

ARMENIA AND THE LAND OF THE *MAZKUT'*
(3RD–5TH CENTURIES AD):
WRITTEN SOURCES
AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL DATA

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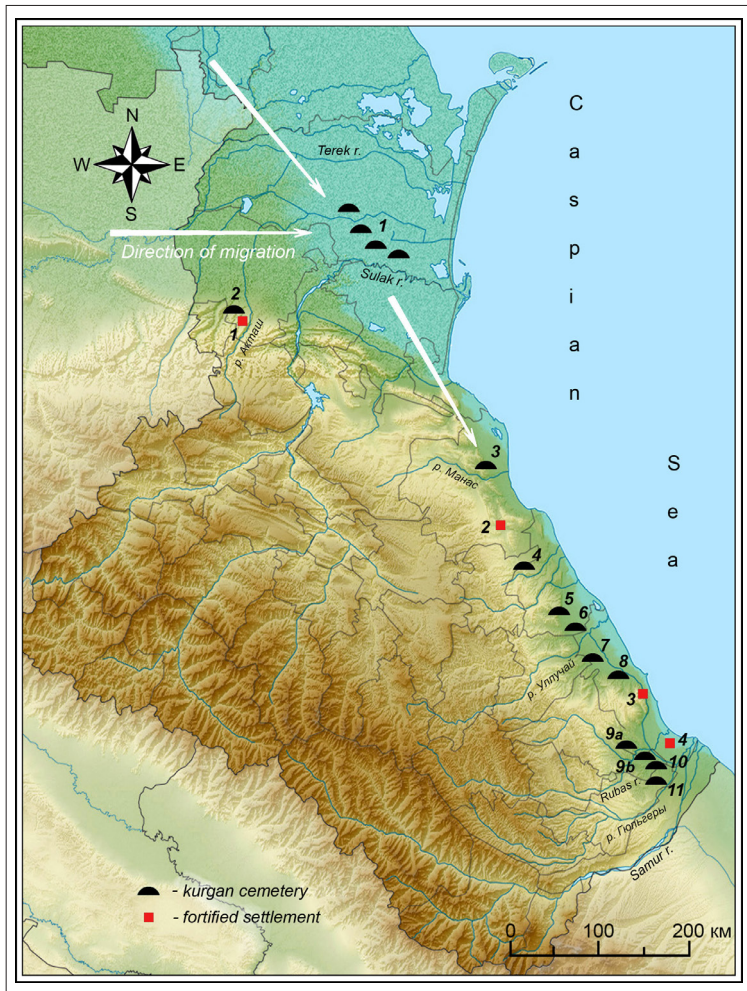
Abstract: Since the early 4th century, ancient Armenian authors (P'awstos Buzand, Movsēs Xorenac'i, Agat'angelos, Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, the *Ašxarac'oyc*) begin to mention the Land of the Mazk'ut' (Arm. ašharh Mazk't'ac'), located in the East Caucasus. The Sarmato-Alan burial mounds of plain Daghestan of the 3rd–5th centuries (Lvov, Palasa-Syrt, etc.) are attributed to this ethnic community. In 216 AD these tribes invaded Armenia through the Derbent pass (Arm. durn Čoray) (Khorenatsi 2,65), and took part in the Armenian-Iranian war in the middle of the 3rd century.

At the beginning of the 4th century the post of “bdeašx from the Mazk'ut's” (Agatangelos. 874) appears in administrative apparatus of Armenia, which shows the military and strategic value of the Land of Mazk'ut's. At the same time, the family dynastic ties are apparently established between the ruling houses of Armenia and the kingdom of the Mazk'ut' (Ašxen, Ašxadar, Trdat, Sanesan, Xosrow). The importance of this kingdom can be seen by the events of the 330s'—the struggle for the Armenian throne after the king Trdat's death in c. 330 AD, in which the different tribes led by Sanesan, the King of the Mazk'ut', took active part.

The discontinuance of the Mazk'ut' burial mounds in the middle of the 5th century might be explained, on the one hand, by the possible annexation of the Mazk'ut' by the Huns during the invasion of Transcaucasia and the seizure of the Derbent pass in circa 440 AD; on the other hand, by the subsequent forceful displacement of the Mazk'ut's and the Huns from the territory to the south of Derbent along with the strengthening of Sasanian Iran in the East Caucasus in the 440s' and regain of control over the Derbent pass, which can be traced both in written sources (Elishe, *History of Karka de Beth Selok*) and fortification monuments (mud-brick fortifications of Derbent and Torpakh-kala).

Keywords: Caucasus, Armenia, kingdom of the Mazk'ut', Sasanians, Derbent pass.

Since the important events of the 330s AD in the Caucasus, ancient Armenian authors (P'awstos Buzand, Movsēs Xorenac'i, Agat'angelos, Movsēs Dasxuranc'i, the *Ašxarac'oyc'*) begin to mention the coastal and southern Daghestan as the "Land of the Mazk'ut' (Arm. *ašxarh Mazk't'ac'*"). The burial mounds of the 3rd–5th centuries AD are reasonably compared with this ethnic community (**Map 1**).¹ These archaeological sites, correlated with information from written sources, mark the territory of the Mazk'ut' country.



Map 1. The kurgan burial grounds of the 3th–5th centuries AD in coastal Daghestan, and some fortified settlements. *Burial grounds*: 1. Lvov, 2. Andreyaul, 3. Manas, 4. Utamysh, 5. Mamay-kutan, 6. Dzhemikent, 7. Mamedkala, 8. Dagonni, 9a. Northern Palasa-syrt, 9b. Southern Palasa-syrt, 10. Sugyut, 11. Kukhmazkunt. *Fortified settlements*: 1. Andreyaul, 2. Urtseki, 3. Derbent (*Chor*), 4. Torpakh-kala (*Šahrestān Yazdgerd*)

¹ Malašev – Gadžiev – Il'jukov 2015, 134–150.

The earliest of them are located north of the Sulak River. In particular, these are the Lvov kurgan cemeteries (**Map 1**), which have two ethnocultural components.² The first is dominant and represents the Middle Sarmatian culture with characteristic burials in the catacombs of Type IV (the long axes of the entrance pit and the burial chamber are parallel), in undercut graves and pit graves.³ The indicative feature is orientation to the southern sector. Moreover, these monuments are dated by the Late Sarmatian time and, thus, fix preservation of the Middle Sarmatian cultural traditions in the Terek-Sulak interfluvium. It is obvious that the tribes that left the Lvov barrow burial grounds and preserved the traditions of the Middle Sarmatian culture, migrated here from the Northern Caspian steppes and the Volga-Don interfluvium. Archaeological date of migration is the beginning of the 3rd century AD.⁴ The second ethnocultural component is the Early Alan culture carriers, who migrated here in the first half of the 3rd century AD from the central regions of the North Caucasus. It is characterized by burials in catacombs of Type I - T-shaped catacombs.⁵

The archaeological connection of the Alan and Middle Sarmatian cultures in the Lvov burial grounds of Northern Dagestan seems to reflect identification of Alans with Massagets by Dio Cassius at the description of the Alanian campaign of 136 AD to Albania, Media, Armenia and Cappadocia.⁶ In the context of this identification there is information of Ammianus Marcellinus (about 330–395), who cited the Emperor Julian's speech (361–363) in April, 363, addressed to his soldiers shortly before the battle against the Persians. In this speech, which Ammianus himself listened to, there were such words: "For not to mention Lucullus and Pompey, who, passing through the Albani and the Massagetae, whom we now call the Alani, broke into this nation also and came to the Caspian Sea..."⁷ This is not the only case of the identification of the Massagetes and Alans by Ammianus. Describing the Huns, he also reports that they have reached "as far as the Halani, once known as the Massagetae" (*Halanos veteres Massagetas*).⁸ It should be noted that Ammianus (I would remind that he was a *protector domesticus* in the Roman army), who participated in the wars of Rome against Sasanian Iran in the mid. 4th century AD, was well aware of Eastern and Caucasian affairs. And we can be sure that he was informed about the Massaget-Alan kingdom on the western coast of the Caspian Sea.⁹

In the light of the messages, associated with the archaeological materials, the bearers of the Middle Sarmatian culture, who migrated to the coastal regions of Dagestan, should be considered as Mazkut', who had close political, ethnic and cultural ties with the early Alans.

Obviously, the ethno-politonym *patria Massagetarum*, which appears next to Caucasian Albania (*patria Albania*) in the lists of the *Anonymus Ravennas*,¹⁰ should be identified

² Malašev – Gadžiev – Il'jukov 2015, 84–87, 144–146.

³ Malašev – Gadžiev – Il'jukov 2015, 85–86.

⁴ Malašev – Gadžiev – Il'jukov 2015, 86.

⁵ Abramova 1997; Gabuev – Malašev 2009, 135–136, 147–148.

⁶ Dio, 69.15.1.

⁷ Amm. Marc. 23.5.16.

⁸ Amm. Marc. 31.2.12.

⁹ Akopjan 1987, 105.

¹⁰ *Cosm.* 2.12.

with the sites of the Middle Sarmatian culture in the North-West Pre-Caspian area and Northern Daghestan. It is necessary to remind also of a victorious inscription of the Iberian *piṭahš* Šargas in which the Asparug, son of the Mazk‘ut‘ ruler (‘sprwg br’ zy mr’ mskyt), over whom the Iberian king Mihrdates, son of the king Pharasmanes, is mentioned.¹¹ In this context Dio Cassius’ identification of Alans and Massagets in the description of Alanian campaign of 136 AD organized by the Iberian king Pharasman, when the Alans invaded to Albania and Media, having affected Armenia and Cappadocia, is a great interest.¹²

It seems that the Mazk‘ut‘-Alanian migration to the Terek-Sulak interfluvium at the beginning of the 3rd century AD might have been caused not only by the climatic changes and desire to explore new territories, but also by the important military-political events of that time. As evidence, we have written sources about two events in which the nomadic tribes of the region took part and which might have caused their movement to the Terek-Sulak interfluvium. The first one is a large invasion of nomads and North Caucasian highlanders in 216 AD to the South Caucasus, to Armenia through Pre-Caspian Daghestan,¹³ possibly somehow connected with Caracalla’s campaign against Parthia and Armenia at that time. The second one is the participation of nomads and North Caucasian tribes in the Armenian-Iranian confrontation after the Sasanides came to power in the late 220s–early 240s, and in the early 250s.¹⁴ In his statement about invasion of 216 AD; Xorenac‘i II 65 mentions the Khazirs and Basils led by Vnasep Surhap to Armenia through the Gate of Chor.¹⁵ Based on archaeological data these nomads were the tribes-carriers of the traditions of Middle Sarmatian and Early Alan cultures not the early Turkic tribes.¹⁶ They participated also in the events of the middle 3rd century AD. At least, since this time, it is possible to believe, acquaintance of Armenia and Mazkut‘ began.

Mentioning the Mazkut‘ (*mskyt‘n*) in the Paikuli (NPK) Middle Persian inscription of *šahanšah* Narse (293–303),¹⁷ the former “Great King of Armenia,” should be associated with the archaeological sites of the northern Daghestan. The inscription lists the rulers of various regions and countries who supported him in the struggle for power and later took part in his coronation. Among the various Caucasian rulers, next to the king of Iberia and the king of Sikan there is a nameless king of the Mazkut‘, *mskyt‘n MLK’*, who had a high *shah* title.

It should be noted here that the Middle Persian form of the ethnonym *mskyt‘n* (*mas(a) kītān* / *mas(a)kētān*) with the suffix *-ān* (from Old Pers. **masakita* / **masaketa*) corresponds to the Greek *Μασσαγῆται* and Lat. *Massagetae* (doubling of intervocalic consonants *-σσ-* and *-ss-* is characteristic for Greek and Latin). Researchers propose various, sometimes unusual interpretations of the ethnonym Massagetes, but it is more likely to see in it the basis *masa* “great,” “large” with typical Iranian word-formation suffix *-ak* / *-ag* and the plural indicator *-ta* (cf., for example, the generic name *Akhsartagata*, the

¹¹ Preud’homme 2019, 3–12.

¹² Dio Cassius 69.15.1; about the campaign see: Perevalov 2006, 318–335 and bibliography.

¹³ Movsēs Xorenac‘i 2. 65.

¹⁴ Gadžiev – Semēnov 2007, 71–89 and bibliography.

¹⁵ Arm. *duṛn Čoray*, i.e. Derbent pass.

¹⁶ Gadžiev 2016.

¹⁷ Humbach – Skjærvø 1980: BI. H3; 1983, 125–126; Lukonin 1987, 169; 255, note 45.

chief Nart family (“Top/Royal Narts” of the Nart sagas) specializing in military activity, formed by this principle with the suffixes *ag* and *ta*. Here we must remember Herodotus (1.201), who calls the *Massagetae* a great (large in number) and powerful ethnus.

It is important to note that in the early medieval Armenian historical and literary tradition the Mazkut' are identified with the Massagetes. This conclusion arises not so much from the consonance of these ethnonyms, but from the Movses Xorenac'i's commentary (2. 13) with reference to Phlegonis Tralliani (the 2nd century AD) about Cyrus the Great's war and death in the fierce battle with the *Mazkut'*, by whom the Central Asian Massagetae are meant.

According to archaeological data in the first half of the 4th century AD the Sarmato-Alanian tribes living in the North-Western Pre-Caspian zone (in the Terek-Sulak interfluvium) (Lvov kurgan cemeteries) together with a new large group of early Alan culture carriers from the central part of the North Caucasus begin the moving to the coastal Daghestan to the south of Sulak river and to the south of the Derbent pass (**Map 1**).¹⁸

The connection of the kurgan necropolises of the 4th–5th centuries AD in the coastal Daghestan (especially the kurgan cemeteries of Southern Daghestan such as Palasa-Syrt with some thousands barrows, Sughyut, Kukhmazkunt etc.) with the land of Mazkut' is determined by the chronological and territorial fixation of the Mazkut' in the same time and on the same territory. We have clear compliance of the correlated data of archeology and narrative texts.

Mazkut' and their kingdom are reliably localized by the ancient Armenian written sources in the Western Caspian, including south of the Derbent Pass. For instance, *Ašxarac'oyc'* (Armenian geography) in the list of peoples of the Caucasus clearly locates them in the following area: “in the Vardanian Plain, dwell the nation of Mazkut' as far as the Caspian Sea to which a branch of the Caucasus extends. Here is the wall of Darband, that is, “the lock and gate,” the guardian city of the pass, [with] a formidable tower built in the sea”.¹⁹

I'd like to note that the Land of Mazkut' was known to a number of ancient Armenian authors—not only to the *Ašxarac'oyc'* but also to P'awstos Buzand, Movsēs Xorenac'i, Agat'angelos, Movsēs Dasxuranc'i. It is important to mention that among the four “pre-eminent” (Arm. *gaherēc'*) military-civil viceroys-*bdešhks* (Arm. *bdeašxk'*) of various regions of Armenia, Agat'angelos calls “*bdeašx* from the Mazkut' side,” who together with other nobles and religious figures accompanied Tiridates (Trdat) during the visit to Constantine (306–337) between 321–325 AD (Agat'angelos § 874). The appearance of this position in the system of state administration at the beginning of the 4th century seems to reflect the military-strategic importance of this political entity—the Land / Kingdom of Mazkut'.

The beginning of mass migration was obviously connected with the political situation in the South Caucasus—by Iran's desire to regain its positions in the Caucasus and by the struggle for the Armenian throne after the king Trdat's death in around 330 AD, in which the different tribes led by Sanesan, the King of Mazkut', took active part. I will not stop on the description of these events which received reflection in a number

¹⁸ Malašev – Gadžiev – Il'jukov 2015, 87, 135–136.

¹⁹ Anania irakac'i 1992, 57, 58.

of publications.²⁰ I will only note that as has long been shown, the *nakharar* Sanatruk Arshakuni and the Mazk'ut' king Sanesan were different historical figures; however, events pertaining to the names Sanatruk and Sanesan did occur during the same period. Furthermore, as is clear from the written sources, there was an intimate and direct link between them.²¹ This, as well as a certain consonance of names, gave rise to the false identification of these two political figures.

After the signing the Peace treaty of Nisibis between Ctesiphon and Constantinople in 298 AD, Iran renounced its claims on the Transcaucasian countries, and Armenia and Iberia came under the patronage of the Roman Empire. It was at this time that the Arsacid dynasty came to power in Albania.²² At the same time, the Arsacid dynasty, represented by Tiridates (Trdat) III, was again established on the throne of Armenia. It can be assumed that the establishment of kinship of Arsacids of Armenia with ruling dynasty of Mazkut' also associated with this time, which later allowed Buzand to claim that the kings of Mazkut' and Armenians "were of the same origin and kin," that the king of Mazkut' Sanesan and the Armenian King Chosroes II (Khosrow II) were kinsmen and brothers, and to call Mazk'ut' king Arshakuni.²³

In this regard, the information of Xorenac'i appears to be important: after Trdat's III (298–330) accession to the throne, he married Ašxen, the daughter of a certain Ašxadar, who was recorded in the Arshakuni dynasty and became the crowned queen of Armenia.²⁴ Naturally, her farther Ašxadar was supposed to be a reigning monarch, or, at least, an aristocrat. As F.H. Gutnov fairly noted, in this message one should see the establishment of a political union between Trdat and Alans, fastened by the marriage with the daughter of the Lord of Alans.²⁵ Researchers have stated long ago that these names are of Iranian (Alanian) origin and carry the *xsa* root, which means "power": the name Ašxen has a parallel in Ossetian *axsin* / *äxšin*, meaning "princess, madam," while Ašxadar is translated as "the one in power."²⁶ This allows seeing Ašxadar as a ruler of some considerable Sarmato-Alanian tribal union. Certainly, this marriage should be considered as a dynastic one, aimed to establish close friendly allied relations between both sides.

The establishment of a military-political alliance with the Sarmato-Alanian tribes of the North Caucasus by Trdat III met the interests of Armenia during that period in the context of its confrontation with Iberia. The same situation made it possible to conclude an alliance primarily with the Sarmato-Alanian nomads of the North-Western Pre-Caspian region, and not the central part of the Pre-Caucasus, since the routes of communication with the North Caucasus through the passes of Greater Caucasus were under the control of Iberia. It should be noted that, judging from the data of written sources, if in the period preceding the Sasanian conquests in the Caucasus in the middle of the 3rd century AD, we observe the military-political alliance of Iberia with the Sarmato-Alans (from the middle of the 1st century AD), then since the incorporation of Iberia into the

²⁰ Trever 1959, 188–197; Gadlo 1979, 33–37; Harut'yunyan 1981, 65–77.

²¹ Arutyunyan 1981, 65–77; Gadjiev 1982, 14.

²² Gadjiev 2015a, 68–75.

²³ Buzand 1953, 14–15.III, 7.

²⁴ Movsēs Xorenac'i 2.83.

²⁵ Gutnov 2001, 145.

²⁶ Nalbandjan 1977, 212.

sphere of Sasanian political influence and its special place in the Sasanian hierarchy, there is a constant Alano-Iberian confrontation.

S.A. Yatsenko suggests considering Ašxadar as a ruler of Sarmato-Alanian tribe of Mazkut' (resp. Massagetes).²⁷ Such suggestion does not look unusual, considering, firstly, that Trdat Arshkuni intermarried the ruling house of Alans and queen Ašxen was entered in Arshakuni kin; secondly, that in 293 AD the nameless king of Mazkut' (with the title of *šah: mskt'n MLK'*) took part in the coronation of *šahanšah* Narseh; and, thirdly, that in 330s Sanesan, the king of the Mazkut', appeared as a representative of Aršakuni kin. This marriage later resulted in Khosrov becoming the king of Armenia.

Given such a historical reconstruction, Buzand's persistent calling Sanesan and Khosrov brothers might be explained as such, as they supposedly were: the first was obviously the grandson of Ašxadar, the second was his grandson, the son of the daughter of Ašxadar. Four times (NB!) Buzand persistently emphasizes the kinship of Sanesan and kings of Mazkut' with the Arsacids.²⁸ Twice he calls Sanesan and Khosrov II brothers, once—congener, and claims that Mazk'ut' and Armenian kings “were of the same origin and kinship.” The emphasis on that is obviously no coincidence and can be considered as a real fact, which points out, on the one hand, already existing kinship of these ruling houses by the time of Sanesan's reign, on the other hand, the ancestral nature of power of Mazkut'.

It is also worth mentioning that the name of the King of the Mazkut' Sanesan finds its etymology in the Iranian languages, namely, in the ancient Iranian *Zanaχšāna / Zanasana*—“the one, having tribe,” “highborn,”²⁹ which stresses the higher social status of its holder, as well as the names Ašxadar and Ašxen.

Judging by the materials of the extensive Palasa-syrt cemetery the new migration of the Mazk'ut'-Alanian tribes to the south of the Derbent pass occurs in the end of the 4th–beginning of the 5th centuries AD.³⁰ The majority of the excavated barrows belong to this time. This movement into borders of Caucasian Albania and on the territory of influence of Sasanian Iran should obviously be explained by the invasion of the Huns and regarded as a reflection of the hostile interrelations between these tribal groups, at least in the initial period of their interaction.

The migration of a significant mass of the Iranian-speaking Mazkut' and Alans to the south of the Derbent pass into Caucasian Albania was evidently carried out with the permission of the rulers of Albania and Sasanian Iran. It is possible that they were placed there as the close ones in status to the Late Roman federates and the creation of a small buffer vassal “kingdom” in the zone of the strategically important Derbent pass matched interests of Iran and Albania. The role of this buffer kingdom was to get more important especially with the beginning of the Hunnic pressure in the end of the 4th century AD.

In the context of information about the Mazkut' (resp. Massagetes) on the western Caspian coast and their role in the history of the Caucasus in the 4th–5th centuries, it is necessary to treat as a reality to a mention of Massagetes in the well-known message of Eusebius Hieronym (342–419) about the first large invasion of the Huns across

²⁷ Jacenko 1998, 89.

²⁸ P'awstos Buzand 3.7.

²⁹ Justi 1895, 379; D'jakonov 1956, 262, note 3.

³⁰ Malašev – Gadžiev – Il'jukov 2015, 116–118, 150.

the Grand Caucasus to Transcaucasia, Iran and eastern Roman provinces in 395 AD: “. . . from the extreme limits of Meotida, between the icy Tanais and the furious peoples of Massagetes, where Alexander’s bolted locks constrain the wild tribes of the Caucasus, the hosts of Huns escaped . . .”,³¹ “along an unexpected way through the Caspian Gates and Armenian snows”.³²

The authors of the 5th century (Xorenac‘i, Agat‘angelos, Ehišē) consider (in relation to the 5th century) the coastal Daghestan as the “Land of the Huns” (Arm. *ašharh Honk*‘). This situation obviously formed at Attila’s reign (434–454), when the Huns, in around 440, undertook a devastating invasion to the countries of the South Caucasus and Iran.³³

At this time, the Derbent pass came under the rule of the Huns and it was reflected in the new name of the fortifications in the passage. This gave Vardapet Ehišē a reason to call the Derbent pass and its fortifications the “Hun fortress”,³⁴ “Hun garrison”,³⁵ “Hun gate” (Arm. *durn Honac*‘)³⁶ together with the more ancient name *Chor*³⁷ (apm. *durn Čoray* “the gate of Chor,” *kapank*‘ *Čoray* “the pass of Chor,” apm. *drunk*‘ *Čoray* «the fortress of Chor», *pahak Čoray* / *Čora pahak* «the garrison (watch) of Chor», *kalak*‘ *pahakin Čora* «the city of the watch of Chor»).

According to Ehišē and *History of Karka de Beth Selok*, in reply, Iran (with Armenian cavalry) undertook military campaigns to the coastal Daghestan against the Huns³⁸ and carried out two major fortification projects in the Derbent pass or Chor. I mean the construction of a mud-brick fortification in the Derbent pass, which completely blocked the 3-kilometer passage,³⁹ and the construction of a grand (over 100 hectares) fortress-city 25 km south of the Derbent pass (**Map 2**). This fortified settlement Torpakh-kala⁴⁰ is reliably identified with the royal city of Shahristan-i Yazdegerd, founded by *šahanšah* Yazdegerd II (431–459) in the 440s in the Chor region, as evidenced by the *History of Karka de Beth Selok*.⁴¹ This was the first stage of the Sasanian fortification and town planning in the Eastern Caucasus, and it was driven by the Hun pressure. A military-administrative district was also formed here the head of which bore the title *Marzban of Chor*.⁴²

³¹ Eusebius, *Ep.* 77.8.

³² Claudian, *In Ruf.* 2.22–30.

³³ Prisc. *Fragm.* 8. About the campaign and its dating see: Semënov 2002, 15–16; Semënov 2007, 39–49.

³⁴ Arm. *Drunk*‘ *Honac*‘.

³⁵ Arm. *pahak Honac*‘.

³⁶ See for example: Ehišē 2001, 243, 288; also see: Kettenhofen 1996, 13–14.

³⁷ About the identification of Chor (Arm. *Čor*, Georg. *Čora*, Greek Τζούρ (Procop. *De Bel. Goth.*, IV,3), *Tūrāyē* by Michael the Syrian (Chron. d.1199), Arab. *Sul*, Darg. *Chulli*, Kubachi *Chule*, Lak. *Churul*, Avar. *Chor*) with Derbent see: Kuznetsov 1893, 423; Markwart 1901, 96–100; Artamonov 1962, 120–121; Kudryavtsev 2000 38–45; Gadjev 2002, 10, 46–48).

³⁸ Ehišē 2001, 198, 237, 243; Hoffmann 1880, 50.

³⁹ Kudryavtsev 1978, 243–257; Kudryavtsev 1979, 31–43; Gadjev 1989, 61–76; Gadjev 2012, 292–294; Gadjev 2013a, 122–147; Gadjev 2013b, 101–112.

⁴⁰ See: Gadjev 1980, 144–152; Gadjev 2001, 32–40; Gadjev 2009, 107–114; Gadjev – Magomedov 2008, 276–297; Gadjev 2015b.

⁴¹ Hoffmann 1880, 50.

⁴² Ehišē 2001, 239–240.



Map 2. Seaside part of Southern Dagestan with a designation of the kurgan burial grounds of Palasa-syrt (more than 3000 tumuli), Sogyut (36 tumuli), Donguz-nour (24 tumuli), Kukhmazkunt (112 tumuli), mud brick long wall and citadel of Derbent (*Cor*), mud brick fortification of Torpakh-kala (*Šahrestān Yazdgerd*), mud brick fortification of Palasa-syrt fortified settlement (a red triangle), St. Grigoris Chapel (a white cross)

It should be noted that the Torpakh-kala fortified settlement is located not far (4.5–5 km northeast) from Palasa-syrt cemetery and other burial grounds of this area (**Map 2**). The upper chronological boundary of the necropolis of the Palasa-syrt does not extend beyond the mid-5th century AD, while the lower one of the settlement of Torpakh-kala comes to the end of the 440s. And the cessation of functioning of the Palasa-syrt cemetery can be put in direct connection with the military-political events of that time.

The discontinuation of the Palasa-syrt necropolis and other barrow cemeteries of the southern and coastal Daghestan in the middle of the 5th century may be explained, on the

one hand, by the possible accession of the Mazkut' by the Huns during the invasion to the Transcaucasia and their occupation of the Derbent pass in about 440 AD, on the other hand, by the subsequent forceful displacement of the Mazkut' and Huns from the territory south of Derbent along with strengthening of the political power of Sasanian Iran in the Eastern Caucasus in the 440s AD and returning the control over the Derbent pass, which is reflected in the written sources and in fortification monuments—I mean mud-brick fortifications of Derbent and Torpakh-kala.

Perhaps, the accession of the Mazkut' to the Attila's Huns is reflected in the appearance of the mixed ethnonym Masaha-Huns (τῶν Μασαχ τῶν Οὐννων), showing the realities of the 5th century in the Greek version of Agat'angelos.

It must be noted that the Mazkut' no longer appear in written sources (Elišē, Parpeci, Dasxuranci) in connection with the anti-Iranian uprising in the countries of the southern Caucasus in 450–451 AD, which also spread on the territory of the Derbent pass.⁴³ Here I must point out the fact which, obviously, confirms the point of view on the accession of the Mazkut' to the Huns.

The latest news of the Mazkut' in Armenian sources are dating back to the time of the revolt of Albanian King Vache II in the end of the 450s–early 460s AD.⁴⁴

One of the strategic actions of the Vache was the seizure of fortifications in the Derbent pass: according to Elišē, the Albanian king “did not want to surrender, dug in the Chor fortress and led the troops of the Mazkut' on this side, united eleven mountain kings and opposed the Aryan regiment with war. And the great damage [Vache] caused to the troops of the king [Yazdgerd].”⁴⁵ According to Dasxuranci, “the king of Albania, however, had no desire to submit to him [i.e. Yazdgerd – M.G.] as a vassal, but threw open the gates of Čolay and led in the forces of the Mask'ut'k'; he allied himself to the eleven mountain kings, opposed the Arian army in the battle and inflicted great loses upon the royal forces.”⁴⁶ That is, by the time of the uprising at the end of the 450s the Mazkut' had already localized to the north of the Derbent pass, i.e. on the territory of the “Land of the Huns.”

From now on the Mazkut' as active military-political force descend from the political arena of the Caucasus though they continue to be mentioned under a name of Massagetæ in the context of history of Huns, Sabirs and Byzantium.⁴⁷

⁴³ About the revolt see: Eremjan 1951, 41–60; Trever 1959, 201–213; Juzbašjan 2001, 65–91.

⁴⁴ About the revolt see: Trever 1959, 213–217.

⁴⁵ Elišē 2001, 326.

⁴⁶ Dasxuranc'i 1961, 9.

⁴⁷ Procop. *De bello Vand.* 1.4.24; *De bello Vand.* 1.11.7–9; *De bello Pers.* 1.13.20.

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