root κυτ- is found in the proper name Κυτίσωρος as well as in the names of Anatolian cities Κύτωρος (Paphlagonia), Μασσί-κυτος (Lycia), and possibly Μασσί-κυτος (Caria).³⁹ This leads to the thought that the name must have been included in this or that way in the earliest versions of the tradition. Such an assumption can be grounded on certain arguments existing in contemporary studies: 1. The city on the Cretan Island with a similar name (Κύταιον). The existence of the city in the Mycenaean period is attested by recurrent mentioning of it in the Linear B texts: ku-ta-i-jo (KN As 1517), ku-ta-i-si-[jo] (KN X 7891), ku-ta-i-to (KN C 902, Xd 146), ku-ta-si-jo (KN Dr 1237, 1394), ku-ta-to (KN [Ce59]), De 1648, Df 119, Dk 1072, 1074).⁴⁰ According to Gordeziani and R. A. Brown, the root reflects the pre-

³³ O. Kajaia, *Megrelian-Georgian Dictionary*, I-III, Tbilisi 2001-2004.

³⁴ T. Mikeladze, *Researches into the History of the Earliest Population of Colchis and the Black Sea South-East Coast*, Tbilisi 1974 (in Georgian).

³⁵ R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 474.

³⁶ A. Lesky, *Aia...*, 46 ff.

³⁷ P. Гордезиани, *Аἴα*, 125-143, 133.

³⁸ R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 488.

³⁹ R. A. Brown, *Evidence for Pre-Greek Speech on Crete from Greek Alphabetic Sources*, Amsterdam 1985, 132.

⁴⁰ Cf. I. Anejo, *Diccionario miceneo*, I-II, Madrid 1985-1993.

Greek root $\kappa\upsilon\tau-$ and Kartvelian root $*kut$.⁴¹ Importantly, H. Vogt reconstructed the $*kut-/kurt-$ root to the common Kartvelian level (scraping out, taking out the core, kurdi, thief).⁴² 2. It has repeatedly been mentioned by Georgian scholars that the name of the settlement has regular parallels in the Kartvelian languages (Georg. Kutaisi, Mengr. kuteši, Svan. kutāši-),⁴³ which allows to suppose that the name existed at the level of Kartvelian languages.

Another very important name that must have been related to the earliest version of the tradition is $\Phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\varsigma$. The name is mentioned by Hesiod among the names of well-known rivers (Hesiod. Theog. 340). Since in *The Catalogue of Women* (Fr. 241) the name is mentioned with reference to the Argonauts, we may assume that from the earliest period Phasis was associated with Aia, the target of the Argonauts' voyage. There are several opinions on the etymology of $\Phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\varsigma$. The stem attested in the name is often associated with Circassian, Svan, Georgian-Zan roots.⁴⁴ According to quite a convincing assumption suggested by Vogt and afterwards shared by Gordeziani, Greek $\Phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\varsigma$, as well as Zan. Poti is derived from the hypothetical Georgian-Zan $*pat-$ root.⁴⁵ According to Mr. Gordeziani, Greeks must have adopted the name with a vowel in the root, i.e. as $\Phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ ($<*φατ\iota\varsigma$) prior to the splitting of Georgian and zan languages. As concerns the $*pat-$ root itself, the scholar associates it with the common Kartvelian $*pat-$ root (Georg. paṭ-ar-i, gamo-piṭ-v-a "rotten", "hollow"; "eroding", "erosion", "exhausting"); Mengr. puṭ-ur-el-i "empty", "worm-ridden"; Svan. li-peṭ "pierce"),⁴⁶ which is attested not only with i, o, u vowels, but also with t consonant in the auslaut of the root: top: pot-ar-o, dial. ga-pat-eba "equalizing".⁴⁷

⁴¹ R. A. Brown, *Evidence...*, 132; R. Gordeziani, *The Pre-Greek and the Kartvelian*, Tbilisi 1985, 117 ff.

⁴² H. Fähnrich, *Beiträge ...* (87 ff.)

⁴³ А. Ониани, З. Сарджвеладзе, Против извращения вопросов грузинской топонимики, *Мацнэ* 3, 1971.

⁴⁴ See M. Berdzenishvili, *For the History of the City of Phasis*, Tbilisi 1969 (in Georgian); G. Melikishvili, *The Issues of the Earliest Population of Georgia, the Caucasus and the Near East*, Tbilisi 1965 (in Georgian).

⁴⁵ H. Vogt, *Remarque sur la préhistoire des langues khartveliennes*, *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap*, Bd. IX, 1938; R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 477. According to M. West (see the paper published in this volume) the name Phasis "has a clear and simple Greek etymology, and means *shiner*." This etymology would certainly be acceptable but for one circumstance: The Greeks called Phasis the city located at the estuary of the river, which is unanimously admitted as modern Poti. The name cannot have been derived from Greek $\Phi\acute{\alpha}\sigma\iota\varsigma$ or Indo-European $bhātis$ as the shifting of *a* into *o* could occur only within the Kartvelian languages.

⁴⁶ H. Fähnrich, Z. Sarjveladze, *The Etymological ...*, 460ff.

⁴⁷ R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 478-79.

Another interesting lexical formative, which is very often discussed, is $\mu\omega\lambda\nu$. It is used by Homer only on one occasion and refers to an unknown plant having magic power. As we learn from *The Odyssey*, Hermes tears out of the soil a magic plant which gods call $\mu\omega\lambda\nu$ (Od. X, 302-306). The fact that $\mu\omega\lambda\nu$ is hapax legomenon and is used only in connection with the island of Circe points to its foreign origin. The etymology of $\mu\omega\lambda\nu$ is unknown. Georgian scholars have suggested its relationship with a Georgian word *moli* – grass.⁴⁸ Until recently, scholars who were skeptical about this assumption used to point to the fact that the Georgian word failed to be reconstructed to the common Kartvelian level. However, after its Svan correlates have been found, Heinz Fenrich reconstructed it to the common Kartvelian level as *mol- (Georg. *mol-i* "herbs"), Svan. *mweul-/melw* (herbs, fresh pasture).⁴⁹

The target of the Argonauts' voyage, or the Fleece ($\kappa\omega\alpha\varsigma$), is first found in Mimnermus as $\mu\acute{\epsilon}\gamma\alpha \kappa\omega\alpha\varsigma$, the "Great Fleece". Presumably, it is mentioned as early as in the Mycenaean documents as *ko-wo*.⁵⁰ According to T.V. Gamkrelidze, $\kappa\omega\alpha\varsigma$ at the time of the hypothetical expedition of the Argonauts to Colchis and it must have been derived from the Zan * tqov-/*tqov- version of the Georgian-Zan * tqav-root .⁵¹ This may point to the Greek-Georgian relationship back in the Heroic Age and to the Mycenaean expedition connected with the Fleece. In this case, R. Gordeziani accentuates the fact that in the Mycenaean documents and in the Homeric, $\kappa\omega\alpha\varsigma$ functions as an average formative, having no mythological implication, e.g. PY Un 718 *ko-wo* ← *kowos* "(sheep) skin". It is not connected with the Golden Fleece either in any fragment of *The Odyssey*, where it merely means denoting "skin", or "sheep-skin". Bearing this in mind, the scholar does not exclude that the given formative could have entered the pre-Greek language from Kartvelian, and must have been introduced into the Aegean through the so-called Kartvelian migrations as early as the second millennium B.C. As concerns the initial Kartvelian form, according to R. Gordeziani, the Greek language must have borrowed the formative from the West-Common-Kartvelian transitional * tqov- root of the pre-common Zan period. This root must have produced Mengr. * tqeb- and Laz tqeb- .⁵²

⁴⁸ See: R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 489; II, 235.

⁴⁹ H. Fährnich, Z. Sarjveladze, *The Etymological ...*, 334.

⁵⁰ I. Anejo, *Diccionario...*; Казанскене, Казанский, 1986, 95.

⁵¹ T. V. Gamkrelidze, *The Ancient Greek Name of the "Golden Fleece" and the Issue of the Population of Ancient Colchis*, *Language and Culture*, 3, 2002, 45 ff. (in Georgian).

⁵² R. Gordeziani, *Mediterranea...*, III, 490. Cf. H. Fährnich, Z. Sarjveladze, *The Etymological ...*, 443.

The above-mentioned may invite the following question: What accounts for the fact that some of the earliest terms related to the legendary Aia may truly imply links with the Kartvelian linguistic environment? It is difficult to doubt that the myth itself was formed within the Greek tradition. This is attested by the majority of speaking names related to the myth as well as by archeological discoveries.⁵³

As Mr. Martin West has stated, it is possible that the myth was developed in the region of the Hellespont. It is likewise logical to suppose that the Greek tradition had remarkable impact on the development of the whole system of identifications in Colchis, which points to the relationship between the Argonautic events and the Caucasian region. Consequently, we may suppose that the development of the myth in the Hellespont to a certain extent reflected the actual episodic contact or contacts that existed between the Kartvelian Black Sea environment and the Mycenaean world.

We could even go further and state that if the so-called Colchian formatives are attested in the earliest versions of the myth, they may be associated with an actual expedition of the Mycenaean period.