

Real and/or Virtual Tours to Mount Ialbuzy/Elbrus/Passa

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Abstract

Mountain peaks and slopes are a great attraction for travel and tourism. Mountains have always been a great attraction for humans' imagination. High peaks were considered to be the areas where one or several gods or goddesses and/or some national heroes lived (or were buried there). I shall talk about my experience of many visits from Tbilisi to mount Ialbuzy/Elbrus/Passa. The scenery is beautiful in every time of the year there. My impressions of those visits concerning who lived there, what languages were spoken by the local population, what was their national food, what music was popular there may add to the already published writings of other persons.

The history of the mountaineering of this area will be reviewed in a nutshell, including tours of the local inhabitants as well as of the English mountaineers in XIX c. The situation of mountaineering in the area in 1942-1954-ies will be overviewed with videos and press materials. Propositions published by various authors aimed to improve the security, peace and the stability in the area will be presented, including my own. Many persons desire to visit the area where this mountain is situated. Persons that visited the area recently share the knowledge as to how a visa can be obtained if one travels the area from the northern or from the southern countries. I propose to produce a virtual educational 30 minute video that will inform people at large about the ancient and modern history of the area and of the mountaineering at large.

I shall talk about my own experience of many visits from Tbilisi to mount Ialbuzy/Elbrus. I spent over two months every year for decades in 1980-ies in winter, in spring and in summer there. I shall talk about my impressions of those visits. I shall talk about the impressions of visitors available on the WWW this 2013 year and in the previous years. Videos of the area during ascents to the top of the mountain Ialbuzy will be demonstrated. The history of the mountaineering of this area will be reviewed in a nutshell, including tours of the English mountaineers in XIX c. The situation of mountaineering in the area in 1942-1954-ies will be overviewed with videos and press materials. I shall present excerpts from the poem of Vazha-Pshavela entitled Ialbuzy. Propositions published by various authors aimed to improve the peace and the stability in the area will be presented, including my own.

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Guests/travelers/tourists/visitors ought to be told that mountain peaks and slopes are a great attraction for travel and tourism. Mountains have always been an impressive attraction for humans' imagination. “You are a great mountain” (kur-gal)– is a translation of the phrase often inscribed in the cuneiform Sumerian and Akadian texts dedicated to kings of Kardunia in II millennium BCE. That phrase is used by the Kardu/Kartu/Georgian authors in 13th c. CE when talking of mepet-mepe (king of kings (sar sarum is the equivalent known in the cuneiform Sumerian and Akadian texts) Tamar of Kardu/Sakartuelo/Georgia. In the Sumerian texts “the mountain’ is rendered by the word kur and the word great is gal. The letter “u” in kur stands for both “u” and “o”, as there was only one Sumerian sound for both vowels. The Sumerian word “kur” (mountain) can easily be seen in the word “gori’/’gora’ of modern Kartuli/Georgian language. The above-mentioned text concerning mepet-mepe Tamar has the word “mta’ (mountain” also in modern-day Kartuli) and not “gora/kur’, but the idea itself is preserved there in the 13th c. CE, despite the span of over twelve centuries since the Sumerian cuneiform signs stopped to be used. High peaks were considered to be the areas where one or several gods or goddesses and/or some national heroes lived (or were buried) there. I shall talk about my experience of many visits from Tbilissi to mount Ialbuzy/Elbrus//

Passa. I used to spend over two months every year for over a decade in 1980-ies in winter, in spring and in summer there. The scenery is beautiful in every time of the year there. My impressions of those visits concerning who lived there, what language was spoken by the local population, what was their national food, what music was popular there, may add to the already published writings of other persons. I brought photos of those visits and investigations of the local inhabitants at the bazaars, schools and other public areas. Several photos were made for me by a famous journalist from Kiev; the man happened to visit the area in order to make photos for popular journals in Kiev. He proposed very colorful photos of the locals during my interviewing them – for the first page of the cover of the popular journal. The editor in Kiev told him he and his journal would willingly publish photos if the interviewer were a Ukrainian person. He sent me those photos and I keep them in my archive. According to the Treaty adopted by our king Irakli II/Heraclius II and the Russian Empress Catherine II, the area of the mountain Passa/Ialbuzi and the area situated even north of it including modern towns Georgi's place/Georgievsk and Mineraluri tsqhalebi/Mineral Waters (with the latter's great international airport - were to belong to king Irakli II and his (also my) nation/ethnicity - the Kartuels/the Georgians. The text was written in the Kartuli/Georgian language (of king Irakli II) and in the Russian language (the language of the empire that Catherine II ruled). This Official Treaty was signed, ratified and published the same year 1783 in both languages in the official book of laws of the Russian Empire. It was published in both languages afterwards again several times. The Kartuli/Georgian text is kept in Tbilisi at the National Center of the Manuscripts at Aleqsidze Street, Building No. 3. The manuscript was scanned and is displayed at its website, though the two official red seals only can be seen on the folded manuscript on the photo displayed there; on clicking on the link, the video of the event that is unrelated to the Georgievsk Treaty pops up. It is important that the vast group of persons learn what the indigenous area of our nation/ethnicity is. Prof. Mose Janashvili has the most informative material on this theme in both published and unpublished writings. What was the northern border, northern area of the kingdom of his nation/ethnicity in king Aieti's/Aia-eti's days? Which nation/ethnicity had the earliest kingdom in that area? His answer is that king Aiaeti was the first known king there and in the adjacent vast area including the lowlands of the Don and the Volga rivers. I advise readers to read that text of Prof. Janashvili in Kartuli/Georgian (Janashvili 1906: 8-56).

Mount Passa/Ialbuzi is mostly famous for being a place where one of the goddesses Dali by name, delivered an amazing son and called him Amirani. The mother died, the boy was raised by Sulkalmakhi. Sulkalmakhi was considered to be the first name or the second/family name of that man. Many folklore texts of this epic have come down to our days and were published several times. Some have been translated into English, French, German and Russian languages. Prof. Jemal Sharashenidze has published a very informative book entitled Sukalmakh's institute in Sumer (Sukalmakhis

instituti shumershi. Logos Publ. Tbilissi, 2008).



Figure I Map of the area ruled by king Aieti, his sister Tsiratsa/Circea/Kirke and his daughter Medea the Healer. (offered to readers by the author based on the oral and literary traditions);

In the fifth chapter of that book Prof. J. Sharashenidze wrote about the etymology of the name Sukalmakhi, mentioned in the famous Kartuelian/Georgian epic concerning the hero Amirani, entitled "Amiraniani"/ Life and deeds of the hero Amirani. Prometheus is a semi god hero mentioned in the Hellenic text published many times as jailed and chained by god Zeus to the cliff of the Caucasian mountain cave (and not to some mountain in Hellas/Greece). Hence Prometheus is a modified name of Amirani. The word amirani itself has a meaning of "seeing" in the cuneiform Sumerian ancient texts. The name Prometheus literally means "he that is able to see events that will happen in future times". This peculiarity is very rare and much esteemed throughout the entire history of humankind in all cultures and civilizations. Visitors of mount Passa/Ialbuzi will be interested in listening to the declamation of the "Life of Amirani" and "the Deeds of Prometheus". This topic will make a narrative and declamation for several days.

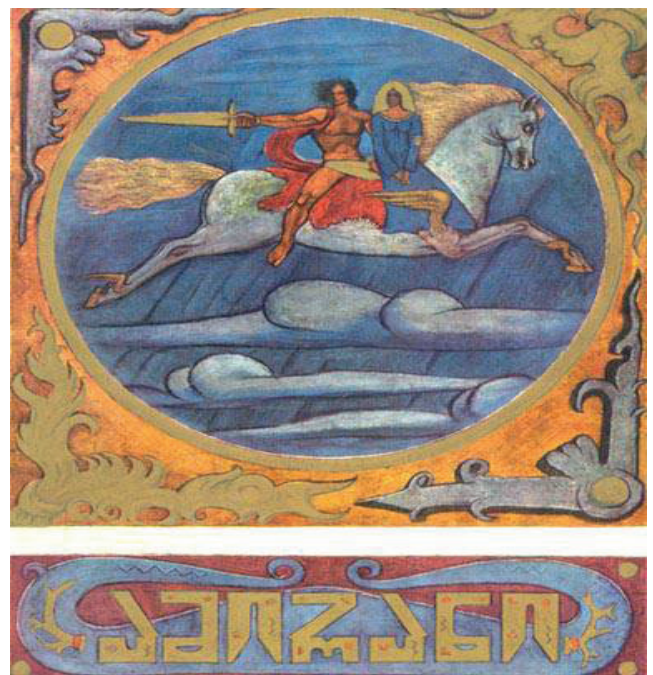


Figure II Cover of the Epic about Amirani. Tbilisi. Merani publishers. 1978.

I recall with great pleasure that during my several stays at Terskol hotel situated at the foot of the Passa/Ialbuzi mountain, the beautiful middle-aged lady that was a director of the library of that hotel, arranged monthly evening meetings of reading poetry of various times by various persons. The room of the library used to be beautifully decorated for the event and the light was “of former centuries” – only the chandeliers were glimmering here and there. Most of the guests of the hotel, participants, arrived ready for that event, ladies in long gowns, men appropriately neatly dressed. They made artistically very attractive declamation of their own verses and/or verses and poems written by world-renowned authors. During my oral presentation at the conference in Batumi in May I shall talk about the impressions of the recent visitors to that mountain. Their texts, photos and videos are available on the WWW for this 2013 year and for the previous years. Videos of the area during ascents to the top of this mountain are also available on the WWW and will be demonstrated, if time permits. One of the greatest topics is the history of the mountaineering in this area and in the world throughout millennia. This topic will need telling that history for hours. It ought to be reviewed in a nutshell, including talk about tours of the local inhabitants as well as of the English mountaineers in XIX c. to this mountain. Parts from books published by travelers Douglas Freshfield, Vittorio Sella concerning their visits to this area will be very informative. The situation of mountaineering in the area in 1942-1954-ies is a special theme that may be overviewed with videos and press materials. Books and articles in several languages have been published on that topic. Guides can present excerpts from the poems of several salient poets where this mountain is mentioned. One can illustrate the impact of the beauty and might of the Mount Passa/Ialbuzi by the text of the epic poem of Vazha-Pshavela entitled Ialbuzi. Propositions published by various authors aimed at improvement of the security, peace and the stability in the area will make a theme of the paramount importance. Unfortunately, there are periods when the security in the area is insufficient for peaceful life and travel. The British Touristic department warned the citizens to abstain from visits to the Northern Caucasia at large and the Russian Official department protested declaring all was secure there in 2013. Still many persons desire to visit the area where this mountain is situated. Persons that visited the area recently share the knowledge as to how a visa can be obtained if one travels the area from the northern or from the southern countries. I propose to produce a virtual educational 30 minute video that will inform people at large about the ancient and modern history of the area including a brief history of mountaineering at large.

Mountaineering started millennia ago. A body of an ancient mountaineer was discovered and excavated in the Alps in the ice and snow a couple of years ago. Two modern republics: Italy and Switzerland quarreled as to which republic the find ought to be given as the body was discovered near the modern border between these two republics. The

corps of the ancient mountaineer that was shot with an arrow many centuries ago was carried to the museum with the long escort of the police of the republic; scholars feared that the ancient find might be stolen and/or kidnapped on the road to the town, inasmuch as any museum in the world would desire to have that relic of mountaineering and would be glad to pay a great some of money. I saw that procession through the Alps to the town on the Television in Tbilissi.

Another testimony of the ancient mountaineering is preserved in the text of the ancient literary piece entitled “The story of Gilgamesh”. It has come down to our days copied in the Sumerian, Akadian and Hittite texts all written in the interrelated cuneiform scripts in king Assur-ban-upali’s library.

During the Soviet times in XX c. the writers living in the USSR somewhat near the mountain called that mountain by several names: Passa, Ialbuzi, Elborus and proudly wrote that the highest peak in Europe was situated in the USSR. Before the Soviet times, Luka Razikashvili better known by his literary name Vazha-Pshavela, meaning a man from the region called Pshavi, wrote and published his long poetical work entitled Ialbuzi. The text tells of the rebellion of minor mountains against their huge and famous neighbor – mount Ialbuzi. This poet mentions that high mountain by the name Ialbuzi for the reason that Ialbuzi was more popular than the other name of that mountain - Passa . The poem is an allegorical depiction of the envy and feud present among the various ethnic entities populating the area situated somewhat near the mount Ialbuzi area at the start of XX c. against the indigenous population of the area: the Kartv/Kartveli nation known in the English texts by the name the Georgian. The appropriate name for the highest mountain of that area is Passa. This mountain Passa transferred its name to the nearby area and the region has been known as Passiani/Bassiani area at large. The fact that this high mountain was indeed called by the Kartuli word Passa by the local population is known through the oral tradition that I witnessed during a decade when staying at the area and collecting the oral information among the local Kartveli population. Later I found out that this was not only an oral tradition, but it had been published almost a century ago in the capital of the Russian Empire. Here I present a photo of a page from a book made and published by a scholar A. Starchevskii (3:127) at the end of the XIX century in Petersburg. (Figure 3).

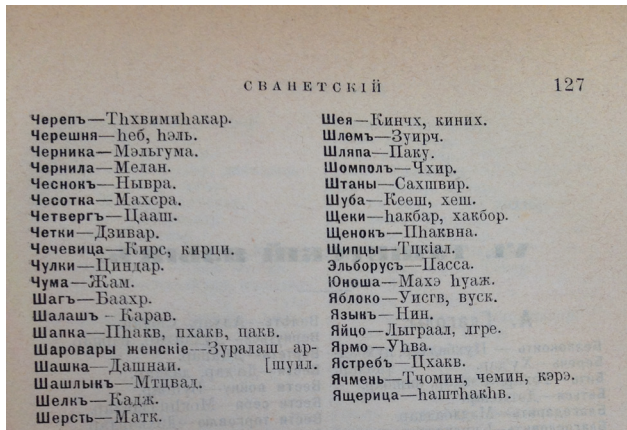


Figure III. page 127 from A. Startchevskii's "Kavkazskii perevodchik". Saint Petersburg, 1883.

The guides ought to inform tourists that the word *passis/passa* is a very ancient word. This word is at least four millennia old. What is the basis for this viewpoint?—a tourist may ask. The guide ought to tell the tourist that ancient literary, grammatical and lexical materials are preserved in museums. It is written in those materials that the word *passis* means sacred and/or divine. The name for the especially beautiful sort of a bird, called *Phazan/Pheasant* seems to me to be derived from the ancient word *pasis* meaning divine and/or sacred. This bird was first seen by the invading Roman warriors in our kingdom more than two millennia ago and it was mentioned as *phazan* by those aliens. This bird is depicted on a postal stamp on the envelope. This bird will be a beautiful emblem of our country/republic, in my view.



Figure VII. Two peaks of Mount Passa/Elborus/Ialbuзи on a sunny day in April

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