

LEPL Samtskhe-Javakheti State University

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# Research and Documentation of Onomastic Material of Javakheti

Ninotsminda Municipality

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## Content

<b>Merab Beridze</b> .....	<b>5</b>
• Javakheti (Geographical terms and boundaries) .....	5
• Mythological Hero and “Amiranis Gora” .....	14
• The Name of the Hero of the Azerbaijanian Epic in Georgian Toponymy .....	20
• For the History and Etymology of Paravani and Tavaparavani (Spelling of the Village, Lake, and River Names) .....	22
• The Names with the Root of „ყულ“/“qul” in Georgia (ყულაღისი/Qulalisi) .....	32
• The Anthroponyms of the Eleventh Century according to the Epigraphy of the Pokani Monastery .....	36
• Surnames and Names according to the Epigraphy of the Georgian Monastery of Gandzani .....	43
• For Referring Some Toponyms of Samtskhe-Javakheti .....	52
• The Epigraphy of the Satkhe Church as a Symbol of Attitude .....	58
<b>Roin Kavrelishvili</b> .....	<b>71</b>
• Samtskhe - Saatabago (Akhaltzikhe Pashalik) in modern Turkish Historiography (Summary) .....	71
• Settling of Armenians to Samtskhe-Javakheti after the Russo-Turkish War in 1828-1829 (According to the Turkish Historiography) .....	107
<b>Khatuna Gaprindashvili</b> .....	<b>134</b>
Armenian Historical Sources about Ninotsminda Municipality	
<b>Mariam Balasaniani</b> .....	<b>148</b>
The Names of Ninotsminda Municipality Villages according to the 5-volume Dictionary of „the Toponyms of Armenia and its Adjacent Regions “	
<b>Merab Beridze, Daria Strukova</b> .....	<b>158</b>
Dukhobors in Ninotsminda Municipality	
<b>Inga Ghutidze</b> .....	<b>165</b>
Language Situation in Javakheti (Ninotsminda Municipality)	
<b>Maka Beridze</b> .....	<b>242</b>
The Problems of Migration Caused by Environmental Reasons and Acharian Environmental Migrants in Ninotsminda Municipality	

<b>A Monasterial Life</b> .....	<b>256</b>
The Pokani St. Nino Nunnery	
<b>Father Alexandre</b> .....	<b>262</b>
• The Fathers’ Monastery after St. John the Baptist Beheading “Tavkvetula” .....	262
• St. Queen Tamar Nunnery of Saghamo .....	262
• Ninotsminda Nunnery after Annunciation to the Holy Virgin .....	263
<b>Bishop Serapime</b> .....	<b>265</b>
Pokani Friary	
<b>Tea Tsagurishvili</b> .....	<b>267</b>
Memoirs of Archimandrite Poka (Markozia)	
<b>Father Papaisi</b> .....	<b>268</b>
A Monastery	
<b>Kukuri Metreveli</b> .....	<b>269</b>
Javakheti Megaliths	
<b>Nino Khazalashvili</b> .....	<b>302</b>
The Toponyms of Ninotsminda Municipality According to the Maps	
<b>References</b> .....	<b>312</b>
<b>Maps</b> .....	<b>330</b>

## J a v a k h e t i (Geographical terms and boundaries)

Ninotsminda Municipality is located in Javakheti. The part of it belongs to the Trialeti. The historical factor is important in this regard. Historical and modern conditions are considered for defining the borders and size of "the countries", i.e., regions of Georgia. The borders were changing according to the epochs during the historical periods, based on the political strengthening or weakening of any "country". "Yet there were still permanent borders of each country confining them. The issue is to outline these permanent borders for the **historical period** we are aiming to study" (Javakhishvili 1965, 28). Accordingly, the establishment and study of the historical borders of Javakheti will be the subject of historical geography. We will discuss its modern state, i.e., the modern "historical age". From the historical geography, it is necessary to consider that Javakheti was referred to under different administrative terms during different times, in particular, it was part of Meskheta, Tao-Klarjeti, Samtskhe-Saatabago, Meskhet-Javakheti, and today it is included in the modern administrative unit of Samtskhe-Javakheti. Samtskhe and Javakheti had existed since ancient times and they are still mentioned side by side as the regions, and "countries" of Georgia. We mean its narrow meaning under Samtskhe. Samtskhe meant Meskheta. Thus, Samtskhe, as a term had two meanings (comp. Samtskhe-Saatabago). Accordingly, primarily, it is interesting to find the border between them. The borders of the countries or the regions within the country are determined by the geographical factor first, the political factor can be added to it. The demographic factor should also be taken into account. While discussing Samtskhe and Javakheti as administrative units, we take into account their historical province first, as its distinctive role for the Georgian state, demonstrated in the cultural-historical and economic functions at all the stages of our history. Therefore, according to the historical sources, the borders of Javakheti are changing, "though physical-geographical Javakheti should include the Javakheti Plateau (highland). The parts of Samtskhe-Javakheti were very different from each other very much and are divergent regions in all respects. Among the local population, Vardzia, Niala, Khertvisi, and other places are considered as part of Meskheta. Thus, the border of the historical and geographical province - Javakheti coincides with the physical-geographical border of the highland of Javakheti" (Kharadze 2000, 14). This is also the modern understanding of Javakheti. When we talk about a distinctively defined area, we mean climatic and geographical conditions. Javakheti, as a historical place and main toponym, is part of such geographical names which include geographical terms, like **highland** and **ridge** as the second component. The highland of Javakheti, with predominant plains of 1,500-2,220m height complicated by lakes, swampy caves and canyon-like valleys of rivers" (KSE1987, 525). **Ridge**, like other geographical terms, is quite specific, "a ridge is the name of the crest of the joined mountains", "Depending on the alti-

tude of the mountain itself, the ridges were sometimes high and sometimes low" (Javakhishvili 1965, 8). "The joined mountains" is the key feature for the ridge and Javakheti is bordered by such joined mountains. "The northern part of the Javakheti ridge is located within Georgia, while the southern part is in Armenia (KSE 1987, 525). As it is seen from the extracts, the Javakheti ridge follows the Georgia-Armenia border. There are two more ridges in Javakheti, the **Samsari** (Samsaris or Samsris Kedi in Georgian) and the **Chrdili** ridge (Samtskhe-Javaketi 2016, 5). Both **highland and ridge** initially were used as geographical terms. After their nomination, when the composites consisting of these terms were marked on maps, they became toponyms.

There is another toponym, which seems to be formed relatively late. It is a geographical term "plateau". Akhalkalaki **plateau** is the name given to the plateau in the central part of the volcanic highland of southern Georgia. It is bounded by Trialeti, Abul-Samsari, Javakheti, and Nialiskuri ridges and the upper valley of Mtkvari, at 1,500-2,000 meters above sea level ( KSE1977, 97). According to the material, it seems that the **plateau and the highland** overlap each other. We will define each term for more accuracy: "According to the explanatory dictionary of the Georgian language, a highland is a "plain place on a mountain, on a hill". For us, the second definition is more interesting, which refers to the geographical term: "**plain**" (or small hills) place at an altitude of 200 meters (and higher) above sea level" (KEGL 1955, 111), and is "plain above sea level joining the lowlands by slopes" (KEGL 1960, 240). There isn't much difference between a **highland and a plateau**. The understanding of the modern Javakheti coincides with the **Akhalkalaki plateau** with its above-mentioned ridges and mountains. The social and distinction ground of naming toponyms sometimes is artificial. When we need to name the notion and distinguish it from others, the main landmark is, in our case, **Javakheti and Akhalkalaki**. The parallel name of the Javakheti ridge seems more natural - სველი მთები [Sveli Mtebi]<sup>1</sup> (wet mountains), which characterizes the object not by belonging to the relief or geographical region, but by another sign, distinguishing the mountains as wet (comp. ჩრდილის ქედი [Chrdilis Kedi]/ **Chrdili** ridge (shadow ridge)). In this regard, the სველი ხევი [Sveli Khevi](**wet ravine**), „სუელი ხევი“ [**Sueli Khevi**] (Vakhushti 1973, 666) is interesting. Although the ravine is already wet due to its watery nature, the name highlights its special feature being a ravine. In contrast to the wet ravine, we have the მშრალი ხევი [mshrali khevi] (dry ravine), which is semantically much easier to explain, because it refers to a dry ravine. There are no "dry mountains" or "dry mountain" opposite to wet mountains. Most of the toponyms of Javakheti were translated into Turkish and Russian after Armenian and Russian migrants settled here. It is translated into Turkish because the speech of migrant Armenians is rich in Turkish

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1 In this section the toponyms from original document are presented unchanged, transcribed in Georgian script as given in the Georgian version of the monograph. Georgian pronunciations in English for (Georgian, Russian and Armenian scripts) are given in square brackets. Georgian consonants **გ, პ, თ, ტ, ქ, ჯ, ც, წ, ჩ, ჰ, ჯ, ხ, ზ** corresponding IPA transcriptions of p<sup>h</sup>, p', t<sup>h</sup>, t', k<sup>h</sup>, k', ts<sup>h</sup>, ts', tʃ<sup>h</sup>, tʃ', dʒ, x, j are given in Romanized form of p, p', t, t', k, k', ts, ts', ch, ch', j, kh, y (Trans./ED.)

vocabulary. Russians translated the Georgian wet mountains and called it "**Mokrie Gori**"<sup>2</sup>. It is difficult to explain what kind of moisture we are talking about. The **highland of Javakheti, Akhalkalaki plateau**, is bounded by the above-mentioned ridges. All these together were historically called the mountains of Javakheti. Iv. Javakhishvili reports: "The mountains of Javakheti are located to the south of the mountains of Samtskhe. The Paravani Lake is surrounded by these mountains. the Georgian enlightener tells in the Shatberdi version of "Life of St. Nino", "I went to the Javakheti mountains and came to the big lake in the mountains..., called Paravna"/„წარვედ მათა ზედა ჯავახეთისათა და მივემთხუიე მათა ზედა ტბასა დიდსა..., რომელსა ერქუა ფარავნა“.

Sumbat, the chronicler of the Bagrationi family, also says about Ashot Curapat: "He came to the mountain of Javakheti, to the coast of the big lake Paravani"/ „მოიწივნეს მათსა ჯავახეთისასა, კიდესა, დიდისა ტბისა ფარავნისასა“. It is notable, that Vakhushti Batonishvili describes the Paravani as in Kartli<sup>3</sup>, this should not be accidental, even though Sumbat the son of Davit and "The Life of St. Nino" seem to place Paravani in Javakheti (Javakhishvili 1965, 18-19). With the examples given by Javakhishvili from historical sources, it should be **the Javakheti range** of the border between Armenia and Georgia, mentioned above, concerning the Lake Paravani, but we consider that the Javakheti mountains mean the entire Javakheti range, the mountains in general in the sources, because this is how the mountains of other regions were also called: the mountains of Achara, Klarjeti mountains, Tkhoti mountains, etc. (Javakhishvili 1965, 18-19), only singular form is used when one mountain is referred, similar to “მთა კახეთისა” [Mtay K’akhetisay] (the Mountain of Kakheti) or „მთაი კოლისა“ [Mtay K’olisay] (the Mountain of Kolisa), thus, according to historical sources and modern data, we have both the **Javakheti range and the Javakheti mountains**, to name a ridge and a mountains as a whole.

**The Javakheti Mountains, and the Javakheti highland**, although they differ from each other in geographical terms, overlap each other as toponyms. It is fair that "the border of the historical-geographical province Javakheti somehow matches to the physical-geographical border of the land of Javakheti" (Kharadze 2000, 14). According to the data of the Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, the Nialiskuri ridges and the upper valley of the Mtkvari, included in the Akhalkalaki plateau should form a separate geographical environment and should not be included in the Akhalkalaki plateau, as part of Javakheti. According to Vakhushti Bagrationi, there is also another mountain of Javakheti.

He writes about the border of Samtskhe: " There are the border of Kartli and the mountains of **Kodiani, Sharvasheti** and the border of Javakheti to the east" (Vakhushti 1973, 668). Sharvasheti mountain is the **same as Javakheti mountain or Javakheti ridge**: "Gokio River joins the water of this Javakheti, it goes through Sharvasheti mountain or Javakheti" (Vakhushti 1973, 66). Another river flows

2 In Russian: Мокрые Горы – wet mountains (Trans./ED.)

3 Kartli, a historical region of Georgia, neighboring Meskhети (including, historical part of Meskhети - Javakheti) (Trans./ED.).

from the Sharvasheti mountain: "Azavreti ravine joins to this water, Kachio, above Baraleti, coming from the Sharvasheti mountain" (Vakhushti 1973, 670).

Sharvasheti mountain or mountains play an important role in determining the borders of Javakheti. "The northern border of Javakheti passed through Sharvasheti mountain. This is the highest part of the Trialeti ridge, where Saqvelo, Qaraqacia (Black Mountain - M.B.), Tskhenistsqaro, Sanislao, and other peaks are located. Now this part is called Tsikhisjvari or Bakuriani mountains" (Kharadze 2000, 13).

The names of the mountains can be changed according to the preserved memory of the population, which is greatly influenced by historical cataclysms, migrations, and administrative changes. D. Berdzenishvili states "Tori borders with **Kodiani mountain, Chobistavi, Sanislo mountain, Chareli mountain, Tskhratsqaro, Saqvelo, Kenchiqari and Kvajvari mountains from the south**, which are historically referred as **Sharvasheti and Tori mountains**" in its physical and economic-geographic description of Tori, the historical province of Georgia (Berdzenishvili 1985, 7). D. Berdzenishvili defines Sharvasheti ridge (the same as Sharvasheti Mountain. M.B) as the Northern border of Javakheti according to Vakhushti Bagrationi (Berdzenishvili 1985, 70).

Therefore, mainly Ninotsminda municipality, as well as the whole Akhalkalaki municipality and several villages of Aspindza and Borjomi municipalities are included in Javakheti.

Presumably, the ancient ethnographic-dialectic wholeness preserved the stable boundaries of the "countries", which could not be changed by administrative expansion or narrowing over time" (Beridze 2008, 4). The dialect of Javakheti, which has survived in a few villages, certainly does not differ much from the Samtskhe dialect, and very often they are not considered as separate dialects, while Georgian speech is lost in some villages. Migrations of the population also caused such a reduction in the current dialect of Javakheti (Beridze 1988, 9-10).

Significantly, Javakheti had both a **highland and a lowland**. Previously, the highland of Javakheti was mostly without forest, an alpine zone, the Mtkvari valleys of the Javakheti and Artaani had different climates and natural conditions. Fruits were grown there. "Taking this into account, it is understandable the tendency of Javakhi villages to choose a residence on the banks of the ravine, the highland, where the conditions are equally good for the field crop producer, cattle breeder, and gardener farmers. There were all the important points of Javakheti on the ravine highland including economically strong and culturally advanced Kumurdo, Saro, Khizabavra, Kvarsha, Khando, Chunchkha, Prtena, Akhalkalaki, and many others" (Berdzenishvili 1985, 72). It was not a coincidence that during the settlement of Armenian migrants from the Ottoman Empire, Christian Georgians were settled in the villages on the banks of the ravine. This type of settlement led to the joint ownership of the highlands and plains, as, for example, Chachkari was a village on the left bank of Mtkvari, while Gogasheni was its "arable land" on the Javakheti plateau. As a result of later developments Gogasheni turned into a village, and Chachkari became its gardens. Nijgori was also the gardens of Saro, the village on the plateau, which eventually became a village.

It was an old Georgian tradition, which was based on the landscape form and public ownership. Based on historical sources, Javakhishvili states: "According to the characteristics, depending on the shape and location, the country could be a "mountain" and a "plain" (Javakhishvili 1965, 6). Therefore, the valleys of Javakheti Mtkvari and Artaani Mtkvari, or as it is called **Mtkvari** (Mtkvari of Artaani) and the **Tavparavnis Tsqali, Javakhetis Tsqali, Paravnis Tsqali** (Javakheti Mtkvari) were named as a plain, and the plateau or highland was called as a mountain. Fruits were grown on the plain, while wheat was grown in the mountains, similar to cattle breeding. There were even higher mountains, which were summer pasturelands. For example, the population of **Kotelia** used to go to the mountain near **Tabatsquri Lake**. So, if Kotelia, similar to Saro, Gogasheni, Ptena, and Chunchkha was a mountain for the lowland, for the valley where fruit was growing, the Tabatsquri was the mountain for Kotelia, as it was located comparatively higher. It was a form of life characterized by Georgian husbandry leading to the creation of the respective toponymic and geographical terms, such as the village of Chunchkha, which is a village near the edge of cliffs, and the **gardens of Chunchkha** (ჩუნჩხის ბაღები [Chunchkhis Baghebi]); village **Ptena** (Prtena) and **Ptena gardens** (პტენის ბაღები [Ptenis Baghebi]), **Gogasheni** and **Gogasheni gardens** (გოგაშნის ბაღები [Gogashnis Baghebi]), etc. In Javakheti, there is a mountain called „თავკვეთილი“ [Tavk'vetili]/Tavkvetili (“cut-off head”), named after a geographical term. "There could be the mountain without a crest, with a plain on top, then the mountain was called Tavkvetili” (Javakhishvili 1965, 8.). This mountain has a parallel form თავკვეთილა [Tavk'vetila]/Tavkvetila, which indicates that the geographical term has become a toponym by adding ა [a] suffix. There is another term related to division/cutting - განკვეთილი [gankvetili]. "When the river divided the mountain into two parts, it was called განკვეთა [gank'veta] and when it referred to the mountains, they used to say, “მთაა განკვეთილი“ [mtay gank'vetili] (divided mountain) (Javakhishvili 1965, 12). Perhaps this should explain another Tavkvetila, the holy place on the right bank of Mtkvari above Vardzia if the term has no religious meaning. When talking about the borders of Javakheti, we should take into account different periods of history. The importance of the administrative unit, the relation of Javakheti as an ethnic (regional) unit to the state. When the country is united, the division into administrative units is related to the administering of the country, which means tax collection and payment, army recruitment, judicial system, and others, the relations with the regions, as a larger state unit. Such a larger unit was **Meskheti**, including Javakheti as its part, as an administrative and not an ethnic term, covered a vast territory. According to Sh. Lomsadze which reports based on D. Bakradze, "The historical Meskheti included the entire upper part of the Mtkvari basin, with the extensive area of Kola, the entire Chorokhi basin, starting from the Speri region, up to the Adjaristskali Valley, **Javakheti**, Tortum-Ispiri, Baiburti, Chaneti, Taoskari, Oltisi, Bana, Panaskerti, Artanuji, Shavsheti, Achara, Chorokhi, which is also called Klarjeti" (Lomsadze 1975, 257).

The list is extensive and some objects in it are presented from the perspective



of the region, and the province, and some are in the form of a settlement. It also has its explanation, as in many cases the name of the settlement was extended to the entire area and was used to denote this area, for example, **Artaani** is a settlement and Artaani is an administrative unit at the same time. The whole district of **Akhalsikhe** was referred to as **Akhalsikhe** in addition to the city. There was also **Erusheti**, the name of the settlement and the name of the whole district, etc. In this case, Javakheti always meant a region, the land with its center for example **Tsunda or Akhalkalaki** at different times.

It is difficult to determine the exact location of the listed and populated regions, both historically and today, therefore, it is better to refer current situation. The description of Vakhushti Batonishvili is closest to the modern situation, the borders of Javakheti, so we will discuss the borders of Javakheti once again according to Vakhushti Batonishvili.

Vakhushti Batonishvili says, "Mtskhetos gave to Javakhos, his son the west of Paravani and the east of Mtkuri, up to the head Mtkuri, and since that these places were called Javakheti" (Vakhushti 1973, 657).

According to the quote, we can say that Javakheti includes from the Tavparavani Lake to the Mtkvari. The west of the Tavparavani and the east of the Mtkvari is the modern border, and the extension of the borders of Javakheti to the river heads means a certain administrative enhancement of Javakheti because Vakhushti Bagrationi points out there, that "those places include Javakheti, Artaani, Erusheti, Kola and the east of Mtkuri" (Vakhushti 1973, 657). According to the list, separate countries are Javakheti, Artaani, Erusheti, Kola, and so it was. Artaani, which according to historical sources, can be found in the form of Artan and Artahan, today is part of the Turkish state and is called Ardahan, and in Georgian today it is called Ardagan. The latest comes from the Russian transcription of the name. "The root for the name of the geographical place should be Arta, an old Persian word, which is the Indo-European root in general" (Beridze 2008, 264).

In the beginning, Artaani was a part of Javakheti: "At first Javakheti, Artaani, and Kola were one principality, and later two principalities, Tsuni and Artaani were established under the Bagrationi reign" (Vakhushti 1973, 675). Between Artaani and Javakheti there is Erusheti, which could have been part of Javakheti, but it was a separate country: "While Erusheti borders with the Mtkuari from the east and Mount in-between Erusheti and Samtskhe, and the roads through that mountain leading to Samtskhe" (Vakhushti 1973, 673)

According to Vakhushti, and even now, the western border of Javakheti is Mtkvari, and the slopes of Erusheti mountains descend on its left bank Today these are the mountains which include **Niala, Vardzia, Tmogvi, Zedatmogvi, Pia, Gelsunda, Toloshi, Bnela, Atsqvita, Kuntsa, Dadeshi, Erkota, Varneti, Zveli, Chobareti, Orgora, Saqudabeli...**

Thus, the western border of Javakheti is the right bank of Mtkvari and Lake Kartsakhi. The villages listed above are located on the slopes of "Mountin between" i.e. Mount Erusheti. Currently, Erusheti is not perceived as a separate country, because scientists include some of the villages and ruined villages listed



above in Javakheti, in particular, **Vardzia, Niala, Tmogvi, Zedatmogvi, Buzmareti, Vani**, and others, and the rest of the villages in Samtskhe. Regarding the borders of Javakheti, it is interesting to divide these regions of Georgia into **upper and lower parts** (Berdzenishvili 1985, 77-83; Metreveli 2022, 57-61), which is connected with certain difficulties. The division of the territory into **"upper" and "lower"** parts in toponymy is undoubtedly related to geographically higher ("upper") and accordingly lower units. Upper usually meant more mountainous. In addition, the river plays an important role during such division, as the unit at the head, the upper part of the river was named **"ზემო" [Zemo]**(Upper), and the one located relatively lower was called **"ქვემო" [Kvemo]** (Lower). A classic example of such a division is the division of Kartli into three parts: Zemo Kartli or Meskheta is Kartli located at the beginning of the Mtkvari. There is one interesting fact. Since Meskheta was separated from Georgia, Zemo Kartli (Upper Kartli) moved to the lower part and Borjomi valley was called this way. Considering the aforementioned, it is not correct to consider the Niala-Buzmareti as Lower Javakheti. The Niala-Buzmareti does not even oppose (Upper) **"Zemo"** Javakheti neither by river nor by altitude. Moreover, it can be said: that some historical points of the Niala-Buzmareti side use the adjective (Upper) **"Zemo"**. The upper Vardiza is the opposite of the lower Vardiza; the Upper Tmogvi, opposite to the lower Tmogvi; Upper Varneti - Lower Varneti and others. And, if we consider the division of Javakheti into upper and lower parts, only lowland Javakheti will be Lower Javakheti. Plain of Javakheti was the Javakheti of Mtkvari and Javakheti Mtkvari, which contrasted with the mountainous Javakheti in terms of landscape, climate, and agricultural conditions.

Since **Samtskhe-Javakheti** was established as the name of the administrative unit and not **Meskheta-Javakheti**, as it was mostly called before, Meskheta is no longer used, therefore, Samtskhelni (People from Samtskhe) and not Meskhni (people from Meskheta) are established to denote their residents. There is a tendency to restore Meskheta and Meskhni with their historical content, in particular, in general, to name the people from those parties are Samtskhelni, Javakhi, Klarjni, Erushelni, Taoelni, Artaanelni, and others, but this is possible only in the scientific literature because the ethnic and administrative units we are talking about no longer exist in reality because each of them (except Samtskhe and Javakheti) is located on the territory of the neighboring country, Turkey and they have names according to the modern administrative unit.

Adjarians use "Meshkhi" in the ethnic context most frequently, as they are neighbors both historically and today. Therefore, **Meskheta**, which was called Samtskhe in a narrow sense and therefore we had Meskheta-Javakheti, is gradually no longer in use. Meskheta and the listed "countries" ("ქვეყანები" [Kveqanani]) are separate subjects of research. What was the relationship between them in the administrative and ethnic content from the historical perspective?

"The name of Zemo Kartli was divided into three parts, but now the part of Odzrkhe, up to the Mountain of Guria and the Mountain Arsiani, is called Samtskhe, because of Mtskheta and the city of Mtskheta, the first one was called

because of Mtskheta obedience" (Vakhushti 1973, 657).

Vakhushti gave birth to the etymological versions of Samtskhe, that Samtskhe was called because of Mtskheta ("Samtskheto") and due to three castles, "Once Sumbat Bivritian built the castle in Demoti, for three castles of Lomsia, opposite to Odzrakhe, this is Samtsikheta<sup>4</sup>" (Vakhushti 1973, 658).

It is important for us to determine the border between Samtskhe and Javakheti, but it is important just from the historical and geographical point of view, as it does not give any difference for dialectology or speech, especially for such villages of Javakheti as Toki, Vargavi, Khizabavra, Saro, Tmogvi, Khertvisi, they consider themselves as Meskhs, the same as Samtskhean (Samtskhseli), though the term Samtskheli has not been applied by the population and it has only an administrative meaning. This modern trend is influenced by the catastrophic decline of the Georgian population in Javakheti. Unfortunately, the population of the villages of Samtskhe (Meskheta) is going through the same path.

Vakhushti does not connect Samtskhe only with the name of Mtskheta. "During Bagration's reign, all these places and lands were called Meskhni, the same ancient name of Samtskheto, and for short it is called Meskhni" (Vakhushti 1973, 658). Samtskheto is Samtskhe according to Vakhushti (G. Bedoshvili). So Samtskhe and Meskheta are the same in a narrow sense.

When Vakhushti describes according to the valleys, Mtkvari is connected to Kartli. When he describes Samtskhe and the corresponding valleys, he indicates the rivers that come out of the mountains to join the right and left banks of Mtkvari. The rivers of the left bank in the area of Aspindza come from the **mountains of Erusheti**, and the right bank comes from the **Javakheti Mountains**. Such a river is the **Aspindza Khevi** "It comes out of the Kodiani or Javakheti mountain" (Vakhushti 1973, 666). Today it is **Otistsqali**. Aspindza itself, as a settlement, is located in Samtskhe, and Aspindza Khevi or Otistsqali originates from Javakheti. Today, this ravine (water, river) is called Otistsqali because it passes through the village of **Ota** and originates from the vicinity of Ota, but Ota is described in Samtskhe i.e. Meskheta. In the same Ota, according to Vakhushti, and even today, the **Chobareti ravine** is connected to the **Aspindza ravine**, that is, the Otistsqali, which is called the **Jabieti Khevi** (water) today and which also originates from "Javakheti mountain". Thus, Ota, Gharta, and Jabieti (Jaboeti) are in Samtskhe, and the water passing them comes from the mountains of Kodiani or Javakheti.

Regarding the borders of Javakheti, Vakhushti states: "And the western edge of Javakheti was called Mtkuari before, and now it is upper **Nijgori's Khertvisi**, and the small hills passing west to the Tsqarostavi, and the first north border is the small mountain going from the mountain of Kodiani to the mountain of Nuska, and then the lines along to it up to the Mtkvari, and now on this side of the **Kokhta river** on the south in particular to a small mountain **to Nijgori head and up to the Kodiani**" (Vakhushti 1973, 672).

The western border of Javakheti is even more specified in this case. We have

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4 In Georgian: სამცხეთა [Samtsikheta]. In translation "sam" means three, and "tsikheta" is a plural form of "tsikhe" – fortress. (Trans/Ed.)

already talked about the border of Javakheti concerning Erusheti. In this case, we mean clarification, if there is no correction here there should be a comma at Nijgori because Nijgori and Khertvisi are nearby locations. In such a case, it refers to the **Tsqarostavi** area at the Mtkvari headwater, above Nijgori and Khertvisi. Indeed Nijgori and Khertvisi are located on the border of Samtskhe and Javakheti, historically and today. "Now we are starting Javakheti. Where the Javakheti Mtkuari joins the Mtkuari, there is Khertvisi between these two rivers, on the eastern bank of the Mtkuri and to the south of the Javakheti Mtkuri " (Vakhushti, 1973, 669). As we can see, the description of Javakheti starts from Khertvisi, which was previously described in Samtskhe by the scientist. "On the upper side of this ravine, at Khertvisi, joins the Mtkuari, the river of Javakheti" (Vakhushti 1973, 667). **Shulaveris Khevi** is meant by "this ravine", which comes out of the **Erusheti mountain** and must be the **current Sholos Tsqali**, which is called **Anaghura** and joins Mtkvari from the left bank near Toloshi. So for Vakhushti Khertvisi is in Samtskhe and Javakheti as well. This of course is not accidental because it is located along with Nijgori on the border between Samtskhe and Javakheti.

As already mentioned, Vakhushti describes **Gharta, Jabieti, Ota, and Aspinda** in Samtskhe. Nijgori and Khertvisi, on the border of Samtskhe and Javakheti, therefore "the borderline of Samtskhe and Javakheti from Kodiani to Mtkvari can be determined with great accuracy according to Vakhushti. Kodiani belongs to Javakheti, which borders Samtskhe, **Kodiani mountains** are the northwestern border of Javakheti. From here, the border passes **over Ota**, and then the sequence of the border is as follows: **Bokta, Gharta, Shoreti** (Taicha), **Kokhta** (Tamala), **Tamalis Tsqkali** ("Kokhtis Khevi"), right bank of Mtkvari" (ბეგრძე 2008, 5). Kodiani mountains are already called Javakheti mountains, and Shoreti is mentioned **as Shorapani** by Vakhushti (Beridze 2008, 36-37).

A kind of uncertainty that exists between the borderlines of Samtskhe and Javakheti today, as well as between Meskhi and Javakhi is not new. It was like that before, when the residents of Erusheti for example, the residents of Agara, Erkota, Dadeshi, Zveli-Chobareti, for whom Erusheti as an administrative unit no longer existed, and Erusheti as an ethnic term was lost, considered themselves either as Meskhs or Javakhs.

Administrative and ethnic (dialectal) borders between these regions existed for more or less accuracy. "The borders of Samtskhe-Javakheti changed throughout the history of the feudal era and included different areas. Even the border between these two regions was changing and overlapping. This was also because sometimes the borderline went beyond the natural limits and it was difficult to find out where the line passed. Vakhushti Bagrationi who looks at the borders of these parts in detail, sometimes gave it inaccurately; This is especially true during the definition of the border between Samtskhe and Javakheti" (Kharadze 2000, 12-13).

Certain inaccuracies can be related to toponymic changes, for example, some villages are not described by Vakhushti (for example, Jaboeti//Jabieti), but the water from this point is described - Jabietis Khevi, but does not say anything

about Bokta, or calls the river and ravine by a new name, for instance, he refers **Aspindzis Khevi** and we have the **Otis Tsqali** instead, by a new name similar to mentioned Kokhtis Khevi which is the **Tamalis Khevi** now, or instead of Shoreti/Shoroti, Vakhushti Batonishvili names the monastery as **Shorapani**. So, any confusion is linked to the history of geographical names. Otherwise, he described the aforementioned line Kodiani-Kohta-Aspindza (Mtkvari) with absolute accuracy.

In our opinion, one more detail of the western border of Javakheti should be considered. Where is Nijgori located, in Samtskhe or Javakheti?

When describing **the Kokhtis Khevi**, the scientist points out that the second unnamed ravine is attached to the **Kokhtis Khevi**, and the **Kokhta fortress** is located between them. We know for sure that **Kokhtis Khevi** joins the Mtkvari at the Khvilisha near Aspindza, to the east of it, on the way to Akhalkalaki. the **Dadeshis Khevi** joins the river above it but on the left bank of Mtkvari, and there is **Nijgori** above it, and one more ravine is described to the opposite, which means, that Nijgori was located in the same place as it is today. Nijgori is mentioned for the second time, as indicated above when the western border of Javakheti is described - as "Nijgori, above of Khertvisi", where Nijgori is mentioned again because of the western border of Javakheti: "and the first border in the north is the small mountain of Kodiani passing by the small mountain Nuskha and a line along it to Mtkuri. And now the small mountain from this side of Kokhta river, to the south area, till the **head of Nijgori** and Kodiani"(Vakhushti 1973, 762). In the description, "this" means the description from Javakheti, so the east of the Kokhta river (of the ravine, of the same Tamalis Khevi). Nuskha is a "small mountain" between Kodiani and Kokhta, located on the border between Samtskhe and Javakheti. Although it is up to Mtkvari, Vakhushti points to the borderline, but he also specifies that the line passes south to a small mountain till **the head of Nijgori**. So, since the border reaches from Kodiani to Kokhta under the current administration passes the village Tamala and passes from above **St. George Church** to the top of **Khvilisha**, crosses the **Chikhorishis Tsqali**, so that Chikhorishi flows within Samtskhe, passes through deserted village **Khiza** and goes from Saro to Khertvisi, the "head of Nijgori" is the old Javakhetian village **Saro**. Nijgori itself remains in Samtskhe.

**Thus, when determining the borders of Javakheti, it will be most correct, as stated above, to take into account the modern reality, which is why the Tabatsquri and Paravani lakes will fall within their borders, from here on to Mtkvari. The rest will follow the borderline between Turkey and Armenia.**

### **Mythological Hero and "Amirani Gora"**

The epic of Amirani was the most widespread heroic poetries in Georgia. The main character of the story is Amiran, the onomastics are interested in it from the perspective of a mythonym.

Amirani, as the main character of a popular myth, was distinguished due to

the age of the myth, its prevalence, and the abundance of the versions in different parts of Georgia.

It is accidental that Amirani is one of the most common non-Christian names among Georgians. The surname Amiranashvili comes from this name.

There are two **Amiranis Goras (Amirani hills)** in Samtskhe-Javakheti, one is in Akhaltsikhe, and another is in Akhalkalaki. Akhalkalaki Amiranis Gora is traditional, and it is said about Akhaltsikhe one, that "Akhaltsikhe Amiranis Gora, which was discovered in 1955 during the archaeological excavations in Meskhet-Javakheti is only one of those monuments which was the ancient residence of the people living in this area" (Chubinishvili 1963, 8).

The "discovery" for the Amiranis Gora in Akhaltsikhe is not a quite relevant term, as the hill was always at the place where it is today, to the northeast of the city, at its entrance. The name is not only newly called, but it sounds artificial.

In addition to their names, Amiranis Goras of Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe are united by the fact that they both belong to the III millennium AD and both have the new Turkish name Tavshantapa (Tavshantapa). The hills are called by the latest name not only in the Turkish language. Together with Tavshantapa, which is the translation of Georgian **Kurdghlis Gora/კურდღლის გორა** [K'urdghlis Gora] (Rabbit Hill) Georgian version of the toponym is used as well. The Georgian version is given preference in Akhaltsikhe, while the Turkish option is popular in Akhalkalaki.

If the **Amiranis Gora** of Akhalkalaki is located on the left bank of Mtkvari of Javakheti, Amiranis Gora of Akhaltsikhe is located on the left bank of river Potskhovi, 2.5 km to the northeast of Akhaltsikhe. The monument is located in the section of the Potskhovi valley where three big valleys of Meskheti are united (Potskhovi, Kvabliani, and Odzhrkhe) to the northwest (Chubinishvili 1963, 15).

The Amiranis Gora of Akhaltsikhe was called **Lomisi** instead of Kurdghlis Gora, which is probably related to the old name of Akhaltsikhe, **Lomsia**. The shrine of Lomisi was on the top of the mountain, where the cross is installed today. Old residents of the area around this hill, the current Sabargo settlement, and the cemetery used to go to the Lomis shrine. According to the saying the population should have mostly disappeared during the capture of Akhaltsikhe in 1828 because they were in the center of the battle. In Meskheti, they still remember that Russian soldiers used the walls of the "mitsuri" houses<sup>5</sup> of the Lomisi settlement during the battle. The people of Arali still remember the blessing of the elderly during scarifying an animal of the "Lomisi grace and power, help..." (Rezo Andghuladze, 60 years old).

As already mentioned, the name of Akhaltsikhe's **Amiranis Gora** is new and is the analog of Akhalkalaki's; it is a replicated name. This transfer is motivated by archaeological interest and by the fact that these hills are similar to each other by shape, it has nothing in common with Amirani, thus we will limit our discussion only to Akhalkalaki.

Javakheti is rich in mountainous landscape. Considering the **Samsari moun-**

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5 mitsuri (Georgian: მიწური) – traditional dwellings with earthen roof.

**tains and the Abuli, Amiranis Gora** looks like a hill, it is a small mountain compared to them. But it is distinguished by its archaeological antiquity. It is characterized by ancient cultural traces of human life.

This hill, as mentioned, has another name, **Tavshan Tapa**, which was confirmed as a toponym in 1898 (Ростомово 1898, 31). There are many places with similar names in southern Georgia. Naturally, such a name could appear at any place with many rabbits. Tavshantapa has Tavshanka as a parallel form.

Adding "-K(a) suffix to the determinant when the modifier is missing is common for the Russian language, but, interestingly, this process is used for the Turkish linguistic fact as a material in Javakheti. We have two **Tavshantapa in Akhalkalaki district, in Akhalkalaki and Gandza**. A parallel form of both is Tavshanka. Adding the suffix is caused by the loss of a modifier (Beridze 1992, 117).

These two names (Amiranis Gora and Tavshantapa - Tavshanka) have no connection with each other. They are formed by different linguistic environments and the national, linguistic history of the environment is visible in them. The durability of the toponym is also significant, but the fixation of the Onyms has great importance. Today, the traditional Georgian name for the community of Javakheti may seem strange and unacceptable to non-Georgians without reasonable proof. Without understanding and considering the ancient name of **Amiranis Gora**, the hill has been named **Tavshantapa**, and eventually, a parallel Russian form, **Tavshanka**, was created. If there was any linkage, the Russian version would have used the Georgian version rather than the Turkish one. If it were not for fixing the Georgian name, it would have been lost similar to many other things in Javakheti.

Turkish and Russian names are etymologically transparent. As for Georgian, we could think that it is linked to someone with the name of Amirani, similar to **Gogia Castle, Petre Castle**, and others, but, it is a mythonym, in this case, there is a place named after the Georgian mythological hero **Amiran**.

**Amiranis Gora** of Javakheti was first recorded by Vakhushti Batonishvili in the 18th century, although nothing was said about the relationship then:

Akhalkalaki "was a closed city with a strong fortress, but it was destroyed many times. However, was rebuilt by the bey of Shavsheti from Kartli. There is the **Amiranis Gora** above Akhalkalaki, on the south bank of the Mtkuari. There is the bridge over the river Mtkuari" ( Vaktushti 1973, 671).

Iv. Gvaramadze (Vinme Meskhi) mentions the idol of Amirani next to **Ar-mazi, Zadeni**, and **Apoloni**. According to him, **Amirani** is the same as Samirom. **"Amiran** (Samirom) is served on the **hill of Akhalkalaki**. Even today, it is called Amiranis Gora, the rock, Balavari is the remnant of it... As for the fairy tale, Amirani and the northerners made a deal and shot from the reed field (Shabonibeli) mountain. **Amiran's** sling was cut off, so he fell in the Photoros of Vale while northerners threw farther, in Chikheli (Gvaramadze 1982, 116-117).

The competition between epic heroes is usual, though Iv. Gvaramadze mentions the **Amiranis Gora**, he also says that there was some "Balavari" (foundation) to prove the traces of Amirani's idol, but the environment is inconsistent and I



think, it is inappropriate to call the **Vale Photoros and Shabonibeli** (probably Shabanebeli - M.B) as a place of competition.

The fact that the idol of Amirani referred by Iv. Gvaramadze and the mythological Amirani are the same as proved by another piece in the "Georgian Chronicles", where the author has recorded one of the oldest versions of Amirani's epic: "Amirani and his boys went hunting,

A deer rose from the mountain, its horns were gold.

Amirani hit the pole, split its shoulders,

He ran away and was chased, the trace of him was not completely lost.

They overthrew nine mountains, the tenth belongs to Assuri,

They found one tower in the field, its top reached the sky,

They looked around and found his locked door.

Amiran kicked and broke the door" ... (Gvaramadze 1982, 47-48)

(„სანადიროდ გაემართნენ ამირან და ყმანი მისნი,

მთას ირემი წამოუხდათ, ოქრო იყო რქანი მისნი,

ამირანმან ბოძალი ჰკრა, გაიჩეხა მხარნი მისი,

გაექცა და დაედევნენ, სრულ არ გაწყდა კვალი მისი,

ცხრა მთა გადაარბევინეს, მეათე არს ასურისი,

მინდორს ერთი კოშკი ჰპოვეს, ცას სწვდებოდა წვერი მისი,

გარ-მოუარეს, უპოვნეს, დაკლიტული კარი მისი,

ამირანმა წიხლი დაჰკრა, შეანტვრია კარი ისი“) ... (Gvaramadze 1982, 47-48)

The tower reaching to the sky, according to the author, is the Tower of Babel, Amirani is Samiromi, who was exchanged into **Amira** by the Muslim owners (Gvaramadze 1982, 47)

It is obvious that, according to the researcher the period of Amirani is related to Babylonage, Iv. Gvaramadze explains: "In the folk poem, it is seen that a deer leads them as a sign of fortune for hunting and conquest of the country, having the meaning of a cow, it crosses 9 mountains, faces the tower reaching to the sky (Babylon), here he defeats giant and stays there with victory, like at other places. (Gvaramadze 1982, 109).

It is unacceptable to identify Amirani with Samiromi, because Amirani's name and deity are associated with Mithra, and Samiromi is the opposite, evil deity of Mithra, which excludes their identity. Akhalkalaki's Amiranis Gora was connected to Amirani's epic in 1898 too by Iv. Rostomashvili and he also referred to as one of the oldest Javakhetian versions of this legend (Rostomov 1898, 32).

We will quote the Javakhetian version of Amirani's legend, in which the motivation for naming of **Amiranis Gora** is visible: "Amirani was a great hero. Amiran was baptized by Christ. Then he became so bold that even fought with his godfather, and the godfather tied him to the hill and now he is chained there. He has a dog, which is licking and licking the chain and when it is time to break it, blacksmiths come and thicken it again.

Once, a man from Kotelia took blacksmiths to release him, but there was a rule, they should not look back or talk to anyone on the way.

The door of **Amiranis Gora** is opened on Thursday, and that day the wife

made the man angry, asking him, "What do you want, a man, where are you going?", the man was forced to talk to his wife, and when he reached to the Amirani Gora, they found the door closed.

Here, near Akhalkalaki, it is called the **Amirani's Gora**, and Aminari is trapped there. In such a manner, the man and blacksmiths were seduced by his wife, and after that **Amirani's Gora** has been closed" (Gigineishvili 1961, 337).

According to other versions, "Amirani's cave opens once in seven years, and a person who witnesses it can see the chained hero.

One of these openings was witnessed by an unknown hunter. The hunter must take the central fire pendant (chain) from his house according to the instructions of Amirani. Amirani must bring a sword with the help of the chain, which he can not reach to cut the shackles. The hunter must pick up this hanger quietly, without saying anything, without answering anyone.

But the hunter cannot keep his vow of silence. The impatient wife misled her husband who is going to rescue Amirani. The hunter who could not keep his oath will no longer be able to find the rock, and the source to release Amirani will be lost" ( Kiknadze, 2023, 20).

According to one version of Amirani's story, the hill is standing above Amirani, which is presented alive in people's perception.

Amirani „once went to the hill:

- Hill, you are a hill, I can not fight with you, you, hill, how did you give me such strength?

The hill opened, Amirani entered, walked and saw that there was a cave inside and blacksmiths were forging weapons" (Zedginidze1969, 157).

On this hill, the blacksmiths chained Amirani, later even the hunter could not save him: "Even today, they say that Amirani's Gora is standing above Amirani, the hill, which is in Akhalkalaki..." (Zedginidze1969, 155).

Other geographical points of Javakheti were not unfamiliar to the creators of Amirani's legend: "Aminari's military encampments on the **Tavparavani lake and Abuli mountain**" ( Zedginidze 1969, 154).

It is not disputed that Aminari is Amirani and is derived by metathesis. The speaker mentions blacksmiths in one case. The blacksmiths go and "thicken it up again", then introduce the Turkish word "damirchi" which also means blacksmith.

We have included this extensive extract to show that it was named after a mythological hero. In the psychology of the Javakhetian man, the Caucasus was very general and distant mountains to create the environment and place of life of the mythological hero. As it was said, the hill is not distinguished by its size either. If we trace analogies, assuming that Amirani is attached to the Caucasus mountain, which other mountain should have been taken as **Amirani's hill** or **mountain, Abuli, Godori, Tavkvetili**, or others, why did this hill at the head of Akhalkalaki become the object of myth?

**Amirani's Gora** is no exception. Different regions of Georgia have their own story about Amirani. For example: Tushetians and Kakhetians call the place of Amirani's chain **Mount Amirani** (M. Chikovani), and according to M. Chikovani



near the Mqinvartsveri in Betlemi, there is **Amiran's hut**. Elsewhere Amirani was chained to the Saqorne mountain (Chikovani 1963, 42). "In Lashkheti, they show a huge rock - **Chitkharo**, which is located between **Ambrolauri and Lashkheti**. They say that Amirani is tied to this rock (Oniani 1969, 152).

Thus, Amirani's Gora of Javakheti is undoubtedly connected with the myth of Amiran. When was the legend about Amiran created?

The story of Amiran reflects the ancient period of our history. It is "The epics of the age of metal production", where the use of fire by people for production purposes is poetically depicted" (Chubinashvili 1963, 13).

The influence of Amirani's epic is so powerful that it is impossible to embrace archeology similar to literature and folklore. Indeed, Amirani's story leads to the monuments that date back to three thousand years before our era, like the Mtskheta bronze belt, Trialeti silver cup, Kazbegi's treasure, and others (Myths of the Peoples of the World 1998, 13).

Is the mythonym Amiran a name that was created along with the creation of a myth? **Iv. Javakhishvili** addressed this issue especially. According to him since the original names of almost all actors in the story have been changed and distorted, "maybe the name of the chained hero was not Amiran before, but something completely different?" (Javakhishvili 1970, 198). Iv. Javakhishvili does not consider Iranian **Ahrimin** as a possible former name of a hero. According to him, it is possible that **Amihrani, Mihrani**, which may come from **Mithra**, was the previous name of Amirani (Javakhishvili 1970, 199). **Aram-Khutu** confirmed in Samegrelo could have been the previous name of Amirani as well (Javakhishvili 1970, 199).

**Sergi Makalathia** had special work on the cult of Mithras in Georgia. The cult of Mithras was not unfamiliar to Georgia, especially since "Mithraism was the last and strongest word of pagan teachings; The researchers unanimously assure us that if Christianity had not been introduced to the pagan world, mankind would believe in **Mithras**" (Makalathia 1973, 3). The version of Iv. Javakhishvili's **relationship with Mithra and Amiran** deities is further strengthened by S. Makalathia and he proves Mithra-Amirani and St. George's common origin. Thus, Amiran as a mythonym, came to us as Amiran and as a deity - in the form of St. George. The versions of the **Amirani/Mithras** are confirmed in our history in the form of **Mihran, Mirian, and Mher** in Armenian (Iv. Javakhishvili. Makalathia), **Mithra** of the Georgian mythological pantheon will be added to them (Makalathia 1973, 19), as well as Mihr-dat, Mihr, and "**Mihrakani**", the month of Mithra, Mihri", the name of the month (P. Ingoroqva) (Makalathia 1973, 18).

The important thing is that Amiran's former name is only a phonetic alternative and not another word with a different meaning.

The **Amirani's Gora** in Javakheti is also important, as the mythonym "Amiran" is documented in 18th-century toponymy and the name continuously existed since that time, while the earliest Georgian recording of the Amiran's adventure in Georgian reality was made in "the Amiran-Darejanian" by the writer **Mose Khoneli** in the 12th century (M. Chikovani), although this is a reworked in the literature and is a different version.

As for the Greek-Caucasian stories like Amiran, they have a much longer history.

"It is known that the legends of the Greeks and Georgians about the chained hero refer to the Caucasus mountain as the place of punishment and chaining. Such a legend has been tracked by Greek authors since the 5<sup>th</sup> century and they point to the greater ridge of the Caucasus as the place where the hero was chained (M. Javakhishvili).

According to Sh Nutsubidze, the poet **Apollonius of Rhodes** of the 3rd century AD points out that the traveler who came from Greece had been already aware of **Amiran** together with **Prometheus** and read the name of Amiran in the mountain **of Amaranth** (Chubinashvili 1963, 11).

Long before **Sh. Nutsubidze**, in 1849, Sulkhan Baratashvili connected Amaranth with Amirani mountain in an article published in the newspaper "Kavkaz" (Chikovani 1963, 43).

A story similar to the story of Amiran was told by the 8th-century Armenian historian **M. Khorenel**, according to which, the Armenian king Artavaz, instead of Amiran, is chained to the Masis (Ararat) mountain (Iv. Javakhishvili), but it does not apply to our mythonym because both the elements of the story and the name are different.

There are many more opinions expressed in Georgian Amiranology regarding the Amiran's legend in other countries. The difficulty of researching lies in the connection of the plot with the Greek world, and associating the name with the Persian one raises certain question marks. It seems that this story was not unknown to the Persians either. "In Georgia, some scientists linked it to the Greek legends, others with the Persian one, and some others sought the Georgian origin. Comparative study has turned the issue in a completely different way. The whole series of "spread fables" were found, which are spread all over the country, and it is difficult to say for sure whether such similarity was created **independently**, or if there was some proto-homeland, where the fable regarding the movement of people was also created" (Kotetishvili 1967, 336-337).

**Amiranis Gora** of Javakheti is associated with such antiquities, therefore, maps and official documents should use only Amiranis Gora and not Tavshantapa or Tavshanka as the name of the hill.

## **The Name of the Hero of the Azerbaijanian Epic in Georgian Toponymy**

Two mountains are known by the name of **Koroghli** in Samtskhe-Javakheti, one is in Ninotsminda Municipality, and another is in Aspindza Municipality. The name is related to the Azerbaijanian epic. "The homeland of the Korogli epic is Azerbaijan, where its creation was determined by the intense social and political situation of the 16th - 18th centuries. It came from the peoples of the South Caucasus and Central Asia from Azerbaijan, and up to twelve national versions of the epic were formed from the early 17th century to the mid-19th century" (Chlaidze 1978, 5).

The epic of Koroghli was spread not only among the Turkish-speaking pop-

ulation in Samtskhe-Javakheti but also among Georgians. Unlike Amiran's epic, it was even sung. It was created as a poem, which is why this monument of the heroic epic enjoyed special popularity among ashughs. Ashugh poetry was a necessary attribute of the life of Samtskhe-Javakheti in the 19th - 20th centuries. In addition to the specially arranged ashugh competitions, when the song was performed with the accompaniment of saz, it was sung at weddings and parties. The Georgian epic of Koroghli is not only the result of good neighborly relations: "That the violence of the Kizilbash tribes led to the name of Koroghli, can be seen even from the fact that the **"Shukura Castle"** of Kvemo Kartli, which was called **Agarata Castle** in olden times, where King Tamar died, and which in the 15th century was called **"Kozhori Castle"**, was renamed as **"Koroghli"**. This form is found in the news printed on the pages of the 19th century's Tbilisi press regarding the epic of Koroghli and the identity of its hero" (Chlaidze1978, 25-26).

The popularity of the epic is echoed by I. Alkhazishvili the place of the trip to Javakheti in 1897 when the hero of the epic is mentioned: "The fiery rays of the summer sun warmed our hearts and made us want to travel." "Lowland in winter, a mountain in summer". We happily obeyed this natural law and went from the lowland to the mountain, to the mountain that sleeps for nine months a year and is alive for three months. **People's hero Koroghli** sings to the mountains of Trialeti:

„Decorated as a bride for three months,  
nine months snow-covered mountains“ (Alkhazishvili1978, 17).

„სამ თვეს პატარძლად მორთულო,  
მთაწო ცხრა თვეს დათოვლილო“ (ალხაზიშვილი 1978, 17).

From the example of **Amiran**, it is clear that the mountain is named after the hero of the epic. Various places in the story of the epic were connected with one or another mountain. For example, there is a horse of the hero tied on **Koroghli mountain** of Aspindza municipality, which is as strong as its owner. It is called **the Koroghli Mountain** (ქოროღლის მთა [Koroghli's Mta]) in Apindza, and only **Koroghli** (ქოროღლი [Koroghli]) in Ninotsminda. It is expected that the determinant will be lost in the first case as well. In another case, when the name of the epic hero was given to a mountain (Amiranis Gora), neither Georgian nor a foreign linguistic environment preserved it as a standalone determiner. Therefore, the hill cannot be called solely Amirani. It is conceivable that in the case of Koroghli, the fact of the determinant loss can be explained by Turkish specifics itself. The word Oghli (son) is sufficient for naming because it stands for the modified. We have similar examples, but no longer related to the epic, in the toponymy of Meskheti, such as **Moidoghli** - deserted village in Aspindza district, **Muradoghli** - forest in Tsqaltbila, **Selimoghli** - cornfield in Skhvilisi, **Muradoghli** - sowing in Tsqruti, **Chakhalogli** – cornfield in Sadzeli. "Oghli" does not form a surname with names, it has the meaning of a son, like Koroghli itself is not a surname, it means the son of a blind man.

Koroghli mountain (Koroghli) has another name in Ninotsminda municipality - Shaori, which, we think, is an older and true name of the mountain, so the latter should remain on maps and official documents.

## For the History and Etymology of Paravani and Tavaparavani (Spelling of the Village, Lake, and River Names)

On the side of the road leading from Ninotsminda to the Trialeti, there is **the Paravani**, the largest lake of Javakheti. Vakhushti mainly calls it **Panavari**, he mentions it as **Paravani** twice and describes it in Kartli: "And the Lake Panavari is large and full of fish, but not tasty, because in summer there are many herds from Kartli and Kakheti, and their manure washes into the lake with the melted snow, and they say that it is tasteless because of it. Here is a spring, and its water aids digestion for those who have eaten well or are filling full, similar to how fire melts fat" (Vakhushti 1973, 320). The water still runs in the village of **Tavparavani**.

Summer grazing of sheep and cows from Kartli and Kakheti around the Paravani Lake and use of this area as a highland pastureland continues till these days, that is why the scientist says that despite the abundance of fish, the fish here was tasteless. Instead, there was a well-known spring that "melts" fulness and helps digestion.

Vakhushti refers to the fact of describing the lake in Kartli when describing the lakes and rivers of Javakheti, the main landmark in this case is the Saghamo lake. " There is the **lake of Panavari** to the south of it (Saghamo lake is assumed - M.B), which we described in Kartli, and the **Mtkuari of Javakheti** flows out of this Panavari, the flowing through **Gasadinari** village"/ „ამის სამჯრიით (იგულისხმება საღამოს ტბა - მ.ბ) არს ტბა ფანავრისა, რომელი აღვწერეთ ქართლსა ზედა და ამ ფანავარს გამოსდის ჯავახეთის მტკუარი, დაბას გასადინარსა“ (Vakhushti 1973, 671). The lake is described in Kartli, but the water flowing from it is the **Mtkvari of Javakheti**.

**Gasadinari**, named by V. Batonishvili no longer exists in the form of a village or deserted village. This toponym is also referred to in the form of **Gasadini**. It is the same name, but the first work is with სა-არ/sa-ar affixes, and the second one is with only სა-/sa- prefix. "This village has not been preserved till now, and there is no mention of it in the defter" (Jikia 1958, 344). To mark the same place V. Komptonashvili uses the **Satauri**<sup>6</sup> ( Jikia 1958, 344) while he denotes the water of Paravni as a branch/ტოტი[t'ot'i] of Mtkvari. In this case, it means the opposite of the second (equally) main branch of Mtkvari, the Artaanis Tsqali. These two "branches" are two main tributaries, forming the river of Mtkvari, on a large scale. Unless there is a terminological problem here and "branch" denotes just one of the tributaries of Mtkvari.

A geographical environment played an important role in shaping the public and political situation. It had significance in the creation of living and economic conditions. The people lived there where there was water from time immemorial, which is clearly visible in the work of Vakhushti Bagrationi. Settlements are mainly found in the river valleys and confluences, the places where water could be used not only for drinking but also for irrigation.

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6 Gasadinari, Gasadini refers to the river outlet in Georgian, while Satauri denotes river source. (Trans/Ed.)

The situation is different in Javakheti. Administratively, **Paravani** was both in Kartli (Trialeti) and Javakheti (Upper Kartli), because of its physical and geographical location and because of what was pointed out by N. Berdzenishvili: "According to the early sources, Pokani (or Poka), along with other villages situated on the lakeside of Paravani (such as Aspara, Makharoani, Tavparavani...), constituted a distinct district, known as **Panavra district**, separate from Javakheti. This is how Melchizedek Catholicos of Kartli understood it in the 11th century. Similarly, in the 15th century, the compiler of the list of villages of Mtskheta Catholicosate understands it this way." (Berdzenishvili 1964, 99).

D. Berdzenishvili emphasized the special importance of Paravni Lake in this regard: "Due to geomorphological features, individual rivers of the Upper Javakheti do not form administrative-territorial units... therefore, small countries (მცირე ქვეყნები[mtsire kveqnebi])<sup>7</sup> are not separated by valleys here. Instead, large and small lakes form small river basins, separated by mountains from other similar or dry hollows. It is the villages around these lakes that make up the local micro-countries (მიკრო ქვეყნები[mik'ro kveqnebi]). The name of the main central point is transferred to the lake, and from the lake, it extends to the whole district. It was the case of **Paravani, the unit formed from the villages around Lake Paravani**" (Berdzenishvili 1985, 83).

In addition to the lake, **Paravani** is the name of the village at the bank of the lake. The village of Paravani is located on the eastern coast of the lake (see the map attached to the "Guidebook"). It is distinguished from other villages by two preserved churches and a caravanserai which is not fully preserved like all other monuments. The first one which stands on a raised hillock dates back to the 10th century (Guidebook 2000, 12), and the second one belongs to the 13th-14th centuries (Guidebook 2000, 13). The caravanserai, which is preserved only in the form of mortar now, belongs to the same period. Obviously, it was adorned with a cladding stone. The stones would have been used to build houses around it when the population appeared in the 19th century. The abundance of churches is common in Javakheti, especially in the villages around the lakes. Besides the village of Paravani (Tavparavani), there are two churches in the village of Gandza, located between the Paravani Lake and the Saghamo Lake, and there are three churches in the village of Saghamo, suggesting the abundance of the population here at the time, but Paravani (Tavparavani) is distinguished by its caravanserai. This indicates that throughout history like today, the road from Trialeti to Javakheti passed through this village. Travelers spent the night here. There was famous drinking water here, and the village was advanced in many ways. It is possible that because of the healing water and St.Nino's arrival the lake was called a holy lake, as our ancestors called it - "**of the holy lake of Paravani of Georgia**"/ „საქართველოს წმინდა ტბისა ფარავნისა“<sup>8</sup> (Jikia 1958, 344).

7 Here the term „small country“ or „micro country,“ refers to a relatively small, self-sufficient territorial unit within a region. (Trans./Ed.)

8 „სოფ. ფოკა ძევს ქ. ახალქალაქის აღმოსავლეთით 25 ვერსზე მისგან. სამხრეთ კიდეზე, საქართველოს წმინდა ტბისა ფარავნისა და მარცხენა კილით ჯავახეთის მტკვრის სათავისა“.

The naming of the village and the lake in the same way must be caused by different factors. According to historical sources such as the works of Leonti Mroveli, Juansher, Sumbat Davitis Dze, chronicler Beri Egnatashvili, and *the Chronicle of Karli*, the name of the lake is mentioned in the following forms: **Panavari, Panamra, Paravani, Panvari, Paravna**, (see in details: ბერძენი 2008, 2012-2014). The name Tavaravani, as it was spread among the people, is not found in historical sources. Each of the names listed referred to both a lake and a village.

The issue of the lake etymology comes out. Turks have understood this word using the famous Georgian word ფარვანე [**parvane**]/**parvane**, which means moth. It was also translated into German with the same content (ჯიქია 1958, 345). For example, "ფარვანა/parvana - ფარვანისა/parvanisa) (Persian: pervane) a kind of small butterfly of the night: it chases the light and flutters around it" (KEGL 1962, 25). Armenian scientists also link the night butterfly with the etymology of the lake. A. Melikyan has a unique etymology of Parvani and connects its name to Lake Vani or Vani (Kadjoyan 2022, 30). The issue refers to whether the lake was named after the village or the village was named after the lake. As a rule, lakes were also referred to by the name of the village, depending on which village was promoted in the area of the lake. This problem becomes especially important because of the issue of Tavaravani. Why were both the village and the lake named Tavaravani relatively late, though this form was the most widespread as the folk name of the lake and the village? What did the word თავ/**tav**[**tav**] mean, which appeared in front of the historical name? S. Jikia devoted an extensive article to the issues, focusing on the study of the historical sources, and the data of *the Great Deftar of Gurjistan Vilayet* and concluded that Tavaravani should come from **tba** (lake in translation) Paravani or **daba** (settlement in translation) Paravani (Jikia 1958, 345). Along with this, the scientist points out that the most common name of the lake is **Tavparavani** (Jikia 1958, 345). This opinion is shared by other scientists: "Paravani is the most important village around the lake, that's why the lake is called after him - "Lake of Paravani"/"ტბა ფარვანისა"[T'ba Paravnisa], verified by St. Nino's Life and the Chronicle of Sumbat Davitis Dze. Over time, this name transformed into "Tavparavani"/თავფარვანე[Tavparavani] and it was understood in the Georgian poem as "Tav-paravani"/"თავ-ფარვანე"[Tav-Paravani] (Guidebook 2000, 11).

We think that „Tav“ in Tavaravani is a part of the composite and it should not be taken as a result of consideration. On the contrary, -თავი [tavi] (head in translation) must indicate the headship and leadership of the village. As has been mentioned many times, the village of Tavaravani is distinguished by its historical and cultural monuments. At the same time, its uniqueness is indicated by the caravanserai and the water with healing properties. In addition to that we will quote an extract highlighting another argument regarding the village's ownership: "It is important to show the "Great Deftar of Gurjistan Vilayet": the villages

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სოფ. ფოკა და მისი ნაშთი, „მოგზაური“, 1901, № 4; [“Village Poka is located 25 verst east of Akhalkalaki. In the south of Georgian holy Lake Paravani and to left of headquarter of Javakheti Mtkvari”. Village Poka and its ruins, “Mogzauri”, 1901, N4] In Jikia 1958, p. 344. (Trans/Ed.)



around the Paravani Lake are listed as deserted villages in 1695, so there are no more inhabitants here, but it seems that it has not been abandoned long ago, and the priority of the Tavparavani (Paravani), being central, is still felt. This village is used as the main landmark.

...54. Village Poka – near village Paravani...

...56. Village Shaori- near village Paravani...

...57. Village Makharo- near village Paravani...

...58. Village Aspara - near lake Paravani...

One more circumstance, except for Lake Paravani, all other lake-related taxes on fish "are subject to the above-mentioned district (Akshehir district in Akhalkalaki Liva), such as: Qushuri for fish of Saghamo Lake", "Exaction on the Lake Iskundrie fish". On the other hand, about the village of Pravani it is said: "The village of Parvana along with Qushuri of Pravani lake fish": Thus, we think that the village of Paravani is the head of this micro-country, therefore searching for the mythological basis in "Tav" is not relevant. Tavparavani is undoubtedly the name of a place, contrary to the idea that the word "**tav**" may be a sign of an ancient myth and that the word Tavparavani is related to a similar moment when the head of a young man was turned into a sacred event" (Kotetishvili 1961, 334-335).

The names with the "**tav**" Component are found in the toponymy of Meskheti: Tavkalo (village of Kotelia, Nakaloari), **Tavichalebi** (field, village of Erkota), **Tavjvari** (village of Chobareti, deserted village). In all cases, the word **tav** has the meaning of prominent, a leader for the locals (Beridze 2008, 2017). At first glance, we should think that being "**Tav**" should have meant being at the head of the object, in this case, at the head of the lake, then the head of Paravani would be in its northern part. Rustavi can express such a case, where the **tav** component indicates the source<sup>9</sup>. Besides the famous Rustavis of Meskheti and Hereti, we also have Rustavis in the microtoponymy, and it refers to the source, rather than the head village.

We think, that referring to the sources and folk names is crucial. According to sources, we only know the name of the lake, and according to the "Defter" similarly is called the village. Tavparavani as the name of the village, and the lake is met from a relatively later period.

Of course, the name of the lake is related to the villages around it, and often the same lake may be known by a different name to one village and another. However, this is not the only form of nomination. Lakes are named according to watercolor, shape, animals, plants, fish, and many other water-related names. At the same time, we can recall the **Satakhve Lake („the lake of beaver”)** confirmed in *the Life of Serapion Zarzveli*. The lake was named because of the abundance of beavers: " This is a muddy lake, which is called Satakhve, and there are a lot of beavers in it". As S. Jikia points out the Ottomans and Persians already understood the name of the lake as **Parvana**, which means the butterfly of the night, and it was even translated into German directly as the lake of butterfly. "It is clear that

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9 რუ [ru] in Georgian denotes a canal, spring for irrigation; თავო [tavi] means head, source of the waater. (Trans./Ed.)

in Turkish Defer the word "Pervane", as the name of this lake and village echoes the Georgian village, which was pronounced as "**Paravan**", "**Parvana**", „**Paravna**" in Georgian (Jikia 1958, 345). It may not necessarily be without foundation. Here Ovanes Tumanyan's ballad "Parvana" can be mentioned as well. The ballad was written after the poet made a special visit to Akhalkalaki, where he listened to local legends and oral transmissions. According to the ballad, moths, butterflies of fire, are the inhabitants of Paravani, who later acquire wings and become butterflies.

We imagine the relation between the name of the village and the lake as follows: the lake was called Paravani and because of it and because of the village's headship, the village was named "**Tavparavani**". "We think that it is crucial to show the "Tavparavneli Chabuki" in connection with the "tavi"/თავი [tavi] (head). In this case, [under Tavparavani] is definitely meant the village, as the place where the ballad was created is local, and the villages **Tavparavani and Aspana** located on opposite sides of the lake are meant (Beridze 2008, 2016). The name of the lake was transferred to the village and then the name of the village, as in the cases of the names of the other lakes, returned to the lake. That is why we have parallel forms of the name of the village and the lake, first **Paravani**, and then **Tavparavani**.

Here it is necessary to focus on the ballad itself „თავგარუნელი ჭაბუკი“/"Tavparavneli Chabuki" [Tavparavneli Chabuk'i] (The Young Man from Tavparavani), which is an important poetic work. In addition to the main character, a young man whose name and surname we do not know, there are two geographical points: **Tavparavani and Aspana**. Due to the spread of the ballad depending on which part of Georgia it was spread the names of these two toponyms changed. In addition to Tavparavani, there are options: **Mtaparavneli, Taparavneli**, and **Tamarasheni**, and instead of **Aspana** we have **Aspindza, Aspara, Gaspara**, and **Aspara**.

"Tavparavneli Chabuki" is also included in the Armenian folklore. The poem "**Parvana**" by Ovanes Tumaniani was created based on the story of the ballad. The names of the lake and the village are so closely related to the ballad that we considered it necessary to include it in the paper:



A young man from **Tavparavani**  
 loved the woman from **Aspana**,  
**The sea** was ahead to sail,  
 He didn't mind to swim across,  
 A woman kept to light a candle,  
 the candle burning like a pillar,  
 An evil **old woman**  
 wishing to harm him,  
 Kept blowing it,  
 Being against it.  
 While saying to her,  
 He's the one, who loved you before.  
 The man with a steady heartbeat,  
 breaks the waves,  
 With a **millstone**<sup>10</sup> in one hand,  
 Sailing with another.  
 One candle across the **sea**  
 Served as a pillar on a faraway shore.  
 The night fell, deep darkness,  
 Something like a pitch-black,  
 Waves beaten after waves,  
 Aspired to engulf the young man.  
 He lost the ford, it's getting harder,  
 While the maelstrom continues to  
 rage,  
 And broke the dawn, delightful,  
 Like the eyes of allure.  
 The water had claimed the man in  
 darkness,  
 The body tossed upon the **silt**,  
 The red silk shirt,  
 Rippling upon it,  
 A griffon vulture sitting on the  
 corpse,  
 Tears his heart, enjoys life."

(Translation from Georgian: Nino  
 Khazalashvili)

(თავფარავნელი ჭაბუკი  
 ასპანას ქალსა ჰყვარობდა,  
 ზღვა ჰქონდა წინად სავალი,  
 გასვლას შიგ არა ზარობდა,  
 ქალი ანთებდა სანთელსა,  
 სანთელი კელაპტარობდა,  
 ერთი ავსული ბებერი  
 ვაჟისთვის ავსა ლამობდა,  
 სარკმელზე ანთებულ სანთელს  
 აქრობდა, აბეზარობდა.  
 თან ამას ეუბნებოდა,  
 წინადაც ეგა გყვარობდა.  
 ვაჟი მიანგრევს ტალღებსა,  
 გულ-მკერდი არა ჩქამობდა.  
 ცალ ხელით დოლაბი მიაქვს,  
 ცალ ხელით ნიავექარობდა,  
 ზღვის გაღმა ერთი სანთელი,  
 გამოღმა კელაპტარობდა.  
 დამე ჩამოდგა წყვედიადი,  
 უკუნს რამესა ჰგვანობდა,  
 ტალღა ტალღაზე ნაცემი  
 ვაჟის ჩანთქმასა ლამობდა.  
 დაჰკარგა ფონი შემჭირდა,  
 მორევი ბობოქარობდა,  
 გათენდა დილა ლამაზი,  
 კეკლუცის თვალეზს ჰგვანობდა,  
 წყალსა დაეხრჩო ჭაბუკი,  
 ჭოროხზე ეგდო, ქანობდა,  
 წითელი მოვის პერანგი  
 ზევიდან დაჰფარფარობდა,  
 ლეშს დასჯდომოდა ზედ ორბი,  
 გულს უგლეჯავდა, ხარობდა.“)

(Kotetishvili 1961, 29-30)

<sup>10</sup> Presumably under the millstone is meant a wooden buoy resembling a form of a millstone (Trans./Ed.)

The main version of the poem supports the villages across the lake: **Tavparavani and Aspana**. Tavparavani [as a lake name TN] is mentioned in another folk poem: "Our king has won, on the lake of Tavparavani, he killed a bull and deer, a quiver has he on the shoulder"/ „ჩვენს მეფეს გაუმარჯვნია, თავფარავანის ტბაზედა, მოუკლავს ხარი ირემი, საისრე უდევს მხარზედა“ (Kotetishvili 1961, 29). It's not accidental that Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani calls the lake the small sea, while the old Armenian translation of *The Georgian Chronicles* calls Paravani both "the lake" and "the sea" when there is only mentioned a lake in the original transcript (Beridze 2008, 205)

We have no information regarding Tamarasheni, which L. Melikset-Begi links with the name of King Tamar. (Jikia 1958, 348). If we put everything aside, people would not alter the name of Tamar. Nobody would call the fortress **Tamara Fortress** or the bridge **Tamara Bridge**. "When the name of a person was used as the basis for the place name, without a doubt letter ა[a]/a was added. In one case, which is very rare, as a result of the "alteration" of St. Ioseb [Ioseb] (St. Joseph), there is an **Iosepas Eklesia [Iosepas Ek'lesia]** (Iosepa's church) in Tmogvi. However, this does not apply to the names associated with Tamar. Apparently, because they would not dare to" (Beridze 2008, 46). When **Aspinza is used instead of Aspana**, the common origin is probably important, namely the root - **asp[asp']**, which can be the basis for both Aspana and Aspidza. We have Aspara, which is one of the phonetic alternatives, and we also have the surname **Aspanidze**, which is common in Meskheta. The resemblance between these forms may not be solely external. The use of **Gaspara** instead of Aspana should be the result of toponymic illiteracy, although we can talk about a kind of phonetic similarity in this case as well.

Tavparavani appears later as the name of the lake and the village. It is not found either in Vakhushti Batonishvili or before him in Georgian and foreign sources. This is another argument for **tav-** being the first village name and this name was given to the lake and the village relatively late. Nevertheless, the entire history of names is preserved in it. Therefore, we think that we should use both names - **Paravani, Tavparavani, Paravani Lake, and Tavparavani Lake** as parallel forms today.

To consider the practicality of using brief inscriptions for village signs, it is better to write Tavparavani as the name of the village since it will be difficult to put two parallel forms on one signboard.

The main characteristic of a toponym as a place name is its distinctiveness. At different stages of history, society distinguishes some objects from other similar ones and characterizes them according to some features. Samtskhe-Javakheti is a mountainous region. Mountain as a geographical term and public name characterizes each mountain, in that it is a distinctive, special type of land and condition. However, a mountain with a "cut-off" peak has become a toponym for society, as **Tavkvetili [Tavk'vetili]** (cut-off head). A primary function of a toponym is to address. Through it, we find out where the point of this name is located. An object with the same name may exist in different places. While they may have a common origin, they might be distinguished by an additional feature. For example,

there are many **Agaras** in Georgia. We also have several Agaras in Samtskhe-Javakheti. So, to prevent the addressing feature from being unclear, it is indicated that this or that Agara is located in Kartli, Meskheti, etc., or if the region is the same, the municipalities are specified: **Agara of Akhaltsikhe, Agara of Aspindza**. If it is in the same municipality, it can be called **Agara of Niala, Agara of Tmogvi, Agara of Ota, Agara Nunnery**, etc.

Unclearness of the addressing function of the denotation of the mentioned object can be motivated by the modern approach for “shortening” the name, for easy writing, to combine different objects and call them the same name. For example: in Javakheti, in the municipality of Ninotsminda, there is the **Paravani** Lake and the village - **Paravani** which was called Rodionovka after the settlement of the Dukhobors in the middle of the 19th century. Today, Dukhobors no longer live in this village, and in general, by restoring historical names, historical reality is restored. At a certain stage in history, the village was called **Tavparavani**, according to which the famous ballad "**Tavparavneli Chabuki**" (“The young man from Tavparavani”) was created. Paravani, which is mentioned with its phonetic variants throughout the history of Georgia also had the name **Tavparavani Lake**, and the river, which originates from the Paravani Lake, was called **Tavparavnis Tsqali, Javakheti Mtkvari, and others**.

According to the administrative and territorial division of the Soviet period, the village name Rodionovka had written **Paravani** in the brackets. Today, Paravani is also the name of the river that flows out of the Paravani Lake and joins the Mtkvari. Three objects - a lake, a village, and a river are marked by the same name. All these three objects have a connection with each other, both historically and geographically, that's why people conveyed this connection with appropriate names: **Paravani, Tavparavani, and Tavparavani Tsqali**. After the objects were "organized" with road signs and appropriate signboards, the Paravnis Tsqali, which was called **Javakheti Mtkvari** and **Tavparavanis Tsqali**, was also "named" as **Paravani** and the appropriate sign was placed near Khertvisi. This way, the main function of the toponym, the addressing function, in the case of the hydronym, was rejected, even though the signs may have "river", and "village" with the corresponding symbols, but by unifying name, we mislead both the local population and the foreigner who came to explore our country. In 2009 when this signboard was erected, we thought that it was necessary to change the name to the historical name - **Javakheti Mtkvari** (Beridze 2011, 96-99). Considering the current attitude and the fact that the mentioned pattern had a certain influence on the public attitude regarding the river name we think that the river should be called **Tavparavnis Tsqali** out of its many names. It should be considered that today's Armenian population calls the river **Tavparavani, Tavparavanchai, Tavparvana, and Taparvana**, which are phonetic alternatives of Tavparavani in non-Georgian communities. So, by making **Tavparavnis Tqali** the legal name, it will highlight the landmark, the lake called Paravani, the village Tavparavani, and the river originating from the lake. Below, the article, which has not lost its relevance, is published once again with a small abridgment:

## The Mtkvari or The Paravani of Javakheti?

There are names in Meskheta that need special care and attention. Many details of our history, ethnography, lifestyle, language, culture, and folklore are connected with them. There are many such names in our environment. Each of them has its place. Samtskhe-Javakheti has many lakes, rivers, and ravines, but two of them have a special role and history. They are the **Mtkvari** and the **Paravani**. One is the main river of Georgia and the other is the biggest lake in our country. Today, on the way to Vardzia, you will have the feeling of hope that there will be a road to Aspindza and Vardzia! The construction of the road is going at a good pace, therefore, in case of peace, I am sure that we will not lack domestic and foreign guests. Recently, I saw a modern sign near Khertvisi and I was happy. A few years ago, "Khertvisi Castle" had the sign in Georgian and English.

I wrote it by my hand and fixed it. At that time, I longed for a time when all monuments, rivers, and landmarks would have appropriate inscriptions. This is how the past lived in the present. . . And here, I considered the sign by the river in Khertvisi as a fulfillment of my dream. The inscription informs that this river is **Paravani**.

First, I will say a few words about Khertvisi. Currently, the name of the place, **Khertvisi** is preserved in different parts of Georgia. It is one of the historical and ancient lexical units. There was a time when Khertvisi meant an island and a peninsula, as indicated by A. Shanidze. Denoting an island and a peninsula with one word was not characterized only by the ancient Georgians. It happens in many other languages, like Arabic, Greek, or Turkish. In the sense that the Khertvisi peninsula, so as a sign of a place that has a connection with the land and is surrounded by water, it is clearly expressed in our case. Two rivers join Khertvisi and there is a settlement with its citadel on the cape of this confluence. Which rivers join each other in Khertvisi? There is no doubt, that the water coming from Vardzia is the **Mtkvari**. Vakhushti Batonishvili writes about the Mtkvari: "And the rivers Mtkvari and Chorokhi are the biggest ones in the country, because the Samtskhe, Javakheti and Kola-Artaani rivers flow into the Mtkvari. . . And the river Mtkvari flows out of Kola up to the Arsian mountain. . . Then it goes from south to north, up to the confluence of the **Akhaltzikhis Tskali**, then returns to the east and goes from the west to the east up to Chobiskhevi". Mtkvari, as the main river of Georgia, determined many historical facts. Many interesting sources considered the Mtkvari as the main landmark; That is why the border of the historical regions in Georgia either passed through Mtkvari or approached it from different directions. A lot of material can be referred for it, but this time we will refrain. One thing to emphasize is that the Mtkvari is our history, our life. It is impossible to imagine Georgia without the Mother River. In addition, Mtkvari is the largest river in the Caucasus and, naturally, it plays an important role in the history of the neighboring nations. Different people call the Mtkvari by different names. "**Mtkvari**" - this name denotes two rivers in Georgia - Mtkvari of **Javakheti** and Mtkvari or **Artaani Mtkvari**

The Mtkvari of Javakheti is the name of the river that originates from the Paravani Lake, more precisely the Saghamo Lake, and joins the Mtkvari near Khertvisi. Let's refer to Vakhushti Batonishvili again "The Mtkuari of Javakheti flows out of the lake of Paravani and joins the Saghamo lake, it flows out of the Saghamo lake and comes between the east and the south in the middle of the north-west, its length is stretched from the Saghamo lake to Khertvisi and it is close to the deep and rocky canyon". This river is called Mtkvari of Javakheti because it flows through Javakheti, from the east to the northwest. In addition, this river is called **Akhalkalakis Tskali**, because along the entire 81 kilometers length where the river runs, the largest settlement is Akhalkalaki. The Mtkvari of Javakheti has many other names. According to old Russian maps, it is called **Paravani or Paravnis Tskali** because it originates from Lake Paravani. We may find **Akhalkalakichai**, which is the Turkish translation of the Georgian Akhalkalakis Tskali water and a distorted form of "мапараван". Any of the above names can become the general name of the river at different times. For illustration, it is interesting the data of the map published by the leadership of Al. Javakhishvili, where this river is written twice as **Javakheti Mtkvari** from the source to the mouth, and **Paravani, Paravnis Tskali, and Akhalkalakis Tskali** are written once.

Which of the following is the most acceptable and established form? When establishing the names of a hydronym (river, spring, narrow gorge, ravine, lake), it should be taken into account that it can have many names, and there are different "dominant" names at different times. Today, when in addition to the social, economic, and reference conditions, one or another name is established, administrative, political, and ideological factors are of great importance. Khertvisi is a border point between Samtskhe and Javakheti. If we call the Akhalkalaki or Paravani (Tavparavani) Tskali, we will emphasize the relationship of the river with Akhalkalaki and Paravani, which is much less important than Javakheti. If we call it **Mtkvari of Javakheti**, we will also restore the historical name, indicate the border and direction of Javakheti, the name "Mtkvari" itself, which is an ancient hydronomic term and means water, will acquire meaning. The worst option is when we call the river **Paravani**. Mtkvari, rivers in general, form valleys in which people have been living since ancient times. Mtkvari was watering the terraces around it, it was used for drinking. The variety of Mtkvari fish was the basis for the development of farming. These valleys created agricultural systems and micro-states, which often became the basis of ethnic formations. A different situation was created on the Javakheti highland, where micro-countries were formed not by valleys, but by settlements around lakes. **Paravani Lake (Tavparavani)** was located on the border of Trialeti-Javakheti from the beginning. Nevertheless, the lake, due to its size and geographical location, formed the district of Paravani itself. "Due to geomorphological features, individual rivers of Upper Javakheti do not form administrative-territorial units. . . Therefore, small countries here are not separated by "valleys", instead, large and small lakes form basins where small rivers meet, separated by mountains and hills from other similar or dry basins. It is the villages around these lakes that make up the local micro-countries. The

name of the main central point goes to the lake, and from the lake it spreads to the whole district" (D. Berdzenishvili). **Tavparavani** was exceptionally advanced among the villages around the Paravani Lake. "Tavi" in this case, means the head, central, main village. The village got its name from Paravani Lake, which later returned to the lake. That's how we got the name of the lake Tavparavani and a beautiful ballad about **Tavparavaneli** Chabuki. We lose all mentioned when we call Mtkvari of Javakheti as Paravani, as it is already "called" according to the sign. The Paravani is a lake with its own ecology, history, and present. Leonti Mroveli says about Javakheti "And he gave Javakhos from Panavari, up to the head of Mtkuri" and Juansher limits the border of Meskheti "from Paravni and Tasiskari, up to the sea of Speri". We think it should be clear that one of the two Mtkvaris connected to Khertvisi is the **Mtkvari of Javakheti** and not **Paravani**. In modern conditions, when signs are installed, tourist brochures, and district and national, administrative, and territorial guidelines are published, it is not difficult to establish names that accurately reflect the past and present and express national interests.

2009

### **The Names with the Root of „ყულ“/“qul” in Georgia (ყულაღისი/Qulalisi)**

“ყულ”[qul]/”qul” root names are prevalent in Georgia, both independently and as components of complex roots. Let's begin the study with names present in the territory of Zveli village in Aspindza municipality. ყულა//ყულაი [qula//qulai]/**Qula//Qulai** is a part of ნაცხარი [Natsikhri]/ **Natsikhari**<sup>11</sup> located in the northern part of the village. It should have been the wall of the castle, looks at Ghobieti. The term is also applied to the cliff's edge, which is stony, the wall is visible too at the edge. The road descends from Qula to Avaznebi. Next to Qula is **Tsikhistavi**. According to local accounts, "There is a large stone on Qula, where people were taken and strangled". Another explanation suggests that "according to the oral transmissions, there was a gibbet on Qula". Towers, Qula, and Tsikhistavi<sup>12</sup> form a unified system. In the 1990s, Bagrat Zedginidze, then 78 years old, shared the following with the dissertator Maya Ivanidze: "Across the village, there was a fortress resembling a column. If you walked beneath it, you would have seen it, but unfortunately, it has been demolished since then." The place name with the **qul-** root, **Qulebi** is also present in another part of Meskheti as well. A village under this name existed in the 16th century and was documented by the Ottomans. Although the village itself no longer exists today, the ruins of the village remain. During the journey in the Adigeni district in the 1930s, S. Jikia recorded from the local the following description: "We refer to this small stream as **ჭულელა** [Ch'ulela]/ **Chulela**, marking the border between Zanavi and Adigeni. It flows through **ჭულე** [Ch'ule]/**Chule** (in the middle), originating from

11 Natsikhari, in literal translation from Georgian, means "a former fortress". (Trans/Ed.)

12 Tsikhistavi, in literal translation from Georgian, means "head of the fortress". (Trans/Ed.)



**Persati mountain**, passing through ყულები [Qulebi]/Qulebi, Chule.” (Jikia 1958, 108). The extract allows for quite precise identification of the location of Qulebi in the Adigeni district. **Chulela**, a small river originating from the Persati mountains, passes through the first deserted village, Qulebi. It then descends towards ჭულევი [Ch’ulevi]/Chulevi and forms a waterfall near the cells of the monastery. In 1595, Qulebi was inhabited by three households: **Mazana Tsiskarasdze**, his brother **Tandila**, and Tandila's son **Zamuka**, all belonging to the same family (Jikia 1941, 82).

To the northeast of the Akhaltsikhe Fortress lies კოკოლა გორა [K’ok’ola Gora]/Kokola Gora (Kokola hill), where the Church of the Holy Cross is situated. According to Rezo Andghuladze, Kokola Gora was enclosed by the fortress wall of the ყულები [Qulebi]/Qulebi, and locals link the fortress **Qulebi of Akhaltsikhe** with ყურება [qureba]/qureba (watching). As it’s an elevated place that “overlooks the whole area...”

The root „ყულ“/“**Qul** “can be discerned in the village name ყულალისი [Qulalisi]/Qulalisi. This name is given to two villages in the Ninotsminda and Akhaltsikhe municipalities. These villages are not documented in *the Great Deftar of Gurjistan Vilayet*, but such exceptions were made for certain reasons. For example, a well-known village **Satkhe** is not mentioned in the same document as well. The village really existed in today’s Ninotsminda municipality, confirmed by ancient archaeological and cultural monuments, as well as inscriptions on the Satkhe temple (Beridze 2010, 44-62).

In Qulalis, the suffixes -ალ[al]/-al and -ის[is]/is, combined with the root -ყულ[qul]/-qul, are distinguishable, similar to the pattern observed in **Baraleti**, which had a parallel form Baralisi. The function of the **-al** suffix **is** presumed to be an origin-denoting suffix (see, Beridze 2008, 113-118). A suffix, -არ[ar]/ **ar**, identified in **Chobareti**, serves the same function (Beridze 2008, 118). An analysis of Qulalisi, with its (-ar//**-al** suffix origin-denoting suffix and **-is** the suffix for geographical names), suggests that the name belongs to the category of ancient toponyms.

In the territory of Samegrelo in Western Georgia there is the village of ყულევი [Qulevi]/Qulevi. “There are remnants of a medieval fortress. The entire village population resides along a single street that runs parallel to the right bank of the Khobistsqali River, extending from village Qorati to the ruins of the historical fortress” (Tskhadaya 2007, 220). The name “**Qulevi**” has varied across different periods in different sources, appearing as კემხელი [K’emkheli]/**Kemkheli** and რედუტ-კალე [Rudet’-K’ale]/ **Redut-Kale**, as various authors have noted, according to P. Tskhadaia. Archaeologically rich, Qulevi has revealed settlements dating back to the III-IV millennia in its vicinity.

The root “Qul” (ყულ) is also notable in the village name of Western Georgia, ყულიშკარი [Qulishk’ari]/**Qulishkari** occasionally appearing as ყულისკარი [Qulisk’ari]/ **Quliskari**. This village was “one of the powerful icon shrines of the pagan times in Samegrelo” (Tskhadaia 2007, 285). The icon of Qulishkari is a well-

known icon. "There is the village of Quliskari in nine verses from Zugdidi, where the miracle-worker cross, or as the Megrelians call it, the **icon of Qulis-Kari**, is kept. This cross is renowned throughout Samegrelo for its strength and draws lots of devoted worship and offerings. Megrelians hold the icon of the Qulis-kari in high regard and do not consider anything as miraculous as the Qulis-Kari icon". (Takaishvili 1913-1914, 199). As previously mentioned, the root origin is **quli**. "According to the oral transmission, quli refers to the name of the icon. The icon was brought from Svaneti by the Roguans, who sought refuge from Dadashkeli's persecution and rested it in Jegeperdi, leading them to change their surname to Rogava" (Tskhadaia 2007, 285). Thus, "the toponym Qulishkari restores the original toponym – Qul" (Tskhadaia 2007, 286), indicating the existence of a place named Quli or Qula in Svaneti.

In terms of formation, names rooted in "Qul" exhibit various forms: ყულ-ა/ qul-**a** // ყულ-ა-ი/ qul-**a-i** , ყულ-ებ-ი/qul-**eb-i**, ყულ-ევ-ი/ qul-**ev-i**, ყულ-იშ/ qul-**ish** // ყულ-ის/qul-**is** და ყულ-ალ-ის-ი/ qul-**al-is-i** . The **-a** suffix functions as a toponym former. In its parallel form, it is succeeded by the nominative case marker, typical of the Meskhetian dialect, particularly with vowel-based nouns. **Qulebi**, where **-eb** serves as the indicator of the plural, as mentioned previously, refers to a deserted village in the Adigeni district. Similarly, the part of the village and the surrounding area of **Qula** are referred to as **Qulebi** in Zveli. In this context, **Qulebi** encompasses both the field and the wall, i.e. **-eb** indicates a multitude of different objects. The same principle applies to deserted villages, where the starting point is **quli** or **qula** and **kulebi** serves as an indicator of plurality. As illustrated by Zveli's Qula, the denotation itself doesn't need to be plural. The mark of the plural number is represented by **-ev** as well, as seen in the case of **Qulevi**.

Plural-derived toponyms are abundant in the geographical naming of Georgian nomenclature, as noted by A. Shanidze. "If we take a look at the toponymy of Georgia, we can easily see that there are a lot of names that, according to formation, are plural" (Shanidze 1981, 438). Along with many other formation markers, plural form is formed by **-ev** suffix, as Shanidze has found out. He provided an "undeniable" list of **-ev**-suffixed toponyms. The roots of these toponyms are transparent and clear: Vashlevi [Vashlevi], Dzeglevi [Dzeglevi], Boslevi[Boslevi], Mghvimevi[Mghvimevi], Velevi[Velevi], Veltqevi[Velt'yevi], Vakevi[Vak'evi], Kvevi[Kvevi], Ipnevi[Ipnevi], and Tqevi[T'qevi] (Shanidze 1981, 443). To this list, **Qulevi** should be added. Before focusing on the root **-qul**, the **-ev** suffix in Qulevi allows us to identify the **-eb** suffixed forms - **Qulebi**, the plural of Quli in the village of Zveli, and **Qulebi**, the designated village of Adigeni region. The suffixes of **-ish// -is** serve as case marks in Megrelian and Georgian, evident in **Qulishkari** and **Quliskari**. As mentioned earlier, **Qulalisi** also follows this pattern. Additionally, the Turkish-Armenian form of this name, ღულალისი [**Ghulalisi**]/**Ghulalisi** can be found in both verbal and in some non-Georgian written documents.

There are both folk and scientific explanations, as well as etymologies for the listed toponyms. Among these, **Qulevi** and **Qulishkari** have been the subjects of extensive etymological studies in scientific literature. According to folk and



scientific etymology, the **qul** root appears to have a common origin in both **Qulevi** and **Qulishkari**. Regarding Qulevi, N. Khoshtaria notes: "Even in the recent past, Qulevi, as a port on the Black Sea, played an important role in the economic life of this region, and way earlier it was known as a fortress." He also provides the etymology of the name, in the footnote: "Hence its name 'Rudet-Kale'[Rudet'-K'ale] and Megrelian 'Kule'[K'ule]. The word '**Redut**' is French and means a small fortress, and it was used in Russian with the same meaning. 'Kale'[K'ale] and 'Kule'[K'ule] must be Turkish words. The first means a fortress, and the second means a tower; the Georgian 'Qulevi' must be derived from the Megrelian 'Kule' "(Khoshtariya1946, 77). The origin of Redut-Kale is clarified as a "non-Georgian hybrid name" (P. Tskhadaya).

As for Qulevi there are differing opinions. According to N. Khoshtaria, Georgian **Qulevi** is derived from Megrelian **kule**, where Megrelian **kule** means "tower" in Turkish. In fact, Kale in Turkish is the fortress, while **qule** is the tower. "Another opinion links the origin of Qulevi to the Eastern word **qul//qule**, which is affirmed in Turkish and means **slave**. Folk etymology aligns with this notion, suggesting that the Turks had a slave market at the confluence of the Khobistsqali, hence it was named **Kule** " (Tskhadaya 2007, 222). However, it is challenging to attribute the function of "**v**" solely to naming a tower, just as it is difficult to associate the term "slave" (Qule) without any formant. The etymology of **Qulishkari** is also connected to the slave trade. "The toponym Qulishkari restores the original toponym **Qul** . According to folk etymology, quli is considered a Turkish word meaning "**slave**." In the case of **Qulishkari**, it's suggested that it used to be a place for trading by slaves, that's why it was named like it" (Tskhadaya 2007, 286). However, an objection to this etymology arises, asserting that "quli," the first part of the composite, is the original toponym, and the slave trade in **Quli** is excluded. After conducting a historical-etymological review of **Qulevi** or **Qulishkari**, D. Chitanava provides the following assumption on the etymology of **Qulishkari**: "From the data given above, it appeared that 'Quli' is interpreted as a 'slave' (or a low-class peasant - in Balkaria), or even a Turkish fortress ('Kale') and a tower ('Kule'). Of course, we do not deny such an understanding, that the 'Quli' means 'slave' in Turkic-Mongolian languages, and that the name of the 'Qularaghasi'<sup>13</sup> institute in Georgia during Vakhtang VI has the Turkic-Mongolian '**Qul**' beginning. It is quite possible that the harbor 'Qulevi' in Samegrelo got its name from this foreign word, but, in our opinion, the toponym (Qulishkari) that is interesting to us has nothing to do with this understanding" (Chitanava 2002, 436).

In the case of Qulevi, it is important to consider the function of the **ev**-suffix, and why it was called **Qulevi** and not **Qulebi**. Is this suffix a living, functioning element in local Western<sup>14</sup> dialects? If not, according to Akaki Shanidze, it could be one of the old signs of plurality. In light of this, the connection of Qulevi to the meaning of "slave" or "tower" is brought into question. D. Chitanava rightly

13 ყულარღასი [qularaghasi] - Turkish-Persian. qulār āqāsi - chief of Qul's army, the king's guards. (<https://www.nplg.gov.ge/>) (Trans. ED.)

14 West Georgia (Trans./Ed./)

points out that such an official existence of slave markets has not been reflected in Georgian history or geographical nomenclature. When considering the confirmed **Qulebi** in Meskheti, the name of the designated village appears to be old enough, raising doubts about its association with the meaning of "slave" or "tower." As evidenced above, by the late 16th century, three Georgian households were residing there. It is improbable that there was a slave market on the slopes of Persati. The Turkish name for a tower also does not seem to provide a satisfactory explanation, as there are numerous names in the vicinity describing this type of structure as a fortress. If the term were to be translated into Turkish, it would likely involve the Turkish plural suffix instead of the -eb suffix. Regarding the village **Qula** of Zveli, it would be inappropriate to refer to it as **Qulas** with the meaning of a tower, given that there is a location next to **Qula** specifically called კოშკები [**K'oshk'ebi**]/**Koshkebi** ("the towers"). The "**Koshkebi**" and "**Qula**" are interconnected. It is natural for a subject to have different names in different languages, but it is illogical for places situated side by side to have names with the same meaning in different languages.

One clear inference is that the "Qul" root must be of common Georgian origin, as indicated by its geographical distribution. Therefore, D. Chitanava's opinion becomes compelling, suggesting that the place called "Qul" in the Qulishkari community served as the main community gathering place for conversing ("სალაპარაკო" [salaparako]), i.e. discussions ([„სჯას-ბასი“ [sja-baasi]) and judgment („სამსჯავრო“ [samsjavro]), i.e. court ("სასამართლო" [sasamartlo]) (Khoshtaria 2002, 438). In this context, the report of the informant in Zveli about a large stone on Qula where people were taken and strangled, indicating the presence of a gibbet, etc., becomes clear. According to Zvelians Qula served as a court where criminals were judged. This explanation resonates with the explanations provided by D. Chitanava.

### **The Anthroponyms of the Eleventh Century according to the Epigraphy of the Pokani Monastery**

In one of the historically important regions of Georgia, within Ninotsminda municipality in Javakheti, stands the Pokani Church on the shores of Lake Tavparavani. This architectural miracle is adorned with numerous inscriptions, providing insight that "the temple was constructed in the 1030s-40s during the reign of Bagrat IV, under the guidance of John Chrysostom, the Catholicos of Kartli. The architect credited with the design is Mikel, likely the chief architect of Kartli (Guidebook 2000, 14).

Apart from the 11th-century temple constructed during Bagrat IV's reign, there is another church in Poka dating back to the 11th-13th centuries. This church underwent reconstruction by Armenian migrants in the 19th century. Additionally, within the same vicinity, there are remnants of an ancient castle (Guidebook 2000, 15).

The Pokani, a well-known in Georgian history, holds significance for various reasons. The inscriptions found here are particularly intriguing, as they not only provide the names of historical figures but also offer insight into the names and surnames of ordinary individuals. This presents an opportunity to explore the Georgian anthroponymy of that specific period.

In the 16th century, the village of Poka was documented as uninhabited, located in proximity to "the village of Paravani" (Jikia 1941, 234). It appears that this location corresponds to its present-day location. Also, village Saghamo's location references indicate its proximity to both the villages of Poka and **Gandzani** (Jikia 1941, 224).

During the compilation of the "Great Defter of Gurjistan Vilayet" many villages surrounding Tavparavani Lake, including Pokani, were reportedly devoid of inhabitants. This included several well-known villages such as Kuntsala, Tumanani (Dumani), Saghamo, Gandzani, Parvana (Paravani), Shaori, Makharo, Aspara (Aspana), and others.

Historical sources about Pokani were reviewed by S. Jikia, confirming two alternatives of its name, **Poka** (ფოკა) and **Pokani** (ფოკანო) (Jikia 1941, 243-244). According to Jikia's interpretation, "**Poka** is an important location in the history of Georgia that has been reported more than once. Its old Georgian name is **Pokani**, then the -ni ending was shortened and now it is called Poka" (ჯიკია 1941, 344). We have another village name with the plural form of "nar", **Gandzani**.

In the 40s of the 11th century, *the Chronicles of Kartli* refers to Poka in the plural form, "Liparit gathered Kakhetians and came to Pokani ". This suggests that **Pokani** consisted of two villages. It is indicated two **Pokas**, located on the left and right banks of **Paravniskali**, were likely connected by a bridge, similar to the present-day arrangement (cf. Gandzani and two villages, as mentioned in the same source). On the left bank of the Poka there are two ancient churches, one of which bears the name of St. Nino. (Guidebook 2000, 14).

Given that both forms **Poka** and **Pokani** are used in historical sources, it would be more appropriate to use – Nar-tan plural form of the name (**Pokani**). The plural form expresses the presence of two Pokas, and that's why the name is found in the relative rotation in the form Pokata." At present, it is deemed suitable to formalize the **nar** form. Although in relative rotation, the plural sign is replaced by the number and person sign "-t," historically, the form was "**Pokata**." Today, the **nar** should remain as the number sign, and the modern relative rotation sign is attached, resulting in the form "Pokani." If the folk version still retains the Poka variant, then in relative rotation, we will have "Pokis" and not "Pokas." This approach helps preserve the history of the name and the village, indicating that there were two settlements in this place and that it was named based on the Georgian language.

In 1829, Armenian migrants from Artaan settled in the village. After the settlement of Armenians, Poga (ფოგა), the Armenianized form of the name appeared, hence there is Russian "ПОГА" (POGA). Cases of sound sharpening are common in the speech of Javakheti Armenians. For example, the village name

Kulalis is found in oral speech in the form **Ghulalis. Kartsakhi - Gharzakhi, Karzakhi. Kumurdo - Gimbirda, Gumburdo. Kartikami** and others are derived from **Kardigami**. Other distorted forms are indicated in the five-book dictionary of Armenian Toponymy: **Poka, Fogha, Pokat**.

On the Poka church, we have inscriptions from the 11th century, in which we can find old Georgian anthroponomics, including the traditional royal family name **Bagrat**: "Christ, praise Bagrat Curapalate" (by opening of titlo diacritic): **King Bagrat IV** of Georgia (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 117). The Catholicos of Kartli, Ioane Oqropiri (**John Chrysostom**), is mentioned in two inscriptions. In one inscription, he is mentioned only as Oqropiri, when talking "about the craftsman of Catholicos", (opening of titlo diacritic) (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 118), and in the other inscription, we have two names Ioane and Oqropiri. By opening the titlo diacritic, it is read: „Christ, the son, and word of God praise Ioane Oqropiri, the Kartli Catholicos, in both lives, amen" (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 119).

Bionymy is known in Georgian anthroponymy. Ioane, derived from Hebrew, entered Greek and then many languages worldwide, including Georgian. In many texts, we find **Iohane**, also spelled **Ioane, Iovane**, and finally **Ivane** (Chumburidze 2003, 165-166)). In today's Kaurma (კაურმაში), in the historical village of Tontio, "there is a perfectly preserved church in the center, its inscriptions commemorate the most important figures in the history of Georgia, **Melchizedek**, the Catholicos of Kartli, **King George the First**, and Melchizedek's eldest son, **Ioane Oqropiri**, the Catholicos of Kartli" (Guidebook 2000, 35). The inscription in Poka similar to Kaurma dates back to the 11th century.

Interestingly, the inscriptions of Poka and Kaurma coincide in terms of mentioning the same names. In the Kaurma inscriptions, we do not have Ioane-Oqropiri reported together. In one case, Oqropiri, the Catholicos of Kartli, is mentioned (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 128), and in the other, only Ioane, along with his children, is mentioned.

Oqropiri was a common name among ordinary Georgians in Meskheta. For example, in the 16th century, Oqropiri Ivanisdze (son of Ivane), who had a brother, Lazare, lived in the village of Tskise (წყობე) in Samtskhe (Jikia 1941, 60). Grigola Oqropirisdze lived near the church of Zarzma (Jikia 1941, 70). Oqropiri grandson lived in the village of Amkheri. Papa (grandfather) was such a famous man that his grandson was not mentioned by his name (Jikia 1941, 74). Abram Okropirisdze (Jikia 1941, 75), Okropir Devalisdze, village Didi Apieti (Jikia 1941, 86), and others were individuals with the name Okropiri.

"Okropiri," Ioane's second name, originally served as a name for an eloquent person or a good orator, later evolving into an independent name. Its abbreviated forms include **"Okro" and "Okrua,"** from which the surname "Okruashvili" originates. Similarly, from "Okropiri," surnames like **"Okropiridze" and "Okropirashvili"** are derived (Chumburidze 2002, 192). The shortened form "Okro" was widespread in southern Georgia, and the Okro's (Golden) Castle is a famous example. Additionally, **"Okroiani"** is associated with the production of the Arme-

nian surname, with its origin traced back to "Okrodze." The Christian religion did not prohibit the use of dual names; therefore, individuals often retained both the name they received during monkhood and the name from their time of birth. A notable example of this practice is seen in the case of **Sulkhan-Saba** Orbeliani. An important illustration comes from Professor Zurab Chumburidze: "The will of Parkhali Gospel reads at one place "I, the poor **Iovane**, the monk, was honored to rewrite this Gospel", another place reads, "I, **Ivane the monk**, a writer from Shatberdi wrote in Shatberdi" (Chumburidze 2003, 166).

"**Nartavi** "in the old Georgian had the meaning of "mixed," word-by-word mixed (Abuladze 1973, 321) and Nartauli-superposed (Orbeliani 1965, 579). If "Bera" is not indicative of Iovane's birth name, it might be his nickname in Nartauli.

One inscription mentions Bankaslar (Architect) **Michael** of Kartli (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 118). The Hebrew name **Mikael** can be found in ancient Georgian monuments. Mikel, Mikela, and the surnames Mikeladze, Mikadze, and others are derived from it (Chumburidze, 2003, p. 18). From the Christian canonical names, we have **Gabrieli** and Elisabedi at the Poka Cathedral. "Christ, have mercy on **Gabriel and Elisabed**" (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 121).

It is particularly interesting to explore not only religious names but also secular ones. Through this exploration, we gain insights into the forms of Georgian names and surnames from the 11th century.

For example, "**Mtsevari**." "Christ, have mercy on the Mtsevari." This name is also noteworthy because it is without titlo dialectic, and this is natural, as the name is non-canonic and non-popular, and to avoid any misunderstanding, it has been entirely consonantized. Mtsevari is the participle of active mood, which signifies the recipient of the verb "to follow" (it follows him) - m-tsev-ar-i is akin to the verb "to chase - devna - დევნა," making it a chaser, (mdevari - მდევარი) from research - researcher (კვლევისაგან მკვლევარი) and others. According to Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani, Mtsevari is defined as "the dog that chases" „**ძაღლი მიმწევი**“ (Orbeliani 1965, 549). "The dog quick and good breed is Mdevari (chaser)" (Orbeliani 1966, 350). Mtsevari remains a term in contemporary usage. Vocabulary related to animals is often used for forming personal names. **Dzaghlika** (Dzagli - dog) is a common name in the mountains, and **Dzaglia**, **Dzaglalia** is a nickname found in Meskheti, but in the case of Mtsevari it appears to have a different origin. The source is the name of the village Tseva (წევა), located in the western Georgia. The word can be broken down as follows: m-tsev-ar-i, where the affixes m-ar denote the origin. A similar situation arises with the titles of Tbeti bishops. The bishop of Tbeti was called Mtbevari, i.e., Mtbevari indicates the title of Tbeli bishops and means Tbeli, the bishop of Tbeti. Davit Tbeli, a figure from the 10th century, could be referred to as both Tbeli and Mtbevari (Kekelidze 1951, 159). Thus, **Mtsevari** means **Tseveli** one who originated from Tsevi. An example of **-el**-formation for those originating from this village is the surname **Tsevelidze**.

The presence of the "Tsev (წევ) "root is evident in another name, specifically in "**Samtsevriv Jvari**" (the cross of Samtsevri), situated 20 km to the west of Gori.

This 10th-century monument bears an inscription from the same century mentioning the "Juari of Samtsevrissi" (Shoshiashvili 1980, 222). The village retains the name **Samtsevrissi** to this day. This case appears to follow a similar pattern as seen in other formations, such as **Achabeti □ Machabeli □ Samachablo**, and **Tseva □ Mtsevari □ Samtsevrissi**. The use of the Mtsevari form is confirmed by the 10th-century inscription (Beridze 2008, 133).

There is another name that signifies origin. Upon unraveling the titlo diacritic, the inscription reveals the following: "In the name of God, I, a Bavarian, deem myself worthy to be a part of the holy church. I collaborated with him in laying the foundation of this church." (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 118). **Bavreli** appears to be titlo diacritic - associated with allegory; evidently, **Bavra** was a well-known name. During the 1933 expedition to Javakheti, N. Berdzenishvili suggested reading versions of the Bvreli-titlo dialectic "Individuals or Bavreli and Beverli mentioned in the inscription are recognized: he is a craftsman of Catholicos Okropiri and a high official - such craftsmen of the church were called Mtskhetishvili. Beverli may be the name for Mouravi (მორავი) of Catholic villages in this area." (Berdzenishvili 1964, 95). According to the note on the page, N. Berdzenishvili is based on "Amiran-Darejanian" and Bivreli's variant. V. Tsiskarishvili reads the titlo as Bevreli. (Tsiskarishvili 1959, 32)

The authors of the historical architectural Guidebook "Javakheti" (Guidebook 2000, 14) and the epigraphic corpus of Javakheti read it as **Bavareli**. One argument in favor of Bavareli over Bivreli or Bivreli is that this name is a titlo, known to the local environment and community where the temple is built. This distinguishes it from other names like **Momtsulisdze**, **Mtsevari**, and **Baia**, whose names are not titlo. There are two **Bavras** in Javakheti, one in Akhalkalaki and the other in the Aspindza municipality, forming part of the name of the Khizabavra village. Close to Khizabavra lies the deserted village of Khiza and the Khiza church, indicating that there might have been a **Bavra** or that it referred to the **Bavra** of Akhalkalaki. The settlers from Bavra and Khiza likely established the village of Khizabavra. Consequently, Bavra was a Javakhian village, and **Bavreli** was a man from this village, serving as an artisan, founder, and builder of the **Pokani** church.

"Bavra" itself, also used as the name of the Sower, as described in the vicinity of the Khizabavra village during the compilation of the "Great Defter of Gurjistan Vilayet" would undoubtedly be a word with a general meaning." (Jikia 1958, 249).

There is another name presented without titlo in the inscription of the Pokani church: "Christ, have mercy on **Baia**." Baia is found with Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani in several meanings "This is the paper of the date. **Baia** is the black eye, by which it sees, **Baia** is a baby (Orbeliani 1965, 95).

**Baia**, along with its homonyms, is also popular in modern Georgian:

1. „Herb with prickly leaves and yellow-glossy flowers (growing mostly in moist places)";
2. Same as eyeball;
3. Infant on child's language;
4. box-tree;
5. Winged palm leaf;
6. Fern leaf (KEGL 1950, 951).

Each of these terms could serve as a personal name in Georgian anthroponymy. Baia, in particular, holds popularity in the infants' language to denote a baby.



The newborn babies are called by the same content. of used for naming infants. This tradition persists today, where newborns continue to be given names with such content. Consequently, individuals have been historically and continue to be named with this motivation. The surname **Baiadze** has originated from this practice.

It's interesting to note the presence of the name **Khela** in one of the inscriptions of Poka, especially considering the historical context of the 11th century when hand (ხელი) and crazy (კელი) were distinguished. This suggests that the origin of the name Khela might not be directly related to a human body part.

In old Georgian, "kheli" is a crazy that runs unconscious and does not beat itself or others" (Orbeliani 1965, 164). This gives rise to the verbal noun "Gakheleba" (getting mad). Khela (ხელა) was not just a literal nickname; rather, it referred to emotional, active individuals, akin to **გოჯა, გიჟა, ხელა**" (Crazy) From Khela, surnames like Kheladze, Khelaia, Khelashvili could have originated. Given the difficulty in distinguishing sounds like ჯ and ხ at the phonemic level, Khela might have also been named based on a part of the human body, similar to Tavadze (Tavi - head), Chipashvili (chipi - bellybutton), Kuradze (kuri - ear), and others.

There is another significant personal name found among the inscriptions of the Pokani church, also without titlo diacritic, and that is Momtsulisdze: "Christ have mercy on Momtsulisdze." (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 119). First and foremost, it's crucial to note that the historical process of forming surnames ending in "dze" is significant, especially given that this type of development is evident as early as the 11th century. The origin lies in "**Momtsuli**," a personal name that belonged to the father of the individual commemorated on the walls of Pokani. In this context, the use of "dze" indicates that the individual is the **son of Momtsuli**, suggesting that "Momtsulisdze" has evolved into a surname. Although the relative rotation is represented with a consonant rather than without, this pattern is commonplace in Georgian anthroponymy during the Middle Ages.

**Momtsuli** is explained in Iv. Gvaramadze's hand-written dictionary (Gvaramadze 1907, 168), as pusher (**მიმწოლვებელი, მიმწოლველი**).

It represents the active voice form of the verb "to push," akin to the well-known proper name **Gamrekeli**, which eventually transformed into a surname.

In summarizing the names of individuals confirmed by historical inscriptions on the walls of the Pokani church in the 11th century, it becomes evident that these names later served as the basis for surnames. Beyond paleographical analysis, understanding the architectural style, and epigraphy, and determining the construction date of the church are crucial aspects for further analysis, providing insights into their structure and semantics.

The Pokani church features a total of nine personal names, with particular attention given to the Bagrationi family name, Bagrat, mentioned alongside the title of Curapalate. Bagrat IV, the king of united Georgia, is specifically identified in the inscription. In the 11th century, holding the position of Curapalate was ranked as the third-highest in the royal court of Byzantium, following Caesars and Novelissimos. For the Georgian kings, carrying the title of Curapalate signified a form of dependence on the Byzantine emperor (Javakhishvili 2002, 408).

The name Bagrat holds significant prominence in Georgian anthroponymy, being associated with the ancient royal family of Bagrationis.

Historical sources indicate that Georgian personal names were influenced by democratic principles during a certain period, and after the adoption of Christianity, naming practices were shaped by fashion and the historical context. Despite various influences, Christian names, particularly biblical ones, became predominant. The ancient Hebrew name **Gabrieli**, associated with the archangel, is represented in its canonical form in the inscription. This name has given rise to several Georgian versions, including Gabo, Gabi, Gabe, Gabila, and Gabria, among others. Georgian surnames, such as Gabitadze, Gabadze, Gabiashvili, Gabilaia, Gabiani, and many more, have been derived from these roots (Chumburidze 2003, 139). Throughout Georgia's history, there have been numerous church figures named Gabriel, including Gabriel I, who participated in a joint congregation of Georgian-Armenian-Albanians in Dvin in 506 (Javakhishvili 2002, 205).

In 1933, N. Berdzenishvili expressed dissatisfaction with the reading of "Gabrieli" in the report of the expedition, as the syllable after GBR appeared to be cut off (Berdzenishvili 1964, 96). However, almost a century has passed since then, and no alternative reading has been proposed. Therefore, "Gabrieli" should be considered the correct reading. We believe that **Gabrieli** and **Elisabedi**, who are seeking pardon, likely belonged to the same family, given the appropriate social status required to submit such a petition. It is plausible that their family was associated with the clergy.

Among the inscriptions, in addition to Bagrat the Fourth, the highest secular authority, five other secular individuals are represented. Analyzing the names of each of them, we can observe a certain stage in the formation of Georgian surnames. It is known that the presence or absence of a surname indicated a person's social status. According to one of the inscriptions from the 11th century, the last name ending in **-dze** is evident in Javakheti as in the case of **Momtsulisdze**. This form of the Georgian surname is one of the main patterns in the development of Georgian surnames, where **-dze** signifies "son" or "descendant" and is attached to the father's name, such as **Momtsuli**.

Surnames ending in **-el** play a significant role in the Georgian surname system. In this context, the suffix **-el**, known as one of the contributors to Georgian surnames, signifies the individual's origin and is appended to a geographical name, such as **Bavra** in this case, resulting in the surname **Bavreli**.

In addition to the **-el** suffix, there are names of origins created with the **-ar** suffix, as evidenced in historical sources, and these can also be transformed into surnames. For instance, **Odisharia** is an example where the surname-forming ending **-ia** is added to the name following the origin-forming suffix **-ar**. This type of name production is also associated with the **-el** form, as seen in surnames like **Khonelidze**. By removing the **-ar** and **-el** suffixes, geographical names are left, like **Odish** and **Khoni**. It's noteworthy that we have **Tsevi**, confirmed as **Mtsevari** in the 11th-century inscription of Pokani, and the modern surname Tsevelidze formed with the **-ar** suffix.

Today it is impossible existence of a person without a surname. Historically, not everyone possessed a surname, and many were not entitled to one. Vakhushti Batonishvili highlights, "It was the rule that principals had the family name and descendants, to be Georgian and to honor it" (Vakhushti 1973, 17). Principals were granted both honor and a surname by the king, together with the possession of a "castle-city, a fortress, and a valley." Nobleman, the nobility, also surnames, associated with "progeny and fortification in some mountain or valley, and small town" (Vakhushti 1973, 17). Possession of a certain wealth became the basis for having a surname, and individuals with surnames could ascend to the ranks of generals or noblemen. Inscriptions from the 11th-century Pokani temple reveal that **Khelai** and **Baia** are mentioned solely by name, lacking a surname or origin. Despite this, their exceptional contributions during the temple's construction earned them the honor of inscription. Similarly, individuals such as **Gabrieli** and **Elisabedi** lack a family name, title, or specific position.

People could be referred to without a surname, even if they were the bearers of a famous surname, as exemplified by the case of **Bagrati**.

Thus, the anthroponyms confirmed in the epigraphy of two temples in Niotsminda Municipality suggest a predominantly Georgian population from the 11th to the 14th centuries. The motivation and structure behind surname formation have a solid foundation, with names distinguished by democratic nomination. The semantics of names are influenced by epochal signs, encompassing both actual Georgian production and biblical origins.

### **Surnames and Names according to the Epigraphy of the Georgian Monastery of Gandzani**

**Pokani** and **Gandzani** are names of the same destiny in terms of spelling. **Gandza like Poka**, is on both banks of the **Javakheti Mtkvari river** (hence "Pokani" and "Gandzani"). It is quite a big village. Antiquities of Gandza are "**Whale, a fort, two churches made from worked stone and a cemetery**" (Berdzenishvili 1964, 41.) N. Berdzenishvili wrote in the diary of the expedition of 1932.

In 2000, in the historical-architectural Guidebook, the authors indicate the plural number in the name of the village. "Gandza is on the slope on the left bank of **Paravnistskali**. The plural sign "-ni" in the name of the village indicates that there were two villages here (comp. ფოკანი) - the second village would be on the right bank of the Paravnistskali, and the old bridge connecting them has been preserved to this day" (Guidebook 2000, 19). The authors of the Guidebook also indicate that "near the village, in the northwest, there is an ancient monument of megalithic culture, the so-called Whale: Vertically placed, approx. 2m high monolith with the image of fish and birds".

I would like to highlight a few issues from the citation: N. Berdzenishvili in 1932 called the river **Mtkvari of Javakheti**, like Vakhushti Batonishvili "Now we begin with Javakheti and where the **Mtkuari** of **Javakheti** joins the Mtkuari" (Vakhushti 1973, 669). The authors of the Guidebook talk about the same place on the same river that it is **Paravnistskali**. According to some maps, the same river

is called the **Tavparavnis Tskali**. It is also called by the Georgian population of Javakheti. The expedition of June 2023 confirmed that the Armenian population also calls it Tavparavnis Tskali (**Taparavanchai, Taparavan, Taparavani, Taparvana**). The mentioned names are the Armenian phonetic alternatives of Tavparavnis Tskali. Today the river is officially called **Paravani** which is not correct.

"Near the village, to the northwest, there is an ancient monument of the megalithic culture, so-called **whale**: vertically placed, approx. two meters in height, a monolith with the image of a fish and a bird. According to ancient beliefs, it is connected to the cult of water and fertility (phalosis) (Guidebook, 2000, 19). The issue of the plural sign of the village name is important. With the authors of the Guidebook, the ending -ni is represented as a sign of plural number, -n is a sign of plurality, and -i is a sign of nominal case. In this case, we should consider the names of two villages, **Pokani and Gandzani**. Historically these two villages are found together. S. Jikia- writes that in the 16th century, when Javakheti was described by the Ottomans according to the "Great Defter of Gurjistan Vilayet", to specify the location of Gandzani it is said that it is "located near the village of Poka. Both of these villages have survived to our time..." "According to the book, in the name "Gandzani" the last syllable "ni" has been preserved, which was later lost" (Jikia1958, 343) "The maps published by Khutversian and Al. Javakhishvili marks **Gandzani**" (Kharadze 2000, 150). **In Gandzani** the Ottomans keep the plural sign, while Pokani has already removed it. In the case of both villages, the sign indicates the number of villages. Today only one village has reached it. Is **n** necessary when there are no more villages and we have only one village? First of all, it should be noted that the Georgian ending of toponyms in other languages is often omitted due to the specificity of those languages, that the majority of names end in a consonant and the vowel -i is considered a Georgian element. Initially, toponymy is motivated by a certain content during nomination, but after some time it is out of content and it retains the address function, therefore for each toponym, it is necessary to preserve such forms which are related to naming and linguistic affiliation.

The etymology of **Mukhran** in Kartli is related to oak, the abundance of oaks, but today there are no oaks in Mukhrani. The etymology of **Tskhinvali** is connected with **Rtskhila**, but even there they do not remember that Rtskhila was in Tskhinvali. We can find many examples of such types.

The endings of toponyms which perform a grammatical function, have often been removed from the name since the 19th century, as a non-Russian, Georgian element. This applies especially to vowels. The trend is demonstrated by foreign authors as well. We have the most examples of removing the nominative rotation sign, which is usually applied to consonant-based names in the official documents and maps of the time. Not just a declension mark. The vowel **e** is removed from **Akhaltzikhe**, the ending of the Georgian stem a necessary component for the semantics of the stem of the castle. In 1910, comprehensive work „Армения Путевые очерки и этюды. Линчаб переводъ съ Англискаго Елизаветы

Днесунковской. Тифлиς, 1910г.” by Linch was published in Tbilisi. The author tries to follow the "rule" as much as possible and remove the root **e** vowel from Akhaltsikhe but sometimes it is "out of sight" in its full form (Beridze 2008, 23).

Linch also acts the same way when stating **Sapara** and presents it in the form of **Sapar**. By the way, such a tendency which has already become a kind of addiction, continues today. The Facebook administration continues to remove the vowel "e" from **Akhalsikhe**, as well as activating the term **Rabati** instead of **Akhalsikhe Castle**. It turns out that I am from Akhaltsikh, not from Akhaltsikhe, or even from Akhaltsikhe. For Sapara, Akhaltsikhe, Gandzani, Pokani, and many other toponyms, this type of interference leads to the first blurring of the linguistic affiliation, genetics, and therefore history of the names and then erroneous etymologies. The combining names of two or more villages with plural are found elsewhere in Javakheti again. About the Karneti inscription it is said: "From the villages given to Vardan, the inscription also reads **Devani** ("Khvranio and Devani"). Devati is now two deserted villages on both banks of Chobaretis Tskali (meaning Chobareti of Javakheti" – M.B.), on the SO side of Alastan in about 2 km. There is a former church and there is a high stone 1 m from the water bank. **Deva** is mentioned in "Great Defter of Gurjistan Vilayet". In the inscription, the sign of the plural number - "ni" refers to two villages" (Berdzenishvili 1985, 107).

In Gandzani (as well as in Pokani), the n plural sign and - i the mark of the nominative case should be preserved. **Both convey the history of each village's name**. The name of the village was associated with the treasure (gandzi) for the first time by I. Rostomashvili and this should not be accidental, because "Treasure mythology is very rich in Georgia" (Kiknadze 2023, 38). "When the country was in danger, the rulers (kings) would bury the **treasure** in a secret place so that they could take it out on their return and use it to restore the country" (Kiknadze 2023, 38). **Treasure** has been a symbol of wealth and opportunity throughout our history. Without the **treasure**, neither the country nor the king could achieve any success "Afterwards Caesar gave the treasure to Guaram the Great, to bring forth his army and fight against the Persians." (Vakhushti 1973, 120). It was of special importance to hide the treasure in places inaccessible to the enemies. Often, it was a state treasure or the property of some rich feudal. The village of **Tontio** in Javakheti is known, which is connected with the place of the treasure of the kings. Today's **Kaurma** village, whose historical name should have been **Tontio**, was built on the foothills of Tontio Castle and the castle itself, a cyclopean structure, was built on a high mountain in the northwest of the village. The story of the royal treasure is also connected with this mountain. "This mountain must be the one that is mentioned in connection with the hiding of the **royal treasure** when the Arabs entered Georgia in the 7th century. According to the Georgian chronicler, Juansher, **Tontio** is a foreign word and translates as "**the Golden mountain**". The importance of this mountain and castle is also expressed in the fact that the mountain was called "**Gor-Make**" because of the treasure buried here, the name from which the name Kaurma (Gor-Make-Ghaurmeki-Kaurma) is derived (Guidebook 2000, 37). The hiding of the treasure was often connected with the stories about

the hidden caves, which are rich in the whole of Samtskhe-Javakheti. Although these cauldrons were mostly used as charms during "escapades", people associated them with hidden treasure. A wooden pole was often thrown out of the caves. Such caves were called pole caves or pole mines. Many of them reached the end of the 20th century. This pole was used as a people trap to pull people up to the hideout with a rope or a rope ladder. One such cave is called Lazi Maghara or Lazi Cave in Chunchkha Caves. The caves of this type were not called **cave hides** by chance. In this case, it was not only used for "hiding" people. There is still a memory that the Lazi took a great treasure from the caves of Chunchkha based on some hints. Saving is one thing but the discovery of a treasure, even with the unknown keeper who is shrouded in a certain mythological secret is of great importance. The discovery of such a treasure is an honor for only the chosen ones. "One of such chosen persons was the king of the united Georgian country, Parnavaz, who found the treasure in Tbilisi surroundings, and released the country and become a king" (Kiknadze2023, 38). The modern definition of **treasure** sounds like "valuable things; valuable thing, value; wealth, property, treasure" (KEGL 2010, 1071). From the same word, through affixation, are derived words treasure (განბეული) and treasures (განბეულობა) which have the same meaning as a hoard. So if the place was given a name related to the treasure there were quite a lot of motivations and each of them had to be related to keeping and hiding the treasure. To illustrate it a composite made of treasure such as **treasure storage (gandzsatsavi)** - a storehouse of treasure (KEGL 2010, 1072). "Svaneti was the treasure storage of the country"; "In the rock of Khvamli there was the treasure storage of Georgian kings and others" (KEGL 2010, 1072). In Gandzani - a is a suffix that turns the name into a toponym, and -n as it was said, is a sign of the plural number.

The presence of two temples in Gandzani indicates that it was a large and important settlement in its time, in the 14th century. These temples are conventionally called upper and lower churches (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 39-41).

Unfortunately, there is no castle, which was quite well preserved in the first half of the 20th century.

N. Berdzenishvili travels to Javakheti in 1933 and writes in his expedition diary: A farmer comes and asks me in a low voice: "Does the collective farm have the right to demolish the old castle and build a common cowshed with the stones of the castle?" (Berdzenishvili, 1964, page 84). Naturally, the scientist is against the demolition of the monument but he does not state his opinion, because the informant may have been sent and N. Berdzenishvili will face problems himself. It's the era of communists it's the 1930s and everything is expected, but he records what the informant said "Until this year, this castle had stood there... Last year they wanted to demolish it, one teacher was a member of the collective farm here, he did not let them do it"... And he writes about the castle: "I saw Gandza castle in 1927 as well. I looked at it last year when I was out on the road, it was still intact. Now there were almost only ruins in front of me" (Berdzenishvili 1964, 88). Such a fate turned upon many castles in the territory of Ninotsminda.



The churches of Gandzani built at the end of the 13th and the beginning of the 14th century have inscriptions, according to which we understand the names of the Georgians of that time. Both nobles and ordinary Georgians.

On both churches, inscriptions with two capital letters of several lines can be found. They are preserved almost in their original and undamaged form. The same person, **Shalva** is mentioned in three inscriptions, and the fourth inscription contains an adoration (glorifying) text of God-crowned King Giorgi (Silogava 2012, 239). In addition to Shalva and King Giorgi, relatively unknown persons of that time, **Nikolasdze and Kebasdze** are reported.

According to the inscriptions of Gandzan, the issue is whether these names are common father's names or **established surnames**. Established means that surname describes either the actual name or trade of a father, its origin, which is inherited by the descendants. It can be verified by a history document of each surname, which was owned by only highly distinguished family names. Otherwise, the family names which gave the final form of the surname could be considered as a surname. **Kebasdze, Nikolasdze** were formed as surnames without S - or lost in the next period - **Kebadze, Nikoladze**, therefore we can consider the mentioned inscriptions in Javakheti as the origin of these surnames. To find out whether **Nikolasdze and Kebasdze** recorded on the Gandzan temple are surnames, we considered it necessary to define some terms. Any onym or own name is discussed in the field of lexicology, namely onomastics, precisely because of the distinctiveness principle. Among the many branches of onomastics, anthroponymy stands out, that is, a person's name, which can be **the name of a person** and a **surname**. If we distinguish a surname from the name of a person, we can define it as it is also the name of a person but it is a family name. "A type of anthroponym, an official and family name **attached to a personal name**" (Tskhadaia 1988, 33). Still Il. Maisuradze noted that a surname "denotes a person's **secondary additional personal name**, the purpose of which is to single out one specific person from many to name him according to the **sign of descent**, as a representative of any family, household or clan" (Maisuradze 1979, 7-8).

Thus, the personal name is first (if primary), and the surname (family name) is additional, secondary. As P.Tskhadaia indicates, the surname specifies and clarifies the named person (first name – M.B.). Historically, it is secondary and the personal name is primary. The difference between them is socio-functional and structural" (Tskhadaia 1988, 33)

It is logical and well-known that a person could not exist without a name since he recognized himself but there are differences of opinion regarding the origin of the surname both worldwide and in Georgia.

A village could live in such a remote area that a person did not need a surname because only his name or nickname was enough to mark him at the level of relationships that the village needed. Certain social relations created the necessary conditions for forming and assigning a surname.

The surname as an anthroponym can be found in folklore and literary monuments of ancient times. According to the famous myth of **Amiran**, Amiran's sur-

name himself is **Darejanisdze. Badri's** surname was written on the paper that was held by the deceased hero in the castle tower and "Amiran read it his surname was written inside" (Maisuradze 1979, 9). Apart from distinctiveness the surname also had a sacred meaning. One of the variants of folk "The Knight in the Panther's Skin," is indicated by Tariel's surname:

"I asked the surname, when he became more joyful,

He said just the name, Tariel, asked to go"

„გვარი ვკითხე, არ მასწავლა, ნულამც მიეცემა ლბინსა,

სახელი თქვა, ტარიელი გაბრუნდიო, მკადრა პირსა“.

(Maisuradze 1979, 10)

We are used to universal surnames, and passportization which is a necessary condition of modern life. One thing is clear "The name is earlier and the surname appeared relatively late. The surname arose in the heart of an already developed class society and therefore it was also responsible for the expression of social difference: in ancient times high and low ranks, nobles and peasants were distinguished according to surnames." (Chumburidze 2000, 69).

Our historical and hagiographic literature shows that the surname existed in Georgia since ancient times. Of course, the conditions for creating and assigning a surname differed in different eras especially when genealogy and non-genealogy were discussed in the background of serious social controversy. Without special necessity, the state was not even interested in the complete development of society. In this regard, the data of epigraphic monuments seem interesting to us.

Surnames and the existence of surnames follow our entire history, therefore, the presence or absence of a surname should not be considered according to any era but by a specific situation whether a surname is necessary for a person and what determines its fixation.

There is an opinion that "in the Middle Ages, the anthroponymic model of our ancestors was already three levels" (Tskhadaia 2000, 9) and relevant examples are given at the beginning of the 12th century, but this is not a universal fact just as the definitions of surnames are more suitable for the modern situation and all the history It will not fit the period. Why are the persons mentioned in the treasure inscriptions only named by their surnames and we do not know their names, while the the representatives of a high class are presented on the contrary? They only show up by names.

Not everyone has a surname and it is assigned to a certain person. "In Georgian phraseology, the surname is also used to show the dignity of a person and his high morals. Based on this, special words were created, **gvarishvili** and **gvarishviliba (family name and membership of the family)** (Maisuradze 1979, 10). Therefore since the presence of dignified people and people with relatively less status has always been characteristic of the society, we consider the following opinion of I. Maisuradze to be fair: "Based on history sources we can say that famous and distinguished people had the official surnames since ancient times." (Maisuradze 1975, 14). Linguistically the characteristics of a person can be represented differently, by transferring the name of the father name of the trade, origin, physical

abilities, totem, and others to more than one generation. At the time of genealogy when a person was officially presented, even when his merit was recorded for example with an inscription on the construction of a temple, the name was not even needed, and it was used only as a form of domestic use. From the same inscriptions, we can conclude that when the surname is already traditional, and well-known with its long history, its owner has a special position in society, they are referred to by first and last name or only by first name. Just mentioning only the name creates other problems. At the time of its recording, the person is known, but after some time there may be a person of different surnames with the same name which makes it difficult to identify as in the case of Shalva mentioned in the board inscriptions.

In Georgian Nikolozzi (Nikolozzi, Nikolaoz, Nikolaos) has been confirmed since early times and is still widespread today, abbreviated as Nika, Niko Nikola, and the surnames Nikolozishvili, Nikoleishvili are derived from it. (Chumburidze 2003, 190) In the inscriptions of Gandzani, Nikolozzi is confirmed in its folk, abbreviated form - **Nikola**, and it is also used as an eponym as the basis of the surname - **Nikolasdze**. In the first inscription, it is conveyed using titlo, and in the second inscription - without titlo

“Christ the god, glory the treasurer Shalva in both lives, with his sons and brothers. We have constructed this holy church, the sons of **Keba** and the **Nikolasdzes**”. In this inscription, **Nikola** is written by titlo and is without vowels "**Nkkladzeta**", but there can be no doubt about its reading since it is read with vowels from the second place. From the content of the inscription, we understand that **Keba's** son and **Nikolas's** sons are building the church. The forming -dze of the surname is not merged with the root, it refers to a son in general, and the person is marked with the name of the father while the second inscription directly refers to the children of **Nikolas-Nikolasdze**. **Kebadze** no longer participates in the construction of the temple:

„Christ lord, glory, the Mandaturtukhutsesi (the head of guardians), **Shalva with his son and brother**, as they have constructed the second church of **Nikolasdzes**. Support to the slave of Shalva, Manglapa, the god of all. The church of the holy mother”. As we should think about whether the surname forming - Dze is with the root or separately, the fact is that there were two Georgian names in the first half of the 14th century - **Keba and Nikola**. The first direct Georgian noun form is **Keba**, from which the surname, **Kebadze** is derived and the second is a shortened affectionate form of the name Nikolozzi of Greek origin - **Nikola**. We think that this construction inscription indicates that the first church was built by **Kebasdze** and **Nikolasdze**, while the second church was built only by **Nikolasdze** therefore the originator of the surname - Dze is merged with the stem.

Giorgi Bochoridze whose work "Travel to Samtskhe-Javakheti" was published in 1992 gave us a record of surnames according to epigraphic material in the 30s of the 20th century. R. Topchishvili based on this material indicates the existence of Georgian surnames in the ancient period and cites relevant examples

from the mentioned book: "Each inscription which G. Bochoridze narrated is also important as Georgian surnames and names can be found in them. One of the inscriptions reads "Christ lord, forgive Nikolas Orbidze, the chief mason, Amen". Another example of an epigraphic monument: „Ch..(Chronology), I, **Tokhadze** Zaal, constructed... "from the inscription of the church of Zarzma „This Ch. Save God, the chief of the construction, **Khurtsidze**. „Christ, Holy mother of Vardzia, save me, your son, sinful, **Blordzeli** ... From the upper Tmogvi church inception "Christ save the soul of Parsman Eristavt Eristavi, the son of Iovane **Chimchime-li**"... In this case, Eristav-Eristav's name is Parsman, his father's name is Iovane and his surname is Chimchimeli. It is worth noting that all these inscriptions on the churches of Samtskhe are written in capital letters" (Topchishvili 1997, 28). As we can see, the surnames of our ancestors recorded on epigraphic monuments are of great importance in the study of Georgian anthroponymics.

Gandzani inscriptions and the mention of Nikoladze in them should be interesting for researchers of the Nikoladze surname as one of the famous families. This surname was recorded only in the 19th century: "According to the archive data of the 1840s, the **Nikoladze** living in Kutaisi were state nobles, while the inhabitants of various villages of Imereti were peasants" (Topchishvili 2021, 76). The data of Gandzani temples are transferred to the rather distant past of the history of the Nikoladze family name. Of course, an ordinary person could not build two churches.

These two surnames, **Kebadze and Nikoladze** show that in the process of becoming a surname, it is precisely the diminutive-abbreviated forms that become the basis of the nomination and then the surname.

In the history of the Keadze surname, the confirmation of Keadze from Gandza appears to be the oldest and thus it is important.

The name **Manglapa** sounds strange because such a name is not found in historical and other types of sources. From the point of view of anthroponyms research the epigraphic data of Javakheti monuments is particularly interesting in that it allows us to record the typical names of the era.

These names are non-canonical and the engravers of the inscription not infrequently wrote in full without titlo. The above inscription, which is pleading, informs us that **Mangalapa** was a **slave of Shalva**:

„Save god Manglapa, the slave of Shalva". To date the churches of Gandzan, it is the historical persons and their references that are crucial. "King Giorgi, mentioned in the inscription, turns out to be the king Giorgi Brtskinvale, and Shalva is the son of Beka Jakeli. During the construction of the upper church, Shalva was **Mechurchletukhutsesi** (a **state treasurer**) and during the construction of the lower church, he was already the **Mandaturtukhutsesi** (the head of the state security service) by mandate. (Guidebook 2000, 20).

There is another opinion about Shalva Mechurchletukhutsesi and Shalva Mandaturtukhutsesi, which is more valid, that he could be the great figure of the XII-XIII century, Shalva Toreli (Berdzenishvili 1964, 87). Nevertheless, for us as anthroponymy research, it is not crucial.

**Manglapa** is a slave of Shalva Bekasdze, Shalva Mechurchletukhutsesi, the

same as the slave of Shalva Mandaturtukhutsesi. According to us, **a slave** is a person from the lower social class. The term can be found in modern Georgian with several contents: In a slave society, an exploited person who does not have the means of production and who is the property of the slave owner, 2. Deprived of freedom, exploited, disenfranchised, oppressed person, 3. The executor of someone else's will, obedient to someone else, 4. In the ancient Christianity, God-fearing and obedient" (KEGL 1958, 816-817). In ancient Georgian, the word was used with different meanings, like „Kirti“ (კირთი), „Barakieli“ (ბარაკიელი), „krmai“ (კრმაი), „Mrtsemi“ (მრწემი), „Chabuki“ (ჭაბუკი), servant („მსახური“), Menijoge („მენიჯოგე“), Menijore („მენიჯგორე“), Menijogre („მენიჯგორე“) (Abuladze 1973, 271). The listed meanings can be considered synonymous with slavery, although some differences are not only nuances. The meaning of each expresses a socially hierarchical attitude. We refer to the definitions from the "Dictionary of the Old Georgian Language" by I. Abuladze, **Kirti** - slave", child, servant (გვ.199). There is derived word – Kirteba. This stem is used by the Georgian surname **Kirtadze**. The same definition has Barakieli - slave, servant (p. 29). The meaning of **Mrtsemi**, **Mtsemi** is back, enslaved, younger. From the same stem is derived **Umrtemesi** is the youngest, the smallest, the last, the lowest" (p. 426), in which a word with a negative meaning is further strengthened by U-s affixes. The servant has almost the same meaning as today: "slave", "tormentor", "servant", (p.296). It seems that the meaning of the tormentor is different: „servant“, "captain", soldier, executioner, horseman. As for the meaning - **Menijoge**, **Menijogre**, **Menijore**, it is directly related to trade and activity. He was the kind of slave, who was a fighter, a bearer of his master's quiver, a quiver keeper (p.231). The name of one of the Javakheti villages, **Nijgori**, is connected with the same stem. (M.Beridze 2008, 133). A slave could be "tsuli" (წული), "young man" (ჭაბუკი), "woman" (ქალი), "son" (ვაჟი), young person (ცმაწვილი) (p.468).

**Manglapa** is a slave, a servant of Shalva Mechurchletukhutsesi, the same as Mandaturtukhutsesi, **younger** than he, "Mrtsemi", both in age and naturally, in social status. Nevertheless, it is mentioned in the petition along with the owner.

Professor **Valeri Silogava** devoted a special study to "Manglapa". It turned out that it is a Byzantine official term denoting trade (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 242.). "**Manglapas** used to accompany the emperor at the ceremony. They were responsible for opening the personal gates of the palace every morning and closing them in the evening. They were equipped with swords. They are mentioned for the first time in the 9th century" (Silogava 2012, 241). Manglaps performed various tasks at the emperor's court. In this case, it is important for us whether the Manglapa mentioned in the treasure inscription is the name of a person or denotes a position. V. Silogava answers this question that if Manglapa meant the same thing in Georgia as it did in Byzantium, his name should have been present at all (surname or first name) Just like Shalva Mandaturtukhutsesi - Mechurchletukhutsesi, that's why V. Silogava believes that Manglapa is more of a **personal** name than an official term and that it is established as an anthroponym in Georgian reality (Silogava2012, 242). Indeed it is probable that if it had been

an official term we should have had Manglapi, not Manglapa. In the latter, **-a** turns the official term into its name, just like **Begi →Bega→Begashvili, Begadze. so Manglapi→ Manglapa.** Thus, the Gandzan inscriptions show that two of the three mentioned persons are represented by surname and one by name.

The inscriptions of the 13th-14th century churches show one peculiarity of Georgian anthroponymy. It is not limited by canonical and purist motivation. One of the three names is a proper name derived from the Georgian verb stem (Keba), the second is the Greek Nikoloz (Nikola) and the third is **Manglapa**, derived from the Byzantine trade term.

### **For Referring Some Toponyms of Samtskhe-Javakheti**

The administrative and territorial division is the basis of state management. In addition to the address function without which members of society can't communicate with each other, control and bordering its jurisdiction by the state is the basis for the country's economic life. First of all, it is impossible to manage the tax system without a systematically organized administrative and territorial division.

Place names, which are also called geographical names and toponyms, are created by the ethnic group inhabiting the given area or implementing the ideology of another country and creating ideological names. For example, during the period of Russian rule, a communist ideological toponymy was created in Samtskhe-Javakheti: Pilipovka [Pilip'ovk'a], Zhdanovakani[Zhdanovak'ani], Kirovi[K'irovi], and others. The local population tries to give ideological (communist) names their affixes and "make toponym local" this way. In such a way, Kirovakani[K'irovak'ani], Zhdanovakani[Zhdanovak'ani], and others are created. The **-kan** [k'an] suffix, which is of Persian origin, today is perceived as a formant element for Armenianizing of Russian roots, just like a nominative case marker – **i** [i] is perceived as a Georgianizing element among the Armenian, Ossetian, and Russian populations. That is why the relevant population tries to remove it from any consonant-based name. In this manner, the toponyms of Javakheti are written in the "Armenian" form as Korkh [K'orkh], Kartsakh [K'arts'akh], Buzavet [Buzavet]<sup>15</sup>, etc. This issue is especially acute in the anthroponymy, of Armenian surnames. The ending suffix – **ian** [ian] is applied for both, Georgian and Armenian surnames (not only Georgian and Armenian, this is the case with Russian, Italian, French, and other European surnames). The Armenian population is afraid that by adding Georgian nominative case sign Armenians will be turned into Georgian and tries to remove the case mark and leaves the names in the root form.

Russian-language toponymy appears in Samtskhe-Javakheti as early as in the 50s of the 19th century with the settlement of Russian sectarian Dukhobors. Bogdanovka [Bogdanovk'a], Gorelovka[Gorelovk'a], Tambovka[T'ambovk'a] and others comes since then.

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15 The correct forms are Korkhi [K'orkhi], Kartsakhi [K'arts'akhi], Buzaveti [Buzaveti] (Trans./Ed.)



Armenian population appeared in Samtskhe-Javakheti in 1828. They were resettled by Russia from Turkey (Ottoman) to "strengthen" the border of the empire, replacing the Muslim Georgians there. Unlike the Russian sectarians, the Armenians did not create new names, because they were settled administratively. Migrants were distributed according to villages. Without the exact names of the villages, it would be impossible to determine the settled families and distribute the lands accordingly. As for the Russian sectarians, their sectarian ideology required them to be given "own" Russian names, which was taken into account by the Russian authorities at the time. For example, Tavparavani[Tavparavani] was renamed Rodionovka[Rodionovk'a], and in other cases, they were called by names brought from the Volga region.

The names of the present places of Samtskhe-Javakheti have endured for centuries. Changing and distorting them did not occur to the representatives of the great empires, the Ottoman Turkey and Russia. This is evidenced by the Ottoman document of 1595 *The Great Defter of the Gurjistan Vilayet* and Russian registers of the 19th century. As these documents were created to regulate tax and other state attributes, they did not change the traditional Georgian names of the place.

There is another factor that causes place names to be changed and distorted. This is a linguistic factor. Although the Georgian phonetic system is close to the Armenian phonetic system it is much different from Russian and Turkish, so Georgian names are translated into another language using the linguistic (phonetic) resources of the given language. This was associated with certain difficulties but the Turkish used special diacritic marks to convey Georgian names, and the Russians managed to preserve Georgian names with special sound combinations, not transcription. We will repeat again, not for goodwill and to preserve the Georgian toponymy but for pragmatic purposes to impose the tax well and accurately, to count the population that should be taxed, to recruit to the army, and for other purposes, the conquerors kept the Georgian toponymy. Although this method is associated with certain misunderstandings, it is still the most justified method. For example, the village აჲნია[Apnia]/Apnia was changed into Russian Апния [Ap'nia]. That's how it got on the Russian maps. Unfortunately, the Georgian administration translated it into the Georgian maps as აჲნია [Ap'nia]/Apnia which is not correct. So the spelling of each name needs careful scrutiny and study.

Because there is no q (y) sound in Armenian, let's say Qulalisi (ყულალისი[Qulalisi]) became Ghulalisi (ღულალისი), Qaurma (ყაურმა[Qaurma]) became Ghaurma (ღაურმა [Ghaurma]), and so on. It is also due to the language problem that the name of the famous episcopal center Kumurdo (კუმურდო [K'umurdo]) is pronounced as "Gumurdo" ("გუმურდო" [Gumurdo]), "Gumburdo" ("გუმბურდო" [Gumburdo]), "Guburda" ("გუბურდა" [Guburda]) and other forms in the local Armenian speech.

The State Department of Language has represented 265 names of 5 municipalities of the Samtskhe-Javakheti region for clarification and recommendation. The main ones are oikonimy (names of villages), and the centers of municipalities are towns: Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Borjomi, Ninotsminda, Aspindza, and Adigeni.

The list is accompanied by graphs represented by signs other than numbers, namely: conditional hierarchical code, settlement types, Georgian name, English name, and administrative unit. It is necessary to add one more column - the form of the genitive case, because such distorted forms as ვალეს მოსახლეობა [vales mo-sakhleoba] (population of Vale), ვალეს სკოლა/school of Vale, ანდრიაწმინდას [Andriats'mindas] (of Andriatsminda), აგარას [Agaras] (of Agara) and similar, have entered into administrative usage<sup>16</sup>.

Each name has its history. Akhaltsikhes and Akhalkalakis<sup>17</sup> were created in our country after the invasion of Arabs, some in new places, for example: Akhalkalaki, and some in the old ones, like Akhaltsikhe, which was called Lomsia before. Each of them has at least the confirmed century of its creation if it is not the precise year. Akhalkalaki had already existed as a fortress in the 10th century, Akhaltsikhe was mentioned by this name in the 12th-13th centuries. Aspindza was referred to in 888 in historical sources. Borjomi appears in the 19th century as the name of the place where it is now. Before that, it was the name of two small villages located between Akhaltsikhe and Anda-Ghveli. The founding date of Adigeni dates back centuries and needs to be determined. At the end of the 20th century, Ninotsminda was renamed from its former name Bogdanovka, which was named after the Russian Bogdan in the 19th century.

There was an attempt to change the name of Akhalkalaki first from the Ottomans and to call it Akshehir, later as an Armenian Norkaghki, but the historical, geographical, and strategic administrative function of Akhalkalaki did not allow the administration of that time to do it as the attempt was so illogical. There was also an attempt to change the name of Akhaltsikhe. We think that the current government of Georgia should further strengthen the promotion of each municipality center, and their Georgian origin, and should emphasize their historical value. It is also necessary to constantly indicate the resettlement of the current national minority (the term thoughtful consideration and understanding), residing in the mentioned municipality, the long-standing historical and contemporary tolerance of Georgians. So that the Armenians, Russians, Greeks, and other residents of Samtskhe-Javakheti would know who arrived when and, what the Georgian land has bestowed upon whom. For this reason, it is necessary to save, preserve, and maintain historical toponymy at the state level.

Names expressing communist ideology Zhdanov, Kirov, and others should be changed. It is necessary to restore the old names or find new ones that will be acceptable to both the state and the local population.

Regarding the given geographical names, we have some notes-corrections, which we will refer to by numbers:

**1. Abastumani (აბასთუმანი [Abastumani]).** There are two Abastumanis in the municipality of Adigeni, Abastumani village, and Abastumani Resort next to

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16 In Georgian, the correct form of genitive formation would be Valis instead of Vales; Andriatsminda, instead of Andriatsmindas; Agaris, instead of Agaras

17 In literal translation from Georgian Akhaltsikhe means new castle, and Akhalkalaki – new city (Trans./Ed.)

each other. The history of the resort is known. Today's Abastuman resort (see road sign), which is included in the list and has the status of a daba (small urban settlement), is located on the place of historical Otskhe. Its establishment (moving the name of the village) is connected with the Russian royal family of the Romanovs. This is an interesting fact itself but the presence of two Abastumani next to each other makes certain confusion. The etymology of Abastumni (აბასაანთ უბანი [Abasaant Ubani] – district of Abasaans) is known. Today, when the contact with Turkey was renewed, the name content in Turkish has an unpleasant etymology.

It would be good to return the resort (urban settlement -daba) to its historical name, Otskhe. Sergi Jikia has studied the issue in detail. Turks have described not only the Otskhe Fortress itself (today it is called the Tamaris Tsikhe), but also the settlement around it. The river that flows through the resort (daba) of Abastumani is called Otskhis Tsqali, Otskhura (for some reason, the river sign reads Otskhe). Otskhe is connected with the ancient historical toponym Odzrkhe, being an urban settlement, etc.

We should not be afraid of the popularity of Abastumani as a resort and as a name today. With today's media and advertisements, the issue can be resolved in the shortest time.

4. Instead of Tsarbastumani (წარბასთუმანი [Ts'arbastumani]), it is correct and acceptable to use Tsarbastubani. Trbastumani is derived by analogy with Abastumani. In Samtskhe-Javakheti, there were many proper names with -Uban (უბან-district) component and many of them have survived to these days. Their formation is related to surnames, the separation of surnames, and the further formation of new surnames. Tsrbastumani is interesting as it is derived from two different types of family names, namely: The personal name Tsarba gives the form Tsarbaant and at the same time, Tsarbasanebi (those who are Tsarbas), as a result of the combination of these two alternatives, Tsarbastuban has been received. It is necessary to preserve it even though its phonetic alternative, Tharbastumani is relatively popular among people.

7. Shoraveli (შორაველი [Shoraveli]), not Sholaveri (შოლავერი [Sholaveri]). Although S. Jikia is categorically against Shoraveli, we believe that this form should be legalized. Because in Samtskhe-Javakheti there are the names of places with the Shor (შორ-far) component: Shoreti, Oshora, and others. Its etymology can be explained.

8. Bolajuri (ბოლჯური [Bolajuri]) is with two more options: Bolazhuri and Bolajauri. Bolajuri should be obtained due to Armenianized etymology, and one out of the mentioned two (Bolazhuri, Bolajauri) can be legalized, even though Bolajuri is popular among the local (resettled) population. According to the administrative and territorial division of 1966, we have Bolajauri.

21-22. According to the census of 2014, as registrars indicated, there is only one Zanavi (ზანავი [Zanavi]), but it is so divided by a large ravine, a castle, a school, etc. Creating Didi (larger) and Patara (small) Zanavi and therefore, we think it is necessary to include them as separate villages. We support the division into Didi and Patara Zanavi

25. Utqisubani (უტყისუბანი [Utqisubani]). The correct and historical name is Utkusubani and not Utkisubani (უტკისუბანი [Utqisubani]), which is derived from unclear folk etymology

This village is undoubtedly mentioned even during the arrival of Serapion Zarzveli in Samtskhe.

28. Ghortubani (ღორთუბანი [Ghortubani]) is the correct form. This is how it is confirmed according to the sources, and it is less expected to get a name consisting of geographical places of this type and accordingly, geographical terms by – urban element (Gortubani).

Component “Uban” (district) includes a certain plurality, first of all, in the names with people's names (Gelatubani) or even a word that expresses a plurality in itself (Tkisubani), some agricultural or other type of objects may be represented (Abanotubani). As for Gortubani, it was produced because of writing. The Georgian Gh (ღ) was translated into G (გ) during the rule of Russia and it was legalized later. The meaning of the word could play a certain role (the area of pigs), which indicates that the abundance of wild pigs is similar to Datveti, Datviani, Sadatve, Sairme, and others, which is another historical argument in favour of Ghortubani.

38. Namniauri (ნამნიაური [Namniauri]) is the correct form. This was the case during the previous administrative and territorial units. It should be related to a proper name - Namnia. As for Naminauri, as a result of folk thinking, it seems to be connected to glass which we think is not acceptable.

50. Tsakhnistsqaro (წახნისწყარო [Ts'akhnsts'qaro]). Tsakhani is the name of the village, from which the name of this village also originates. It is a common modifier. Syncope is natural for the determinants. Tsakhani and Tsakhnistsqaro are mentioned together according to the administrative and territorial division, so we consider Tsakhanstqaro to be the wrong form.

67. Zemo Vardzia (ზემო ვარძია [Zemo Vardzia]). Although Zemo Vardzia is not indicated as a rural area according to the survey, the main function of toponyms is the address function, there is a nunnery in Zemo Vardzia and a new settlement has appeared in the surrounding areas, along with that, current Vardzia was built because of the "Mitsvalebis" (“death”) of Zemo Vardzia and it is a historical name, we consider its inclusion in the administrative and territorial unit of Aspindza municipality.

76. Both names, Gelsunda (გელსუნდა [Gelsunda]) and Gulsunda (გულსუნდა [Gulsunda]) have equal rights to exist, but since the local population still prefers Gelsuda, we can support this form.

79. We have Dzveli (ძველი [Dzveli]) according to the administrative and territorial division and it should be obtained as a result of giving certain content to it. It was connected with the word “Dzveli”, although names of this type, represented only by a modifier, are very rare. At the same time, etymology is also related to the word Zvel (ზველ [Zvel]). The local population calls it Zveli, so we also support the latter form.

87. Ghadolari (ღადოლარი [Ghadolari]). According to the old administrative and territorial division, we have Ghado and this is the correct historical name of

this village. **-lar** is a Turkish suffix for plural form which is used by the Armenian population emigrated from Turkey. It could be obtained as a result of some calque. Ghadoni -> Ghadolar.

94. Machatia (მაჭათია [Mach'atia]) is the correct form. This is how it is confirmed by the sources and **Majadia** was obtained as a result of certain phonetic processes, in which the Armenian and Turkish languages played a crucial role (S. Jikia).

99. Ikhtila (იხტილა [Ikht'ila]) is called historical Ghrtila (ღრტილა [Ghrt'ila]) by the local Armenian population. Although the correct and historical form is Ghrtila, Ikhtila is so established that it is not recommended to change it. If possible, the old form can be written in parentheses (Ghrtila).

107. Chamdzvrala (ჩამძვრალა [Chamdzvrala]) is the correct name of the village. Chamdura is an Armenian form of the word. Chamdzvrala is the name according to administrative and territorial division. Several villages in the area of current Javakheti and Chrdili (Childir, Turkey) were referred to this way (S. Jikia). This type of name may have been called due to a certain geographical landscape.

111. Zakvi (ზაკვი [Zak'vi]) is the correct form. It is related to the old Georgian word - zakva (ზაკვა [zak'va]), which is found in the word Mzakvari (sly). It needs to be maintained. As for the form of zak (ზაკ [zak']), it was adopted due to the non-Georgian environment, the last consonant is removed. It happens in Javakheti toponymy. e.g. Diliskar was change into Diliska.

113. Today the village of Tirkna (თირკნა [Tirk'na]) has become Trkna in the speech of the local population as a result of rethinking. In oral speech, it is sounded as Tirkna, the sound that appears between t and r makes pronunciation of the word more comfortable for the locals, as an Armenianized alternative.

121. Pilipovka (ფილიპოვკა [Pilip'ovk'a]). It is unclear whose name it is related to, the name created in the Soviet period. Such Soviet-dedicated names should be changed. Acceptable and linguistically understandable forms should be selected together with the municipalities.

126. Kochio (კოჩიო [K'ochio]). It is a distorted, Armenianized form of Georgian Kachio. Kachio is confirmed by Vakhushti Batonishvili. The same is found in the old documents and books (S. Jikia). It is recommended to apply this form.

128. Sirkva is Sirkva (სირქვა [Sirkva]) was obtained as a result of certain phonetic processes, the etymology is transparent and is linked to a bird stone. The old administrative and territorial division preserves this way, so its Georgian name *Sirkva* (სირქვა [Sirkva]) should remain.

129. Kirovakani (კიროვკანნი [K'irovak'ani]). It was renamed during the communist period. Its name was Zreski. The inhabitants still call the lake near this village Zreski Lake. It is necessary to restore the old name of the village

137. Miasnikiani (მიასნიკიანი [Miasnik'iani]) is a communist product. It is even necessary to change its even by the name of Armenian writer and call it Tumaniani.

141. According to the old administrative and territorial division Davnia (დავნია [Davnia]) is Dabnia and should be etymologically related to the settlement, a populated place (Cf. to desert). In addition to the fact that the **daba** is

found as a component of the composite - Akhaldaba, there is a place called “daba” in Borjomi municipality. Dabnia could be derived from the plural form of the word - **Dabani** which needs to be legalized.

163. Instead of Chvinta (ჭვინთა [Ch'vinta]), there should be the old and correct form Chvinta (ჭვინტა[Ch'vint'a]), as Vakhushti calls it

239. Zhdanovi (ჟდანოვი (Zhdanovi)). It is a communist product it must be changed.

240. The Sameba (სამება[Sameba]) was named after the communist Kalinino, so it is necessary to remove the parentheses - (Kalinino). It was originally called Troitskoe during the settlement of the Doukhobors.

252. Uchmana (უჩმანა [Uchmana]) is Armenized Ujmana (S. Jikia). It may also mean some rethinking. Ujmana should be returned.

256. Orojalari (ოროჯალარი [Orojolari]) is a distorted form of the name Orja. Turkish suffix -lar (ლარ[lar]) for plural was added to the appeared Armenian sound dividing consonants first, as there were several orjas. The Georgian name itself must come from Orjvari (the form Orjua can also be referred to the documents), therefore it should be legalized as Orja.

258. Satkhe (საძხე [Satkhe]) was turned into a disputable form by a former school principal Sanosyan. Satkha is an Armenian version of the Georgian word. In addition to assigning of certain meaning (the name was connected to the non-existent Sadagha proper name), phonetic changes also played a certain role. Akhaltsikhe - Armenian Akhiskha, Only Satkhe should be preserved.

260. The village Tavparavani was renamed Rodionovka (როდიონოვკა[Rodionovk'a]) since the arrival of the Dukhobors here, which restored its name after the departure of the Dukhobors again. The form Paravani (34) written as a note in the presented list is not correct. The correct and only name of this village is Tavparavani. The village was named this way because of its condition and size at that time. Two Georgian churches and caravanseraï mortar were preserved in the village. A famous folk ballad "Tavparavneli Chabuki" was created here. First, the name of the village was created to distinguish it from the villages around Paravani and it was called Tavparavani then its name was returned to the lake, Tavparavani Lake, and the river was named Tavparavnis Tskali. That's why it must remain (have) the name Tavparavani.

261. The village was named Tambovka (ტამბოვკა [T'ambovk'a]) by the Dukhobors who resettled from Tambovka in the Volga region, and after the departure of the Dukhobors, the Armenians who moved there called it Akhali Khulgumo. I think it is better to keep Tambovka, because it is an interesting form of toponymic metonymy as an imported name and there is historical content in it.

### **The Epigraphy of the Satkhe Church as a Symbol of Attitude**

The name of the village is transparent; it is composed of the სა-ე [sa-e]/sa-e affixes and is related to the local fauna. Its basis is თხა[tkha]/tkha - **the goat**.



The Explanatory Dictionary of the Georgian language defines a goat as “a hoofed animal of the Cavicornia family with a rough coat, beneath which lies a soft undercoat. Goats can be wild (tur, jaal-got) or domestic. Domestic goats are valued for their milk, meat, leather, and wool” (KEGL 1955, 506). This is common Kartvelian word (Fenrich, Sarjveladze 2000, 165). “Tkha” (goat), is one of the oldest lexical units in the Georgian language and is even confirmed in biblical texts (Abuladze 1973, 185). Just as the village name “Satkhe”, many place names are derived similarly throughout Georgia (for further details, refer to Beridze 2010, 44-56). **Sa-archv-e** (base - Rupicapra), **Sa-putkr-e** (base - bee) , **Sa-katm-e** (base - chicken), **Sa-kor-e** (base - hawk), **Sa-gugul—e** (base-cuckoo), **Sa-irm-e** (base - deer), **Sa-ikhv-e** (base - duck), **Sa-mtred-e** (base-pigeon), **Sa-Sir-e** (base-sparrow), **Sa-tsurbl-e** (base-leech), **Sa-ghor-e** (base-pig), **Sa-kalmakh-e** (base-trout) , **Sa-kvern-e** (base-marten), **Sa-shashv-e** (base - blackbrd), **Sa-tskhen-e** (base - horse), **Sa-tsitsl-e** (base - chick), **Sa-chi-e** (base - worm), **Sa-khar-e** (base - bull)<sup>18</sup> and others (Beridze 2010, 48). In the hagiographic work such as *The Life of Serapion Zarzveli*, which dates back to the 9th century, the name of one of the lakes in Samtskhe is derived from the affixes სა-ე [sa-e]/sa-e. The author, Basil Zarzveli, attributes this name to the lake's abundance of **beavers** - თახვთა [Takhvta], as he mentions, „ეს არს ტბად მღრვე ყოვლადვე, რომელსა ეწოდების სათაჴუე, და არს ამასა შინა სიმრავლე თაჴუთაი“ /“**This is a muddy lake, named Satakhue, and it is teeming with numerous beavers**”<sup>19</sup> (Zarzveli 1960, 108). Takhvi (the beaver) “is a wild animal of Castor genus” (Abuladze 1973, 179). There are phonetic variations of the village name, as referenced by Armenian toponym scientists: სათხა [Satkha], სატხე [Sat'khe], სატხა [Sat'kha], საბხა [Sabkha], სადხა [Sadkha], and სათღა [Satgha] (Beridze 2010, 48). Among these alternatives, the “Satkha” alternative holds particular popularity among the local population. It is not excluded that this form may be influenced by the Turkish language, similar to how the Turks altered the well-known Georgian name “Akhaltsikhe”, with the ending “e”, to “**Akhskha**” [Akhskha] and “**Akheltskha**” [Akheltskha] (Jikia 1958, 42). Furthermore, it is worth noting that Satkhe is presently inhabited by settlers who arrived from Erzurum in 1829. Armenian toponym scientists specify their origin from the villages of **Sogyutli**, **Tsalka**, and **Jeni**. This migration brought with it the Turkish vocabulary and a distinctive influence on the Turkish language. The name of the village kind of raises a question because it is not mentioned in

18 In translation from Georgian: in სა-არჩვე-ე [Sa-archv-e] არჩვი [archvi] means rupicapra; in (სა-ფუტკრ-ე [Sa-putk'r-e] ფუტკარი [putk'ari] means bee; in სა-ქათმ-ე [sa-katm-e] ქათამი [Katami] means hen; in სა-ქორ-ე [Sa-kor-e] ქორი [kori] means hawk; in სა-გუგული-ე [sa-gugul-e] გუგული [guguli] means cuckoo; in სა-ირმ-ე [Sa-irm-e] ირემი [iremi] means deer; in სა-იხვე-ე [Sa-ikhv-e] იხვი [ikhvi] means duck); in სა-მტრედ-ე [Sa-mt'red-e] მტრედი [mt'redi] means pigeon; in სა-სირ-ე [Sa-sir-e] სირი [siri] means bird; სა-წურბლ-ე [Sa-ts'urbl-e] წურბელა [ts'urbela] means leech; საღორე [Sa-ghor-e] ღორი [ghori] means pig; in სა-კალმახ-ე [Sa-k'almakh-e] კალმახი [k'almakhi] means trout; in სა-კვერნ-ე [Sa-k'vern-e] კვერნა [k'verna] means marten; in სა-შაშვე-ე [Sa-shashv-e] შაშვი [shashvi] means blackbrd; in სა-ცხენ-ე [Sa-tskhen-e] ცხენი [tskheni] means horse, in სა-წიწილ-ე [Sa-ts'its'il-e] წიწილა [ts'its'ila] means chick; in სა-ჭი-ე [Sa-ch'i-e] ჭია means worm; in სა-ხარ-ე [Sa-khar-e] ხარი [khari] means bull (Trans. /ED.)

19 In სა-თახვე-ე [Sa-takhv-e], თახვი [takhvi] means a beaver. თახვთა [takhv-ta] ia a plural form of თახვი [takhvi], სათაჴუე [Satakhue] given in an excerpt is an archaic form of სათახვე [Satakhve] (Trans. /ED.)

such an important document for this region, as *the Great Deftor of the Gurjistan Vilayet* compiled by the Ottomans in 1595, while the surrounding villages are described in detail. However, it does not mean that the village did not exist at that time and was created after the Armenian resettlement in 1829, because the *Jaba Deftor of Childir Eyelet* compiled by the same Ottomans, spanning 1694-1732 years, describes the village commonly, as **Satkhe**.

The importance of the epigraphy of the Georgian temple in Satkhe needs to be highlighted. The epigraphy held great importance in many aspects. It's worth noting that we deliberately use the past tense, as the epigraphy of the Satkhe temple has been entirely erased today.

In 1979, our expedition report on the then Bogdanovka district stated: "In the middle of the village, stands a large Armenian church constructed onto the Georgian one, so that the southern wall of the Georgian church now serves as the northern wall of the Armenian church. Georgian one is a hall type, adorned with ornaments. There are inscriptions as well, the old one is heavily damaged, and the arch, likely used in the construction of the Armenian church, is collapsed. The ornaments from the Georgian church have been incorporated into the Armenian church" (Beridze 2002, 379).

The Georgian church dates back to the 11th century, while the Armenian church dates back to the 19th century. Despite the abundance of inscriptions and the persons mentioned in them, we do not know whose name the Georgian church was named after. The Armenian church, according to the caretakers and patrons of the church, is named after St. Nerses. When two churches stand side by side, each belonging to different cultures and communities, we believe it should be perceived as a unique richness embraced by all the people living here. Unfortunately, such an attitude in Satkhe is not common. To imagine the importance of the inscriptions on the 11th-century monument and how methodically they were gradually destroyed, we will quote an excerpt from Prof. Valery Silogava's work: "In 1898, Ivane Rostomashvili, a prominent researcher, journalist, and public figure of the time, and the editor of "the Mogzauri" magazine, first published information about the antiquities of Satkhe, including the Georgian inscriptions carved on the walls of the church. According to his report, two inscriptions were read on the eastern facade of the church: **"Christ, have mercy on Jeremiah"** and **"Christ, have mercy on Kharaisdze."** There were inscriptions on the western wall: **"Christ, have mercy on Giorgi"** and **"Christ, have mercy on the son of Beshken..."** He also mentions two inscriptions on the south wall of the church, one of which reads - **"Christ, have mercy on everyone,"** but, as later clarified by E. Takaishvili and N. Berdzenishvili, we should read - **"Christ, have mercy on Iovane."**

As for the second inscription on the south wall of the church, it was especially valuable, containing an important message: **"God, have your mercy on Parsman Eristavt Eristavi; He built this church to glory himself and their parents."** In addition, on the inner side of the southern wall of the church, Ivane Rostomashvili read two more inscriptions: "Christ, have mercy on Tskhoreba" and "Christ, have mercy on Giorgi."

Unfortunately, none of the above-mentioned inscriptions, except for the **Tskhoreba** inscription, can be found on the walls of the Satkhe church" (Silogava 2002, 127-128).

Simultaneously with the destruction of the Georgian inscriptions of Satkhe, new Armenian inscriptions appeared on the church in the 20th century, about

which we wrote: "New Armenian inscriptions have appeared on the west wall of the Georgian church. This is how they are read: **1. Remember Podosian Bagrat** and **2. Remember Beroian Sarkis**. It has been becoming a tradition to seek mercy from the Georgian church in Satkhe, as one stone, which appears to have been processed below, i.e., cut quite deeply, and then placed on the wall, has already become "old," with moss growing on it (although it could be a cladding stone as well). The second one is still new, the cement poured during cementation is still white" (Beridze 2002, 380). Today, both stones blend "organically" with the walls. They have aged and acquired the appropriate color (photograph 1).



**Photograph 1.** New Armenian inscriptions on the west wall of the Georgian church of village Satkhe. (Photograph taken in 2023).

It is necessary to discuss another Georgian inscription of the temple, which was discovered later. It was plastered and served as the northern wall of the Armenian temple. In the late 80s of the 20th century, because of the collapse of the plastered wall, the inscription of the Georgian temple was revealed. This information was provided by Mr. Guram Tedoradze, and V. Silogava studied the inscription on-site in 1990 together with Mamuka Akhalashvili. The inscription was first introduced to the public through an article in the newspaper of the TSU Akhaltsikhe branch - "Meshkheti" (see Silogva 2002, note 127). Upon reading of the titlo, the inscription provides us with the following information: „გიორგი შაზელისძესა და ძეთა მისთა შეუნდვენ ღმერთმან. დაიდევს ორი დღე ალაპი, რომე არცა ზედა შედა სეფისკუერი გამოვიდეს. ზარზარობა და მეორედ მოსლვამ, ამა სალდარსა შიგან მყოფმა ვერავინ დააკლოს წირვამ, ჩუენმა მომავალმან: და ვინცა დააკლოს, კანონსამცა ქუეშე არს: ამენ” / "May God forgive the sins of Giorgi Shazelisidze and his sons. Two days of the dedicated agape and the communion bread and wine were made. St. Barbare's Day and the Apocalypse, those who are in the church, our future, pray for it: and anyone who will not pray is bound by the law. Amen."<sup>20</sup> (Silogava, 2002, 131). As the publisher of the inscription notes, the inscriptions mainly date back to the 12th-13th centuries, while the latter belongs to "a little bit later period and, unlike these inscriptions of Asomtavruli (Capital writing system), is written in Nuskha-Khutsuri

20 The translation is approximate and might not fully convey the meaning of the inscription, due to its difficult readability. (Trans./Ed.)

script" (Silogava 2000, 131). It's important to focus on the anthroponymy of the inscriptions. **Kharaisdze, Jeremiah, Giorgi, Beshkeni, Iovane, Tshorebai, and another Giorgi** are mentioned in it. They are the ordinary people living in Satkhe, praying and asking God for mercy. Separately should be discussed an inscription that mentions the builder of the temple, Eristavt Eristavi **Parsman**, who served during the reign of Bagrat IV. "Besides Satkhe, the name of Parsman Eristavt Eristavi is mentioned in two more inscriptions in Javakheti, in the **inscription of the Church of Zeda Tmogvi** (upper Tmogvi) and the **inscription of Mirashkhani**. According to this latter inscription, Parsman met his demise in the summer of 1064, during the invasion of the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan. His death occurred during the siege, capture, and burning of the Akhalkalaki fortress" (Silogava 2000, 129). This event provides us with an almost precise date for the construction of the church, as the builder, Parsman Tmogveli, is explicitly mentioned in the inscription. It belongs to the early 11th century, while the inscriptions date back to the 12th-13th centuries according to the paleographic analysis (N. Berdzenishvili). Due to the presence of agape inscriptions written in Nuskha-Khutsuri, distinct from Asomtavruli inscriptions, the construction of the temple, and its epigraphy serve as evidence that in the 11th-14th centuries, there was a Georgian state here, Georgians lived there, services were held in the Georgian language and so it was until 1829 when migrant Armenians settled in the village.

Over a century has elapsed since the initial recording of the Satkhe inscriptions in 1898. Remarkably, among the numerous inscriptions, only the one on the southern wall has managed to survive to this day, purely by chance. The rest have fallen victim to deliberate erasure at the hands of people. This, we believe, reflects an attitude towards culture, specifically towards Georgian culture and its rich history. This attitude persists even in the present day. The pillar of the balcony of the Armenian church, constructed on the wall of the Georgian church, is directly attached to the corner of the Georgian relief, resulting in damage to this historical monument (photograph 2).



**Photograph 2** The pillar of the balcony of the Armenian church, attached to the corner of the Georgian relief on the southern wall of the Georgian church (serving as the northern wall of the Armenian church), in the village of Satskhe. (Photograph taken in 2023).

The villagers demonstrate a genuine ability to preserve their history and cultural heritage, as evidenced by the upkeep and stewardship of the Armenian church. There is also an informational desk providing information about both churches. The monument from the Georgian cemetery was recently relocated to the churchyard and is positioned in front of the church (photograph 3).





**Photograph 3.** Georgian grave monument relocated in the churchyard of the village Sathkhe. (Photograph taken in 2023)



**Photograph 4.** Georgian grave monument in the yard of Satkhe museum. (Photograph taken in 2023)

This attitude is well felt in the museum situated by the river in the same village's territory. The courtyard is adorned with stones taken from ancient Georgian cemeteries, featuring graves of horsemen, shepherds, and others.

Unfortunately, the Georgian Church of Satkhe is not an exception. For instance, the church of Qulalisi, with the inscription of Bagrat IV stating that it was built in 1060, follows a similar fate. Typically, part of the inscription is carved with a sharp object, and fortunately, the main part is preserved. Stones from the church scattered in the yard are at risk of being used for construction purposes just as "the castle and the tower erected here were demolished and houses were built" (Beridze 2002, 397) (photograph 5).



**Photograph 5.** Inscription of Qulalisi church. (Photograph taken in 2023).

Disassembling Georgian tombstones and relocating them to different places has led to the belief that hidden treasure might be preserved in these graves. While such notions are unlikely in Christian graves, particularly in Javakheti, they persist among the people. In front of the church of Qulalisi, gravestones were removed in pursuit of such perceived “treasure”.



**Photograph 6.** Displaced tombstones in the churchyard. (Photograph taken in 2023)



**Photograph 7.** Displaced tombstones in the churchyard. (Photograph taken in 2023)

A new structure has already been constructed on the site of the Qulalisi church. Nearby, someone cleared out the hiding places of the fortress and built a shrine. However, unlike Satkhe, this shrine is not built onto the Georgian church but is built separately.

In Georgia, wealthy people were buried around churches. Sometimes, the con-



struction dates of the temples and cemeteries were often closely related. Armenian migrants who moved from Turkey had a separate cemetery and were not interred in the Georgian historical cemetery. Similarly, the Doukhobor sectarians who were resettled in the Ninotsminda municipality had their distinct cemetery. In this regard, the cemetery surrounding the Georgian church in the village of Mamtsvara raises curiosity, as people resettled in the 20<sup>th</sup> century are buried here as well. This is evident from the so-called "Agrada," (iron fences) used to delineate the graves of their deceased people. Given the abundance of old Georgian graves observed during previous visits, it is possible that newcomers buried their deceased atop the existing burial sites. The migrants' attitude towards historical Georgian culture is especially evident in the Georgian Asomtavruli inscription on the south wall of the church, which is intentionally wiped out with metal tools (photograph 8).



**Photograph 8.** The Georgian Asomtavruli inscription of the Mamtsvara church, wiped out intentionally. (Photograph taken in 2023)

It should be necessarily noted that in front of one of the temples in the village of Tavparavani (Rodionovka) is an information desk denoting its history. The temple seems to have traces of the inscriptions that did not reach us due to destruction. The inscription on the south wall has been erased, while only a few letters remain on the east wall, and the inscription on the north wall has been destroyed, appearing fragmented (photographs 9,10,11,12).

### **Inscriptions of Tavparavani church**

(Photographs taken in 2023)



**Photograph 9**



**Photograph 10**



**Photograph 11**



**Photograph 12**



The temple with the Mkhedruli inscription is in a deplorable condition (photograph 13)



**photograph 13**

The residents of the community at the shore of Saghamo Lake traditionally have lived on fishing throughout the whole history. They were fishermen. It seems that the village Saghamo, on the shore of the lake, was considerable, as three churches located in this village have survived till today. If we orient ourselves from Gandzani towards Ninotsminda, the first church, dates back to the 10th century. It has undergone restoration and now houses a nunnery. The second church, also dates back to the same period, while the third church, perched on an elevated site, dates back to the 13th-14th centuries. A stela from this very same village is now safeguarded and placed in the State Museum of Georgia after S. Janashia (Tsiskarishvili 1959, 67). The stela and its accompanying inscription trace back to the 13th century. The middle church has an inscription as well. The particular expression of the attitude towards the Georgian culture unfolds around the second, middle church. The agricultural implements and hay are laid out alongside the church, and what's notable, it has already become the "property" of a citizen. There is a dog tied nearby, preventing visitors from approaching the monument. This is the condition of the middle church as recorded during our expedition.

In 2000, while approaching Gandzani from Shaori Fortress, in the vicinity of the village, to the north-west, the compilers of the Javakheti guidebook observed the ancient monument of the megalithic culture "so-called whale: a vertically placed monolith, approximately two meters high, with depictions of a fish and a bird on it. According to the oldest beliefs, this monument is linked to the cult of water and fertility (phallus) (Guidebook 2000, 19). Unfortunately, our expedition couldn't witness this monument. This monolithic monument is so massive and so deeply embedded in the ground it would be nearly impossible to remove it and disappear. Fortunately, a photograph of it has been preserved.



**Photograph 14.** Gandzani Menhir. Photograph taken by Devi Berdzenihsvili, 1970.

It was revealed that a new Armenian church was constructed in its place, and this ancient stone statue was incorporated into one of its walls (photograph 15).



**Photograph 15.** The small Armenian church, constructed upon the Gandzani Menhir, 2023

This marks a peculiar "revival" of the pagan monument, as Christian believers started praying on it and even carved a cross (photograph 16). This is another example of an attitude and appropriation of an ancient cultural monument that has survived to this day. However, the form is unacceptable, as it is inappropriate to depict Christian symbols on a phallic cult object and offer prayers over it.



**Photograph 16.** Gandzani Menhir inside the church, 2023

The issue of signboards should be discussed separately. Today, living in the modern world without road signs and signboards is impossible. Setting aside the deliberate removal or crossing over of the nominative indications of the village name and similar actions, a problem with signboards, in general, is particularly noticeable. Unfortunately, the state has not fully resolved this issue yet. Generally, village signs are only located on central roads. When following the road, especially along consecutive or connected villages, it becomes challenging to discern the specific village one is entering due to the lack of corresponding signs. In such circumstances, it might be commendable if an affluent villager takes the initiative to create and install a signboard marking the village. However, the goal differs in this case. The individual undertaking this task provides their interpretation and essence of the village name. Sometimes, the signboards even lack inscriptions in the Georgian language. This is evident at the entrance of the village Patara Arakali [P'at'ara Arak'ali] (Ptara Arakali [P'at'ara Arakali]).

A certain type of attitude is represented by the case of **Didi Arakali [Didi Arak'ali]**. In this regard, Professor Inga Ghutidze, a member of our expedition, records the following: "Only two walls of the old Georgian church in this village remained, both completely looted. In this very spot, there is a large stone cross with an inscription." The author of these words traveled in Javakheti in the 30s of the XX century and documented the mentioned fact. Today there is no longer the Georgian church, nor is there any stone cross. An Armenian church named after Saint Stefanos has been constructed on the site of the Georgian church, incorporating stones from the old Georgian church."

The pattern of migrants erecting new churches over old ones or reconstructing Georgian churches, "based on dreams", to "patronize" it, is a typical narrative.

Additionally, the alteration of the village name Patara Arakali [P'at'ara

Arak'ali] to Aragiali [Aragiali], as depicted on the village sign is inconsistent with the historical and canonical name of the village. The sign at the entrance to the village of Eshtia reflects a unique phonetic interpretation of the village name. It's worth noting that road signs typically adhere to specific forms, colors, and other symbolic representations.

Similarly, a large red sign at the entrance of village Eshtia indicates as if the village name were **Heshtia** instead of **Eshtia**. When we discussed it with the villagers, they explained, and we believe rightfully so, that they anticipated the state to install a sign. Since it did not happen, they took matters into their own hands and created one as best they could and in a way, they deemed fit (photograph 17).



**Photograph 17.** Signboard at the entrance of village Eshtia, 2023.



## Samtskhe - Saatabago (Akhaltsikhe Pashalik) in modern Turkish Historiography (Summary)

### Introduction

The first scientific works on the history and culture of Georgia were published in Turkey in the second half of the 20th century. Subsequently, there was a consistent continuation, and today, research on Georgia has become more intensive.

In Turkish historiography, sources related to the history of Samtskhe-Saatabago have been analyzed, and researchers have produced various works, including individual articles and monographs. These works address some topics in a contemporary and interesting manner. Exploring the extensive source material employed by Turkish historians has the potential to unveil previously unknown or relatively obscure facts in Georgian historiography.

The identification, examination, and inclusion of fiscal documents, (such as census books - *defters*<sup>1</sup>) created by the Ottoman state apparatus, hold immense value for the study of the political, economic, and social conditions, and onomastics of historical South-West Georgia.

Of course, it's not feasible to encompass all the monographs or publications directly related to the history of Samtskhe-Saatabago in a single article. Hence, in the context of the history of Samtskhe-Saatabago, this article focuses on two monographs by the Turkish author Fahrettin Kırzıoğlu and published by Georgian author Nodar Shengelia *Muhime Defters about the Kingdoms of Georgia (XVI-XVIII centuries)*<sup>2</sup> and *Ottoman firmans and berats for the history of South Georgia (XVI-XVIII centuries)*<sup>3</sup>. It's worth noting that Kırzıoğlu's monographs served as a foundation for the research conducted by a group of authors in the field of Georgian history in Turkey. The article also provides descriptions and, in some cases, explanations of the names of individuals and places associated with the history of Samtskhe-Saatabago. It should be mentioned that medieval Turkish authors, as well as later translators, faced challenges when attempting to accurately represent the foreign-sounding names of Georgian places or individuals using Arabic script. This difficulty has led to some confusion and misinterpretation among contemporary Turkish scholars.

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1 Defter - book for the tax register and all types of inventory in Ottoman Empire (Trans./Ed.)

2 Shengelia, 2019 - “მუჰიმე დავთრები საქართველოს სამეფო-სამთავროების შესახებ (XVI-XVIII სს)” (Trans./Ed.)

3 Shengelia, 2011 - „ოსმალური ფირმანები და ბერათები სამხრეთ საქართველოს ისტორიისათვის (XVI-XVIII სს)“ (Trans./Ed.)

## **Samtskhe - Saatabago (Akhalsikhe Pashalik) in Modern Turkish Historical Literature**

Professor Fahreddin Kırzioğlu laid the foundation for monographic studies of Georgian history in Turkey, with several of his works being of particular interest. One such work is "Kipchaks in the Upper Mtkvari River and Chorokhi Basin."<sup>4</sup> It is interesting in terms of researching the history of the Kipchaks in the Caucasus. Kırzioğlu has his approaches and vision regarding the mentioned issue, particularly concerning the history of Samtskhe-Saatabago. He believes that the Kipchaks founded the "Samtskhe-Saatabago, or Atabags state." In the present monograph, he has devoted a separate chapter to this topic (Kırzioğlu 1992, 105-162). This chapter is prefaced by an excerpt from the works of famous Turkish historians Zeki Velidi Togan<sup>5</sup> and Akde Nimet Kurat<sup>6</sup>. According to Togan, during the time of Abagha Qaen, the Christian Turkic Atabags active in the Akhalsikhe region and these Kipchaks started to convert to Islam. Whereas, according to Kurat, a large part of the Kumans who came to Georgia did not return; they stayed there and settled in the plains. In Eastern Anatolia, the Kipchaks living around Childir Lake<sup>7</sup> are their descendants (Kırzioğlu 1992, 105-152). Kırzioğlu thoroughly examines the history of the Kipchak settlement in Georgia during the time of Davit Agmashenebeli. In his analysis of this topic, he draws upon Georgian historical literature and accurately points out that the Kipchaks' settlement began in 1118. He also mentions that the Kipchaks began to settle in the places liberated from the Seljuks (Kırzioğlu 1992, 107). However, he does not specify any source to confirm this event. He only refers to a passage with similar content in Akde Nimet Kurat's work mentioned above. In parentheses, he adds his explanation that the Kipchaks settled in the Upper Mtkvari River and Chorokhi Basin after being expelled from the Emirates of Anis and Erzurum. He also mentions that although after the death of the great prince of Kyiv, Vladimir Monomakh, Athraka Sharahan's son returned to his homeland, a large part of the Kipchaks who had settled in 1118 remained in Georgia and established themselves in the aforementioned areas (Kırzioğlu 1992, 112). Kırzioğlu has extensively verified the section on the settlement of the Kipchaks by Davit Agmashenebeli from the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles*<sup>8</sup>. He provides a distinct quote regarding their settlement in Georgia: "After the arrival of the Kipchaks, they were settled along with their families in the places they preferred, bringing with them 40,000 (mounted) warriors." Here, he also mentions the Christianization of the Kipchaks. He notes that the settlement of the Kipchaks seems to have continued into the following year as well. According to his own account, there were 250-300 thousand inhab-

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4 M. F. Kırzioğlu, Yukarı-Kür ve Çoruk Boylarında Kıpçaklar, İlk Kıpçaklar (M.Ö. VIII-M.S. VI yy) ve Son Kıpçaklar (118, 1195) ile Ortodoks Kıpçak Atabekler Hükümeti (1267-1578), (Ahıska/Çıldır Eyaleti Tarihinden), Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 1992.

5 A. Zeki Velidi Togan, Umumi Türk Tarihine Giriş, İstanbul, 1946, I, p. 258.

6 Akdes Nimet Kurat, İdil Boyu ve Karadeniz Kuzeyindeki Türk Kavimleri ve Devletleri, Ankara 1972, p 84.

7 In Turkish historiography, it is called Childir Lake. In the text, it will be referred to by its Georgian name - Chrdili Lake.

8 The principal compendium of medieval Georgian historical texts, natively known as Kartlis Tskhovreba (Georgian: ქართლის ცხოვრება), literally "Life of Kartli".

itants and 40 thousand Kipchak warriors (Kırzioğlu 1992, 113-115)<sup>9</sup>. Kırzioğlu also examines the accounts preserved in *The Georgian Chronicles* about the wars waged by Davit against the Seljuks and the Seljuks' defeat in the Didgori Valley. It is worth noting that the author often emphasizes the contribution of Kipchaks to Davit's success. When describing the events, he refers to the settlement of the Kipchaks without citing any specific source. For example: "In 1124, the most significant conquests were achieved during the period of Kipchaks' settlement in the upper Mtkvari and along the Chorokhi River." He also notes that "in 1124, after liberating the right bank of Mtkvari and Javakheti-Tao from the Seljuks, Davit's army returned home, and the Kipchaks began to settle in the territories liberated from Javakheti between the Speri" (Kırzioğlu 1992, 119). Also, during Davit's campaign to Shirvan in 1124, during his march to Shaburan in April of the same year, Davit talks about the settlement of Kipchaks in the city of Shaburan (Kırzioğlu 1992, 120). The author notes that, according to *The Georgian Chronicles*, between 1118 and 1124, the Kipchaks rebelled against Davit several times and even threatened to kill him. However, *The Georgian Chronicles* does not provide any information about the reasons for this rebellion (Kırzioğlu 1992, 121). Kırzioğlu suggests that the reason for this rebellion should have been the issue of their resettlement. He quotes from *The Georgian Chronicles* regarding the reign of David's son Demetre as follows: In *the Georgian Chronicles* regarding the year of the reign of David's son, Demetre, it is said that "the great King Davit, when he took Tbilisi (and burned it down), annexed Hereti and Kakheti. At that time, it was no longer inhabited (the Turkmens left), and the fortresses and cities of Hereti, Armenia, Tashiri, Javakheti, Kvemo Artaani (present-day Ardahan and Hanak), and Artani (present-day Göle) were desolated. The areas of Tao (Chorokhi Basin) were re-established during the reign of Demetre." (Kırzioğlu 1992, 121)

When discussing the old and new Kipchaks, Kırzioğlu references the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles* and points out that following Davit's time, a second wave of Kipchaks settled in Georgia during the reign of Tamar in 1195, referred to as the new Kipchaks. Once more, without specifying a precise source, Kırzioğlu asserts that the old Kipchaks settled in the upper Mtkvari region, including Javakheti, Akhaltsikhe, Artaani<sup>10</sup>, Kola<sup>11</sup>, and the Chorokhi Basin (excluding

9 An excerpt from the Georgian Chronicles about settlement of Kipchaks states: "Kipchaks, along with their families, were settled in the territories convenient for them, among whom there were forty thousand outstanding warriors. He provided them with horses and armor, as well as five thousand skilled and experienced Christian servants known for their reliability and strength; And day by day, many among the Kipchaks were converted to Christianity, greatly increasing the number of Christians (The Georgian Chronicles, edited by Acad. Roin Metreveli, published by "Meridian" "Artanuji", Tbilisi, 2008, p. 320) „ხოლო ყივჩაღნი დააყენნა ადგილთა სამათოდ მარჯუეთა დედაწულითა მათითა, რომელთა თანა იყო წყობად განმავალი რჩეული ორმოცი ათასი. ესენი განასრულნა ცხენებითა და საჭურველითა; და კუალად მონანი, რომელ ჰყვეს რჩეულნი და განსწავლულნი ღუაწლსა, ვითარ ხუთ ათას კაც, ყოველნი ქრისტეანე-ქმნილნი, მისანდონი და გამოცდილნი სიმკნითა; და თვთ ყივჩაყნიცა უმრავლესნი ქრისტეანე იქმნებოდეს დღითი-დღე და სიმრავლე რიცხვსა მძლე შეეძინებოდა ქრისტესა (ქართლის ცხოვრება, აკად. როინ მეტრეველის რედაქციით, გამომც. „მერიდიანი“ „არტანუჯი“, თბილისი, 2008, გვ. 320

10 Present-day Ardhan (Trans./Ed.)

11 Present-day Göle (Trans./Ed.)

Bayburt and Speri). The new Kipchaks, according to him, settled in the area between the Khrami and Mtkvari rivers after the Bagratians severed the Orbeliani family in 1177 (Kırzioğlu 1992, 122).

The author engages in a detailed discussion of the settlement of the new Kipchaks (Kırzioğlu 1992, 122-162). He revisits the topic of Kipchak's uprisings against Davit and highlights Davit's failure to fulfill his promise to settle them in the lands liberated from the Seljuks after their initial settlement. He also mentions that during the reign of Demetre in 1125, the Kipchaks settled in the territories liberated from the Seljuks along the Mtkvari and Upper Chorokhi rivers, which they obtained through their service (Kırzioğlu 1992, 123).

Kırzioğlu returns to the issue of Kipchaks, which will directly impact Samtskhe-Saatabago when discussing the matter of Tamar, the Queen's marriage. He notes that among the potential suitors were Guzan (Kozan), the principal Kipchakof Klarjeti and Shavsheti, and Botso, the commander of the Akhaltsikhe region (who would later become the forefather of the KipchakAtabags in the upper Mtkvari and Chorokhi basin) (Kırzioğlu 1992, 132). It's worth noting that Kırzioğlu is familiar with the **Meskhეთians** and **Meskhეთi**; these names appear in several parts of his work. For instance, in 1195, during the reception of the Shirvanshah and Emir of Rani by Tamar and Davit Soslan in **Agarebi**, among the representatives from various regions of Georgia, he mentioned the Meskhs (inhabitants of **Akhaltsikhe**, **Atskuri**, **Khertvisi**) in the seventh row. In the 2nd and 3rd rows, he names the new and old Kipchaks. While the author has used quotation marks for the mentioned paragraph, he hasn't indicated the source (Kırzioğlu 1992, 134). He refers to Shalva Akhaltsikheli as a Kipchak as well (Kırzioğlu 1992, 135, 139). Consequently, in describing the following events, such as during Jalaeddin Khorezmshah's campaign on Tbilisi, Rusudan appointing Memna and Botso Jaqels as guards of Tbilisi, are referred to as Kipchaks (Kırzioğlu 1992, 145).

The author dedicates one sub-chapter to the topic of Samtskhe-Saatabago, titled "Ancient Kipchaks" Orthodox "Government of Atabags" (1267-1578). The sub-chapter commences by recalling the episode of the battle in the Gagi Valley in 1221. He mentions Beka<sup>12</sup> the son of Qvarqvare, who fought as part of the Georgian army and held the position of Kipchak Bey of Akhaltsikhe<sup>13</sup>-Fotskhovi<sup>14</sup>-Artaani<sup>15</sup>. The author notes that he bore the name of his grandfather, who served as a commander during the Tamar period. Their great-grandfather, Botso<sup>16</sup> Bey Spasalar of Akhaltsikhe-Artaani, established Jaqi Castle as his residence, which is why they were referred to as Jaqels. Kırzioğlu doesn't overlook the battle in the winter of 1225-1226, in which Botso's sons Memna/Memnis and Botso fought against the Khwarazmians to defend Tbilisi. The author also highlights the participation of Sargis, the youngest son of Qvarqvare Jaqeli, in the battle of Kosedagi in 1243 with the Mongols (Kırzioğlu, 1992: 145). In the mentioned sub-chapter, the author extensively uses the information preserved in *The Georgian Chronicles*, translated into French, about the Jaqels. **However, it is known that the Atabags**

12 In parentheses, the name "Beka" has been changed by his own interpretation and is called "Boke" (Böke).

13 He names it as Akhiskha (Ahıska).

14 Posof

15 Ardahan

16 Because there is no "ts"/"ç" sound in Turkish, he calls it "Bocho" (Boço).

of Samtskhe are not mentioned as Kipchaks anywhere in *The Georgian Chronicles*. But Kirziloglu follows the narration and adds the word "Kipchak" where he deems it necessary. For example, the principality of Kipchak Jaqeli<sup>17</sup>. He lists the Georgian names of places and people preserved in the sources describing Tamerlane's campaigns. For example, Ak-Sika (according to Kirziloglu, Akhiskha). Also, another author mentions a temporary guard of the Tortumi fortress named Gurch Bey<sup>18</sup>, who together with his two hundred Georgians troubled the Muslims and did not pay tribute. Kirziloglu has written an addition to the word "Georgian" in parentheses - (Kipchak)<sup>19</sup> (Kirzioğlu, 1992: 153). In itself, such an approach is unjustified because if these Georgians were Kipchaks, the chronicler would have mentioned it himself. Also, he examines *The Georgian Chronicles* and notes that Atabag<sup>20</sup> defeated King George VIII, thereby getting rid of dependence on Tbilisi. He continues by saying, "Thus, the government of the Kipchak Atabags<sup>21</sup>, who were spiritually connected with the Bagrations of Kartli since 1347 and assisted them [the Bagrations' R.K.], was completely liberated from the mentioned dependence with the help of Aq Qoyunlu<sup>22</sup>" (Kirzioğlu 1992, 155). It is clear that nothing similar to Atabag's Kipchak origin is written in *The Georgian Chronicles*. The author did not overlook the issue of the appointment of Sargis Jaqeli and his son Beka as rulers of Samtskhe by Abagha Qaeni, which he dates to 1267 (Kirzioğlu 1992, 150).

It should be noted that Kirziloglu often emphasizes the names of people and places, thereby indicating their Kipchak (or rather Turkish) roots. For instance, he mentions Sadun Mankaberdeli, whom he calls Kipchak Bey, and provides his interpretation in parentheses - (Mengü Berdli). He holds a similar attitude towards Kutlu Bugha, the son of Saduni, noting the importance of these individuals bearing names typical of the Kipchaks (Kirzioğlu 1992, 149).

Another work by Kirziloglu, "The Conquest of the Caucasus by the Ottomans,"<sup>23</sup> is quite interesting. In this monograph, the author delves into the relationship between the royal principalities of Georgia and the Ottoman Empire. The book comprises a table of contents, a preface, an introduction, three chapters, and sections on places and persons, and it includes two maps created by the author. Additionally, Ottoman documents transliterated into Latin script are appended to the monograph.

**The second chapter of the monograph on the history of Samtskhe-Saatabago** discusses the conquests of Prince Selim and Fadishah Yavuz Selim in 1508 and 1514. The author notes that Prince Selim, who was appointed as the governor of Trabzon, led a campaign against Georgia during the initial years of his rule. This information is based on his correspondence with Sultan Yaqub of Aq Qoyunlu, in which he mentions his campaigns in Georgia on multiple occasions. It is men-

17 Caklı Kıpçak Beğliği (Kirzioğlu 1992, 151).

18 Gürç-Bek

19 „İkiyüze yakın Gürcü'nün (Kıpçakın) Müslümanları rahatsız edip, haraç vermediği anlatılınca, üzerine kuvvet gönderildi" (Kirzioğlu 1992, 153).

20 Implying Qyarqware II

21 Atabekli Kıpçak Hükümeti.

22 Also referred to as the White Sheep Turkomans. (Trans./Ed.)

23 M. Fahrettin Kirzioğlu, Osmanlılar'ın Kafkas Elleri'nin Fethi (1451-1590), Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, Ankara, 1998.

tioned that in 1501, Selim led an expedition into Georgia with his army, accompanied by Anatolian volunteers. During this campaign, they engaged in plundering and taking captives (Kırzioğlu, 1998, 83-84).<sup>24</sup> In Chapter M, Kırzioğlu dedicates ample space to the issue of Samtskhe-Saatabago. He points out that since 1267, the regions of Speri, Tortumi Livana (present-day Yusufeli and Artvin), Oltisi<sup>25</sup>, Artanuji<sup>26</sup>, Shavsheti<sup>27</sup>, Kola, Artaani, Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, and a portion of Atskuri<sup>28</sup> were under the semi-independent rule of Orthodox Kipchak Atabags<sup>29</sup>. Their territory was considered part of Georgia due to common language and religion (Kırzioğlu 1998, 83-86).

Kırzioğlu also discusses Selim's campaign into Imereti. He mentions that Georgian sources provide varying dates for the capture of Istanbul<sup>30</sup>, with some sources indicating the year 1457 and others suggesting dates more than four years apart. Hence, Selim's march from Trabzon to Imereti is dated to 1512 when the Ottomans raided Kutaisi and Gelati. Kırzioğlu notes that Selim was guided by his subordinate, Atabag of Samtskhe Mzechabuki. (Kırzioğlu 1998, 86).<sup>31</sup>

Kırzioğlu highlights that in the early stages of the relationship between Mzechabuki and the Ottomans, when the Ottomans took Ajara and Chaneti from the Gurians, Atabag presented valuable gifts to the Ottomans, saving his country from Ottoman attacks. The question of the conquest of Kutaisi and Gelati by the Ottomans with the help of Mzechabuki is also discussed here. The author also delves into the episode from *The Georgian Chronicles*<sup>32</sup> translated into French by Marie Brose. He indicates the dates of the Ottoman campaign from *The Georgian Chronicles* - 1509 and 1512 years (Kırzioğlu 1998, 88). As for the information from Ottoman sources, Kırzioğlu has reconciled several of them and points to the months of May-June 1508 as the date<sup>33</sup> (Kırzioğlu 1998, 90). It is known that

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24 It should be noted that nothing is known about this campaign of Selim in Georgian sources.

25 Present-day Oltu. (Trans./Ed.)

26 Present-day Ardanuc. (Trans./Ed.)

27 Present-day Savsat. (Trans./Ed.)

28 Kırzioğlu refers it as "Atabeg Yurdu" (dwelling of the Atabegs).

29 The approach promoted by Kırzioğlu has been widely adopted in contemporary Turkish historiography.

30 Among most Turkish authors, Constantinople is commonly referred to as Istanbul.

31 The author reiterates the non-Georgian origin of the Atabags once again. In footnote 10, after the capture of Tbilisi in 1578, he examines one of the chapters of the book "Rulers of Georgia" written by the secretary of the Ottoman army, Mustafa Ali (in Turkish: Gelibolulu Ali Çelebi), about Georgian kings and governors, along with historical Georgian regions. However, there is no source that directly confirms the Kipchak origin of the Atabags. In another footnote (11), it is indicated that although Atabag's Georgian name is Mzechabuki, this is not correct because in a 10-line Persian letter sent by Mzechabuki to Selim at the end of 1514, he calls himself "Emirza Chabuk" (see .p. 87). We explain here that in the case of Arabic graphics, even Mzechabuki himself could not write Georgian Mzechabuki correctly.

32 Histoire de la Georgie, II, Paris.

33 There are different considerations regarding to this date, the date given by Mikheil Svanidze, October, 1510 is more reliable (see, Mikheil Svanidze, From the History of XVI-XVII cc of Georgian-Ottoman Relationship, publish-house "Metsniereba", Tbilisi, 1971, p.44) (მიხეილ სვანიძე, საქართველო-ოსმალეთის ურთიერთობის ისტორიიდან ს.ს., გამომცემლობა „მეცნიერება“, თბილისი, 1971, გვ.44).



Mzechabuki provided guides to the Ottomans to the siege of Kutaisi and Gelati, which earned him the respect and trust of the Ottomans. Regarding the events after 1508 mentioned by Kırzioğlu, it is noted that according to the Georgian chronicles, Mzechabuki surrendered to the Ottomans earlier. Additionally, as in 1514, Mzechabuki supplied Selim with provisions and guides when they were returning from the Battle of Chaldiran (Kırzioğlu 1998, 93).

There is also information about the appeal of the Georgian kings-principals, including King Bagrat III of Imereti, Atabag Qvarqvar IV, and King Levan of Kakheti, to Sultan Suleiman Kanuni<sup>34</sup> in 1524, seeking permission to pray in Jerusalem (Kırzioğlu 1998, 99).

In the second sub-chapter of the second chapter, which describes the raiding of Nakhichevan and Yerevan during the Chaldiran campaign and the subjugation of the Akhaltsikhe-Chorokhi Atabags (1514), the author characterizes the Samtskhe-Saatabago bordering Northeastern Anatolia. According to him, it included Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, Altunkala<sup>35</sup>, Chrdili, Artaani, and Kola in the upper part of Mtkvari; And Shavsheti, Artvini, Artanuji, Oltisi, Barduzi, Narmani, Tortomi, Yusufeli, and Speri regions in the upper part of Chorokhi. Here he repeats once more that Mzechabuki (1502-1516) ruled this area inhabited by Orthodox Kipchaks, who obeyed the Ottomans. In the east, the border of Saatbago was limited by Mount Alagoz, in the west by Mount Kop, and in the south by the beylik of the nomadic Afshar-Turkmen (Kırzioğlu 1998, 102).<sup>36</sup>

The author points out that after taking Tabriz, on his way back, Selim demanded provisions from his lieutenants - Afshar Bey and Samtskhe Atabag. At that time, Selim was camping in the residence of Chalkavuri village. Afshar Bey did not comply with this request, and Atabag provided provisions and additionally gave the castle of Speri (Kırzioğlu 1998, 103).<sup>37</sup> It is also stated that during the reign of Yavuz (Sultan Selim I), the regions of Speri and Livana (Yusufeli and Artvin) represented the border between the Ottoman Empire and Saatabago, which Yavuz marched through. Later, during the rule of Sultan Suleiman Suleiman Kanuni, it was incorporated into the Ottoman Empire (Kırzioğlu 1998, 104).

Kırzioğlu indicates that on his way to Chaldiran, Selim reached the village of Sogmen on Thursday, August 9. At this point, an ambassador<sup>38</sup> from the Georgian

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34 Sultan Suleiman Kanuni - Suleiman I, commonly known as Suleiman the Magnificent in the West and Suleiman the Lawgiver (Kānūnī Sulṭān Süleymān) (Trans./Ed.)

35 Okros Tsikhe (golden castle) in Adigeni region.

36 Kırzioğlu examines Yavuz Sultan Selim's letters to Sevinduk Khan of Iran, where he refers to the Afshars as loyal to the Ottomans. The following districts are named as part of Afshar Beylik: Gyumri, Kars-Arpachai, Shuregel-Basyan, Erzurum to Chobankofru. Chobankofru itself represented the border between the Ottomans and the Atabags (R.K).

37 To confirm the mentioned event, Kırzioğlu notes in footnote 41 that while handing over the castle and provisions, Mzechabuki Atabag also sent a letter to Selim, which is kept in the Topkapı Palace archive, N5846. However, according to Kırzioğlu, he did not see this letter due to the procedures of document registration. Instead, Kırzioğlu uses a document describing the event by the head of State Chancellery Ibn Kemal (Kemalpaşazâde) during Selim's time. We should also note that Kemalfashazade refers to the people from Samtskhe as Georgians. Regarding this event, Fahrettin Kırzioğlu also examines the famous Ottomanist Hammer's note, where Hammer refers to the hand-over of the key to Kigi (Kığı) Castle together with Speri.

38 It should be noted that Mzechabuki is always referred to as Georgian in the sources certified by

ruler Mzechabuki, known as Nizam and belonging to the Ak Koyunlu community, approached Selim. The ambassador presented Selim with 2,000 sheep sent by Mzechabuki, along with a certain quantity of processed skins and honey. Furthermore, the ambassador was accompanied by the nephews of Alauddevle<sup>39</sup>, who had fled to the Qizilbashs of Dulkadir<sup>40</sup> and switched allegiance to the Ottomans. The Ottomans presented a robe to their ambassador for him to give to Mzechabuki (Kırzioğlu 1998, 106).

Upon returning from Tavriz, Selim's army, which had set out for the winter, was facing a shortage of provisions. Upon reaching Kars, he sent a message to Mzechabuki, expressing his dissatisfaction with the delay in the grain he had requested (Kırzioğlu 1998, 106). On October 8, 1514, Selim, in a state of anger, advanced towards the borders of Saatabago, reaching the Kola area and establishing his camp in the village of Chalagavur (Chalkavur or Chaglagur). Nizami Bey, ambassador of Mzechabuki, was accompanying Selim's army, sending information after information about the developing situation. Ultimately, news arrived from Mzechabuki confirming that he had dispatched provisions to Chobankopru<sup>41</sup> (Kırzioğlu 1998, 110).<sup>42</sup>

The author of the monograph discusses the events that took place in Samtskhe-Saatabago after Selim's return to Istanbul in 1515. To support his account, he references "Letters of the Sultans" by Haidar Chelib.<sup>43</sup> The author points out that after Selim departed from the region, the Safavids resumed their attacks in the Baiburt and Erzurum areas. Additionally, after the death of Mzechabuki, a split occurred within the Atabag family. Some members aligned with the Ottomans, while others sided with the Safavids in their bid to seize the Atabag throne (Kırzioğlu 1998, 114).<sup>44</sup> Here is provided an excerpt from Haider Celebi's record regarding ongoing events, that by the decision of the divan on August 28, 1515, Commander Sinan Pasha was sent on a campaign to Eastern Anatolia and Upper Mtkvari, and he was granted the authority to invade Georgia (Kırzioğlu 1998, 114-115)<sup>45</sup>. However, despite the preparations for war, the invasion of the Otto-

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Kırzioğlu.

39 In 1505, Shah Ismail campaigned in Beylik of Dulkadir. As a result, the nephews of Alauddevle first escaped to Qizilbash, then found refuge to Mzechabuki (Kırzioğlu 1998, 107, footnote 46). Mikheil Svanidze refers to the notes by Hammer, who reports comparatively different information about the mentioned fact. According to him those two persons were the sons of the Shah Ismail's brother, Hidir Oghlu (see, Mikheil Svanidze, *From the History of Georgian-Ottoman Relationship*, XVI-XVII cc, publish house "Metsniereba", Tbilisi, 1971, p. 49) (იხ. მიხეილ სვანიძე, საქართველო-ოსმალეთის ურთიერთობის ს.ს. გამომცემლობა „მეცნიერება“, თბილისი, 1971, გვ. 49).

40 In sources and literature, it is also referred to as Zulkadri.

41 Same as Chobani bridge.

42 Kırzioğlu, relying on various sources, indicates that Mzechabuki sent three thousand sheep to Chobankopru. Also, in order to forgive Selim, he sent the key of Speri Castle to Chalgavur village (in Turkish: Çalagavur) (see footnote 48).

43 Münşeatü's-selâtîn

44 Kırzioğlu has indicated the diaries of the Sultan's divan and the secretary of the meetings of the consultative council, Haider Celebi, as the source confirming this news.

45 It is worth noting that Kırzioğlu directly mentions the name "Georgia" as stated in the source. However, he provides an explanatory note in parentheses on his own initiative – "Atabeg Yurdu"

man army's camp was postponed until a later time (Kırzioğlu 1998, 114).<sup>46</sup>

Kırzioğlu continues the story about the struggle for the throne in Samtskhe-Saatabago and mentions that on December 18, 1515, during a meeting of the divan gathered in Edirne, it was reported that Kizilbash Bey Rumlu Div Sultan had arrived in Yerevan. Additionally, foreign merchants brought news that Mzechabuki's brother Qvarqvare<sup>47</sup> had fled to Shah Ismail while Manuchar remained loyal to the Ottomans and assumed the throne of Georgia<sup>48</sup> (Kırzioğlu 1998, 116).

It is important to quote a note from Kırzioğlu regarding Manuchar. He points out that in the Georgian chronicles, Atabag Manuchar is not mentioned after Mzechabuki, and it is likely that he was the son of Mzechabuki (see footnote 62)<sup>49</sup>. The information provided in the same footnote regarding Qvarqvare IV is particularly interesting.<sup>50</sup> Kırzioğlu examines Hasan Rumlu's "The Most Beautiful Histories" (Ahsenü't-Tevarih) and Marie Brosset's "Historie de la Géorgie"

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(Saatabago in Georgian). This name was introduced by him in Turkish historiography and is frequently employed by modern Turkish historians. Professor Tsisana Abuladze offers insights into the mentioned campaign. She translated an order issued by Selim I in the name of Ali Bey, which was published by the Turkish historian Selahattin Tansel, concerning the organization of the campaign in Georgia. It is likely that this order was a diplomatic maneuver by Selim since he had an interest in the conquest of Zulqadri in Anatolia and wanted to conceal the main goal with this order. Otherwise, he had neither an excuse nor a reason to attack Georgia. On the contrary, he was appreciative of the Georgians for their assistance in the Battle of Chaldiran (See Tsisana Abuladze, "Turkish Sources for the History of Samtskhe-Saatabago in the First Quarter of the 16th Century," Tbilisi, 1983, pp. 9-10, 26 / ცისანა აბულაძე, თურქული წყაროები XVI საუკუნის I მეოთხედის სამცხე-საათაბაგოს ისტორიისათვის, თბილისი, 1983, გვ. 9-10, 26).

46 See footnote (59).

47 Kırzioğlu refers to Qvarqvare as Korkora. It's important to note that Qvarqvare was not the brother of Mzechabuki but his nephew. This information is available in the book "International Relations in the Middle East during the Ottoman-Iranian Wars and Georgia in the 16th Century," published by the "Nekeri" publishing house, Tbilisi, 2008, on page 45 (საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობანი ახლო აღმოსავლეთში ოსმალეთ-ირანის ომების დროს და საქართველო XVI საუკუნე, გამომცემლობა „ნეკერი“, თბილისი, 2008, გვ. 45)

48 Kırzioğlu refers to Qvarqvare as Korkora. It's important to note that Qvarqvare was not the brother of Mzechabuki but his nephew. This information is available in the book "International Relations in the Middle East during the Ottoman-Iranian Wars and Georgia in the 16th Century," published by the "Nekeri" publishing house, Tbilisi, 2008, on page 45.

49 It appears that Georgian sources concerning Manuchar were not accessible to Kırzioğlu. It is established that Manuchar was the sixth son of Qvarqvare II and the uncle of Qvarqvare III, as indicated in Kristine Sharashidze's work, "Materials of the History of South-West Georgia XV-XVIII Centuries," Tbilisi, 1961, pages 99-100 (ქრისტინე შარაშიძე, სამხრეთ-დასავლეთ საქართველოს ისტორიის მასალები XV-XVIII სს., თბილისი, 1961, გვ. 99-100). Manuchar managed to seize it, but his control over it was short-lived. Qvarqvare made the decision to seek the Shah's assistance to achieve his objectives. This information can be found in the book "International Relations in the Middle East during the Ottoman-Iranian Wars and Georgia in the 16th Century," published by the "Nekeri" publishing house, Tbilisi, 2008, on page 45.

50 Kırzioğlu has incorrectly indicated Qvarqvare IV, which may be a technical error, as after Mzechabuki, Atabag was succeeded by his nephew Qvarqvare III (1516-1535). This information is available in the book "International relations in the Middle East during the Ottoman-Iranian wars and Georgia in the 16th century," published by "Nekeri" publishing house, Tbilisi, 2008, on page 45.

(II/I/214). Hasan Rumlu describes the events of the conflict between Manuchar and Qvarqvare<sup>51</sup> during the years 922 (1516) to 923 (1517) Hijri. He mentions that in 1516, while Shah Ismail was in Nakhichevan, a war broke out in Georgia between Qvarqvare and Manuchar. Qvarqvare fled and reported to the Shah about the raids and conflicts in Georgia. In response, the Shah immediately dispatched Rumlu Div Sultan, Cherkez Hasan, Qajarlu Narin Bey, Rumlu Kazan Bey, and Chotelu Hasan Bey to deal with this situation and defeat Manuchar. These Beys, like a calamity from the heavens, reached Akshehir (Akhalkalaki) via Shuregel (Arfachai) and laid siege to it. Manuchar found himself in a dire situation, and he withdrew to the village of Veli<sup>52</sup> along with his nobles. In this village, Manuchar was intercepted by Div Sultan, who defected to the Ottoman side. The Beys sent by Tahmasp I then laid siege to the fortress of Tumuk, which was defended by the Manuchari commander Oruz-Batur.<sup>53</sup> It is a fort built on a hill with ravines coming down from the sides. This castle withstood the siege for fourteen days. However, after that period, the Muslims managed to infiltrate the water supply tunnel of the castle and capture the defenders. Oruz Batur was released from prison in exchange for significant gifts and surrendered to Div Sultan. Div Sultan handed over the governance of Georgia to Qvarqvare and returned. In 1517, while Sultan Selim was in Egypt, Shah Ismail (1516-1517) spent the winter again in Nakhichevan. In this year, Manuchar allied with Kizilahmetoglu, the sanjak-bey of Bayburt, and went to war with the Ottomans in the direction of the Chorokhi valley. At that time, in the region of Tao, Oltisi, and Artanuji, Div Sultan launched an attack but later returned and arrived at Chukur Saad. Also, during the last years of Yavuz's rule in 924/1518, Shah Ismail spent the winter in Tabriz. During this period, Shirvan governor Sheikh Shah, Reshti Fadishah Emir Debbaji, and Karkii Sultan Ahmed Lahijan visited him and pledged their allegiance. The governor of Georgia, Qvarqvare, also visited the Shah in his own palace. Along with Qvarqvare Div Sultan was sent to Georgia, and he defeated Lore and Surami (Kirzioglu 1998, 116-117).

According to Kirzioglu's conclusion, the transfer of the above-mentioned two parts located north and east of Saatabago to Kirzioglu shows that his dependence on Tabriz increased even more (Kirzioglu 1998, 117).

Kirzioglu further explores the situation of Qvarqvare by referring to Marie Brosset's translation of *The Georgian Chronicles*. According to his findings, in 1520, the Ottomans launched an attack against Qvarqvare IV<sup>54</sup>. Subsequently, they extended their operations beyond his territory into Trialeti and Kartli, resulting in widespread destruction (Kirzioglu 1998, 117).

During the eastern campaign, while Selim was in Damascus, a significant meeting took place on November 22, 1516. This gathering was attended by the Georgian Bey<sup>55</sup> Manuchar, the Ottoman tributary rulers of Samegrelo and Imere-

51 Kirzioghlu reads as Korkora. It can be (კ) „vav “written instead of „r“(კ) in the original text, then it could be read as Qvarqvare (ყვარყვარე) or Quarquare (ყუარყუარე). Kirzioghlu himself and other historians often refer it as Gorgora as well.

52 Kirzioglu points out that Veli is misspelled as -Dil, should be -Vel.

53 Tmogvi castle

54 Should be Qyrqvare III

55 The term “Beg” was often used in Turkish-speaking countries before adoption of Islam and till today it is applied by the meaning of “Bey” and “Beg”. It denotes the status of the distinguished

ti<sup>56</sup>. Subsequently, on December 10, 1516, during a session of the divan convened in Damascus, Manuchari, one of the Georgian Beys, was officially acknowledged as the ruler of Georgia. He was presented with a flag and received the appropriate respect and recognition (Kırzioğlu 1998, 117). On December 15, Selim departed from Damascus and headed to Egypt. By December 22, he had reached the Ra Sasa Palace<sup>57</sup>, where he issued a berat officially appointing Manuchar as the ruler. Selim also provided him with the necessary equipment and resources, after which Manuchar was sent on his way (Kırzioğlu 1998, 118).<sup>58</sup>

Kırzioğlu once again refers to the diaries of the aforementioned Haider Celebi<sup>59</sup> and highlights the events that transpired in the region of Erzincan and Samtskhe-Saatabago in 1517-1518. It is mentioned that on August 29, 1517, a report about the battle between Qyarqvar<sup>60</sup>, who was supported by the Safavids, and Mirza Bey of Erzincan was presented at the divan meeting in Aleppo. During this battle, the Bey of Erzincan was killed, and the bey of Speri was defeated (Kırzioğlu 1998, 117). During the Chaldiran campaign, Selim incorporated the fortress of Speri and the surrounding region that had been taken from the Atabags of Samtskhe into the province of Erzincan. This Vilayet was combined with the areas of Kemah, Erzincan, Tercan, and Bayburt, which were conquered the following year (Kırzioğlu 1998,117).

On the same and the next page, Kırzioğlu revisits the history of Speri and notes that in 1514, while Sultan Selim was positioned between Kars and Basiani<sup>61</sup>, Atabag Mzechabuki sent him the key to the Speri Castle. Following the fortress's surrender, the sanjak of Speri was established in the surrounding area and placed under the jurisdiction of the Trabzon banner. In August 1517, Atabag Qyarqvar IV conducted a raid on Speri and Bayburt, which led to the massacre of sanjak beys, likely in response to the capture of Speri. The specific lands in this area were not described. In 1518, Nasuh, the newly appointed sanjak bay of Bayburt, conquered the Speri region and likely documented the place. It's worth noting that the 1516-1518 Erzincan and Bayburt defters, compiled at Nasuh's command, do not mention Speri (Kırzioğlu, 1998:119-120).

During the early years of Sultan Suleiman Kanun's rule, he abolished the Erzincan vilayet and, until March 1523, integrated the provinces of this vilayet into the Sivas eyalet. As part of this administrative change, Speri, designated as a "Kaza,"<sup>62</sup> became part of the Bayburt sanjak. This restructuring is corroborated by the 1523 Bayburti (Bayburt) Defter (Kırzioğlu 1998, 120).

The third chapter of the monograph is dedicated to Sultan Suleiman's con-

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people of the society.

56 The author does not name them. It seems that the mentioned persons are not named in the source used by the author either.

57 Sasa was a palace located 19 km from Medina.

58 It is known that Manuchar I was Atabag in 1516-1518. Qyarqvar regained the throne with the help of the Persians. In 1518, Manuchar again tried to regain the throne with the support of the Ottomans, but to no avail.

59 The mentioned defters are included in the collection of so called "Muhime Defters" and are published by the administration of the Prime Minister's Archive.

60 Qyarqvar IV

61 Known also as Phasiane. (Trans./Ed.)

62 Administrative unit in the Ottoman Empire, corresponding to a district.



quests in 1534-1555. The first sub-chapter (A) tells about Suleiman's conquest of territories along the Araks River (1534) and the creation of the Erzurum Vilayet (1535). The author refers to the beginning of relations between Sultan Suleiman and Shah Ismail, the Safavid campaigns in eastern Georgia, and Shah Ismail taking Saatabago under his protection. The date of Shah Ismail's death is indicated here - May 23, 1524, after which Shah Tahmazasp I ascended the throne (Kırzioğlu 1998, 120-124).

The (b) sub-chapter discusses the occupation of Samtskhe-Saatabago territories by the first beylerbeylik of Erzurum, established by the Ottomans, and outlines the northern and eastern borders of the Erzurum Eyalet. In the opening paragraph, the author revisits Manuchari's ascension to the throne of Atabag after Mzechabuki's death<sup>63</sup> and his submission to the Ottomans. It then delves into the capture of the Atabag throne by Mzechabuki's brother, Kvarevare IV, with the assistance of the Safavids. The text further highlights the capture of Akhalkalaki by the Safavid army under the command of Rumlu Div Sultan, the invasion of the Tmogvi area in 1516, and the capture of Saatabago with its subjugation to Tabriz. This Atabag, referred to as "Gorgor" by the Ottomans and Safavids, attacked Ottoman lands with the support of Shah Ismail during Yavuz Sultan Selim's stay in Cairo in late July or early August 1517, resulting in the killing of the sanjak beys of Bayburt and Speri. Nevertheless, under the reign of Sultan Suleyman Kanuni, Speri was once again under Ottoman control, a fact substantiated by the 1523 census defter (Kırzioğlu 1998, 160).

The author emphasizes the significance of establishing and fortifying Erzurum as a military base for Ottoman conquests in Georgia and the broader Caucasus region, as well as for conducting campaigns against Iran in the Caucasus. He briefly mentions the historical invasion of South Georgia territories<sup>64</sup> by the Seljuk Sultan Alp Arslan and notes that following the Seljuks, the first governor of Erzurum who came from that region to administer Saatabago territories was Mehmed Bey of Dulkadir. The matter of Erzurum's Eyalet was resolved on October 6, 1535, during a divan meeting chaired by Suleiman in Bitlis. They decided to refortify the old fortress of Erzurum, and Mehmed Khan of Dulkadir was appointed as the beylerbey. Mehmed Khan, along with his brothers, nephews, and supporters, relocated to Erzurum. Additionally, Sunnis from Tabriz also moved to Erzurum. In 1536, preparations for a campaign against Atabag Qvarqware IV were initiated by Mehmed Khan. The author verifies the pertinent sources about this event and notes that on the 15th of Muḥarram 943 A.H. (July 4, 1536), Mehmed Khan, the governor of Bayburt, led a campaign into the bordering territory of Georgia<sup>65</sup>. During this campaign, he defeated the Georgians and captured five Georgian dignitaries, along with other captives (Kırzioğlu 1998, 161).

According to the author, Bagrat II<sup>66</sup>, the king of Imereti, who was aligned with the Ottomans, seized the opportunity presented by Qvarqware's defeat at the hands of the Ottomans and launched a campaign against the Atabag. Kırzioğlu

63 As proof, he uses the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles* by Marie Brosset that Atabag Mzechabuki died in 1616 (p. 6). In fact, Mzechabuki died in 1515 (R.K).

64 He applies the spread name of Samtskhe-Saatabago in the Turkish historiography – “Ahiska” (Akhiskha).

65 Kırzioğlu gives in parentheses - “Atabekli” (Saatabago).

66 Should be Bagrat III (R.K.).



mentions the Battle of Murjakheti<sup>67</sup>, which took place on August 13, 1535, between Bagrat II and Qvarqvar IV. To verify this event, he refers to the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles* by Marie Brosset. However, the author points out (in a footnote) that Persian sources do not mention the defeat of Atabag Qvarqvar by Mehmed Bey of Dulkadir and the King of Imereti. While Vakhushti Batonishvili suggests that this event occurred in 1535, Kırzioğlu believes the correct date is 1536. Kırzioğlu reiterates Vakhushti's account of Qvarqvar's death while being in captivity at Imereti and Otar Shalikashvili sending Qvarqvar's son, Kaikhosro II, to the Ottoman Padishah in 1545, where he received assistance. The Turkish sources verified by the author make it clear that Mehmed Khan crossed the Bana River during his campaigns in Georgia and captured the fortresses<sup>68</sup> of Berakani and Bana. According to another source, Ibrahim Mulhem<sup>69</sup> of Erzurum, Mehmed Pasha attacked the Georgians, killed many [Georgians-R.K] in the region of Mamirvani (present-day - Narman), and captured the fortresses of Oltisi and Bana. Based on the mentioned source, Kırzioğlu suggests that although the source mentions Mehmed Khan's campaign in Upper Basiani and Oltisi Water Valley, it was likely his younger brother, Mirza Ali Bey, who campaigned in this region. Meanwhile, Mehmed Khan had to march in the direction of the mainstream of Chorokhi and through Speri. In 1536 or 1537, he had to conquer Livana (Yusufeli, Artvini). This assumption by Kırzioğlu is based on the census book of 1538-1539 called the "Narman-Ilgar" defter. (Kırzioğlu 1998, 162-163).

The next sub-chapter (G) deals with the dependency of Samtskhe Saatabago on Iran, Shah Tahmasp's instigation of the Atabags' attacks on the Erzurum area, the lands taken from the Atabags during the second eastern campaign of Sultan Suleiman Kanuni, and the events that took place in Georgia and Shirvan.

The author discusses the history of Samtskhe-Saatabago, reiterating the history of the expeditions to Samtskhe by Mehmed Khan, the beylerbey of Erzurum, and Bagrat III of Imereti. The author also examines Otar Shalikashvili's<sup>70</sup> political efforts to restore the Atabagi throne. Here, Kırzioğlu's assessments regarding the historical geography of Samtskhe-Saatabago are interesting. He indicates that the former Saatabago with a large area was divided into two parts. The first part of the Mtkvari valley was called "Mosuk", and the territory in the Chorokhi Basin was referred to as "Dav-Eli". The first part was subject to the Safavids, and the second part to the Ottomans. This division is clearly visible in the official historiography of the Safavids and the historiography of the Ottomans. Kırzioğlu continues and says that of these two parts, "Moskhi" represents the Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki-Dmanisi<sup>71</sup> districts and which derives from the old ethnic name. Referring to Samtskhe, he divides this name as follows: "Sami-Sikhe"<sup>72</sup>. However, when explaining the etymology of Samtskhe, he favors the variant "Sameskhe," "Moskhi Yurdu" (Sa-Moskhi, "Moskhi Yurdu"), and in this matter, he checks the French

67 The author has indicated- Akhalkalaki, however, in the same form as it is used in Turkish literature – Ahilkelek (Ahilkelek)/ Akşehir (Akshehir).

68 Verifies the information from the "Kühü'l-Ahbar" (Arabic - Essence of the News) by Mustafa Ali (in Turkish: Gelibolulu Ali Çelebi).

69 The book of Mulhem: Muradname.

70 The author calls Otar Shalikashvili as the Naib of Atabey i.e. regent.

71 Kırzioğlu has made an inaccuracy here, because Dmanisi has never been a part of Meskhethi.

72 Turkish language has not the consonant "ts" (ç) therefore, he uses "s" (b).

translation of *The Georgian Chronicles*. As for "Dav-el," he states that this area was mentioned by Xenophon in 400 BC when he saw warriors called "Tavok" in the Chorokhi basin, and in the Middle Ages, this place was called "Tav." This means the residence of the Scythians. Atabags also called this side<sup>73</sup> "Tav," and it included today's Shenkaya-Narmani-Oltisi-Tortumi-Artanuji-Yusufeli-Artvini regions (Kırzioğlu 1998, 171). Kırzioğlu cites the fact from the official history of the Safavids about the division of Georgia into seven parts, where, along with the parts of the disintegrated Georgia, Meskheta is mentioned, with Akhalkalaki<sup>74</sup> as the center. Here he indicates that Kaikhosro<sup>75</sup>, the son of Atabag Qvarqvar, ruled on the side of "Mosuk" [Meskheta R.K.]. According to the same source, the king of Kartli, Luarsab, the king of Imereti, and the ruler of Samegrelo, Bagrat II<sup>76</sup>, came out against Tahmasp I, and at the same time, they attacked the Shah's subordinate, Kaikhosro Atabag. It was to punish them that the Shah sent his army against them several times. The Shah put Bagrat in his place and subdued him. Bagrat was the owner of Tao, which he had taken from the Atabags before. The author notes that the western part of Samtskhe-Saatabago, with the center of Artanuji/Tortumi-Akchakale<sup>77</sup>, as well as the royal principalities of western Georgia, was under Ottoman control (Kırzioğlu 1998, 172).

The author does not miss to overlook the events of 1543-1545. He mentions that after Ferhad Pasha, the second beylerbey in the Erzurum area, Kyzil Ahmed Musa Pasha, originally from Kastamonu, becomes the third beylerbey. Kırzioğlu acknowledges the information provided in the source and notes that some nobles of the Atabag did not fulfill their obligations, providing a sufficient reason for their punishment. Musa Pasha, following the orders of Sultan Suleiman, led an invasion of Tao in 1543 with his sanjak-beys into the territory of the Atabag, where he laid siege to the fortress and successfully captured it in ten days.<sup>78</sup> Upon hearing this news, Bagrat came to the aid of the Tao people. While Musa Pasha was besieging the fortress of Oltisi, Bagrat offered him numerous gifts and assured him that if Musa Pasha chose to withdraw, he would willingly surrender the keys to the fortress. Musa Pasha subsequently withdrew towards Erzurum, but Bagrat used a ruse to outmaneuver him and managed to cut off Musa and his army. (Kırzioğlu 1998, 173-174)<sup>79</sup>.

The text mentions that Hadim Pasha, the beylerbey of Diyarbakir, received this news and led a campaign into Tao. However, by the time he arrived, the Georgian rulers had already left the area. Therefore, Hadim Pasha burned down some of the villages and turned back. The author also references events related to this in *The Georgian Chronicles* (Kırzioğlu 1998, 175. Also see footnotes 146,147).

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73 Alem-Aray-i Abbasi.

74 Kırzioğlu: Akşehir/Ahılkelek.

75 Kırzioğlu: Korkora and Keyhüsrev.

76 Kırzioğlu indicates the name incorrectly. It should be the king of Imereti Bagrat III and the Principal of Samegrelo.

77 Akçakale in Turkish. (Trans./Ed.)

78 Kırzioğlu explains neither the name of the fortress nor location for some reason, as we have read it, it is "Eli" fortress

79 Kırzioğlu highlights in footnote 145 that, according to the source (Ahsenü-i Tevarih), Musa Pasha marched to Tao with sixty sanjak-beys. However, he points out that this seems to be a mistake, as the number of sanjak-beys appears to be exaggerated tenfold.

He also mentions information about the Battle of Sokhoista in 1545 (Kırzioğlu 1998, 175), which is drawn from *The Georgian Chronicles*. He further highlights Shah Tahmasp's raids on Akhalkalaki in 1546, during which the soldiers abducted large and small cattle (Kırzioğlu 1998, 175).

Regarding Suleiman Kanuni's eastern campaign against Iran, Kırzioğlu highlights that in 1548, during Suleiman's march on Tabriz, he issued orders to Tekeoğlu Mehmet Pasha, the beylerbey of Erzurum. These orders instructed Mehmet Pasha to lead an expedition towards Saatbago and seize the fortresses of Samtskhe located near the beylerbeylik of Erzurum. This action was intended to serve as a punitive measure by the Ottomans against the Atabags<sup>80</sup> who had turned against them and aligned themselves with Iran. On August 15-16, 1548, Mehmed Pasha led an invasion of Samtskhe and initiated a siege on the Barakani fortress, situated to the northeast of Oltisi and on the right bank of the Banistsqali River. Despite the determined resistance of the fortress's inhabitants, the Ottomans successfully captured the castle. Subsequently, the Ottoman forces occupied several other locations, including Komik Castle<sup>81</sup>, Panak Castle<sup>82</sup> situated on the right bank of the Bana River, Panaki Castle situated approximately 3 kilometers downstream from the confluence of the Bana and Oltisi Rivers, Samagara Castle, and Akha Castle (Kırzioğlu 1998, 195-196)<sup>83</sup>.

Kırzioğlu highlights that during the second Safavid campaign led by Suleiman I, the Ottomans achieved a significant territorial gain by capturing the Saatbago region located to the north of the Erzurum vilayet. They established four sanjaks in this area. Kırzioğlu further explains that in August 1548, Mehmed Pasha, the beylerbey of Erzurum, successfully seized the fortresses in the Narmani and Bana regions, and between August 25-28 of the same year, Safavid Ismail Mirza managed to capture the Kars area. During this period, another Safavid commander, Behram Mirza, led an expedition towards Bayburt and engaged in a battle with Mehmed Pasha in that region. It appears that Atabag Kaikhosro II and his commander Otar Shalikashvili seized the opportunity during this conflict to recapture the fortresses in the Narmani-Bana area that had been lost to the

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80 As mentioned earlier, Kırzioğlu considers Jaqeli Atabags as a Christian Kipchaks. He reiterates this characterization in this paragraph as well. However, it's important to note that there is no concrete evidence to support this point of view.

81 In the Arabic script, the name is written as "Komki," and in the Georgian sources, it is also referred to as the "Komki Castle." Due to the specific features of the Turkish language, which necessitate the insertion of a vowel between consonants, the author [Kırzioğlu] interprets it as "komik."

82 In this context, Kırzioğlu's observations regarding the Georgian language are intriguing. He points out that Georgians often append the letters "i" or "a" to their names, creating new variations. An example of this phenomenon is evident in the name "Bana," which becomes "Ban(a)." The author suggests that this might be the Turkish name "Ban-lar," signifying "Ulu-Beg'ler" (Kırzioğlu 1998, p. 195, footnote 212).

83 The author cross-references multiple sources, and among them, Celalzade and Ali only mention the names of Barakan and Fenek. The names of the seven fortresses taken by Mehmet Pasha have been mentioned by the Ottoman historian Ibrahim Pecevi as: Barakani, Komike, Banaki, Barnaki, Kochiki, Samagari, and Akha. Additionally, Katib Celebi's "Jihannuma" indicates that the mentioned last two castles were captured in 1549. Celebi lists eight fortresses: Barakan-Barusu, Kormiki (Komike), Peneki, Barnaki, Samagari, Agha-Berdi (Akha), Nihakhi, and Irmakhuri (Kırzioğlu 1998, 196, footnote 214).

Ottomans. Furthermore, they managed to reclaim the Fertekrek/Livana sanjak from the Ottomans, a stronghold that had been lost in 1536-1537 and reached the border of Speri. According to Kirzioglu, these castles and the surrounding area were recaptured by the Ottomans in 1549, relying on the sources indicating that the castles were lost a year before being retaken by the Ottomans. Kirzioglu also points out that the maneuver by Atabags is not documented in either Ottoman or Georgian sources. However, in *The Georgian Chronicles*, it is mentioned that the Ottomans made conquests in the direction of Samtskhe in 1549, and the date is also cited - the year 1547. Kirzioglu believes that the date 1547 is incorrectly indicated (Kirzioglu 1998, 198). He verifies Hasan Rumlu's account of the events in 1549 and finds it to be accurate. According to Rumlu, the Ottoman Padishah sent the third vizier Kara Ahmed Pasha with four thousand horsemen and foot soldiers to invade Georgia. They retook the "Dav-el" area from Kaikhosro, the son of Qvarqvare, and returned to their homeland (Kirzioglu 1998, 199).

According to Kirzioglu, on the orders of Suleiman Kanuni, the western territories of Samtskhe were raided. Based on the sources, he indicates that when Suleiman was stationed in Karaaghaji with his army, he received news about Georgians, raiding the border areas inhabited by Muslims. Due to the fact that Kaikhosro II lost Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe, he chose Tortumi Castle, which is close to Erzurum, as his residence. Suleiman ordered the third vizier Ahmed Pasha to lead an attack on various parties of Saatabago. The beylerbeys and sanjak-beys of Erzurum, Dulqadir (Maras), Rumi (Sivas), along with a group of janisaries and Kethudas<sup>84</sup>, were to be united in his army. Additionally, a unit of foreigners serving in Padishah's palace and their leaders were to join the campaign. On August 25, 1549, Ahmed Pasha set out, and by September 8, he had encamped in front of the Erzurum Castle, awaiting the arrival of the rest of the army as per the Sultan's orders. On September 11, 1549, the Ottoman army initiated a siege on Tortumi Castle. The castle's keeper, George Aga<sup>85</sup>, refused to surrender and chose to fight. The Ottomans successfully captured the castle on September 13, and they appointed a sanjak bey to oversee it. Following this, they peacefully acquired the fortresses of Nikhakhi and Amirakhori and brought them under Muslim control. On September 17, the Ottomans initiated a siege on the renowned Akchaqala fortress near Tortumi, often referred to as „the locker of Georgia“ / „საქართველოს კლიტე“ situated in present-day Onguzek village. They weakened the fortress walls and eventually succeeded in capturing it on September 22, although it required considerable effort. During the siege, the warden of the fortress was thrown from the walls and killed. Following the capture of Akchaqala, the Ottomans advanced to occupy Eshkesor, Zih, and Hars fortresses. As a result, the entire Tortumi valley, stretching from Nikakhi in the south to Zikhi fortress in the north, was captured (Kirzioglu 1998, 199-200).

After the capture of Akchaqala, on September 24, the Ottoman army approached the fortress of Kamkhisi. On September 30, they conquered Kamkh-

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84 Kethuda was a civil servant and was responsible for conducting court proceedings, managing finances and overseeing administrative affairs.

85 In the "Letter of Good News" sent by Sultan Suleiman Kanuni to the King of France, Thortum Castle is mentioned as the primary castle of the country. According to another source, there was an individual named Görçi Giorgi (see Kirzioglu 1998, 199, footnote 226) who served as the warden of Tortumi.

isi, Panaskerti, Anzavi, and other Agjaqala fortresses. All the fortresses, fifteen in total, located in the same area, under the control of these three castles, were abandoned by the guards, who were frightened by the Ottoman army and fled. The Ottomans took control of these fortresses, which belonged to the Atabags. Furthermore, all the castles in the valleys of the Oltisi River and its tributaries below Bardizi and Oltisi, as well as the castles up to the borders of Kola and Artanuji, were captured. On October 1, the Ottoman army also seized the Rad<sup>86</sup> fortress located in the village of Khakho<sup>87</sup> in the Tortumi valley. On October 3, the Ottomans took control of the Kiskim fortress in the Yusufeli-Erkni area from the Georgians<sup>88</sup> in the Livani Valley, and on October 7, they occupied three significant Georgian fortresses - Fertekreki, Nihahi, and Arsus (Ersisi) fortresses in Yusufeli.

The majority of the fifteen castles captured from the Georgians in the Tao region<sup>89</sup> had been destroyed. Four sanjaks were established in the occupied territory - Tortumi, Agjaqala, Kiamkhisi, and Livana. Following the conquests in Tao on October 24, 1548, the third vizier Ahmed Pasha joined the Padishah's forces as they withdrew from Karacadag, and they camped in Cevlik near Diyarbakir<sup>90</sup> (Kirzioglu 1998, 201-202).

According to various sources, Kirzioglu provides interesting information regarding the fortresses of Samtskhe-Saatabago that were occupied by the Ottomans. He indicates that, according to Celalzade<sup>91</sup>, the number of large and small fortresses seized from Atabag was 45. However, Celalzade names only 11 of them: Tortumi, Nihakhi, Amirakhor, Akhchaqala, Eshkesori, Kiamkhisi, Panaskerti, Anzavi, other Agjaqala, Rad Bey Castle, and Pertekreki. As for the letter sent by Suleiman Kanuni to the king of France, Suleiman informs that in addition to the great fortresses Tortum, Nihah, and Agjaqala, he occupied another 35 fortresses. The names of the captured castles were brought by the historian Selman in Suleiman's army, a total of 39 castles and towers. These are: 1. Tortumi, 2. Akchaqala, 3. Kiskimi, 4. Nihakhi, 5. Pertekreki, 6. Bash-Kapani, 7. Gorgechi, 8. Oduki, 9. Kherisia, 10. Oruskuni, 11. Pisteisori, 12. Eshkesori, 13. Zikikhi, 14. Shekhijeki, 15. Kiamkhisi, 16. Fanaskerti, 17. Orjeki, 18. Anzavi, 19. Panaki, 20. Ferneki, 21. Kotuki, 22. Samagari, 23. Akha, 24. Inchi, 25. Shamkhi, 26. Erteskini, 27. Mushaki, 28. Kechur-koi, 29. Keghvanki, 30. Charchuri, 31. Soghmunruki, 32. Norpurti, 33. Nihakhi, 34. Koduki, 35. Other Agjaqala, 36. Ersuzi, 37. Taktaki, 38. Orushnaki, 39. Chelviri. It is worth noting that Kirzioglu indicates the location of all named castles except Chelviri. The same Celalzade has named the names of four sanjaks founded by the Ottomans on the territory of Tao - Pertekreki, Akchaqala,

86 According to Kirziloglu, in some sources, this castle is also referred to as the "Rad Beg" or "Radik" castle.

87 same as Khakhuli

88 Despite the fact that the source clearly indicates that the Tao-Klarjeti side and the castles belong to Georgians, which Kirzioglu himself also points out, he still refers to the Atabags as "Kipchaks" in his own interpretation.

89 Indicated as "Dav Eli" in the sources mentioned by Kirzioglu.

90 Historical name "Amad".

91 Celalzade Mustafa Çelebi, statesman and historian who wrote about the reign of Suleiman I. He is the author of the work describing the period of Suleiman Kanuni's rule, called "the Magnificent Century".

Tortumi, and Kiamkhisi. The names of several castles mentioned by Pecevi and Uzuncharshili in their works have also been confirmed here, with some variations in spelling. For example, with Pecevi, Kiamkhisi is referred to as Telkhisi; and according to Uzuncharshili, Nikakhi is written as Najakhi, Amirakhorı as Mirakhuri, and Panskert as Bengerdadi. All four sanjaks established in the territory taken from the Atabags of Samtskhe were subordinated to the Erzurum province (Kırzioğlu 1998, 203).

Kırzioğlu cites a translation of Suleiman Kanun's 6-point letter to King Charles V of France. Point 5 is interesting, where Suleiman says that his vizier Ahmed Pasha took 35 fortresses of Georgia. Of these 35 fortresses, 14 were destroyed, and Ottoman garrisons were placed in 21 fortresses. An area the size of one beylerbeylik, consisting of four newly founded sanjaks, joined the Ottoman Empire (Kırzioğlu 1998, 204).

As we can see, Ottoman Sultan Suleiman Kanuni, in his letter indicates the territories acquired from Georgia, without mentioning any Kipchak element.

The next sub-chapter (Ç) deals with Suleiman Kanuni's third eastern campaign. In this sub-chapter, we are interested in the issue of the seizure of Artanuji and Artaani by the Ottomans from Samtskhe Atabags. According to Kırzioğlu, Iskender Pasha, who was sent from Van to Erzurum and appointed as the beylerbey of Erzurum, along with the sanjak-beys of Erzurum and the local army, in 1551 marched on Artanuji, the last fortress belonging to the Atabags in Chorokhi Basin, and occupied it on the 33rd day (May 13, 1551). Then he continued his way to the east and captured the fortresses of Kindzo Damal and Artaani on the banks of Mtkvari. Kırzioğlu cites the events described in the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles* to confirm this story (Kırzioğlu 1998, 207).

According to the information given in the monography<sup>92</sup>, in 1552, Iskender Pasha, beylerbey of Erzurum, imposed tribute to the Georgians and sent it to Sultan Suleiman. He also restored the mosque, originally built by the Aq Qoyunlu in Artanuji but later destroyed by the Georgians, and turned it into a sanjak center, beginning the rapid conversion of the population to Islam (Kırzioğlu 1998, 203).<sup>93</sup>

Based on Persian sources, Kırzioğlu says that in 1551, when Shah Tahmasp I was in Shaki, Kaikhosro II sent ambassadors to him asking for help because Georgian (Meskhetian) Vakhushti, Shermazan, and Luarsab, the king of Kartli, had seized territories from him. At the same time, Iskender Pasha besieged the castle of Artanuji. Kaikhosro was a vassal of the Shah, so the Shah immediately came to his aid. He crossed the mountain and occupied Malinkopi, Arkara, Derzabadi<sup>94</sup>, the beautiful and splendid church in this area, as well as Tmogvi Castle. Amvan, son of Luarsab Shermazan, and Vakhushti visited the Shah and declared their obedience. At that time, Kaikhosro Atabag came to the Shah with lavish

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92 Kırzioğlu refers to the 'Asafname,' the work of Lütfi Pasha, the son-in-law of Sultan Suleiman and Grand Vizier, and an Arabian text dated 1565 presented by Reshid Iskender Oghlu in 1953, preserving interesting information about Artanuji.

93 According to the sources verified by Kırzioğlu, Iskender Pasha led a campaign in the Georgian region, where he called Georgians to obedience. However, his call was met with refusal, and in response, he captured the castle of Artanuji. The owner of the castle, Kaykhosro II, ultimately surrendered to him and presented gifts to the Pasha. Among these gifts was a ruby-colored cup adorned with precious stones, which was subsequently sent to the Sultan.

94 It is not known which places are meant in the mentioned three points.



gifts. Vakhushti and the son of Shermazan were hanged, and their possessions, including Tmogvi Castle, Akhalkalaki, and its surrounding area, were given to Kaikhosro. In this way, Atabag lost Artanuji and Artaani, which remained under Ottoman control, but he received Akhalkalaki and Tmogvi Castles, which belonged to his ancestors, from the Shah. Atabag combined them with the parts of Kobliani, Akhaltsikhe, and Atskuri under his possession, further strengthening his relationship with the Shah (Kırzioğlu 1998, 209). Kirzioglu, when discussing the mentioned event, refers to the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles*. According to the author, by supporting Kaikhosro Atabag in preserving his remaining territories, the Shah created a buffer zone against the Ottomans (Kırzioğlu 1998, 210).

Kirzioglu provides in sufficient detail about Shah Tahmasp's major campaign against the Ottomans in 1552. Of particular interest is the attempt by Kacar Bayram Bey and Atabag Kaikhosro to liberate Tao from the Ottomans. It is mentioned that Tahmasp I planned this military operation while being in Ahlat. Despite Bayram Bey and Kaykhosro's initial success in capturing a few fortresses from the Ottomans, they were suddenly attacked by Beylerbey Iskender of Erzurum with a large army. The Ottomans emerged victorious in this battle, with the Kizilbash and Georgians suffering around 300 casualties, and they were forced to retreat.

Kırzioğlu provides a detailed description of the scenes of the Iran-Ottoman war. Regarding the Peace of Amasya, it is mentioned that Shah Tahmasp I sent an embassy to negotiate with Suleiman Kanuni in the spring of 1555. The embassy, led by Kemalettin Ferukzad Bey, arrived in Amasya on May 10 and held talks with Ottoman officials, including Ayas Pasha, the beylerbey of Erzurum. On May 21, the imperial council- divan at the Padishah's Palace convened, and the Padishah entered the council chamber - divan where he received a letter from the Shah. On June 1, Suleiman Kanuni dispatched the text of the Iran-Ottoman truce to Shah Tahmasp I, which comprised three articles. Kirzioglu emphasizes that while there are documents about the Amasya peace negotiations in the *Muhime Defters*, the details of the temporary truce in Erzurum in 1554, which laid the groundwork for the Amasya Treaty on June 1, are not readily available. According to Kirzioglu, precise information about the Iran-Ottoman borders and the division of the Caucasus region between these two powers can be extracted from Ottoman documents compiled after the Amasya Treaty. In this context, official Persian historiography is intriguing, as it provides insight into the terms of the temporary truce in Erzurum on September 27, 1554. According to these sources, the division of Georgia between the Ottoman Empire and Iran was as follows: Iran retained Kakheti, Meskheti<sup>95</sup> (Akhalsikhe-Borchalo)<sup>96</sup>, and Kartli, while the Ottomans gained control over Imereti, Samegrelo, Svaneti, Guria, and the territories of Atabag along Chorokhi, including Artaani, Artanuji, Oltisi, and Thortumi<sup>97</sup>. Suleiman left Amasya for Istanbul on June 21, 1555. Before leaving, he sent firmans to 11 beylerbeys and local rulers, from Georgia to Bahrain, urging them not to encroach upon the Iranian border. These firmans provided clarity on the territories that remained under Ottoman control (Kırzioğlu 1998, 240-245).

Kırzioğlu refers to Celalzade's work completed in 1556, which provides in-

95 Indicated as "Mosuk"

96 These two prts are given in parentheses by Kirzioglu: Ahıska-Borçalı

97 These areas are referred to by Kirzioglu as Dav-Eli

sights into the Ottoman provinces along the Iranian border following the truce of 1555. Notably, the relevant sections for our context are united in "Vilayet of Erzurum and Georgia." The sections of Georgia that were incorporated into the Ottoman Empire were divided as follows: 2) Parts of Georgia subordinate to Trabzon province: Guria, Samegrelo, and Imereti. 11) Basiani, with the center of the sanjak in Avniki. 13) Kiamkhisi (today's Senkaya and Olur). 14) Oltisi. 15) Mamirvani (Narmani). 16) Tortumi. 17) Pertekreki (Yusufeli and Artvin/Livana). 18) Speri. 29) Batumi, with the sanjak center in Gonio. The tribute collected from Imereti, Samegrelo, and Guria was conveyed to the treasury of Erzurum through the sanjak-bey of Batumi. Sanjaks from positions 13 to 18 and Batumi sanjak were taken away from Samtskhe-Saatabago. During the negotiations in Amasya, it's worth noting that the Ottomans were involved in fighting against the Safavids to capture the center of Kobliani, which bordered Shavsheti, specifically Altunqala, from the already diminished Atabag territory. Additionally, they targeted the regions of Artaani and Kars. Chief Vizier Kara Ahmed Pasha made persistent efforts to address this issue. He met with the Shah Tahmasp's ambassador in Amasya and delivered a letter to four viziers in Iran, namely Masum Khan Safevi, Bedir Khan, Sevunduk Korchibashi, and Shahkuli Shah. In this letter, he outlined the terms of the truce and demanded the handover of Altunqala to the Ottomans. The text of Kara Ahmed Pasha's letter, including the fourth article, which pertains to the Ottomans' demand for Altunqala, has been transliterated and confirmed by Kirzioglu (Kirzioglu 1998, 245-246).<sup>98</sup>

Shah Tahmasp I did not hand over Altunqala to the Ottomans. Instead, he dispatched Varaza, son of Otar Shalikashvili<sup>99</sup>, who was the regent of Kaikhosro II and governor of the Akhalkalaki-Childir<sup>100</sup> district, on a campaign to the eastern regions of the kingdom of Imereti. This news filled the sultan with indignation, and he sent a letter expressing his disappointment. The monograph includes the complete text of the letter transliterated into Latin script (Kirzioglu 1998, 248-249).

**The fourth chapter of the work explores the conquests during the reign of Sultan Murad III, (1578 to 1590).** In sub-chapter a) of the mentioned chapter, the focus is on the multifaceted policy pursued by the Ottomans in the Caucasus region. Based on the purpose of the article, we will only discuss events related to Samtskhe-Saatabago. After making the decision to initiate hostilities against Iran, the Ottomans in Istanbul began preparations for their campaign in the East. Naturally, the western part of Samtskhe-Saatabago under Ottoman control was also involved in these preparations. Fahrettin Kirzioglu provides us with interesting information based on the *Muhime Defters*.<sup>101</sup> He notes that at the beginning of the

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98 In the same article, in parentheses, Kirzioglu explains that Atabag Kaykhosro II- made Adigeni apparently referring to Altunqala, [R.K.] his own capital.

99 Kirzioglu makes his own interpretation here as well and represents Shalikashvili as Çalikoğlu.

100 Chrdili area, Chrdili Lake, Palakatsio.

101 Defters, in which important political, military, social, and economic decisions related to internal and external matters were recorded. These decisions were deliberated in the Council of Ciziers or Civan and then sent to the Padishah for approval or further action. At certain periods of Ottoman history, the Padishahs also attended the Council. The Ottoman archive contains 266 Muhime records spanning the years 961-1323 (1553-1905).

campaign, roadworks were carried out smoothly from the port of Gonio through Artvini, Artanuji, and Artaani. These works were aimed at facilitating the road for carts for the transportation of food for the army and livestock, and cannon tubes. Additionally, the Ottoman command had decided to construct flat-bottomed boats that could sail on the Mtkvari River to transport cargo from Artaani to Tbilisi and from there to Shirvan. However, the plan to construct flat-bottomed boats for transporting cargo from Artaani to Tbilisi and Shirvan was halted due to the lowering of the Mtkvari River's water level at the head of the Mtkvari in Artaani. Additionally, the vulnerability of these boats to attacks by Georgians loyal to Iran, living in the territories from Surami led to the abandonment of this idea. The central government's decision to halt this project was reported to the Beylerbey of Erzurum on June 1, 1578 (Kırzioğlu 1998, 277. See footnote). As previously mentioned, before the complete annexation of Samtskhe-Saatabago, the Ottoman central government-initiated relations with the Georgian royal principalities through the Beylerbey of Erzurum. A similar approach was employed on this occasion. On June 16, 1578, a letter was dispatched to the beylerbey of Erzurum, instructing him to send a letter and clothing to Atabag, the governor of Childir, Varazashvili,<sup>102</sup> and the local nobles under Kizilbash's authority. This message conveyed that if the Ottomans were to march into their territories, they should submit to Ottoman rule, and in addition, propose to cede Akchaqala<sup>103</sup>, situated in the northeast of Chrdili Lake, to the Ottomans. In return, a relative of Kaikhosro Atabag, who had passed away in 1573, would receive ownership of Oltisi Castle. The beylerbey of Erzurum had to wait for a response from Samtskhe and then act according to the instructions of the Ottoman central government (Kırzioğlu 1998, 278). The commander of the Ottoman army, Lala Mustafa Pasha, dispatched letters to 11 rulers, including Georgian kings and governors in the Caucasus, and-informed them of his intention to march on Shirvan, commencing the campaign in early April 1578. Lala Pasha requested their assistance and proper support in this endeavor. Regarding Samtskhe, Lala Pasha sent individual letters to both the Chrdili governor Varazashvili and Samtskhe Atabag Qvarqvare IV. He awaited responses from these recipients through his emissaries (Kırzioğlu 1998, 278-279). It is worth noting one more fact regarding the conversion of local beys and the history of Samtskhe-Javakheti. During Lala Pasha's tenure as the beylerbey of Erzurum, he sent a letter to some Ahmed, an Islamized sanjaks-bey of Shavsheti and a representative of the Jaqeli branch. The mentioned bey had granted the sanjak of Shavsheti in a manner of Ojaklik<sup>104</sup>. In the letter, Lala Pasha demanded from Ahmed to deliver his request for allegiance and assistance during the campaign to the son of Levan, Alexander, and the son of "Ujrulo" (infidel) Varaza. Thus, along with the material and political preparations, psychological preparations were also part of the plan (Kırzioğlu 1998, 286).

Lala Pasha arrived before the Padishah on April 5, 1578, and after receiving the firman from the Padishah, he began his campaign against Iran on April 28, 1578. By July 2, 1578, Lala Pasha was located just 12 km away from Erzurum.

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102 This surname is indicated as Varazaoglu.

103 Same as Aghjaqala.

104 Ojaklık refers to hereditary feudal domains that existed within several Ottoman vilayets (provinces) during the Ottoman Empire. These territories were granted to individuals or families by the Ottoman authorities. (Trans./Ed.)

He set up his camp in Chermik (Ilija), where beylerbeys from various regions joined him with their respective armies. Lala Pasha waited for 20 days to receive cannons and military equipment from the port of Trabzon (Kırzioğlu 1998, 283). The author presents intriguing details about Kokola the son of Varaza. Some of this information is corroborated by the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles*, which narrates the killing of Varaza, the son of Otar Shalikashvili by Dedisimedi and the transfer of "Yeni Qala<sup>105</sup>" (Akhaltsikhe) to Kokola, the son of Varaza by Shah Tahmasp I in 1574. Following his conversion to Islam, Kokola, the son of Varaza adopted the name Mahmud Khan and became the ruler of Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki and the Chrdili regions. According to "Nusretname," Kırzioğlu writes that Kokola arrested Mahmud Khan, the leader of Artaani's detachment, upon his return from the Shuregeli campaign. Kokola imprisoned him in Akhaltsikhe and compelled him to consume pork. Furthermore, in the forested Artaani (Hanaki district), 22 villages inhabited by Marash Turkmen were raided, and their possessions were destroyed. In response, the sanjak bey of Kars, Yusuf Bey, launched a campaign in the Childir region, where he defeated Kokola, son of Varaza, the local ruler, near the village of Canbaz. During this battle, Yusuf Bey captured over a thousand Georgian prisoners and brought them to Lala Pasha's camp in Chermik. This victory brought great joy to the Ottoman commander, Lala Pasha. (Kırzioğlu 1998, 284).

On July 24, Lala Pasha arrived at Hasankale with his army. The following day, the beylerbey of Erzurum reached Artaani through Oltisi with cannons. While staying near the Soganli mountain in the western direction, in the vicinity of Basmali, Lala Pasha received the ambassadors of King George II of Imereti, who pledged their obedience. On August 2, Lala Pasha dispatched the ambassadors of King George II from the camp of Allahuekber, sending a letter to the king, informing him that the Ottoman army was heading to Artaani. Lala Pasha urged Giorgi to take his side if King Davud Khan<sup>106</sup> of Kartli and Dedisimidi<sup>107</sup> did not obey him, and attack them from his direction. But if they chose to obey, he would place them in the service of the Padishah. On August 5, Lala Pasha's army encamped on a plain located to the south of Artaani Castle and remained there for two days. During this time, the beylerbey of Erzurum received a letter, presumably regarding the Georgians, from Khan Tokmak of Yerevan. In response to the letter, the Ottomans conveyed that during the period of Ottoman subjugation, the Georgians often disobeyed and organized rebellions, therefore the Ottomans would fight with them as with "infidels". They further stated that they would also confront those who provided support to the Georgians, even if they were from the family of Muhammad. The Ottomans mentioned in the letter that the defeat of Turkman Emir Khan's 20,000-strong military unit by Kose Husrev Pasha of Van Beylerbey on the Artaani plain greatly excited the Ottoman army. According to official Persian sources, the Padishah was not directly in command of the campaign, so it was not appropriate for the Iranian side to command the Shah. The collection and command of the Iranian army were entrusted to Prince Hamza Mirza. As Lala Pasha's army approached the Iranian border, Tokhmak Khan of Yerevan, Turkmen Emir of Tabriz Khan, and Beylerbey of Ganja Kacharlu Imam Kuli Khan

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105 This is how Kirzioghlu refers to Akhaltsikhe.

106 Davit, the brother of Simon I, converted to Islam.

107 Queen of Samtskhe-Saatagabgo, mother of Manuchar II and Qvarqvare IV.

Beylerbey were ordered to gather their troops in the vicinity of Yerevan. However, there was a disagreement between the Turkmen and Ustajalu tribes, and the Turkmen Emir Khan was delayed in reaching the meeting place. Imam-Quli Khan came with the army of Ganja and joined Tokmak Khan in the Chrdili Valley. While Lala Pasha was in Artaani, the guards reported that a 30,000-strong Iranian army had entered the Artaani area. Lala Pasha sent a strongly worded letter to Tokmak Khan, accusing him of violating the Iran-Ottoman peace. On August 8, 1578, which was a Friday, the Ottoman army left Artaani and camped in the border village of Behrekhatuni<sup>108</sup>. On the same day, Dedisimedi, the widow of Atabag Kaykhosro II, who owned Altunqala, sent an Ambassador with a letter of submission to Lala Pasha. The ambassador reported that Dedisimedi was offering his eldest son Manuchari as a hostage, and his younger son Kvarekare<sup>109</sup> was ready to pay tribute. However, it was evident that they were anticipating a war between Iran and the Ottomans (Kırzioğlu 1998, 287-288). When the Ottoman army assembled from Artaani and marched to war, Sanjak Bey of Artaani Abdurahman and Bey of Bayburt Alai Bey<sup>110</sup> Bekir advanced to Ulgar<sup>111</sup> mountain in the territory of Mahmud Khan. The same day, they seized Mere fortress in Potskhovi,<sup>112</sup> and in the evening the Vale fortress, where they placed the guards. The following day, on August 9, they seized Akhaltsikhe<sup>113</sup>, Tmogvi<sup>114</sup>, Khertvisi,<sup>115</sup> Chrdili (Kurtqale)<sup>116</sup>, and Akhalkalaki fortresses. verifies the information from a Georgian source and notes that on August 7, Lala Pasha and his army approached Mgeltsikhe. After a day of battle, they captured this fortress with the assistance of the Artaan-Baiburts army, but several Georgian nobles were killed in the fight, including Roin Gogorishvili, his brother Beri Erushneli, and his nephew Zurab. Additionally, the Ottomans took control of Kaji Castle, Veli Castle, and Tetra Castle, the same as Agjaqala. During this time, Mehmed Khan, the son of Varaza (Shalikhshvili Kokola, who had converted to Islam), camped northwest of the Chrdili Lake with Tokmak Khan's army (Kırzioğlu 1998, 288).

On August 9, a Friday, Lala Pasha, departing early in the morning from Behrekhatun, launched an attack on Sheitan Qala. This fortress was situated on a 70-meter-high rock on the bank of the Karasu<sup>117</sup> River. The Ottomans attempted to seize it from the ridge to the west of the castle using cannons. On the same day, in the afternoon, Dervish Pasha, the beylerbey of Diyarbakir, arrived with regular troops and engaged in battle with about 2,000 Iranian soldiers who had set up an

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108 This village still exists in the Artaani region and bears the same name.

109 Kirzioglu refers to as Gorgor.

110 The owner of Zeamet and the commander of the sifahs of sanjaks.

111 This mountain is located in the area of today's Ardahan, the road from Ardahan (Artaani) to Potskhovi passes through the Ulgar pass. In Georgian sources it is also mentioned by the name of Mount Saniore.

112 It should be noted that the author has written Poskhov and not Posof as it is accepted in Turkish official literature today.

113 The author refers to as "Yenıkale".

114 The author refers to as Tümüük".

115 The author refers to as "Khirtız".

116 Mgeltsikhe.

117 The same as Kaji Castle or Rabati Castle (in the present-day Turkey, Childir region).



ambush at the exit near Zurzuna. Zurzuna<sup>118</sup> is the district center of present-day Chrdili, situated at the confluence of the Urta water from the south and the Karasu River from the east. The Ottomans fought against this detachment without informing Lala Pasha. The beylerbeys of Erevan and Ganja, along with tens of thousands of horsemen and additional infantry, set up ambushes on the mountains of Yildirimtefe (2258 m) to the north and Zinzal (2144 m)<sup>119</sup> to the south-east. They also positioned forces on the small hills of the Chrdili Valley along the Karasu River. The tactics employed by the Iranians, including the use of a narrow gorge by Tokmak Khan to obstruct the Ottomans on the border, were indicative of their well-thought-out strategy. During the two-hour clash of the vanguards of both armies, the Ottomans were exhausted. However, they received assistance from Ozdemiroglu Osman Pasha and Ahmed Pasha, who arrived from Marash with his auxiliary army. Despite the rain, the battle in the Chrdili Valley, which lasted from noon until night, was fought with only swords and spears, and it ended in victory for the Ottomans. Under the cover of darkness, the Iranian forces retreated from the battlefield, leaving behind more than 5,000 soldiers killed and over 500 wounded. (Kırzioğlu 1998, 289-290).

On the second day following the victory, which was August 10, a Sunday, Atabag Manuchar arrived at Lala Pasha's camp with around 5,000 to 6,000 troops and declared his obedience with great celebration<sup>120</sup>. In response, Lala Pasha granted Manuchari the sanjak of Atskuri, appointed his brother Qvarqvere as the ruler of the sanjak of Oltisi, and allocated the so-called "Aghir Zeamets"<sup>121</sup> to his other brothers. According to the so-called Hesse Rule, their mother Debora Dedisimedi was given control of three villages as an imperial demesne. In addition, Manuchari received a flag, a drum, and a personal gift from Lala Pasha, which was a horse harnessed with cloth adorned with gold, a silk tent, and ornate robes (Kırzioğlu 1998, 290). Manuchar handed over the keys to Altunqala Castle, as well as the keys to 32 other nearby castles that were already under Ottoman control, to Lala Pasha. From that point forward, Manuchar played a guiding role for the Ottomans during their conquests of Tbilisi and Shirvan. On that very day, Lala Pasha extended an offer to Tokmak Khan to join the service of the Ottomans, but Tokmak Khan declined the offer (Kırzioğlu 1998, 290-291).<sup>122</sup>

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118 Historical Dzurtsna (Georgian: ძურჯნა).

119 Historical Tsintsali (Georgian: წინწალი)

120 It is known, that Manuchar did not appeared from the beginning to show obedience to Lala Mustafa. He waited for the main attack between the Ottomans and the Safavids in the Childir Valley (August 9), which he was watching from the high slope. His goal was to go to the winner and beg for mercy and declare his obedience (Mirian Makharadze, Zaza Shashikadze, Waqf-namas by Lala Mustafa Phasha about Georgia, publish-house "Universali", Tbilisi, 2021, p.93 /მირიან მახარაძე, ზაზა შაშიკაძე, ლალა მუსტაფა ფაშას ვაყუფ-ნამეები საქართველოს შესახებ, გამომცემლობა „უნივერსალი“, თბილისი, 2021, გვ. 93).

121 whose annual income exceeded 50,000 Akhcha.

122 Based on the writings of the Iranian chronicler Dizpul Cemal bin Hasan, Kirzioglu provides a list of the Iranian beys who participated in the Childir War. The list includes Kachar Ansar Khan, Zohrab Bey, Emir Khan, Halil Khan, Veli Khan, Sultan of Qum Turkmen Haydar Bey, Governor of Kashan District Turkmen Mehmed Veli Khan, Ustajalu Peyre Khan, Ali Khan, Ibrahim Khan, Ispahan Bey, Aslan Sultan, and Georgian Perkhad Beg. Furthermore, Tokmak Khan's son-in-law, Veli Bey, who led Kara Khan's squad out of Yerevan, later switched allegiance to Sharabkhane's camp



Lala Pasha's army bypassed Yeniqala (Rabat)<sup>123</sup> and began the march towards Tbilisi. The following day, Abdurrahman Bey accomplished the conquest of Mehmed Khan's "country"<sup>124</sup> by capturing the fortress of Aghjaqala, located northeast of the Chrdili Lake. There, 60 heads were severed, and these were presented to Lala Pasha near Lake Kartsakhi. In the newly conquered castles, the Ottomans stationed guards and cannons (Kırzioğlu 1998, 291).

In this manner, within 4 days, Mahmud Khans' domain the Akhaltsikhe area, including the Atabag residential place – Altunqala, was conquered, and began the inventory of the territory. In the autumn of 1578, the Akhaltsikhe (Childir) Eyalet was established, which subsequently incorporated the territories of the Mtkvari headstream and Chorokhi valleys (Kırzioğlu, 1998:291). Kırzioğlu notes that Manuchar Atabag and Lala Pasha passed through Tmogvi and Akhalkalaki on August 17 (Kırzioğlu, 1998, 291).<sup>125</sup>

The author briefly outlines the significant moments of Lala Pasha's campaign in Kartli, Kakheti, and Shirvan, as well as his return to the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently, he provides a concise overview of the developments in Samtskhe-Saatabago. It is established that Lala Pasha returned from Shirvan in the autumn of 1578. The author notes that, after crossing the Surami Pass, he arrived at Atskuri, within the jurisdiction of Atabag Kaikhosro. Lala Pasha spent two days at Atskuri, during which he received a visit from Dedisimedi and her son Atabag Qvarqvare V (1573-1578)<sup>126</sup>, who kissed the hand his hands. In November 1578, he reached Artaani passing through the Jakistsqali River (Kırzioğlu 1998, 294).

After the victory in the Battle of the Chrdili on August 9, 1578, the "Childir Eyalet" or beylerbeylik was established, with Akhaltsikhe as its center. It was named after the location of Lala Pasha's army's victory. This region included the sanjaks of Artanuji, Kola (Little Artaani), and Great Artaani, which had been conquered by the beylerbey of Erzurum in 1551. It also encompassed the "Country of Mahmud Khan," Altunqala, and part of the Saatabago territory along the Mtkvari coast, which was conquered in early August 1579<sup>127</sup>. This region was officially described in 1592 (Kırzioğlu, 1998). Cafer Pasha was appointed as the Beylerbey,

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following their defeat at Childiri Valley (Kırzioğlu 1998, 290, refer to footnote N109). The author also delves into *The Georgian Chronicles* and highlights that on August 10, 1578, Manuchar Atabag approached Lala Pasha, who was encamped near Kaji Castle, and pledged his loyalty, for which he was rewarded with a Khakhuli Sanjak (Kırzioğlu 1998, 290, see footnote N112).

123 refers to Kaji Castle

124 It refers to Akhaltsikhe Castle and the district including the Potskhovi river where the influence of Iran was spread. Atabags stayed at the Okro Fortress.

125 To confirm this fact, he cross-references the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles*. According to another source that the author has verified, which is "Nusret-name", Lala Pasha passed through the following points on his way to Tbilisi: Didi Artaani - Begrekhatuni - Yeniqala (Kaji Castle) - Kartsakhi Lake - Rukaveli [Unknown R.K.] - Akshehir (Akhalkalaki) - Paravani Lake - Beyond the Lake - Tsalka - lake shore - Nazarbazar Khan [likely Nadarbazevi of Tetristsqaro R.K.] - Algeti - Mtkvari bank - Tbilisi (Kırzioğlu 1998, footnote 117).

126 Should be Qvarqvare IV

127 The census book is known as "Defter-i İcmal-i Cedid-i ElviyeiÇıldır," comprising 149 pages. It is dated H.1000 and is preserved in the cadastral archive of the Prime Minister, listed as No. 633 (Kırzioğlu 1998, 294. Refer to footnote 126 for further information).

and he oversaw the newly formed Childir Eyalet. This region included several sanjaks, each with its own sanjak-bey: 1. Akhaltsikhe Sanjak: This included the nahiyahs of South, North, Ude, and Atskuri. 2. Altun-Qala Sanjak, governed by Sanjak-bey Kaplan Bey, which covered part of Kvabliani. 3. Odzrkhe Sanjak, led by Sanjak-bey Akhmed Bey, which included part of Abastumani. 4. Chacharaki Sanjak, under Sanjak-bey Osman Bey, encompassing the Borjomi and Akhaldaba area. 5. Aspindza Sanjak, governed by sanjak-bey Yusuf Bey, which covered part of the Mtkvari River. 6. Khertvisi Sanjak, overseen by sanjak-bey Pervane Bey. Akhalkalaki Sanjak, under the governance of Sanjak-bey Mehmed Bey. This sanjak encompassed the nahiyahs of Akshehir (center), Nialisquri, and Tmogvi. 8. Potskhovi Sanjak 9. Childiri Sanjak. In "The Great Defter of Akhaltsikhe", dated 1595 12-20 January, has 180 pages, and the number of sanjaks recorded in 1592 Defter is reduced from nine to six.<sup>128</sup> These are: 1. Akhaltsikhe Sanjak, uniting the nahiyahs of - south, north, Ude, Kobliani, Atskuri, Altunqala, Otskhe, Aspindza, Chacharaki. 2. Khertvisi Sanjak, uniting nahiyahs of - Khertvisi, Forrest-ed Javakheti, Buzmareti. 3. Akhalkalaki Sanjak, uniting nahiyahs of - Akshehiri, Tmogvi, Nialisquri. 4. Childir Sandjak, uniting nahiyahs of - Janbazi, Kenarbeli, Mgeltsikhe. 5. Potskhovi Sanjak, uniting nahiyahs of south and north. 6. Petre Sanjak, uniting nahiyahs of - Petre and Kashueti (area below Atskuri to Gori) (Kırzıoğlu 1998, 294-295).

The author indicated the route taken by Lala Pasha from Aresh to Erzurum, according to which he left Aresh on October 8, 1578. He passed through the territories of Azerbaijan, Kakheti, and Kartli. Zanavi, Petre Castle, Dukari, Atskuri Castle, Akhaltsikhe, Odoria, Argha Castle in Samtskhe, Forested Artaani (Khanaki), Artaani Castle, in Kola area (Koprubasi), Panak Castle (Kheviskari), Oltisi Castle, Idi village of Narman center, Bashkoi in Basiani (where he rested and camped). Then, on November 21, Friday he arrived in Erzurum and distributed the army to the shelters (Kırzıoğlu 1998, 307).

## **Chapter Two: Samtskhe - Saatabago (Akhaltsikhe Pashalik) in the Ottoman Muhime Defters and Berats**

As mentioned above, after incorporating Samtskhe-Saatabago by the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of the Childir (Akhaltsikhe)<sup>129</sup> Pashalik, the entire region was registered, and fiscal documents, so-called Census Defters, were developed. Georgian and foreign experts had read part of the defters and processed them scientifically, giving the possibility to get the information and make conclusions about political developments, economic and social conditions, as well as the ethnic and religious composition of the population<sup>130</sup>. The historical de-

128 Kırzıoğlu contends in disagreement with Acad. Sergi Jikia that the latter incorrectly referred to this book as "The Greate Defter of Gurjistan Vilayet " (Kırzıoğlu 1998, 295. footnote 127).

129 Manuchar Atabag was appointed as the first pasha of Childir (Akhaltsikhe) vilayet, who was named Mustafa after accepting Islam on April 27, 1583. (See Mümmin Yıldıztaş, Osmanlı Arşiv Kayıtlarında Gürcistan ve Gürcüler, Georgia and Georgians in Ottoman Archival Documents, İstanbul, 2012. p. 91).

130 For additional information see "Meskheti according to the Ottoman Defters" by Dali Nikolaishvili, Davit Sartania, Avtandil Ujmajuridze, Darejan Kirtadze, Manana Kvetenadze, Publish-house "Universali", Tbilisi, 2021 (Georgian: დალი ნიკოლაიშვილი, დავით სართანია, ავთანდილ უჯმაჯურაძე, დარეჯან კირთაძე, მანანა კვეტენაძე, მესხეთი ოსმალური დავთრების მიხედვით, გამომცემლობა „უნივერსალი“, თბილისი, 2021)

velopments showed, that the Ottoman government implemented both incorporation and controlling of the Territories of Samtskhe-Saatabago through the Erzurum Pashalik. Since the establishment of the Childir or Akhaltsikhe Pashalik, the Ottomans regulated their relations with other kingdoms and principalities of Georgia through the mentioned Pashalik. The Empire interfered in their internal affairs with the help of Akhaltsikhe Pashas when necessary.

The importance of the *Muhime Defters* is immense along with the Census Defters. *The Muhime Defters about the Kingdoms and principalities of Georgia* represents one of such registers of the XVI-XVIII centuries (Shengelia, 2019). The work includes the original 200 Ottoman documents and its Arabic transcription with Georgian translation. The documents are kept in the archives of the Council of Ministers in Istanbul. The mentioned sources are significant for the study and exploration of various aspects of the history of individual kingdoms and principalities in Georgia. We will focus on the material relevant to the history of Samtskhe Saatabago, based on the objectives of the article.

One of the documents included in the *Muhime Defters* pertains to the small Artaani Nahiyah, in which the Giol<sup>131</sup> castle within the nahiyah area received more attention from the local ruler than the Germujek<sup>132</sup> castle located in the same nahiyah. Due to this, on April 28, 1560, the Beylerbey of Erzurum was ordered to take appropriate measures to repair this castle, so that the local population could seek refuge in the castle in case of danger (Shengelia 2019, 43). The following document clearly indicates an abuse of office by the local government. As a result, on September 24, 1564, the Bey and the Qadi of Ispir<sup>133</sup> were instructed to apprehend a man named Piri, the sipah<sup>134</sup> from the village of Pir Pakir in Ispir Liva and other surrounding areas, who was obstructing the roads and involved in acts of robbery (Shengelia 2019, 52). It is obvious that there was a conflict between the soldiers of the Ottoman army stationed in the historical Samtskhe-Saatabago fortresses to seize some property, which sometimes turned into armed clashes. To prevent such confrontation, on 24.11.1564, the Beylerbey and Qadi of Erzurum were ordered to arrest Savindik bin Hikmet, the soldiers of the Oltis garrison, who attacked with his squad to some Hizir squad stationed in the Erzurum fortress (Shengelia 2019, 55). It is likely that the Ottoman authorities initially appointed non-local guards for the fortress they occupied in the western part of Samtskhe-Saatabago. This is supported by an order dated 21.02.1565, which was sent to the Bey and the warden of the Oltis. They were ordered not to give the land to the sons of the people serving the Oltis fortress, as these lands were intended for the Chepni<sup>135</sup> tribe and not for outsiders (Shengelia 2019, 66). A document dated 21.03.1565, addressed to the beylerbey of Erzurum, shows the diverse attitude of the local government representatives to the local producer people on the newly conquered territory of Samtskhe-Saatabago by the Ottomans and certain mistrust of the national government to the local administration. It

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131 Historical Kola

132 At this point, the location of the fortress is unclear.

133 Speri

134 A heavy cavalry soldier in the Ottoman army, with a significant number of them being landowners who possessed timars, which were certain land plots granted as part of a feudal system.

135 According to the Oghuz Kagan's epic, the Chepni tribe is indeed one of the 24 Oghuz tribes.

presents the so-called *Hukm*<sup>136</sup> to the qadis of Kiamkhis, Artaani, and Erzurum. (Shengelia 2019, 75). In this context, it is evident that there is some disagreement within the Panaki Nahiyah, which has resulted in a confrontation between the representatives of the local government. Another noteworthy aspect is the indirect involvement of the Kurdish Bey of Minor Artaan in the aforementioned disputes. The Kurdish population probably settled in this area after the annexation of the Artaani region to the Ottoman Empire. As evident from the letter, the injustice perpetrated by the local government against the local community - Reaya<sup>137</sup> has raised concerns. The Padishah demands a detailed description of the problem and written reports on it. Furthermore, he instructs the beylerbey of Erzurum to restore order. The letter also suggests that the local population is still predominantly of the Christian faith (Shengelia 2019, 76) Another *Hukm* sent by the central government to the beylerbey of Erzurum addresses a property dispute in Artaani Sanjak. The ruling instructs him to resolve the ownership dispute concerning a shrine between the owners of Timar<sup>138</sup>, Ali's son Mehmed, and Mehmed's son Ali (Shengelia 2019, 105). It's noteworthy that despite the Ottoman government's establishment and rules in the conquered territory, security issues remain precarious. The *Hukm* issued in the name of the beylerbey of Erzurum highlights such a situation, where he is tasked with investigating and resolving a robbery issue in Oltisi Sanjak involving cargo destined for the state treasury en route to Erzurum (Shengelia 2019, 130). Additionally, there are records about the transfer of property to the local governor (bey) and Judge (qadi) in Speri's Kaza<sup>139</sup>. The document dated 11.05.1571 clearly shows that administrative changes often led to the dissatisfaction of beys whose properties were confiscated. In this particular case, the bey named Zim, whose property was confiscated, incited a rebellion, apparently, he deceived the local people. According to the document, the governor (bey) of Speri and the qadi are instructed to restore order and ascertain the truth (Shengelia 2019, 139). The document from 21.01.1576 pertains to the supply of armory, guns, and other materials to the sanjaks of Trabzon, Artaani, and Artanuji. It is evident that transporting the mentioned military materials to their destination was not very safe. All of this was sent by ship from Istanbul, and the beylerbey of Erzurum was instructed to pay more attention to the security of this cargo (Shengelia 2019, 164). The name of the governor of the Artaani district, Mehmed is documented in the letter dated 08.06.1576. This document grants Mehmed the little territory of Artaani. It is also interesting to note the settlement of a certain number of people who arrived from outside the Artaani region to avoid taxes. The local governor has ordered the issuance of *Tezkere*<sup>140</sup> to the nomads who settled there (Shengelia 2019, 167). The document belonging to the period of starting the new Ottoman-Iranian war is the *hukm* dated 01.06.1578, which was sent to the beys and qadis of Artanuji, Ajara, and Livana. It is noted that this *hukm* was also sent to the Bey of Adjara, Hussein (Shengelia 2019, 187). The document discusses

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136 A decision made regarding an individual, their actions, or any event.

137 Non-Muslim subjects of the Ottoman Empire before tanzimat.

138 A plot of land granted to an individual, often a soldier or bureaucrat, in exchange for specified services provided to the government.

139 The term defining the administrative unit and the area of activity of the qadi (judge) in the Ottoman Empire.

140 Official permission to settle.

the construction of roads in the Artaani area, as some places were impassable and required subsequent repairs. The document mentions that “the negligent local successor was sentenced to death” due to the carelessness displayed in maintaining the roads. This was because road repairs were necessary in the mentioned livas, and the Padishah's administration was also ready to purchase suitable working tools (Shengelia 2019, 183). As we see, before the start of the war, the Sultan's administration was actively working in the Ottoman areas bordering Iran. Manuchar II's<sup>141</sup> rebellion against the Ottomans is mentioned in the Hukm (order) of Padishah dated 21. 11. 1882, which was sent to Livana Bey. According to the aforementioned order, the Beylerbey of Erzurum provided information about the rebellion to the sultan's court. Padishah calls on the Beys of Livana, Shavsheti, Major, and Minor Artaani to assist Yusuf Bey<sup>142</sup> in suppressing the rebellion (Shengelia 2019, 198). It is known that Yusuf Pasha could not suppress the rebellion, and the Ottomans restored Manuchar to the throne of the Pashalik. This issue is related to the Hukm of the Padishah dated 25.05.1583, which was issued in favor of Manuchar. According to the mentioned document, Manuchar was granted the so-called berat of the principality<sup>143</sup> (Shengelia 2019, 183). Interesting information is preserved in the Hukm of Padishah dated 11. 06. 1591, which was sent to the beylerbey of Childir.” We are talking about the Berta<sup>144</sup> and Kutaisi castles. According to the decree, the castle of Berta used to be under the control of Manuchar, and at that time, it was taken over by King Simon. It is also indicated that Simon was camped in Kutaisi Castle at that time. It can be seen from the very same hukm that an order was given to seize the Kutaisi Castle. According to the hukm, “the accursed Simon could not enter this area” (Shengelia 2019, 219)<sup>145</sup>. The following document is still related to the events that happened in Imereti. According to Padishah's Hukm, which was issued to the Beylerbey of Childir, from Akhaltsikhe Pashalik 300 soldiers and Gonullu<sup>146</sup> were sent to occupy the Kutaisi Castle (Shengelia 2019, 226). In the document dated to the first decade of April 1702, which is a hukm sent to Isak Pasha, the beylerbey of Akhaltsikhe, there is talk about the events that happened around the throne of Imereti in the early years of the eighteenth century. General Giorgi Abashidze is positively mentioned in the document. The Pasha of Akhaltsikhe is required to arrest King Simon of Imereti, who allied with the Principal of Guria and Dadiani (Shengelia 2019, 264)<sup>147</sup>. The document dated 27.06.1702 again discusses the events in Imere-

141 Manuchar is referred to as Mustafa in the document.

142 Yusuf Pasha was appointed as Pasha of Childir (Akhaltsikhe) instead of Manuchar.

143 An order of the Sultan issued during the Ottoman period to appoint a person to a position, according to which the person was paid a salary, given privileges, given a mark and powers related to the position.

144 The Berta Castle, mentioned in the document as the former property of Manuchar, is likely the castle with the same name in Klarjeti. However, it is unlikely to have been occupied by King Simon. It is possible that there is another Berta castle, or the document may contain an error. Further research is needed to resolve this issue.

145 It's possible that the events referred to in the document occurred after King Simon's defeat at Opshkvit

146 One of the categories of the Ottoman armed forces (see N. Shengelia, p. 692).

147 In Georgian historiography, the year 1701 is indicated as the date of the events mentioned in the document.

ti. This document also represents Padishah's hukm to the Pasha of Akhaltsikhe. Here, the story of King Simon's escape from Imereti to the East is confirmed<sup>148</sup>. It should be noted that in this document, General Giorgi Abashidze is mentioned as the king. It is clearly visible the Ottoman's support for Giorgi Abashidze, who was entrusted with establishing order in Imereti (Shengelia 2019, 272-273). The hukm dated 19.03.1703, sent to Akhaltsikhe Beylerbey, makes it clear that the Sultan's court requires the Pasha of Akhaltsikhe to investigate the murder of King Simon, who had returned to the throne of Imereti, and to submit an official written request. Additionally, the Ottoman State Court requests information about the incident from King Giorgi<sup>149</sup> of Imereti, Gurieli, Dadiani, and the generals of Imereti (Shengelia 2019, 276). An undated document details the conflict between local authorities in the beylerbeylik of Childir. According to the document, Childir's Sanjak Bey did not receive the beys of the Akhalkalaki, Artaani, and Panak Sanjaks who had arrived to perform some work based on an official order. This situation raised an alarm. The commanders of the aforementioned sanjaks were required to gather at Childir Beylerbey and visit together (Shengelia 2019, 370)<sup>150</sup>. Another document, also without date, was sent to Childir's Beylerbey<sup>151</sup>, authorizing the latter to issue orders to his subordinate sanjak-beys in the traditional manner. In case of resistance, they were authorized to arrest the individuals in the name of religion and the state (Shengelia 2019, 373). One of the undated documents pertains to the appointment of Yusuf Pasha as the beylerbey of Akhaltsikhe (Shengelia 2019, 402). The document also mentions Kartli Governor Simon Khan<sup>152</sup> and Zagemi Governor Aleksandre<sup>153</sup>. Hence, the Yusuf mentioned must be Yusuf Pasha, appointed as the ruler of Akhaltsikhe during Manuchar II's rebellion against the Ottomans after Manuchar's deposition. In one undated document, it is mentioned that 60 Ottoman soldiers were confined in the Shavsheti fortress, and a designated fund was allocated for the fortress strengthening. The same document mentioned that the local beys were standing in the Shavsheti castle and that the Qizilbashs were subject to oppression. Furthermore, it is noted that Georgians were compelled to convert to Islam (Shengelia 2019, 414). It is known from one more undated document that the Gori Castle was temporarily under the ownership of Mustafa, sanjak-bey of Artaani. Padishah's hukm was dispatched to him regarding the transfer of Gori Beylerbeylik to another individual. However, he was instructed not to leave the castle until the arrival of the new beylerbey (Shengelia 2019, 433).

Interesting information is presented in another undated document. It contains the hukm issued to the beylerbey of Childir, informing him that the sanjak-beys of Panaki and Akhalkalaki had been placed under the authority of the beylerbey of Dmanisi. The beylerbey of Childir was also instructed to relay all relevant information about the aforementioned two sanjaks to the beylerbey of

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148 It is known that King Simon fled to King Erekle the First in Kartli.

149 Prince Giorgi Abashidze is being referred to.

150 The document does not specify the destination or location to which the mentioned officials were required to travel.

151 The document indicates that it is a copy. It suggests that a similar hukm may have been dispatched to other officials.

152 Refers to the king of Kartli - Simon I.

153 Refers to the king of Kakheti - Aleksandre II.



Dmanisi (Shengelia 2019, 490). An undated document references the appointment of a certain Abdallah in place of Mustafa as Childir Beylerbey. According to the hukm, Mustafa was obligated to remain in his position and safeguard beylerbeylik until the new beylerbey arrived at the destination (Shengelia 2019, 583). Another undated document addresses the matter of the territorial-administrative organization of Akhaltsikhe Pashalik. It contains Padishah's hukm directed to Childir Beylerbey. The hukm was issued in response to Childir Beylerbey's appeal to Padishah, where Childir Beylerbey requested the return of the large and small Artaani Sanjaks, which had previously been under his authority but were subsequently transferred to Kars Beylerbeylik. It is evident from the document that Padishah granted his request and returned these two sanjaks to him (Shengelia 2019, 630).

To shed more light on the current issue, Ottoman firmans, and berats are particularly interesting for the history of South Georgia (Shengelia 2011). They serve as invaluable sources for examining the mechanisms of Ottoman governance in the region. Following the Ottoman incorporation of this territory, a segment of the local population was compelled to conform to the Ottoman-established conditions. In the meantime, a significant portion of the population chose to abandon their ancestral lands. It's important to highlight that the system introduced by the Ottomans in the territory of Samtskhe-Saatabago diverged considerably from the pre-existing tax and military system, and this transition played a pivotal role in reshaping the socio-economic structure of the region.

This comprehensive work comprises firmans and berats issued by the Ottoman authorities within the historical territory of Samtskhe-Saatabago. In this stage of the research, we have specifically focused on materials directly pertinent to the Javakheti region. This collection vividly illustrates the intricate dynamics of coordination between the Ottoman central government and the local administration. Furthermore, it unveils details about the identities of local officials of that era, including their physical descriptions, and provides the names of the locales where the events of our interest unfolded.

In this context, the order dated 03.08.1730, issued by Ottoman Sultan Mahmud, is quite interesting. From this document, it becomes apparent that Childir Pasha Yusuf had failed to report in writing to the Padishah regarding Omer's neglect of duty, the owner of the ziamet<sup>154</sup> in the village of Toloshi, within the sanjak of Khertvisi, and other locations. Consequently, Yusuf Pasha requested the transfer of the aforementioned ziamet to an individual named Murtaza. This request was granted by the Sultan (Shengelia 2011, 452). The decree of Sultan Mustafa of 11.02.1696 issued in the name of Ahmed Mahmud's son, the owner of 5,000 akche timars in the village of Hacek<sup>155</sup> in Akhalkalaki Sanjak, Bucak Nahiyah, and other places for reclamation of the rights to the old timar. This decree granted the request of the aforementioned owner (Shengelia 2011, 467). A similar situation is observed in the village of Kudasi<sup>156</sup> in Nialisquri Nahiyah of Akhalkalaki Sanjak and other locations with an individual named Hassan, the owner of 13,090 akche

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154 A military fief in the medieval Ottoman Empire, a parcel of land granted conditionally by the state.

155 The name of the mentioned village is unknown. Today, there is no village with a similar name in Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda.

156 Today, a village with a similar name cannot be found in Nialisquri.

timar. Furthermore, the aforementioned request for the land was reapproved by the decree of Sultan Mustafa dated May 18, 1696 (Shengelia 2011, 470). The berat was then renewed for Yusuf, the owner of a timar valued at 11,300 akche, located in the Akshehir Nahiyah of the Akhalkalaki Sanjak, situated in Didi Horania<sup>157</sup>. Yusuf had held the same timar since the previous Padishah's reign, and the new Padishah Ahmed reaffirmed it with the decree issued on November 14, 1698. In addition to Didi Khorenia, the following territories were confirmed to Yusuf: Banhye Duchakruzali, Alaki village, and a sowing plot near the Ribani Nurmuli village, Mahasma<sup>158</sup> village (Shengelia 2011, 478). According to the order of Sultan Mustafa dated 26.06.1701, a total of 10,755 akhche timar was reaffirmed for an individual named Mehmed in Akhalkalaki Sanjak, Akshehir Nahiyah, Rabati village, and various other locations. Apart from the village of Rabati, it encompassed the village of Madi<sup>159</sup>, which was under the jurisdiction of Rabati, and the village of Didi Murjakheti (Shengelia 2011, 486). In the sanjak of Akhalkalaki, within the Nahiyah of Akshehir, the zeamet of the late Mustafa in the village of Kvemo Humsa and other areas was transferred to an individual named Ibrahim by the decree of Sultan Ahmed III, dated 21.01.1704. The villages that belonged to Ibrahim, in addition to Kvemo Humsa, include: Kvemo Khosbio<sup>160</sup> village; Vashlovani village, situated near Khodi mahalle; Bahur Kendi<sup>161</sup> village, located close to Akhalkalaki Rabati; Kuldezbaridi, a village Ali Jurmani, falls under the jurisdiction of Akshehir; village Kulkami,<sup>162</sup> under Akshehir as well; village Vashlovani, near the second Vasbula mahalle, under Buteti; Patara Khudanie<sup>163</sup>, under the Buteti as well; village Usullu<sup>164</sup> under Akshehir; village Tiamskuli<sup>165</sup> under Lumex<sup>166</sup>; village Almalu<sup>167</sup>, situated near Khosbio village; village Kanbali<sup>168</sup>, near village Aku<sup>169</sup>, under Tanaskuri<sup>170</sup>; village Diveti<sup>171</sup>, near Vashlobi<sup>172</sup> village, under Akshehir (Shengelia 2011, 490).

According to the order of Sultan Mahmud, the son of Sultan Mustafa, dated 09.11-08.12 of 1733 (1146), we find out that some Ahmed, son of Aslan, possessing 4045 akhche timar in village Kiliskha<sup>173</sup> in Nialisquri Nahiyah of Akhalkalaki Sanjak and other places (since 1718(1131), had journeyed to Istanbul to reaffirm

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157 Present-day village Didi Khorenia

158 Toponyms with similar names are no longer found in this area.

159 A similar toponym is no longer found in today's Akhalkalaki district

160 Present-day Khospio.

161 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

162 Present-day Kulikami.

163 It must imply the village of Patara Khorenia

164 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

165 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

166 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

167 Ruins of the village still exists today.

168 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

169 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

170 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

171 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

172 The etymology of the toponym is transparent, but currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

173 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

his ownership of the timar and requested an update on his berat of ownership. He was granted the restoration of the Berat, permission to reside in the aforementioned sanjak, and was pledged to participate in the expedition under the flag of his Alai Bey<sup>174</sup>. The following are the names of the villages where the aforementioned individual was reassigned land plots. These villages include Khalshkha<sup>175</sup>, under the subordination of Nialisquri; Ninhalemi<sup>176</sup>, located near the settlement of Patara Mahdie<sup>177</sup>, subordinate to Akshehir; Pirkesali<sup>178</sup>, close to the village of Didi Erkani<sup>179</sup>; Shua Murjakheti, situated near Murjakheti village; Patara Murjakheti, situated near Shua Murjakheti village; and Gorsikhle<sup>180</sup>, situated near the village of Karahani<sup>181</sup> (Shengelia 2011, 492). The order dated on 11. 03. 1725, issued by Sultan Ahmed, the son of Sultan Mehmed reveals that, upon receiving a letter from Isak Pasha of Childir Beylerbey, Padishah allocated shares in Akhalkalaki Sanjak, particularly in Mahusili<sup>182</sup> village within Nialisquri Nahiyah, along with other villages, to the sons of Osman, who had lost his life while guarding the Tbilisi Castle, as well as to an individual named Mehmed. The names of the villages encompassed within the territory of the timar are also specified, which include Iavla Savla<sup>183</sup> and Lorisimili<sup>184</sup>, located near the village of Vardie<sup>185</sup> (Shengelia 2011, 492). According to the decree of Sultan Mahmud Khan, the son of Sultan Mustafa, dated 15.08.1733, Mehmed is a possessor of a timar amounting to 4,045 akche in the village of Kilisa, as well as in various other locations in Nialisquri Nahiyah of Sanjak Akhalkalaki, and his brothers Yusif and Behzad, who are the sons of Yahya. Following Behzad's demise, half of his share was transferred to his brother Mehmed. The timar mentioned in the text included the following villages: Kilisa<sup>186</sup>, which falls under the jurisdiction of Nialisquri; Kurisahlo<sup>187</sup>, located near the village of Dahbati<sup>188</sup>; Sakhalia<sup>189</sup>, near the villages of Mehdie<sup>190</sup> and Duhadi<sup>191</sup>, under the subordination of Akshehir; Markbali<sup>192</sup>, near the village Didi Erkani<sup>193</sup>; Shua Murjakheti, near the Didi Murjakheti village; and Patara Mur-

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174 The military commander of the timar-owning sifahs in sanjak

175 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

176 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

177 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

178 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

179 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

180 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

181 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

182 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

183 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

184 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

185 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

186 "Church" in Georgian translation. Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

187 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

188 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

189 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

190 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

191 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

192 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

193 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

jakheti, near the Shua Murjakheti village (Shengelia 2011, 505). The decree issued by Sultan Mahmud on June 16, 1734, addresses the confiscation and reassignment of timar. As per the letter of Childir's Vali and Vizier, Yusuf Pasha, the timar was seized from Ibrahim, the son of Ahmed, and subsequently granted to Husein. This action was taken due to Ibrahim's failure to participate in the military operation associated with the defense of Tbilisi, which was within the Nialisquri Nahiyah of Akhalkalaki Sanjak. The villages included in the Timariot are as follows: Anburi<sup>194</sup>, in Nialisquri; Koki<sup>195</sup>, in Nialisquri; Biurbani<sup>196</sup>, in Akshehiri; Mavuni<sup>197</sup>, in Akshehir (Shengelia 2011, 509). Again, based on the letter of beylerbey of Childir and Vizier Yusuf Pasha, according to Sultan Mahmud's order dated 11.07.1734, in Nialisquri Nahiyah of Akhalkalaki Sanjak, timar of the weakened Ali Piri was handed over to Hassan. The villages included in the timariot were Bialuri in Nialisquri; Haramaslu in Nialisquri; Tiboldakrat; Meramlu in Akshehir, and Bamaleti in Nialisquri (Shengelia 2011, 513). Sultan Mahmud's decree, dated July 11, 1734, which was prompted by a written report from Isak Pasha<sup>198</sup> of Childir Beylerbey, pertains to the confiscation of the timar that was previously held by the incapacitated Ali Piri in Nasur Nahiyah of Akhalkalaki Sanjak, and its subsequent transfer to an individual named Mehmed. The villages that were part of this timariot are as follows: Kebze<sup>199</sup>; Bialeti<sup>200</sup> in Nasur Nahiyah<sup>201</sup>; Hamamlu<sup>202</sup>, in Nasur Nahiyah; Dakudi<sup>203</sup>; Jamlovani<sup>204</sup>, in Akshehiri Nahiyah; Bamaleti<sup>205</sup>, under the jurisdiction of Salmara<sup>206</sup> (Shengelia 2011, 517). A document issued by Sultan Mahmud on September 11, 1734, based on a letter from Akhaltsikhe Pasha Yusuf dated July 11, 1734, indicates the reassignment of the timar formerly owned by Ali Piri to an individual named Hussein. The names of the villages are listed here: Nialisquri village, subordinate to Nialisquri; Karamlu<sup>207</sup>, subordinate to Bura<sup>208</sup>; Durul Dagur

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194 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

195 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

196 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

197 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

198 It refers to Isak Pasha I (1701-1705; 1708-1716; 1717-1737; 1744-1745). It should be mentioned, that in 1737 Isak Pasha was replaced by Yusuf Pasha III (1737-1744). Yusuf Pasha III should be implied in the previous document. Mentioned, as well as the previous document are dated by 11.07.1734. 1737 is considered as the date of substitution of Isak Pasha by Yusuf Pasha in Georgian historiography. Probably, 1734 should be more correct, as 1734 is given in both places in the tughra of Sultan Mahmud.

199 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

200 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

201 Further research is required to prove the existence of this nahiyah.

202 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

203 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

204 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

205 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

206 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

207 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

208 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

Mahu<sup>209</sup> village; Meramlu<sup>210</sup> village, subordinate to the mentioned; Bamaleti<sup>211</sup> village subordinate to Nialisquri (Shengelia 2011, 521). Sultan Mahmud's decree dated July 26, 1734, reveals that Ishak Pasha no longer governs the Akhaltsikhe Pashalik for the current year. Nevertheless, Padishah regards him kindly and preserves Ishak's letter regarding the transfer of timar. This case pertains to the confiscation of timar from Ahmed in the Beraliti<sup>212</sup> village of Nialisquri Nahiyah, Akhalkalaki sanjak, and other areas and its reassignment to Yahya. In this context, it's evident that the mentioned timar was previously granted to Mehmed Halil. The villages in Nialisquri Nahiyah that were allocated to Yahya are listed as follows: Mukaliti<sup>213</sup>, Vakiskuli<sup>214</sup>, Lusheti<sup>215</sup>, Lukuketi<sup>216</sup> (Shengelia 2011, 525). Additionally, through Sultan Mustafa's order dated March 31, 1757, the timar held by some Hali in Akshehir Nahiyah within Akhalkalaki Sanjak was reconfirmed. The villages that are part of this timariot include Sasani<sup>217</sup>, Karlabeneti<sup>218</sup>, Aksahuri<sup>219</sup>, Julluja<sup>220</sup>, Barsudari<sup>221</sup>, Alara<sup>222</sup>, and Buneti<sup>223</sup> (Shengelia 2011, 529).

### **Chapter Three. Georgian Toponyms of Samtskhe-Saatabago (Akhalsikhe Pashalik) in Turkish Historiography**

Regarding place names, it's worth noting that Kirzioglu demonstrates a good understanding of the historical geography of Georgia. For instance, when addressing the topic of Samtskhe Saatabago, he accurately identifies the locations of places. However, it's important to mention that he offers his own interpretation of some of the toponyms. In Kirzioglu's monograph, *Kipchaks in the Upper part of the Mtkvari and Chorokhi Basin*, pages 163-181 are dedicated to the names of places and individuals that find confirmation in the French translation of *The Georgian Chronicles*, Turkish sources, and the census defters of 1573 and 1595. This section provides details on a total of 335 places and 511 individuals. Naturally, among the personal names and toponyms, there are those of clearly Turkish names. However, the author also provides his own interpretation for a significant part of the Georgian names, offering Turkish explanations peculiar to him. Towards the end of the monograph, Kirzioglu expresses concern that the Russians took into account the national needs of Soviet Georgia and forcibly exiled around 200,000 Kipchak Sunni Turks<sup>224</sup> from Akhaltsikhe and its vicinity to Central Asia

209 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

210 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

211 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

212 The village is likely to be Baraleti in the Akhalkalaki Municipality, as there is no village with a similar name on the Niala Plateau.

213 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

214 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

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222 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

223 Currently, a toponym similar to the ones mentioned is no longer documented.

224 As mentioned earlier, Professor Kirzioglu holds a certain opinion regarding the resettlement



in 1944 (Kırzioğlu 1992,163-181).

A part of the names of places and persons is well read in *Muhime Defters*, firmans, and berats. However, due to Arabic graphics, in most cases, there are difficulties in reading correctly. This issue is evident in both Turkish and Georgian authors. Nevertheless, the material at our disposal is undoubtedly of great importance for the study of the prevailing social and political system in the region.

**Conclusion:**

To sum up, it can be stated that the material preserved in Turkish historiography holds significant value for the study of Samtskhe-Javakheti's history. Comparing these sources with Georgian and other foreign-language materials enables a more comprehensive analysis of contemporary events in the region. Regarding contentious matters, particularly the subject of the resettlement and return of Kipchaks, it is advisable to address these topics through collaborative scholarly forums involving both Georgian and Turkish researchers. A similar approach can be employed for the identification of place and personal names, thereby mitigating potential misunderstandings.

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of Kipchaks to Georgia. However, Georgian historiography finds this approach unacceptable, as the precise settlement of the Kipchaks has not yet been defined. We believe that verification of such issues requires evidence rather than assumptions.

## **Settling of Armenians to Samtskhe-Javakheti after the Russo-Turkish War in 1828-1829**

### **(According to the Turkish Historiography)**

#### **Introduction**

The consequences of the Russo-Turkish War of 1828-1829 are especially important for the history of the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. The relationship between Russia and Turkey became tense even before the end of the war with Persia. Interference of Russia in the Turkish-Greek war and the destruction of the Turkish fleet by the Russian squadron became the reason for the split in October 1827. At the beginning of 1828, the capture of Tabriz by Giorgi Eristavi hastened the end of the Russian-Persian war. The Treaty concluded in the v. Turkmenchay in February 1828 ended the war. The mentioned act was followed by the annexation of Yerevan-Nakhichevan Khanate to Russia, which further expanded Russia's border with Turkey. When the victorious Paskevich was returning from Tabriz in March 1828, he received a secret notification on the way about the possible start of the war with Turkey. Paskevich immediately returned to Tbilisi and started preparations for war (Lomsadze 1975, 354-155).

“The Tiflisis Utskebani<sup>1</sup>” published special news about beginning of the war with Turkey. The military actions started on June 14, 1828, when the Russian Army breached the Russian-Turkish border from the side of Gyumri, the river Arpachay, and entered the Turkish territory (Tpilisis Utsqebani, June 4, 1828).<sup>2</sup>

On June 23, 1828, Russians took Kars. Paskevich left the military unit of General Berchman in the captured Kars Fortress and on July 16, he moved to Akhalkalaki. On July 22, he crossed the Chrdili (Childir) mountain ridge with the rest of the soldiers and descended to the Javakheti Plateau. On July 23, the Russians started the operation of capturing the Akhalkalaki Castle and succeeded. Russians took the Khertvisi Castle on 26 July, while Aspindza Castle surrendered to Russians without a fight, its 150-men garrison left the fortress and fled (Kavrelişvili 2022, 18).

After taking of the Khertvisi, on July 30, Paskevich issued Order №100, according to which the Russian military units were required to be stationed near Akhaltsikhe (Acti 1866-1904, 760).

The Russian military corps continued with the route from Akhalkalaki to Akhaltsikhe towards Tsikhisjvari. Despite the road being highland and forested the grenadiers' brigade implemented cleaning work. Before the movement of the whole army towards Akhaltsikhe, on July 27 General Muravyov's Brigade was sent to Akhaltsikhe (Kavrelişvili, 2022, 21). The military operation at Akhaltsikhe Castle started on August 11 and ended successfully on August 15. (Lomsadze 1975, 169). After the victory on Akhaltsikhe, it was the time of the Atskuri Castle, which was taken by Russians on August 17 (Potto 1887-1889, 4). At the end of August Paskevich arrived in Artaani<sup>3</sup>. On August 22, the military unit of Russian General Bergman occupied Artaani (Kavrelişvili 2022, 27). Paskevich appointed

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1 „ტფილისის უწყებანი” – Georgian weekly newspaper, published by funding of the government in 1828-1832 (Trans./Ed.).

2 Remark: The dates are given in an old style in Georgian and Russian sources and literature

3 Present-day Ardahan, Turkey (Trans./Ed.).

General V. Bebutov as a governor of Akhaltsikhe Pashalic temporarily (Lomsadze 1975, 172). On August 28, 1828, General Chavchavadze captured the Bayezid Fortress and then Toprak Qala<sup>4</sup> on September 12 (Kavrelishvili 2022, 28). After that, the doors were open for Russians to the west, to Erzurum, and to the south, to Mus and Bitlis (Muratoff 1966, 30). On July 8, 1829<sup>5</sup>, Russian military units took Erzurum (Muratoff 1966, 86), while on July 13, 1829<sup>6</sup>, Bayburt was taken (Muhtar 1928, 87). As a result of the military operation in 1829, Russians gained control over Erzurum, the largest city of Anatolia. They fully occupied the Erzurum and Mus regions and partially the Trabzon region (Celal 1940, 78).

The Russo-Turkish War of 1828–1829 ended on September 14 by signing the 16-article Adrianople treaty. Additional agreement composed of 4 articles annexed to the treaty referred to the problems of the evacuation of occupied territories, the harm and damages incurred during the war, and trading compensation. The document about Wallachia and Moldova was also signed (Gök 2008, 66–68).

Based on the treaty, a part of the historical territories of Georgia turned out to be under Russia's control, in particular, 10 sanjaks of Akhaltsikhe Pashalic, including Akhaltsikhe, Akhalkalaki, Atskuri, Aspindza, Khertvisi, Kvabliani, Abastumani, Chacharaki, Photskhovi and Chrdili (Svanidze 2007, 282). as well as Anapa, Sogucak, Gelendzhik, Sukhumi, Anaklia and Poti fortresses. Russians abandoned other occupied territories of the eastern vilayets of Turkey.

### **I. The settlement of the Armenian population from the Northeast Provinces of the Ottoman Empire and their attempts to return.**

The new phase of the history of the Armenian population residing in the northeast vilayets of Ottoman Turkey started after the end of the war.

Article 13 of the Adrianople Treaty of September 14, 1829, referred to the Armenian population as well. According to that article, the parties of the war undertook the obligation to let those citizens be untouched who had been directly involved in the military operations and/or supported another party. In case of desire, the population had the right to re-settle from the Ottoman Empire to Russia or vice versa within 18 months. With the article, Russia wanted to avoid potential punitive measures by Ottoman Turkey against its supporter Armenian population (Aykun 2019, 411). Within the same 18-month period, the Christian and Muslim populations had the right to move on both sides freely and settle the procedures related to the trading of property. Despite such an agreement, Russia did not allow Armenians resettled in Russia to benefit from these conditions. (Demirel 2006, 266).

According to the agreement, the Ottoman State should not prevent the Armenians, willing to move to Russia, from leaving the country, while Russia should not force the Armenian population to leave Turkey. Ottomans thought that the part of the Armenian population who was happy with their well-being in Turkey would not leave their property and move to another place (Aykun 2019, 412).

The occupation of the Turkish territories by Russians forced the population, already displaced from the Akhaltsikhe Pashalic to Erzurum and Erzincan regions, to flee to the central regions of Turkey again (Beydilli 1988, 384). It seems, that after the occupation of the Erzurum region, Russians could not keep order, as according to the works by Kemal Beydilli, the Kurdish armed gangs started

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4 Toprak-Qala, the same as Eleskirt/ Valaskert

5 The date is given in a new style

6 The date is given in a new style

looting the Armenian population of the Erzurum lowland and Basiani<sup>7</sup> highland villages, therefore the Catholic Armenian population of Erzurum were frightened and 150 families moved to the Russian side. 300 Gregorian Armenians followed them. After entering into a truce, Russians started leaving the region, so the threatened Armenian population asked the national government of Ottomans to protect their lives and property<sup>8</sup> (Beydilli 1988, 386). General Pankratyev asked Mus Mutasarrif<sup>9</sup>, certain Emin Pasha, for protection of the population from Kurdish gangs (Beydilli 1988, 386).

In connection with the mentioned events, already on December 27, 1828, the Bishop of Surb Karapet Monastery<sup>10</sup> and four Archimandrites<sup>11</sup> submitted the request to the Mayor General Pankratyev mentioning that they suffered from the oppression by the Turkish government and the Kurds plundered them indiscriminately, destroyed their churches and desecrated their holy shrines. Armenian priests invited Russian military units to Erzurum offering allegiance and help. Otherwise, as they wrote, all the Armenians would be plundered and sold into captivity (Lomsadze 1975, 346).

It is obvious, that there was the feeling of unsafety spread among the Armenian population after leaving the region by the Russian troops, due to the threat of revenge for their cooperation with Russians.

On October 15, 1828, when Paskevich was going from Erzurum to Tbilisi, the Armenian population met him and asked to take them with him. In June 1829 when parts of the Caucasian army took Erzurum, Paskevich sent General Adjutant Potyomkin to Peterburg and presented the report personally to the Emperor. The report mentioned the resettlement of the Armenians and Greeks (about 10, 000) who were loyal to Russia and living on the invaded territory, to Georgia and the Caucasus. Paskevich asked the permission of the Emperor to utilize 100,000 Chervonets, originally allocated for winning over Kurdish tribes, for the deportation of Armenians, as only 10,000 had been spent out of it. On November 18, 1829, Count Chernishev informed Paskevich that his request for the deportation of 10,000 Armenian families was confirmed by the imperial court and he was allowed to use the money allocated for Kurdish tribes for deportation (Lomsadze 1975, 347).

Chernishev believed that Armenians should have been settled in Akhaltsikhe and its adjacent areas to establish military units, which could be used for the protection of a new border of Russia and to create conditions for economic development in the region (Acti 1866-1904, 831).

After getting permission, Paskevich started organizing re-settlement. On December 3, 1829, the special committee for resettlement was established, chaired by a civic Governor, Zavileisky. In December 1829, the committee drew up the Resettlement Decree, which had 13 articles. The committee was functional until the end of the resettlement, distribution, and housing of the resettled families (Lomsadze 1975, 348).

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7 The author refers the Turkish name Pasinler

8 The author refers to the official letter of the Armenian trader, Migirid Kigork from Erzurum preserved in the Turkish Archive of Prime Minister. Remark: (The author, misspelled the name Migirid due to the specifics of Arabian script, it should be Mkrtych.R.K)

9 The head of the region in Turkey

10 The name is not given

11 The names are not given

Each resettled family was to receive 25 rubles in silver and the committee had to grant permission and then seek the approval of the Civil or Military Governor (Acti 1866-1904, 832).

Based on Paskevich's order the commanders of the Russian army had to support all the Christians in Kars, Erzurum, and Bayezid Pashalics willing to move to Georgia. They had to give them special tickets and provide all kinds of support to them. The Resettlement was scheduled to start in spring, 1830. The military commanders were to submit to the committee the list of the families willing to resettle (Acti1866-1904, 834).

The committee estimated that it was possible to resettle 8,000 families within the Georgian border (Acti1866-1904, 834). However, more colonists arrived, around 14,000 families. The main resettlement started in July 1830 (Lomsadze 1975, 351).

Because of the resemblance of Javakheti and Erzurum climates Armenians from Erzurum asked for relocation to the Akhaltsikhe Pashalic. Initially, two thousand families showed willingness (Acti 1866-1904, 833), later on, their number increased up to 7 thousand (Acti 1866-1904, 838).

According to the material referred to by Turkish authors, the local Armenian Church facilitated the movement of the Armenian population from their place of residence and resettlement to the territory of the Russian Empire. The same material shows that the letters were sent to the national government of Ottomans by the community leaders of remaining Armenians asking for the possibility of rehabilitation of the returned ones in the cases when they came back.

The responses of the Armenian Erzurum Bishop Karapet to the letters received from the center are interesting. He wrote to Padishah, that "there were certain irrelevant and wrong actions during the war". The Bishop's request was discussed at the court of Padishah. The decision to pardon (Muammer Demirel 2006, 264)<sup>12</sup> was sent to the naibs of Erzurum, Hinis, and Mus (Demirel 2006, 267).<sup>13</sup>

According to Karapet, the situation was the result of raids on the Armenian villages by Kurdish bands and should not have been understood as cooperation with the Russians or the betrayal of the country. Armenian Bishop feared that the same thing could happen if the Russians had left, and asked for government protection (Beydilli 1988, 386).

The claims about attacks of the Hinis and Terkman Kurds on the Armenian population were sent to the regional government. They demanded the punishment of the oppressors (Demirel 2006, 267).<sup>14</sup>

The Ottoman state tried to prevent resettlement of the Armenians from the Erzurum, Kars, Bayezid and Valashkert<sup>15</sup> regions in a secretive or declared way. It is noteworthy, that even Armenians indicated themselves that Russians were forcefully deporting part of the population. The Ottoman state sent its own people

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12 The Author refers to the letter of the Armenian Bishop of Erzurum, Karapet dated as February 13, 1830. The letter is preserved in the Turkish archive of the Prime Minister: BOA, HH. No 43153-J.

13 The Author refers to the decree sent to the Erzurum Naib, Mehmet Nuri Efendi, 23. Ş. 124, BOA, HH, №341-53=7; The decree sent to Hinis Naib, Hasan Efendi - 13. N. 1245, BOA, HH, №43153 - H; The decree sent to the Musi Naib, Sunulah Efendi - 5. N. 1245, BOA, HH, . №43153-G.

14 The Author refers to the letter of Trabzon Vali and Governor of the East, Osman Pasha, By Hijri 13. L. 1245; BOA, HH, № 43153-B.

15 It is referred to as Eleskirt (Eleşkirt) in Turkish literature



to conduct propaganda against resettlement openly and in secretive way in those regions (Aykun 2019, 412). Through their apostles, Ottomans promised security to the Armenian population, so that they would not believe the empty promises of the Russians and would not leave their places of residence. Authoritative people were also used for this very reason (Beydilli 1988, 387).<sup>16</sup> Moneylender Kose Oglu was one of them. He informed Ottoman Commanders about the current situation (Aykun 2019, 412). Officials also tried to influence the resettlement process, for instance, the mufti of Erzurum together with the Muslim leaders met the Armenian population and tried to convince them to stay. Though he could not provide real guarantees of safety for them (Demirel 2006, 266).<sup>17</sup>

The attempt to hinder the resettlement of Armenians turned out to be fruitless. The Erzurum Serasker, Hasan Pasha, and Armenian Bishop Bartolome sent by the Sultan from Istanbul were all involved in this process, though without result (АКТЫ 1866-1904, 842).

In addition, Trabzon Vali and the commander-in-chief of the East, Osman Pasha requested the national government to return the former head of Bayezid, Behlulu Pasha, who could meet the demands of Armenians and return them (Demirel 2006, 267).<sup>18</sup>

To negotiate with the Armenian community, the government of the Ottomans decided to send the Armenian Bishop to Erzurum<sup>19</sup>, some Ibrahim from the foreign entity to Kars, and Behlulu pasha to Bayezid. The goal of the meeting was to conduct negotiations about the stay of the Armenians, but the Russian government did not allow them to go beyond Erzurum and did not let them meet the Armenian community (Demirel 1988, 268).<sup>20</sup>

In some regions occupied by Russians, relatively soft politics were applied, for instance, in the Eleshkert<sup>21</sup> region. The mufti and the head of the region met with the local Armenian population and gave them safety guarantees. As a result, the majority of the population did not resort to exile. Only 17 Armenian families left (Demirel 2006, 268).<sup>22</sup>

It is obvious, that the Ottoman Government was not officially able to oppose the resettlement of the population, which was based on certain promises or pressure. It is well shown in the official letter sent by the Ottoman government to the Commander of the Eastern Troops, Osman Pasha. He was asked not to oppose the mentioned process and if somebody wanted to stay to take care of them as much as possible (Beydilli 1988, 387).

Obviously, the Ottoman Government did not expect such a large-scale agi-

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16 Some moneylender Koseoglu is referred as an example.

17 The Author refers to the explanatory letter of the Erzurum Mufti and several Muslim leaders from the archive of the Prime Minister dated July 9, 1831: BOA, HH, No. 4321, A.

18 The Author refers to the letter of Trabzon Vali and Governor of the East, Osman Pasha dated by Hijri 13. L. 1245 (April 7, 1830). BOA, HH, № 43153-B.

19 The referred bishop is Bartolome (see, Shota Lomsadze, Mentioned book, p. 351; АКТЫ, VII, p. 842.).

20 The Author refers to the letter of Erzurum Vali Hasan Pasha, by Hijri 3 M. 1246, BOA, HH, №43139-F.

21 It is known as Valashkert in Georgian historical sources.

22 The Author refers to report by a Valashkert Mufti and the region head, written in Hijri 19 B. 1245, BOA, HH, № 43022 -D.

tation and so much pressure from Russians among the Armenian population regarding resettlement.

The evidence is the letter of Trabzon Vali<sup>23</sup> Osman Pasha to the national government dated 14.08.1829. He sent this letter to Osman Pasha because of the facts referred to in the letter sent to him by Erzurum and Sivas Vali Hasan Pasha. The letter reads that General Pankratyev did not allow Armenian population to cultivate lands in Erzurum, what meant pushing them for displacement (Beydilli 1988, 388).

The same Osman Pasha mentioned that Pankratyev granted allegiance of Russia to the Armenian Bishop<sup>24</sup> and he tried to win the Armenian population over this way (Beydilli 1988, 388). The Osman Pasha's letter to the national government demonstrated that Russian General Pankratyev agitated the population to move. For instance, he said the Armenian population residing in the village Kojaba, Erzurum district, that the already were the subjects to Russia and he was supporting their resettlement to the Russian territory (Aykun 2019, 412). By the order of Pankratyev Armenian Bishop sent his people to Basyan, Machined, Hinis, Timken, Tejano districts of Erzurum region and ordered to draw up the list of those who wanted to resettle (Beydilli 1988, 388).

It is noteworthy, that Osman Pasha asked the Ottoman Government to fire the Armenian Bishop<sup>25</sup> and appoint another person instead of him. In addition, he asked to consult with the Russian representative in Istanbul by the Ottoman Government in order to stop Russia from forcefully resettling Armenians (Beydilli 1988, 388).

It seemed that Pankratyev used smart tactics. He used to meet the Armenian population and explain that they had a free choice (Beydilli 1988, 388).

The Armenian Patriarchate of Istanbul was informed about the possibility of the Armenian Erzurum Bishop being substituted by more loyal to Ottomans and about the need to send officials from Istanbul to prevent Russians from being too active in the Erzurum region. However, none of the above-mentioned took place. In such a case, the only chance to prevent deportation was to grant a guarantee of safety to the Armenian population by the Ottoman government. Even the Decree about freedom of choice was issued (Beydilli 1988, 389).<sup>26</sup> After that, the Armenian population was divided into two, those who wished to leave and those who wanted to stay (Beydilli 1988, 389).

According to one of the documents, Armenian clergymen used to go door to door and openly propagated the deportation policy and register the population in the so-called "Register of the Bishop". They conducted propaganda about what would happen if they chose to stay. They warned them that if they stayed, they would be under the threat of robbery and burning of their houses. It is also interesting, that the Muslim population hidden, not openly gave the safety guarantee to their Armenian neighbors, though it had no result (Beydilli 1988, 389).

Proof of the participation of the Armenian Bishops in the resettlement<sup>27</sup> can be found in the letter of Erzurum Mufti sent to the Ottoman Government on 28.04.1830. In addition, the Istanbul authorities sent official pardon letters to the

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23 Military-administrative position in Ottoman Empire.

24 Name is not referred

25 The source does not indicate the information which specific bishop is referred to.

26 The author does not indicate who issued the order.

27 The name is not indicated

representatives of the Armenian Bishops in Erzurum, Kars and Mus<sup>28</sup> and Karabashes<sup>29</sup> in relation to the people who committed a crime during the war. However, in 1830 the Armenian population departed, some voluntarily and others forcedly. It should be noted, that those, who did something against their country during the war, were the first to depart and they made others follow. Some of them regretted this step even on the way and returned back from Kars. It is also interesting that those who had returned were hiding from Russians. By the decision of the Russian Government, the Armenian population expelled from Erzurum was resettled in the territory of the Akhaltsikhe Pashalic. Russia established strict control over this territory to prevent the voluntary return of Armenians. The Ottoman state ensured the safety of those, who were able to go back. In addition, the Ottomans registered all the property left behind by the deported Armenians (Beydilli 1988, 390).

As for the number of Armenians who returned from Kars to Erzurum, it was 100 people. According to them, if given the opportunity, most of the resettled population would be willing to return (Demirel 2002, 266).<sup>30</sup>

It is obvious, that there were no such conditions in the place of resettlement, the Russian Commander had promised to the departing Armenian population, and that is why part of those who had resettled decided to return.

According to the researched material, the Armenian priests who remained in the Erzurum region were leading the return of the Armenians deported to the territory of the Russian Empire. They addressed to the Ottoman Government and provided them with information about those who were willing to return. Noteworthy that a certain part of the departed people returned back, to their houses. However, their exact number is unknown (Özcan 2011, 195).

The attempt and the process of returning Armenians is proven by Russian sources as well. On January 25, 1834, Baron Rosen wrote to Neselrodes that attempts of Armenians to return from Akhaltsikhe Pashalic decreased gradually (Acti 1966-1904, 833). Return to Erzurum had an intensive form during the first three years of resettlement (1830-1833) (Lomsadze 1975, 360).

It needs to be mentioned that Baron Rosen requested the establishment of Russian representation in Erzurum, to control the issues related to the return of the Armenians (Acti 1966-1904, 884).

The Russian party asked Erzurum Serasker Asat Pasha to stop the return of Armenians. They received approval followed by certain results. However, an Armenian Bishop, Gevork mentioned in 1836 that 400 families still returned to Erzurum from Akhaltsikhe (Lomsadze 1975, 360).

In Valashkert, the local mufti Abdurrahman Efendi met the Armenian population based on the decree issued by the Ottoman Government and promised that there was no threat in case of leaving Russians for them. Though it was not sufficient for the Armenian population, they still promised mufti not to leave. Yet pressure and propaganda played their role and they were exiled (Beydilli 1988, 392).<sup>31</sup>

28 The names are not indicated.

29 Qarabashes, Armenian priests are referred to in this way in the reviewed and in general Turkish historical sources.

30 The Author refers to the explanatory letter by Ali Shevpik Pasha of Erzurum Vali to the national government dated by Hijri 9 R. 1246. BOA, HH, No. 43212. A.

31 The author refers to the official letter of Mufti Abdurahman and the teacher Sadullah Effendi to the government of Ottoman Turkey.

It is noteworthy that the city of Erzurum suffered great losses in this war. It had 130,000 residents before the war, while the number was reduced to 13,000 after the war. It was the result of the movement of the local Muslims to various parts of the Ottoman Empire and Armenians to the Russian Empire, in particular to the Governates of Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, and Yerevan. Presumably, Russian commanders intended to make this region economically poor. The Ottoman Government developed the quantitative lists of the Armenians who had left from Erzurum. One of the lists included the names of those Armenians who had sold their property and left, another list had the names of those, who moved without selling off their assets. The Russian government also developed a list of the Armenians who moved to Russian territory<sup>32</sup> (Aykun 2019, 413).

The number of Armenians who resettled from the villages under the jurisdiction of the city of Erzurum was quite high. The Ottoman Government also registered those villages and their real estate. The list included the names of the villages, the number of households, the names of the land plots, mills, grain processing grounds, and grain storages. In total 1,225 households were moved. The movement took place in May and June. Refer to the Annex VIII<sup>33</sup> (Aykun 2019, 418-422).

Non-Muslim males used to pay a jizya tax to be released from Military service in the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, the movement of the Armenian population harmed the economy of Erzurum from this perspective as well (Aykun 2019, 417).

Armenians were resettled to Akhalkalaki, Akhaltsikhe, and Tbilisi<sup>34</sup> (Muratoff 1966, 288; Lomsadze 1975, 359). 2,421 families were resettled from Erzurum City and 1,225 families from the villages of the Erzurum region. In total 3,648 families. Armenian population was resettled from the following settlements of the Erzurum region, Pasinler, Hınıs, and Bayburt. According to the list made by Ottomans, the majority of Armenians were involved in trading and workmanship. Some of the resettled Armenians sold their property and left the country, though others moved without selling anything. Refer to Annex VI for more information<sup>35</sup> (Aykun 2019, 413-415).

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32 Unfortunately, the author did not publish the names. He indicates only the archive reference numbers of the documents kept in the Ottoman archive of Prime Minister: BOA. H.H. Nr. 43065-0 About Armenian Population resettled from Erzurum City; BOA. H.H. Nr. 43065 – p About Armenian Population resettled from Erzurum region. The Author indicates the list of the resettled Armenians from Bayazid and Valashkert, which was published by J. D. Maloma in his Russian article. The article was published in the geographical community news of Russian Empire, *İzvest. İmp. Russ. Geog. Soc. Canc. Sect. V. s. 1877-78*. Although Ibrahim Aykun mentions that the article was published in Russian, he refers to its English title: 'The List of Inhabited Places in Districts of Bayazid and Alashkert.

33 In the table we have presented, only the number of households (family names) and individual families is indicated.

34 Presumably, the term "Tbilisi" in this context encompasses the territory where the Armenian population resettled, namely the Borchalo district, Tsalka surroundings, and Bambak-Shoragel areas of the Tiflis Governorate.

35 According to the table given in the Annex VI, the population was deported from 42 districts of Erzurum. It shows that the majority of the Armenian population had not sold their houses, and the Ottoman state warned them that if they sold the houses and left, they would not be able to reclaim their own houses back in case of return. Table in Annex VII shows the economic activities of the Armenian population in Erzurum.

Besin Özcan provides slightly different information about the resettled from Erzurum. According to him, 2,372 Armenian families left Erzurum city, while 1,139 families moved from the Erzurum valley. As the author states, 561 Armenian families were resettled from Pasinler town, 33 from Terjan town, 40 from Bayburt town, 117 families from Tortum, and 468 families from the Hinis district, in total 4. 730 families. If you estimate that each family has five members, a total number of 23, 650 people were resettled (Özcan 2011, 199).

Erzurum Armenians intensively started relocation in May 1830. They received passports for entrance to Russia. The priests - Bishop Karapet from Erzurum and Archimandrite Seraphim, led the resettled Armenians from Erzurum and Bayezid. The head of Akhaltsikhe Pashalic, Dreshern, a former Commandant of Akhaltsikhe, appointed after Bebutov, personally contacted the temporary Chief General of Erzurum Pashalic, Pankratyev, who informed the population willing to resettle about the conditions of resettlement (Lomsadze 1975, 356).

A total of 7,298 families were transferred from the Erzurum region to the territory of the Russian Empire, with more than 5, 000 of them resettled in Akhaltsikhe Pashalic (Lomsadze 1975, 359).

The mentioned population was resettled in the former residences of the Muslim Georgians in Akhaltsikhe Pashalic (Lomsadze 1975, 332-334).<sup>36</sup> The officers of the Tsarism tried to exile as many local people as possible (Lomsadze 1975, 354). The Turkish government in its turn also insisted on the resettlement of the population of Akhaltsikhe Pashalic on the territory of Turkey (Acti 1866-1904, 883).

The Armenian population from Erzurum was resettled in 51 villages of Javakheti, including Akhalkalaki town (Melkonyan 2003, 193-196). It can be said, that the resettled population essentially continued their activities in Javakheti, similar to what they did in the Erzurum region (Karapetyan, 2006). As for the history of the places of resettlement of the Armenian population in Samtskhe-Javakheti, and the toponyms brought by them or that existed at the places of their resettlement, it is described in detail in the five-volume "Dictionary of Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions" by T. Hakobyan, St. Melik Bakhshyan and H. Barseghyan published in 1986-2001 (Dictionary of toponyms 1986-2001; Balasanyan 2016).

Currently, there is no precise data about the number of people relocated from Eastern Anatolia. According to Richard Hovanesyan, it is 100, 000. Based on the data provided by the representative of England, Robert Kerzon who attended the Erzurum Conference in 1843, the number of the deported Armenians from Eastern Anatolia is 69, 000 people (Demirel 2006, 268).<sup>37</sup> According to Shota Lomsadze, the number of Christian Armenians who relocated and settled in the Russian Empire from Turkey during 1829-1830 reached 14,044 households (Lomsadze 1975, 354).

In 1871, 228 Armenian Catholic households that had resettled from Erzurum

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36 It should be noted here that after annexation of Akhaltsikhe Pashalik by Russians, the Turkmen tribes - Karapapakhs (Terekemes), settled in Samtskhe-Saatabago at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century, moved from there and resettled to Ottoman Empire. They mainly resettled in the area of Kars. Even today, in this area, a distinction is made between "Yerli" (local) from Akhaltsikhe and Terekeme (R.K.).

37 The Author refers to Ricard Hovannisyan, *Armenia on the Road to Independence*, Los Angeles 1976, p. 9 and Robert Curzon, *Armenia: A year at Erzerum, and on the Frontiers of Russia, Turkey and Persia*, London 1854, p. 203.



city returned, comprising a total of 622 people (Demirel 2006, 269).<sup>38</sup> According to Demirel, the registers of Kars, Mus, and Kagizman, where the information about the resettled Armenians and their property were registered, were not accessible at that moment. Considering the inaccessible data, presumably 60-70,000 people were resettled from Eastern Anatolia. It means that the region was left by the majority of Christian residents (Demirel 2006, 269).

It is worth noting that around 100 households of the resettled Armenians from Erzurum and its adjacent areas moved back. They stated that if given the opportunity the majority of the resettled would like to go back. (Demirel 2006, 269).<sup>39</sup>

According to the observation of Kerzon, who mentioned it during his speech in 1843, most of the Armenians who moved to Russia suffered from famine and poverty and therefore tried to go back. (Demirel 2006, 270).

Processes similar to those in Erzurum were taking place in other places occupied by Russia. For instance, the Ottoman Government tried to prevent resettlement in Kars as well. They also applied public diplomacy and included the moneylender, Koseoglu here as well. He addressed the local population to refuse resettlement. However, one group of local Armenians together with the person appointed by Pankratyev visited the Armenian villages in Kars and drew up a list of those, who wanted to resettle. Similar to Iran they appointed headmen for this task. It is noteworthy, that Pankratyev issued so-called travel permission for those who wanted to leave the Kars region and resettle (Beydilli 1988, 391). 114 families did not resettle and remained in Kars, while 139 families that had moved during 1830-1831 returned to Kars again (Demirel 2002, 270).

Attempts to return the Armenians resettled on the Russian Territory, continued after 1830-1831 due to internal and foreign policies of the Ottoman State. It is impossible to calculate the precise number of those who returned, as some people returned illegally, others came back legally and this process took decades.

In 1851, four Armenian families who had been deported to Russia applied jointly to the Ottoman government and asked for permission to return. Their request was granted (Demirel 2002, 270).<sup>40</sup> It is noteworthy, that it took 16 years to get a positive decision, it seems that a national government took the decision later.

A new wave of returns started in 1853 after the introduction of the Tanzimat Law. According to the law, Armenians living in Erzurum, both Grigorians and Catholics, and Greeks were granted more rights, motivating the resettled population in the Russian Empire to return. The Armenian and Greek populations who remained in the place jointly asked the local Ottoman government to let those who had resettled to return. They sent two letters of appeal to the Head of Erzurum. They explained that Grigorians were in first place among non-Muslim residents of Erzurum, and Catholic Armenians and Greeks followed them. The appeal of Gregorian Armenians from Erzurum was titled "On behalf of Christians" and accompanied by 380 signatures. It featured four types of stamps: some with only Armenian script, some with Armenian-Turkish, and others with just Turkish (Demirel 2006, 271).<sup>41</sup>

The letter written by Catholic Armenians from Erzurum had the same con-

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38 The Author refers to: BOA, HR. MKT, 89/95.

39 The Author refers to the report of Erzurum Vali Ali Shefik: 9 M. 1254, BOA, HH, № 43212-A.

40 The author refers to the decision of Erzurum Vali sent by the national government on 16 R. 1267 by Hirji (February 18, 1867, BOA, A. MKT. MVL, 39/64.

41 The request of Christians from the Erzurum and its region, BOA, İrade Meclisi Vala, №11109.

tent and was signed by 85 individuals. The stamps attached to the letter were identical to the ones on the letter of Gregorian Armenians by their form and content (Demirel 2006, 271).<sup>42</sup>

Both requests were sent to the special committee consisting of 5 people at the Ottoman Meclis with the approval of the Erzurum region head.<sup>43</sup> By decree of August 11, 1853, of Padishah, the Armenians returned from Russia, were given the authority to become subjects of the Ottomans, and were given the guarantees of safety (Demirel 2006, 272).<sup>44</sup>

As a result, 570 Gregorian Armenians returned to Erzurum and received the citizenship of the Ottoman state. They were registered in the Register of the Armenian Patriarchate. There were 10 Greeks as well among returnees, who were sent to be registered in the registry of the Greek Patriarchate (Demirel 2006, 272).<sup>45</sup>

After reception approval of repatriation, some of the Armenian Catholics returned to Erzurum and its region. Their total count reached 228 households and 622 people. They were registered in the register of the Armenian Catholic Patriarchate (Demirel 2006, 272).<sup>46</sup>

At the end of the Crimean War, in 1856-1857 (by Hijri 1273), another wave of Gregorian Armenians, comprising around 300 families, returned to Erzurum and its surrounding region. (Demirel 2006, 272).<sup>47</sup>

It is also important that some of the returned Armenians maintained contact with Russia. They did not abandon their allegiance to Russia but still became citizens of the Ottoman Empire. The commander of the Anatolian Army<sup>48</sup> considered it as a threat and informed the Sultan government about it. Accordingly, a special committee of the Ottoman Meclis (parliament) made a decision, to identify individuals who acquired Ottoman citizenship while retaining Russian citizenship as spies (Demirel 2006, 273).<sup>49</sup>

In 1859, the request for repatriation of the Catholic Armenians who departed from Arzut<sup>50</sup> of Erzurum region was granted (Demirel 2006, 274),<sup>51</sup> and 50-60 out of 73 deported families returned (Demirel 2006, 274).<sup>52</sup>

Resettlement of Armenians to Russian territory also took place during the wars of 1877-1878. In 1877, after the occupation of Kars by Russians, 4,000 Armenian citizens were departed from Eastern Anatolia to Russia. After the completion of the war, 500 families asked to return, and the Russian government granted permission (Demirel 2006, 274).<sup>53</sup>

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42 Appeal of the Catholic Armenians living in Erzurum and its region, by Hijri 5. L. 1265. BOA, İrade Meclisi Vala, №11109..

43 In Turkish: İrade Meclis-i Vala.

44 The Author refers to BOA, İrade Meclis-i Vala, №11109..

45 The letter of the Armenian Bishop to the Greek Patriarch, Hijri 19 Za. 1270. (August 13, 1854), BOA, Hr, MKT, 82/93.

46 The Author refers to BOA, HR, MKT, 89/95.

47 The Author refers to BOA, A.A. AMD, 75/14/

48 The name of the mentioned person is not indicated.

49 The author refers to Osmanlı Belgelerinde Ermeniler (1691-1870), C. I, İstanbul, 1987, №77, p. 161-162.

50 Current Yeshiliaila (Yeşilyayla).

51 The author refers to BOA, HH, №43065. P.

52 The author refers to İrade-i Seniyye, Hijri 4. ca, 1276, BOA, İrade Meclisi Vala, №18631.

53 The author refers to: Bilal Şimşir, British Documents on Ottoman Armenians, Volume I, Anka-

Later on, remaining citizens from those 4, 000 also asked to return, but the Ottoman Government refused to register them in Turkey under the condition of Russian protection (Demirel 2006, 274).<sup>54</sup>

After the completion of the Russian-Turkish War of 1877-1878, there was still a voluntary outflow of the Armenian population living in Turkey to Russia. It mainly happened during the strike of Armenians in 1890. During that time the Armenian population, frightened of attacks by Kurdish raider groups moved to Russia. For instance, about 20,000-30,000 Armenians decided to go to Russian territory (Demirel 2006, 274).

The Ottoman state was concerned with the dissatisfaction of so many people. In 1904, Sultan Abdul Hamid II officially addressed the Russian government on granting permission for resettling to aforementioned Armenians to the Russian territories, though he was refused, as Russia considered that such a great movement of Armenians to the Caucasus could be dangerous for the Caucasus (Demirel 2006, 275).

## **II. The Land and Real estate-related issues of Armenians deported from the Northeast Provinces of Ottoman Turkey**

The abandoned land and property by departed Armenians was an important issue for Russia and the Ottoman Governments. This issue was divided into two parts: 1) the land and property of the fleeing Muslim population bought or seized differently by the Armenian population during the Russian occupation; and 2) the land and property abandoned by the departed and resettled Armenian population (Beydilli 1988, 392).

As for the first category, during the Russian occupation, the Armenian population cheaply bought the land and property of the Muslim population who had fled from Kars in Sivas, Zile, and Toktas.<sup>55</sup> In some cases, they even captured it for free. The part of Muslim population left all this to the wealthy Armenians in exchange for the debts taken earlier. Since the peace agreement was concluded and some of the Armenians relocated to the Russian Empire, the problem of returning those lands to the Ottomans turned into a legal dispute between those two countries (Beydilli 1988, 393).

The Ottoman Government began to investigate who the sellers and buyers were, how much was paid for the property and land, how much the property's annual income was, and how much it would be to buy it back. Therefore, the leaders of the Muslim refugees from Kars wrote to the Ottoman Government to mediate with the Russian authorities to allow them to enter the Kars region and study the issues related to the return of the Muslim population and the property before the de-occupation of the Kars region. It turned out to be acceptable for the Russian side. The representatives of the Turkish party, some Mardiros and Arslan brought documentation pertaining to the property of the deported Armenians

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ra, 1989, p. 132-133.

54 The author refers to F.O, 424/81, №340, P. 249, date: February 24, 1879.

55 Sivas,Zile, Tokatare the cities in Turkey.

and Muslim population in Kars. They gave those documents to the people who were responsible for the problem solution. Based on this registry, it was evident that Armenians had fully purchased 80 villages and half of 15 villages before the Muslims fled. It also demonstrated that the Armenians had not fully paid for the property and had departed to Russia without completing the payment. Such a circumstance put Russian authority, in particular, General Pankratyev, in a poor condition. He faced this problem while still in Erzurum and even paid a portion of the unpaid amount (Beydilli 1988, 394).

Article 13 of the Adrianople Treaty addressed the selling and disposal of property for those wishing to relocate within 18 months, though as it turned out this period was not sufficient. General Paskevich was asked to review the issue. He promised the population that he would inform the Emperor about it. In addition, they asked General Pankratyev, temporarily appointed to replace Paskevich, to prolong the period by 40 days after the expiration of 18 months. However, Pankratyev did not consider this problem. He thought that the selling of the Armenians' property and land was delayed deliberately (Beydilli 1988, 395).

The selling of the Armenians' property took place with difficulties. The purchasing power of the affected Muslim population during the war was quite low. There was a big imbalance between the number of sellers and buyers. Neither amount required for purchase was enough (Beydilli 1988, 396).

As for the property and land abandoned by the Armenian population, the local Turkish government registered them in the special registers. One copy of those registers was left at place and another copy was sent to Istanbul. Returned Armenians received their property according to those registers. In this way, the Ottoman Government tried to bring somehow back the Armenian population, relocated by Russians. The Ottoman government allowed Armenians to retrieve their property within five months after their departure. If they returned, they could apply to the local authority and get their property back. The process with such conditions started in Erzurum and Kars immediately (Beydilli 1988, 397).

General Paskevich appointed Captain Venikov to make an agreement with the Turkish party about the property and land issue based on Article 13 of the Adrianople Treaty. He was accompanied by the resettled Armenians who visited Kars to meet the Turkish party representatives, Arslan and Mardiru (Beydilli 1988, 397).

Captain Venikov and the aforementioned representatives asked for 390,000 Kurush in exchange for wheat used for sowing by the Armenians resettled to Russia. They declared that if their demand were rejected they would file a case against the owners of the land plots. At the same time, the representatives of the Ottomans requested repayment of the debts owed by Armenian citizens to Muslims. These debts arose when Muslims sold their properties to Armenians during the Russian entry into the region and the subsequent resettlement of Muslims to the central regions of Turkey. The situation became tense because of it. To ease the situation, the representatives of the parties re-compiled the books of accounts payable and receivable and handed them over to Captain Venikov (Beydilli 1988, 398).

An official letter from Paskevich sent to the Vali of Erzurum and Kars, delivered by the representatives of the departed Armenians, enables us to identify the individuals who accompanied Venikov. They were Archimandrite Tatos, Karabetoglu Makdes, Karabetoglu Akacan, Matevosoglu Evanes, Yusufoglu Akacan, and

Anacoglu Iakub<sup>56</sup>, in total 6 people. They were responsible for selling the property of resettled Armenians and payment of existing debt. In the letter, Paskevich strictly adhered to an 18-month deadline in accordance with the Adrianople Treaty, dealing with the sales and disposal of property, debt settlement, arable and pastureland problems. Due to the expiration of the deadline on 10.03.1831, Paskevich forbade property trading. Regarding issues related to financial debts, he indicated that this matter should have been discussed with Captain Venikov and resolved without pain (Beydilli 1988, 398).

In such a condition, it became evident that overcoming such misunderstandings would take time. However, Russia's desire to address the problem promptly led to the idea of quantifying the property and debt issues into an acceptable amount for both parties.<sup>57</sup> Finally, after negotiations, Venikov asked Turks to pay 3,000 purses (kisa)<sup>58</sup> full of akche (Beydilli 1988, 398).

Throughout the year, the representatives of the departed Armenians in Erzurum received an amount of 107,000 Kurush from the sale of property and 63,000 Kurush, from the outstanding debt owed by local Muslims and remained ethnic Armenians to the departed Armenians. The representatives received 29,000 Kurush from the sale of the harvest stored by the departed Armenians. As for the debt owed by the Armenians, departed to Russia, to the remained Armenians and Muslims amounted to 1,700 purses (kisa). The process of selling and disposition was difficult. In this regard, an additional three-month period was determined. There were cases when resettled Armenians secretly arrived in Erzurum and engaged in trade activities. According to the Turks, they encouraged the Armenian population to move to Russia in a hidden way (Beydilli 1988, 399).

The Turkish party contemplated to define a final payable amount to Russians. Accordingly, the Russian party was offered 1,500 kisa. This amount was unacceptable for Russians. However, it became clear, that it was impossible to settle the problem of property sale, and repayment of debts within 18 months and even within an additional three-month period. Therefore, the Vali of Erzurum, Mehmed Esad Pasha, met the leaders of the Muslim population in Erzurum and decided to pay 410,000 Kurush to the Russians. The payment was to occur in two installments, with the payment date set for 17.02.1832. Both the Russian and Turkish parties agreed on these conditions and exchanged the necessary documents (Beydilli 1988, 401).

To complete financial operations General Pankratyev demanded that Captain Venikov stay in Erzurum. It meant that Venikov had to be there for an additional two years. This fact raised doubts among the Turks whether the stay of Russians in Erzurum implied the presence of a consulate. Turks informed Pankratyev about it via Venikov. In response, Pankratyev reported that Russia had no such plan. Finally, with the departure of Venikov trading visits of Armenians resettled to Russia in Erzurum terminated.

The desire of departed Armenians to return to the land of their ancestors remained strong.

56 Due to Turkish pronunciation and Arabic graphics, some of the names and surnames are inconsistent with current and correct Armenian names and surnames.

57 The author refers to the letter of General Pankratyev, sent to the Erzurum Vali Mehmed Esad Pasha dated 16. 07.1831. It seems that the idea originated from the Russians.

58 The kisa, or purse in English translation, was a small bag or pouch in which various coins or currency units, such as akçe or para, were stored (Trans./Ed.).



The Firman of Tanzimat<sup>59</sup> issued on November 3, 1839, which granted substantial rights to the ethnic minorities, raised hopes to the Armenian population resettled from the Ottoman Empire to the Russian Empire. Despite existing threats, some of them started returning (Özcan 2011, 199).

As mentioned, this process took place even during the resettlement, as confirmed by the letter of the Erzurum Vali, Ali Sepik Pasha, to the government in 1830. The letter stated that the resettled Armenians even while on the way to Kars, were leaving their families and returning to Erzurum (Özcan 2011, 199).

The reasons mentioned by resettled Armenians for returning from Russia included military service obligations and taxes imposed on them, as well as negligence from the state. The Ottoman state was loyal to those who returned. As their property had been registered, they could return it and have the possibility to get a land plot as well (Özcan 2011, 199).

The desire to return to the Ottoman Empire did not disappear among the Armenian and Greek population resettled to Russia even during the Crimean War. In 1853, the representatives of these two communities remained in Erzurum addressed the Ottoman Government seeking permission for the return of those who moved in 1830. The Catholic Armenian community also joined in this request (Özcan 2011, 199-200).

The letter sent by the Armenian community to the Ottoman authorities regarding the request for the return of resettled compatriots is accompanied by the seal of the 380 districts, representing their residents. This request was sent to the national government, to Istanbul by Vali, Mustafa Pasha, on July 11, 1853. By the order of Padishah, of August 13, 1853 Armenians were given permission to return. The process took place until the end of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-1878. However, the number of Armenians who returned is not known (Özcan 2011, 201).

In addition, in 1877, the Armenian member<sup>60</sup> of the Ottoman Parliament declared at the Meclis of the Ottoman State that the Armenian community was generally satisfied with the attitude of the Ottoman Government, and in 1829, the Armenian population had been forcibly resettled by Russia (Özcan 2011, 201).

In a conclusion, it can be said that:

1. The experience and example of the resettlement of Armenians from Iran to the Yerevan region after the Turkmenchay Treaty of 1828 preceded the resettlement of the Armenian population to Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe Mazras, as well as surrounding areas of Tbilisi.<sup>61</sup>

2. The above-mentioned experience was applied in Article 13, Adrianople Treaty of 1829.

3. The interests of the parties to the mentioned process were different: Russia tried to settle Christian Armenians being loyal to Russian authority in the place of evicted Muslims from Meskheta. In this way, Russia strengthened its position against the Ottomans in the forthcoming wars. It would also strengthen the abandoned region economically. For the Ottoman Empire, the relocation of Armenians caused not only a loss of population but also the decline of the region's economy.

4. The Armenian Church played a great role in resettlement of Armenians

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59 The decree of the Ottoman Sultan about starting reforms.

60 Unfortunately, the identity is not referred by an author of an article.

61 The territory of Borchalo district, Tsalka area and Bambak-Shuregeli are implied.

5. The expectations of Armenians relocated to the territory of the Russian Empire partially failed, therefore, part of them decided to go back, though the Russian government dealt with such initiatives strictly.

6. On the contrary, the local and national governments of the Ottomans did their best to support returnees. In that case, the Ottoman Government had a purely economic interest, as among the resettled many people were skilled in trade, handicrafts, and farming.

7. It is also worth noting that, in general, those branches of craft that are widespread among the Armenian population living in the territory of the Ottoman Empire are almost entirely found among the Armenian population living in Eastern Anatolia, as confirmed by Ottoman records from the 16th century (Aktaş 2020, 297-314).

8. The Armenian population residing in Eastern Anatolia was mainly involved in agriculture and animal breeding, while urban residents were engaged in handicraft and trading businesses.

9. To some extent, some branches of artisanship even formed some Armenian surnames. For example, Abajyan, Palangyan, Cherchyan (Charchyan), Kazanjyan, Marangozian, Demirjyan and others.

10. In Turkish historiography, there is sufficient factual material preserved about the places where Armenians resided, their activities, and the number of resettled.

11. Comparison of the available materials with the Georgian, Russian, and Armenian sources enables a better understanding of the ongoing processes of that time.

**Annex I** (Beydilli 1988, 409).

The amount received from selling the individual land plots by the representatives of the resettled Armenians	107, 000 Kurush
The amount of debt received by the representatives of the resettled Armenians from the Muslims and the Armenians, who had stayed at the place.	63, 000 Kurush
The amount received by the representatives of the resettled Armenians from selling stored wheat.	29, 000 Kurush
The amount payable by Turks to the Russian party in two installments.	410, 000 Kurush
Total	609, 000 Kurush i.e. 1218 purses (kisa)

**Annex II** (Beydilli 1988, 409).

The debt owed by the Armenian population resettled to Russian territory to both the Muslim population and the Armenians who remained in the area.
850.000 Kurush i.e. 1,700 purses (kisa)

**Annex III** (Beydilli, above-mentioned work, 409).

The amount requested by the Turkish party	850,000 Kurush i.e. 1,700 purses (kisa)
The amount paid to the Russian party by the Ottomans	609,000 Kurush i.e. 1,218 purses (kisa)
The amount that the Ottoman party lost, i.e., the amount it could not receive from the Russian side.	241,000 Kurush i.e. 482 purses (kisa)

**Annex IV** (Beydilli 1988,410).

The cost of the real estate, land plots, and other assets requested by the Russian party	1,500,000 Kurush i.e. 3.000 purses (kisa)
The amount offered by the Ottoman party to the Russian party	750.000 Kurush i.e. 1.500 purses (kisa)
The final amount agreed by the parties to be paid by the Ottoman party	410.000 Kurush i.e. 820 purses (kisa)

**Annex V** (Beydilli 1988, 410)

The number of ethnic Armenians resettled from Iran to Russian territory	Family – 8,249 Person – 41,245
The number of resettled Armenians from Erzurum to Russian territory, as per official Turkish documents.	Family - 423 Person – 21,150
The number of Armenians resettled from East Anatolia to Russian territory	Family – 20,000 Person – 100,000

**Annex VI** (Aykun 2019, 414-415).

**The districts of the city Erzurum from where the Armenian population was resettled**

<b>N</b>	<b>The name of a district/ Mahallenin İsmi</b>	<b>The number of residential places sold by an owner</b>	<b>The number of residential places unsold by an owner</b>	<b>Total</b>
1	Lala Mustafa Paşa Mahallesi/ Lala Mustafa Pasha District	1	5	6
2	Cafer Efendi Mahallesi/ Jafer Efendi District	4	-	4
3	Cami-i Kebir Mahallesi/ Jami Kebir District	4	-	4
4	Kabe-i Mescit Mahallesi/ Kabe-i Mesjit District	-	3	3
5	Koloğlu Mahallesi/Kologhlu District	-	-	-
6	Karakilise Mahallesi /Karakilise District	2	3	5
7	Boyahane Mahallesi/Boyahane District	5	-	5
8	Bakırcı Mahallesi/Bakırçı District	2	3	5
9	Çortan Mahallesi/Chortan District	-	-	-

10	İlyas Paşa Mahallesi/İlyas Pasha District	1	17	17
11	Hanım Ha. Mescidi Mahallesi /Hanım Ha. Mesjidi District	-	3	3
12	Ağ Mescid Mahallesi /Ag Mesjid District	5	5	10
13	Cafer-zade Mahallesi / Jafer-zade District	-	3	3
14	Çukur Mahallesi /Cukor District	1	1	2
15	Cennet-zade Cami-i Şerifi Mahallesi/Jennet-zade Jami-i Sherifi District	7	11	18
16	Yoncalık Mahallesi/Yonjalık District	13	11	24
17	Sultan Melik Mahallesi/Sultan Melik District	2	-	2
18	Hasan Basrı Mahallesi/ Hasan Basrı District	8	-	8
19	Mehdi Mehmed Mahallesi / Mehdi Mehmed District	5	1	6
20	Emirşeyih Mahallesi / Emirsheyih District	1	4	5
21	Habib Efendi Mahallesi / Habib Efendi District	5	1	6
22	Darağaç Mahallesi /Daragaj District	22	20	42
23	Habib Efendi Mahallesi / Habib Efendi District	6	4	10
24	Kadana Cami-i Şerif Mahallesi/ Kadana Cami-i Sherif District	8	5	13
25	Veyis Efendi Mahallesi/Veyis Efendi District	16	21	37



26	Haci Cuma Mahallesi/Haki Juma District	2	11	13
27	Kemhan Mahallesi /Kemhan District	-	3	3
28	Derviřaęa Mahallesi / Dervishaga District	6	5	11
29	Cedid Mahallesi /Chedid District	-	-	-
30	Kasım Pařa Mahallesi /Kasım Pasha District	19	41	60
31	Yeęenaęa Mahallesi /Yege-naga District	19	78	97
32	Yeni Cami-i řerif Mahallesi / Yeni Chami-i Sherif District	3	1	4
33	Ali Pařa Mahallesi /Ali Pasha District	48	350	398
34	Abdurrahman Aęa Mahallesi /Abdurrahman Aga District	5	88	93
35	Kavak Mahallesi /Kavak District	32	232	264
36	Gümrük Mahallesi /Gumruk District	37	469	506
37	Topçıoęlu Mahallesi / Topchıoghlu District	19	56	77
38	Zaęarcı Ali Mahallesi /Zagar-ji Ali District	1	13	14
39	Gez Mahallesi /Gez District	11	66	77
40	Mumcu-yu Sülfa Mahallesi / Mumcu-yu Sulfa District	41	116	157
41	Mumcu-yu Ulya Mahallesi / Mumcu-yu Ulya District	6	147	153
42	Murad Pařa Mahallesi /Murad Pasha District	12	23	35
43	Dere Mahallesi /Dere District	7	30	37

44	Vani Efendi Mahallesi /Vani Efendi District	5	3	18
45	Şeyih Mahallesi /Sheikh District		1	1
46	Çırçır Mahallesi /Chirchik District	2	21	23
47	Hikmet Mahallesi /Hikmet District		34	34

**Annex VII** (Aykun 2019, 415-416)

N	Profession	Number	English translation	N	Profession	English translation	Number	Remark
1	Abacı	22	A Thick cloth (coat) weaver/ tailor	66	Bezzaz	A cloth weaver	17	
2	Alacacı	1	A colored cotton weaver/ tailor	67	Bıçakçı	A knife master	1	
3	Arpacı	1	A barley merchant	68	Borcu	A pipe master	1	
4	Attar	1	A spice merchant	69	Boyacı	A painter	3	
5	Pabuccu	31	A shoemaker	70	Börekçi	A pie baker	14	
6	Bakırcı	7	A copper dish master	71	Baltacı	An axe master	3	
7	Bakkal	7	A grocer	72	Bürükçü	A knitter of women's thin head-piece	3	
8	Baltacı	9	An axe master	73	Çubukçu	A master of smoking pipes	1	
9	Banucu	1	A falgon master	74	Çadırcı	A tent master	1	
10	Başlamacı	1	?	75	Çakmakçı	A master of a cocking piece	5	
11	Başmakçı	6	A boot master	76	Çarıkcı	A master of bast-shoes	16	
12	Berber	3	A hair-dresser	77	Çerçi	A second-hand dealer	10	

13	Bezirgân	3	A merchant	78	Çilingir	A key master	6	
14	Çitçi	3	A master of garden fences	79	Kasap	A butcher	47	
15	Çizmeci	29	A boot maker	80	Duhamcı	A master of cigarette holders	29	
16	Çubukçu	6	A smoking pipe maker	81	Düğerci	A hitter of the sheaf to separate grain	1	
17	Çukacı	1	A wool canvas coat tailor	82	Ekmekçi	A baker (of bread)	11	
18	Ç u l h a (cı)	94	Producer of the carpet looms	83	Enfiyeci	A master of the snuff box	2	
19	Debbağ	16	A leather processing master	84	Fırıncı	A bread stove master	3	
20	De ğ i r - menci	21	A miller	85	Göncü	A leather master/dealer	1	
21	Demirci	71	A smith	86	Gübreçi	A collector/applier of a manure	1	
22	Dikici	1	A tailor, an old shoe repair master	87	Haffaf	A shoe tailor and seller	6	
23	Dökmeci	11	A moulder	88	Haftan (cı)	A master of a cotton dress for wearing over chain shirt (tailor)		
24	Döküm-cü	4	Smelter	89	Hallaç	A processor of the wool, cotton, or other materials for sewing	3	
25	Döşekçi	1	A mattress producer	90	Hamur-cu	A dough kneader	1	
26	Döşeme-ci	7	A floor master	91	Hancı	A manager of a hotel	1	
27	Hızarcı	5	A sawyer	92	Hasırcı	A mat master	1	
28	İbrikçi	6	A master of a copper jug	93	Kapanıcı	A trap master	2	

29	Kabzımal	2	Wholesaler of fruits and vegetables	94	Kavalcı	A pipe player/master	1	
30	Kahveci	12	A coffee dealer	95	Kaytancı	A fine thread master	9	
31	Kalaycı	13	A tinsmith	96				
32	Kalburcu	1	A sift master	97	Kazancı	A saucer master	5	
33	Kalıpçı	1	A shape producer	98	Kazzaz	A master of golden and silver jewelry	47	
34	Kalpakçı	4	A tailor of caps	99	Kebabçı	A kebab master	1	
	Kaltakçı	6	A saddle string master	100	Ketenci	A felt-cloak maker	2	
35	Kandilci	1	A candle master	101	Meyhaneci	An alcohol dealer	10	
36	Ketenci	3	A producer of linen cloth	102	Mihçı	A nail maker	3	
37	Kılcı	8	A thread master	103	Mumcu	A candle maker	14	
38	Kısırcı	1	A barren sheep dealer	104	Muytup	A chandelier	19	
39	Kılarcı	1	A storekeeper	105	Naalçacı	A master of clogs	7	
40	Koltukçu	8	A furniture master	106	Nakkaş	A house painter	2	
41	Kömürcü	2	A charcoal dealer	107	Nalband	A blacksmith	65	
42	Kuyumcu	31	A goldsmith	108	Nalıncı	A shoe maker	2	
43	Külhancı	3	A bath stoker	109	Oturakçı	A stool master	1	
44	Kürekçi	22	A spade master	110	Şalcı	A wool-cloth maker	1	
45	Kürkçü	29	A fur-coat master	111	Şamdancı	A chandelier	1	
46	Lağımıcı	1	A bathroom/ sewage master	112	Tarakçı	A comb maker	1	
47	Mabuccu	1	A shoe trader	113	Tarakçı	A comb-maker	3	
48	Palancı	8	A mule saddle-maker	114	Taşçı	A stone master	1	

49	Panbukçu	19	A cotton producer	115	Tavukçu	P o u l t r y farmer	2	
50	Pabuccu	3	A trader of women's shoes (looks like a slipper)	116	Tekneci	A hopper maker	1	
51	Penbeci	5	A cotton producer	117	Terlikçi	A tailor of the head-piece for wearing at M o s q u e , synagogue	2	
52	P e ş t a - malcı	3	An apron maker	118	Terzi	A tailor	101	
53	Saatçi	6	A watchmaker	119	Tiftikçi	A master of fine lamb's wool;	7	
54	Sabuncu	15	A soap producer	120	Tokacı	A master of the cloth pins and similar	1	
55	Serral	1	A low fence maker	121	Torbacı	A small-size canvas bag tailor	1	
56	Savakçı	1	A water channel master (re-directing)	122	Tulumcu	A master of bags/ bag-pipes	3	
57	Semerci	1	A mule saddle-maker	123	Uncu	Flour seller	3	
58	Seridar	9	A bead maker	124	Yemen-ci	A tailor of women's big and decorated shawls/ trader	10	
59	Setenci	1	A tailor/seller of the cloth decorated with fine silk	125	Tüccar	A merchant	46	
60	Sırmacı	1	A tailor/seller of the cloth tailored silver/golden threads	126	Tüfençi	A gunsmith	12	
61	Sirkeci	5	A vinegar master (made from the grape juice)	127	Tükme-ci	A Button maker	2	



62	Sucu	2	A water seller	128	Tülbetçi	A seller of kerchiefs made from fine and soft cotton cloth	1	
63	Üzengici	3	A stirrup master	129	Tütün-cü	A tobacco seller	1	
64	Zurnacı	1	A zurna master	130	Kavuk-çu	A tailor of hats for the educated religious class in Muslim countries	5	
65	Selekçi	1	?					

**Annex VIII** (Aykun 2019, 418-420).

<b>The name of a village</b>	<b>Household (surname)</b>	<b>An individual family</b>
Şeyih-Sheikh	2	107
Müdürge - Mudurge	15	56
Igrasor-Igrasor	15	62
Tufanç - Tufanch	54	224
Hınıs - Hınıs	77	243
Köşk - Koshk	9	24
Uğrak- Ugrak	6	32
Karagöbek - Karagöbek		150
Zaggi - Zaggi		98
Kızıl Kilise - Kızıl Kilise		215
Künbed - Kumbed	23	106
Dinarkom - Dinarkom	32	119
Sıtavuk - Sıtavuk	16	61
Anzuti - Anzuti	73	356
Umudum - Umudum	50	265
Kevahor - Kevahor	32	169

Gıncikos - Gıncikos	18	42
Mülk - Mulık	7	29
Tivnik - Tivnik	3	13
Kirnic - Kirnij	7	22
Erkinis - Erkinis	6	18
Hackevank - Hajkevank	20	77
İğdasor – İğdasor	15	46
Artızu – Artızu	23	105
Norşin – Norşin	16	72
Terkuni – Terkuni	4	13
Kömık – Komık	9	23
Özni – Ozni	23	100
Badışin - Badishin	1	2
Salasor- Salasor	4	14
Karaz- Karaz	11	23
Kuşcu-Kushju	6	27
Ercek- Erjek	5	21
Kaypa- Kaipa	1	3
Tiger-Tiger	1	4
Poçık-Pochık	13	40
Zuvans- Zuvans	1	4
Şegedav-Shegedav	40	104
İrgemansur- İrgemansur	40	77
Kagdariç-Kagdarich	10	45
Karahasan- Karahasan	20	49
Aşkale- Ashkale	88	364
Pırnakapan- Pırnakapan	5	18
Danzut- Danzut	3	7
Çizmet-Chizmet	1	4
Topalçavuş- Topalchavush	8	22
Pırtın- Pırtın	36	95
Nordiban - Nordiban	25	105
Örtülü- Ortulu	16	59
Cinis- Jinis		123
Ilıca-Ilıja	48	183
Pulur- Puhir	13	63

Söğütlü- Sogutlu	39	166
Süngerîç - Sungerich	24	94
Özbek- Ozbek	10	30
Arşuni- Arshuni	23	11
Gez- Gez	6	22
Kan- Kan	73	192
Karagöbek - Karagobek		115
Zağki - Zaghki		82
Kızıl Kilise- Kızıl Kilise		175

## Armenian Historical Sources about Ninotsminda Municipality

### Introduction

The close and centuries-old relationship between Georgia and Armenia, their common historical past, and the borderline areas have generated a profound and unique interest among the Georgian and Armenian people toward each other, which has been reflected in various forms of historical writing. This interest grew and strengthened over the centuries. For the Armenian people, Georgia was the closest neighbor, friend, protector, political ally, and partner during the fight against common enemies, at times a competitor at the international stage, and their primary adversary in religious matters. Yet, the Armenian and Georgian people never lost their interest and respect for each other.

Georgia was often a reliable shelter for the Armenian population oppressed by their enemies. The long-standing friendship between these two neighboring people, their coexistence in a shared geopolitical region, and their shared traditions of Christian culture contributed to the ease and natural process of adjustment and adaptation to the Georgian environment for the Armenian population who intentionally moved here or entered Georgia due to political border changes. In Georgia, the Armenian people continued the same trade they pursued in their homeland, with the only obstacle being the language barrier.

Armenian historiography is very important for studying the settlement of the Armenian population in Georgia, particularly in the South Georgia. The initial aim of our work was to discover and analyze information about Ninotsminda municipality and its constituent villages in Armenian written sources. However, Armenian authors either provide limited details about the Ninotsminda region or offer only fragmented information. It's important to consider that geographical names changed over time, and the toponyms mentioned in the sources may not always correspond to those in use today. Therefore, in this paper, we present information about the entire Samtskhe-Javakheti region as documented by Armenian historians. Based on this information, we aim to demonstrate when the migration of Armenians to South Georgia commenced, the characteristics of this migration, the reasons behind these migratory processes, and the extent of their scale.

### Armenian Historical Sources about Samtskhe-Javakheti

In Armenian historiography, information about Samtskhe-Javakheti dates back to the early period and is primarily of a general nature. We present the material in chronological order.

In Armenian sources, the earliest notes about Javakheti can be found in *The History of Armenia* by Movses Khorenatsi. The Armenian historian, while discussing King Valarshak, mentions “Gushar, the son of Sharas, inherited the desolate mountain, which is Kangarkh, half of Javakheti, Kogbi, Tsobi, Dzori, up to Hnakert fortress. Vagarshak appointed a descendant of Gushar Haikazian as the master of Ashotsi and Sepuhad of Tashir”<sup>1</sup> (Movses Khorenatsi 1984, 106).

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1 «Իսկ Գուշարայ, որ յորդուցն Շարայի, ժառանգեաց զլեանն Սթին, որ է Կանգարք, և զկէս մասին Ջաւախաց, զԿողք, զԾոր, զՉոր, մինչև ցամուրն Հնարակերտ: Բայց

In the “History” of Movses Khorenatsi, there is no mention of a person among the descendants of Hayk by the name of Gushar. They are referred to as “Haikazn,” meaning Haykians, in the line of Hayk’s descendants. It is believed that the association of Gushar with the Armenian patriarch Hayk may have been made later, possibly to justify the Armenian authorities’ aspirations to expand their territory into neighboring regions. Iv. Javakhishvili identifies Gushar as the eponym of Gogarene-Gugark (Javakhishvili, 1950, 25-26). According to Berdzenishvili, “half of Javakheti” should be understood as those areas located to the right of Mtkvari, extending from Paravani to Mtkvari (Berdzenishvili, 1985, 78).

We find interesting information about Georgia, including Samtskhe-Javakheti, in the *Armenian Geography* dated to the 7th century. Klarjeti, Shavsheti, and Artaan are described as separate from the Armenians, with the Mtkvari River flowing through these regions. The river “flows from Tao, through the Kola canyon on the Javakheti plateau, it flows into Samtskhe, then turns eastward, flowing through the upper lands of Kartli, which are divided into gorges: Orotiskhevi, Tunishkhevi, with its primary fortress being Dekitsikhe (Dek-tsikhe Kh.G.), Manglisi Gorge, and the Bolnisi Gorge extending up to Paruar, which encircles the city of Tiflis, are regions separated from the Armenians by three gorges.<sup>2</sup>

In the *Armenian Geography*, when describing the Mtkvari and Liakhvi rivers, the text offers significant notes about the fertile lakes of the Javakheti plateau: “The River Liakhvi flows from the Caucasus to the south and confluences with the Mtkvari. It continues through Kharniskhevi to Tskhradzmaya, and further downstream joins the Aragvi River, which eventually meets the Caucasus and flows south to the **Akhaltzikhe fortress**. It passes through the city of Mtskheta and Saint Cross before merging into the Mtkvari, covering the entire upper region of Georgia and reaching Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia. It continues alongside Paruarav and the rivers named Tsofofor, Koghbofor, and Dzorofor, reaching the city of Hnarakert. These cities are separated from the Armenians, and its southern plateau of Javakheti is abundant with numerous lakes and diverse fish<sup>3</sup>.

In the *Armenian Geography*, “Zemo Javakheti” is listed among the districts of

գտերութիւնն Աշոցայ, և գտեպհականութիւնն Տաշրաց կարգէ Վաղարշակ ի գաւակացն Գուշարայ Հայկազնոյ» [Մովսէս Խորենացի, 1991, էջ 113]:

2 Comp. «Եւ գաւառք են այս, սկսեալ ի Վոհ գետոյ եւ ի հիւսիսոյ Տայոց. Կլարձք, գոր ի Հայոց հանեալ է, եւ Շաւշէթ. Արտահան գաւառ, գոր առեալ է ի Հայոց, ընդ որ անցանէ գետն հօր Կուր, որ ի Տայոց գալով, ի Կող գաւառէ **ընդ ստորոտս Զաախաց, իջանէ ՚ի Սամցիխէ** եւ դառնայ յարեւելս անցանելով ընդ Վերին աշխարհն Վրաց, բաժանելով զգաւառսն, զԲոռոթիսիսէ, զՏունիսիսէ, որոյ ի գլուխն Դեկիցիխէ բերդ, եւ զՍանգլեացփոր, եւ զԲողնոփոր մինչեւ ցՊարուար գաւառ, որ պատէ զՏիփսիս քաղաքաւ. բայց երեք փորակոյ ի Հայոց հանեալ է...» [Աշխարհացոյց, 2003, էջ 2150]:

3 «... ի ստորոտս Կովկասու. յորմէ հոսի Լէխ գետ, եւ անցեալ ի հարաւ կոյս իջանէ ի Կուր. եւ առ նովաւ Խառնիսիսէ ի Յիւրասձմայա, մինչեւ յԱրագւ գետ, որ հոսի ի Կաւկասայ, եւ գնալով ընդ հարաւ ընդ **Ախալցիխէ բերդ**, եւ անցանէ ընդ մէջ Սցիսիթայ քաղաքի եւ բլրոյ Սուրբ Խաչին, իջանէ ի Կուր, եւ բովանդակի ի Վերին աշխարհ Վրաց. յորմէ յառաջ խաղացեալ Կուր՝ գայ ի Տիփսիս մայրաքաղաք Վրաց. գնա թողով Պարուարաւ, եւ զԾոփոփոր եւ զԿողբոփոր եւ զԶորոփոր հոմանուն գետօք, մինչեւ ցՀնարակերտ քաղաք, զորս ի Հայոց հանեալ է. որոց ըստ **Հարաւոյ Լիառնադաշտքն Զաախաց** բազում լճօք լի գանազան ձկամբք...» [Աշխարհացոյց, 2003, էջ 2150]:

Gugareti: “Gugareti has nine provinces at the entrance of Uti: Dzorofor, Koghbofor, Tsofofor, Tashir, Trialeti, Kangari, **Zemo Javakheti (Upper Javakheti)**, Artaan, Klarjeti “.<sup>4</sup>

According to D. Berdzenishvili, “Zemo Javakheti” mentioned in the Armenian source should be to the territory of “Javakheti from Paravani to the Mtkvari”, as described in Georgian sources. The remaining part of Javakheti, referred to as “Kvemo Javakheti”, would extend from the Mtkvari riverbank to Samtskhe and the Niala Valley (Berdzenishvili 1985, 78).

Armenian authors of the 8th century continue to offer fragmentary information about Samtskhe-Javakheti, and there is no mention of the migration of the Armenian population in their accounts.

One such Armenian author of the 8th century is Hovhan Mamikonyan, who, in his *History of Taron*, describes the Arab campaigns and mentions their defeat in Javakheti: “In the same year, Heracles came out and killed Khosrow... Eight years later, Abdarrahim, Muhammad’s nephew, arrived with eighteen thousand men and horses, demanding tax from the Armenians. Abdarrahim extended his campaign to Armenia, Basiani, Kartli, Javakheti, Vanandi, collecting taxes before returning to Arabia”<sup>5</sup>.

According to the *History of Taron*, Abdarrahim invaded Armenia, Kartli, and Javakheti in the eighth year following the execution of the Persian king Khosrow. El. Tsagareishvili dates this historical event to the period after 639, following the Arab conquest of the Mediterranean region and its adjacent territories (Tsagareishvili, 2020, 48).

The information provided by Hovhan Mamikonyan is similar to that found in the *History of St. Nerses*, where it is mentioned that “in the eightieth year of the Armenian era, the Greek king Heracles battled the Persian king Khosrow and killed him.” [History of St. Nerses, 1853, էջ 43-44]. Eight years later, Muhammad’s nephew, Abdarrahim, arrived in Armenia with 18 thousand men, aiming to collect taxes and confront the Christian army encamped in Taron Gavar. Abdarrahim’s campaign extended to Hark, Basiani, Kartli, Javakheti, and Vanand, where he collected taxes, and then he returned to Arabia” (History of St. Nerses, 1853, 43-44).

The date of the event described in the *History of St. Nerses - 639* - aligns closely with the arrival of Arabs in the South Caucasia. During this time, the Arabs were conquering neighboring regions and establishing their presence, including exploring their path to Armenia (Tsagareishvili 2020, 48).

The Arab invasions indeed inflicted significant damage on South Caucasian countries, including Armenia. By the end of the 7th century, the Arabs had established a strong presence in Kartli, while Western Georgia was under the influence of

4 «Գուգարք ի մտից Ուտիացոց, ունի գաւառս ինն. գձորոփոր, գԿողբափոր, գՄոբափոր, գՏաշիր, գԹռեղս, գԿանկարս, **գՋովախս Վերի**, գԱրտահան, գԿալարջու: Լինի անալուք, եւ հաճար ծառ եւ սորովիլ եւ տօսախ: Ունին արդ Վիրք հանեալ ի Հայոց...» (Ashkharhatsuyts 2003, 2154).

5 «Ապա ՚ի սոյն ամի ելանէ Հերակլ, և սպանանէ զԽոսրով... Եւ յետ ութ ամի եկն Աբդրահիմ քեռորդի Մահմետի բազում աղխիւ, ութևտասն հազար առնև-ձիոյ ընդ իւր բերեալ, խնդրէր հարկս ՚ի Հայոց: ... Իսկ Աբդրահիմ անցանէ ընդ Հարք և ՚ի Բասեան, ՚ի Վիրք և ՚ի **Ջախվախս** և և ՚ի Վանանդ. և առեալ հարկս, դառնայ ՚ի տաճկաստան» (Hovhan Mamikonean 1832, 1832, 57-58)



the Byzantine Empire (Ghevond 1982, 68-71). Frequent cases occurred where Armenian princes, seeking refuge from Arab's rule, found sanctuary in Western Georgia. Notable information about these events is preserved in the *History* authored by the Armenian historian Ghevond in the 8th century (Ghevond 1982, 68-71).

Armenian princes, seeking protection from Arab dominance, sought assistance from Georgia. According to Ghevond, during the Abbasid dynasty, rebellions in the conquered territories became more frequent. Armenian princes, led by Artavazd Mamikonyan, staged a rebellion. They gathered in Dvin, eliminated the tax collector, and then sought refuge in the Georgian territories for assistance. Upon hearing this news, Muhammad quickly assembled a significant force, including the Commander of Armenia, Smbat Ashot's son, and other princes. They pursued Artavazd and his followers and arrived in the region of the Georgian territory known as Samtskhe.<sup>6</sup> However, Artavazd and his group managed to evade the pursuing Arabs and eventually settled in the Egrisi region.

Given the circumstances, the crucial determination of foreign orientation was an event of significant international importance for Kartli throughout the Early Middle Ages. Georgia had to make a critical ideological choice and define its role and position between the great empires of the East and the West. By adopting Christianity as the state religion, Kartli embarked on a pro-Western course. A century later, it reaffirmed its pro-Western choice by declaring Dyophysitism as the state ideology. The adoption of Chalcedonian orientation in Georgia represented a significant political choice between Byzantium and Iran. It marked a commitment to national consolidation and the centralization of the country, reinforcing Georgia's alignment with Byzantine Christianity and the West. Another critical issue associated with these events was the resolution of the matter concerning the language used in worship by the diverse population residing in the border regions. In Province of Tsurtavi, same as Gugareti, a region that shared borders with Armenia and changed hands between Kartli and Armenia, religious services were required to be conducted in the state language (Aleksidze 2010, 394-410).

Kiron, the Catholicos of Kartli in the 7th century, is portrayed as the initiator and driving force behind these efforts. He played a significant role in addressing and resolving these issues through his profound knowledge and mastery of the art of diplomacy.

Biographical information about Catholicos Kiron of Kartli is preserved in the work of the 10th-century Armenian author Ukhtanes of Sebastia, titled *History of the Separation of Georgians from Armenians*. Ukhtanes' history is based on the material preserved in the *Book of Epistles*.<sup>7</sup> According to Ukhtanes, "he [Kiron] was

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6 «Լուր հասավ Դվին քաղաք, թե Հմայեակի որդիները այդպիսի դառն ոճիր էին գործել: Մահմետը շուտափույթ բազում զորք հավաքեց, [վերցնելով] նաև Աշոտի որդուն՝ Սմբատին, հայոց սպարապետին և այլ նախարարների ու նրանց հետապնդելով հասավ **Վրաց աշխարհի այն գավառը**, որ կոչվում էր **Սամցխե**: Գրավելով կիրճերը՝ նա ավարի մի մասը իլեց և նրանց հալածելով փախցրեց Հայոց աշխարհից: Իսկ նրանք գնացին ու պատսպարվեցին Եգերաց աշխարհում, և նա [Արտավազդը] ստանձնեց Եգերաց իշխանություն, ինչպես նաև Վեոխայի, այսինքն Վիրքի» (Ghevond 1982, 112)

7 "The Book of Epistles" represents the correspondence of Armenian church and state officials with leaders of other churches on religious matters in the 5th-13th centuries.

a Georgian by country and family, from Province, Javakheti, from a village called Skutri, and he knew both Georgian and Armenian writing”<sup>8</sup> (Ukhtanes 1975, 20-21).

Around the turn of the 6th-7th centuries, Kiron Scutreli had already become the Catholicos of Kartli. According to Ukhtanes, he had previously served as a chorebishop in Dvin for five years and had spent fifteen years in the Greek city of Nicopolis, where he studied Greek. Based on this information, Z. Aleksidze concludes that “for the learned circles of Ukhtanes and Armenian society in the second half of the 6th century, Javakheti was a part of Georgia, this region was primarily inhabited by Georgians” (Aleksidze 2011, 215).

Javakheti is mentioned for the second time in Ukhtanes’ writings when the historian discusses “Tsurtavi, its prince, and Georgians”:

“I think I will write you a few words about Tsurtavi and what [happened] after that because this name Tsurtavi, which we always and consistently mention in history and will mention here, was known by that name then, and now it is called Gachiani;

Back then, it was a complete, vast, grand, and renowned capital. Now, it is a small and modest town situated at the mouth of the river known as Gache-ni, in the region called the Valley of the Georgians (“Vrats Dasht”). This region functions as the central border between the lands of Armenians and Georgians. It extends directly to the Caucasus Mountains, which mark the boundary of the impressively constructed and renowned mother-city of Tbilisi. Tsurtavi served as the estate of Prince of Gugareti, who was appointed as the conqueror of the north by our king Vagharshak Arshakunyan.

He was the Prince descendant of Mirdat Dareh, as reported by the truth-teller Moses. Moses had been brought by Alexander the Great and left as a captive ruler to rule over the tribes of the Iberians. These Iberian tribes were brought by Nebuchadnezzar with the might of the Libyan army, conquered, converted, and subdued. A portion of these tribes were taken on the right bank of the Pontus Sea and settled there, as the historian reports. This marks the western border of the country. As they settled on the Pontus shore, this tribe experienced a revival and multiplied, scattering along the sea, eventually reaching the border region between Armenians and Albanians. They grew into a substantial population, and this land came to be known as Abkhazia” (Ukhtanes 1975, 65-67).

According to Ukhtanes’ report, Georgians had been living in this territory since the time of Nebuchadnezzar. Furthermore, this region was politically affiliated with Georgia, as the territory inhabited by Georgians extended to Armenia and Albania. The people that Ukhtanes is referring to were known as Verians in the Pyrenees. After their settlement in Amer-Imereti along the Black Sea, they came to be known as Iberians. At the time of Ukhtanes, the land they inhabited was called Abkhazia. In this context, the Armenian historian alludes to a united Georgia, with its capital being the marvelously constructed and astounding city of Tbilisi (Aleksidze 2011, 215-217).

Following this, the Armenian historian enumerates the ravines where the Iberians, who were brought during the time of Nebuchadnezzar, also reside. They have their own state with all its characteristics. The historian holds a favorable

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8 «Մա էր աշխարհաւ և ազգաւ ի Վրաց՝ **ի գաւառէ Զաւախաց՝** ի գեղջէ՝ որ կոչի **Սկուարի**. և ունէր գրպրութիւն վասն Վրաց և Հայոց»(Ukhtanes, 1975, 20-21).

view of the Georgian nation, while simultaneously criticizing Kiron, the Catholikos of Kartli for putting the country of Georgians to the test.

The area has numerous names for each province surrounding it, and there are other provinces around the city of Tbilisi, including Tsanareti, Javakheti, and Trialeti. These people multiplied and evolved into a tribe. In their original homeland, they were known as Verians, while here, they are called Georgians. They grew stronger as a tribe, with their own language, writing, patriarchate, and monarchy. In contrast, Kiron of Skutri separated, created divisions, and distanced himself from us, which led to the downfall of this sizable tribe. In doing so, he became a cause for their destruction, a parallel to Judas Iscariot”.<sup>9</sup>

Hence, the 10th-century Armenian historian Ukhtanes, who was commissioned by the abbot of the Narek monastery, narrates the history of ecclesiastical unity between Armenians and Georgians, making every effort to portray his history as a defender of the Armenian Church and to bolster its standing. Indeed, it is intriguing to note the geopolitical awareness of Ukhtanes, who considers Javakheti and Gugareti as integral components of the state of Georgia and includes them within its borders. This perspective underscores the historical and political complexities of the region and the different perceptions held by historians like Ukhtanes.

Regarding the identification of “Skutri,” it appears that this toponym in the territory of Georgia is not substantiated by other sources. L. Melikset-Beg made an effort to determine the location of “Skutri” and suggested that it might be a modified form of “Kotelia.” (Melikset-Bek 1934, 17). The village of Sakudria is mentioned among the villages of Akhalkalaki in the “Great Register of the Province of Georgia.” However, it couldn’t be identified. Z. Aleksidze suggests that “Skutri” and “Sakudria” or “Sakutria,” as confirmed by Ukhtanes, should be considered identical toponyms (Aleksidze 2010, 121-123).

Significant information about the political, socio-economic, and cultural life of neighboring countries and peoples has been preserved through works of the “universal history” type authored by Armenians. In this regard, the *Universal History* of the 11th century Armenian historian Stepanos Taronetsi (Asoghik) is interesting. The historian tells us the events in chronological order, and the important material for us is also provided according to the chronological principle. Stepanos Asoghik, in his description of one of the Arab invasions, mentions the arrival of Khalib Yezit as the emir of Armenia and his subsequent death in Javakheti: “At this time, in the year 290 (290+551=841), Khalib Ibn Yezit arrived as the emir of Armenia and moved to Kartli with a sizable force, but he passed away in Javakheti, in a village known as Khozabir (Khizabavra in Georgian)” (Stepanos Taronetsi Asoghik, 1855, 106).<sup>10</sup>

9 «... և իւրաքանչիւր անուանք գաւառացն՝ որ շուրջ զիւրն անթիւք, և այլ ևս գաւառք շուրջ զՏփղիս քաղաքաւ, որ կոչին Ծանարք՝ և **Ջավախք** և **Թոնխք**: Արդ սերեցան և բազմագան, և եղեն ազգ. և զոր յառաջին իւրեանց յաշխարհին անուանէին Վերիայ, աստ Վրացիք անուանեցան ազգաւ, և լեզուաւ, և գրով, և հայրապետութեամբ, և թագաւորութեամբ հաստատեցան. զոր մերժեալ և հերձեալ հեռացոյց ի մէնջ **Կիրոն Սկուտրացի**՝ հանգոյն և հաւասար լեալ Յուդայի Սկարովտացոյ, և կորուսեալ, կործանեաց զայնքան բազմութեան ազգ՝ պատճառ լլեալ կորստեան նոցա» (Ukhtanes 1975, 66-67).

10 «Ի սորա աւուրս, ՅՄԶ թուկանին, Խալիք իպն Եզիտ՝ Հայոց ամիրայ եկն և էանց

In his *Universal History*, Stepanos Asoghik Taroneli provides an account of the alliance between Georgians, Armenians, and Albanians and their collaborative efforts in battle. He also mentions another village in the Javakheti region: “David, the Kuropalates of the Tao, and Bagrat, the king of Georgians, sent an envoy to the Armenian king Smbat, requesting his assistance.” [Smbat] led the entire Armenian army, accompanied by his brother Gagik, to Javakheti, and they established their camp in the village of Dlivek. On the other side, there was the king of the court, the young Abbas, along with his red-clad army. The armies of Georgians, Vaspurakan, the princes of Syunik, and Albania united against the Abkhazian army. Frightened, the Abkhazian troops requested a peace truce, and, with mutual agreement, the conflict was resolved amicably (Stepanos Taronetsi Asogik, 1855, 252).<sup>11</sup>

The village of Dlivek, also known as Dliv in Georgian, as mentioned in the Armenian source, corresponds to the present-day Dilifi, located in the Ninotsminda district. It is situated on the Javakheti plateau, to the west of Khanchali Lake.

Following Asoghik, the second historical account depicting world history is attributed to the Armenian historian of the 13th century, Vardan Areveltsi, also known as Vardan the Easterner. Vardan’s work is often labeled as a *Historical Compilation*, but it primarily focuses on the history of Armenia and its neighboring regions, including Georgia. In Vardan’s *Historical Compilation* events are chronicled from the earliest times to the year 1267.

While discussing the Seljuk invasions, Vardan Areveltsi mentions Akhalkalaki among the numerous South Caucasian cities that were destroyed by Alf-Arslan: “Then [Alf-Arslan] returned with 100,000 men, captured a new city known as Akhalkalaki by the Georgians, as well as Samshilde. He married the daughter of King Kvirike, the niece of King Bagrat of Georgia, and also seized Anisi...” (Areveltsi 2002, 124).

It’s worth noting that in Vardan’s *Historical Compilation*, when mentioning Akhalkalaki, the Armenian translation of this toponym is provided as “New City.” [«...եկն դարձեալ հարիւր հազարաւ, եւ առ **Ղնոր քաղաք**, գոր Վիրք **Ախալքաղաք** ասեն»].

The information about the capture of Akhalkalaki by the Seljuks dates back to the 11th-12th centuries. The Armenian historian Matthew of Edessa provides the name of the place somewhat distortedly: “[Alf-Arslan] came and camped in the area called Javalis, laid siege on Alakh Kalaki(city) in a fierce battle, and captured Alakh-Kalaki with a sizable force.” [«...և իջեալ բանակեցաւ ի գաւառն, որ կոչի **Ջաալխս** և պատերազմաւ մեծաւ պատեաց զքաղաքն, որ կոչի **Ալախ** և ուժգին զօրութեամբն առաւ **Ալախ քաղաքն**...»] (Matthew of Edessa 1991, 158).

As per A. Mamikonyan’s analysis, Javalis corresponds to Javakheti, and Alakh city is identified as Akhalkalaki (Melkonyan 2005, 46-62).

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բազմութեամբ ի Վիրս. և մեռաւ ի **Ջաալխս**, ի գիւղն որ կոչի **Խողաբիր**» [Ստեփանոս Տարօնեցի Ասողիկ, 1855, 106]:

11 «Եւ կիրապաղատն Տայոց Դաւիթ և թագաւորն Վրաց Բագարատ առաքեն առ թագաւորն Հայոց Սմբատ՝ կոչել յօգնականութիւն իւրեանց: Եւ նորա առեալ զամենայն զօրս Հայոց և գԳազիկ գեղբայր իւր՝ գնաց առ նոսա ի **գաւառն Ջաալխաց**. և բանակին **գիւղն**, որ կոչի **Դլիվեկն**, և մանուկն Աբաս թագաւորն Կարուց կարմրագգեստ գգունդն իւր ունելով: Եւ ամենայն զօրն Վրաց և Վասպուրականի, Սիւնեաց և Աղուանից իշխանքն միահաւաք լինելին ընդդէմ Ափխազաց զօրուն: Որոց երկուցեալ զխաղաղութիւն խնդրեն և սեր հաստատեն առ միմեանս» (Stepanos Taronetsi Asogik 1855, 252)

Both Samuel Anetsi (12th century) and Stepanos Orbelian (13th-14th centuries) mention the event of Alf-Arslan's campaign in Javakheti. Stepanos Orbelian, in this case, relies on the work of Samuel Anetsi and essentially repeats the account of the Seljuks capturing Akhalkalaki. Following the conquest of Ani, Alf-Arslan "seized Akhalkalaki, and in the same year, Bagrat captured Kvirike and took Samshvilde"<sup>12</sup> (Stepanos Orbelian 1942, 18).

The capture of Akhalkalaki by the Seljuks was indeed a significant event, and this is evident in the writings of Armenian authors. Furthermore, most modern historians, when discussing the history of Georgia, highlight the historical importance of the Seljuk capture of Akhalkalaki.

The region of Samtskhe-Javakheti indeed experienced significant losses during the period of Ottoman Empire rule, particularly due to the Jelalis who rebelled within the empire. The notes about the events are documented by an Armenian chronicler and church worker Arakel of Tabriz, who lived during the 16th-17th centuries.

"In this manner, those of the Jelalites who were executed on the road were put to death, and those who survived were brought to the village of Karbi. Some of them were sold for silver money, while others were allowed to continue their labor." The Jelalis remained until spring, specifically until the Ascension Days. From there, they departed and proceeded to the Akhaltsikhe district, where they carried out similar actions. It was not just the Jelalis, who acted in this manner; there were other groups of Jelalis, varying in numbers, who moved from one location to another, stayed for some time, settled, and engaged in such activities. Even some Christians, who had lost their fear of God, upon witnessing the actions of the foreign tribes, started engaging in similar behaviors. Observing these actions with their own eyes and agreeing with them in their hearts, they too began to engage in such activities. Some did so openly through abductions, while others carried out these actions secretly, driven by their arrogance. This occurred because the land had been laid waste and despoiled by conquerors, allowing each individual to act according to their own desires. According to eyewitnesses, that era was characterized by the absence of any signs of goodness; only misfortune and poverty prevailed, as we have previously described and will describe once more. Shah Abbas, the king of the east, led the Persian army and wreaked a portion of the eastern region. The Jelalis, who were situated in another part of the East, were even more tumultuous and destructive than them.»<sup>13</sup> (Arakel of Tabriz 1990, 107).

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12 «Էառ և գԱխալ քաղաք. և ի սոյն ամի Բագարատ գԿիրիկէ կալաւ, և գՇամշուղէ էառ» (Stepanos Orbelian 1942, 18).

13 «Եւ այսպէս՝ որք մեռան ի ճանապարհին՝ մեռան, և որք մնացին՝ զամենեսէան բերեալք հասուցին ի Կարփի. զոմանս վաճառէին արծաթոյ և զոմանս պահէին ի ծառայութիւն գործոց իւրեանց: Եւ Ջալալիքն կացին այսպէս մինչ ի գարունն՝ և հասին մերձ յաւուրսն Համբարձմանն: Եւ ապա ելեալք անտի գնացին **ՋԵՐԿԻՐՆ ԱԽԵՂԻՍՈՒ**. և անդ ևս զայն գործ կատարէին: Եւ ոչ միայն այս Ջալալիքն այսպէս առնէին. գոյին և այլք Ջալալիք՝ ոմանք յուրով՝ և ոմանք սակաւք. որք ի տեղիս տեղիս զկայ առեալ և որջացեալք էին՝ զայսպիսի գործս գործէին: Այլ և ի քրիստոնէից ազգէ՝ արք ոմանք, որք ոչ ունէին զերկիւղն Աստուծոյ յինքեանս. իբրև տեսանէին թէ այլազգիքն այսպէս առնէն, ինքեանք ևս սկսան այսպէս առնել. վասն զի աչօք տեսին և սրտիս յօծարեցան. եթէ յայտնի յափշտակութեամբ՝ և թէ զաղտնի գողութեամբ այնպէս առնէին. քանզի երկիրն անտէր և ամայի էր յաշխարհակալ

In addition to recounting the inhumane actions of the Jelalites, Arakel of Tabriz, in his *Book of Histories*, mentions the conquest of Akhaltsikhe in the year 1444: “In the year 893 (893+551=1444), Jahnshen conquered Akhaltsikhe.”<sup>14</sup> (Arakel of Tabriz 1990, 473).

The Jahnshen mentioned in Arakel of Tabriz’ report is likely Muzaffar ad-Din Jehan-Shah-Khan, who served as the Sultan of Kara-Koyunlu from 1435 to 1467. Jehan-Shah’s conquest of Akhaltsikhe is also noted in the *Small Chronicles*: («ՊՂԳ (1444) թվին Ջհանշէն Ախլցխա գերեցուց» [In 1444 Jehanshah conquered Akhaltsikhe] (Chronicles 1956, 515), The colophons of the manuscripts mention that “this book was written during the cruel times of the Armenian era (ՊՂԴ) in the year 1445, during the reign of Jhansha, who, in that same year, led a large army to Akhaltsikhe and captured many Christians. The suffering and woes of these events were witnessed by our own eyes” (Abdaladze, 1978, 70).

Thus, from the records preserved in the Armenian historical writings of the Middle Ages, it is clear that the Armenian chroniclers consider the historical and political events of South Georgia in a general geopolitical context and provide us with the material for this purpose. The personal aspirations and interests of Armenian authors towards the neighboring country are not evident. For these authors, Georgia, particularly the Samtskhe-Javakheti region, is regarded as a neighboring, friendly, and partnering state with which they share close historical and political relations.

It should be noted that the Georgian geographical names confirmed in Armenian sources are typically presented in their Armenian forms. In certain cases, Armenian authors intentionally convert Georgian toponyms into Armenian counterparts, while in other cases, they adopt forms that are already established among Armenians.

A clear example of this is the mention of “Javakheti” in the form of “Javakhk” in Armenian sources. Armenian researchers connect the etymology of the term “Javakheti” with “Zabakha”. The use of “Zabakha” as a name for the region is confirmed as far back as the 8th century BC, as seen in the Chronicle of Argishti I<sup>15</sup> (786-764 BC). According to Karageozian, the root of the toponym “Zabakh-a” is “Zabah,” and the “a” is a plural suffix that is characteristic of Indo-European languages. Due to phonetic changes over time, the name evolved from “Zabakh” to “Zavakh” (with a sound shift from b to v), from “Zavakh” to “Javakh” (with a sound transition from z to j). Thus, with the suffix “a” denoting plural, the final name became “Javakhk” (Karageozian, 1998, 204).

In one of his essays, V. Sargsyan attempted to elucidate the etymology of the Javakhk toponym by associating it with “Chapag-Javakhk.” His assertion was based on the distinctive geographic characteristics of this region, particularly its vast and water-rich fields [Sargsyan, 1999].

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բնաւորաց. և ամենայն որ զախորժակս կամաց իւրոց կատարէր: Արդ՝ որպէս պատմեն տեսողք ժամանակին, զի բնաւ ոչ գոյր նշոյլ բարութեան յաւուրսն յայնոսիկ բաց ի թշուարութեանցն, որպէս պատմեցաք, և տակաւին ևս պատմելոց ենք: Վասն զի թագաւորն արևելից Շահաբաս զօրօքն Պարսից զբաժին արևելեայ աշխարհիս յաւեր դարձոյց: Սոյնպէս և Ջալալիքն՝ որք ի մասն բաժնի արևելեայ երկրիս գերագոյն քան զնոսա աներիչք և ապականիչք» (Arakel of Tabriz 1990, 107).  
14 «Թուին ՊՂԳ Ջահնշէն գԱխլցխայ գերեայոց» (Arakel of Tabriz 1990, 473).

15 The rock of Khorkhori, on which the cuneiform inscription of Argishti I is preserved, is located on the southwest side of the city of Van.



In terms of translating Georgian toponyms into Armenian, the analysis of the *Old Armenian translation of the life of Kartli* is particularly intriguing. The *Life of Kartli* was translated into Armenian in the 12th century. According to Abuladze, the Armenian translator of the *Life of Kartli* into Armenian must have lived during the same period as Davit Aghmashenebeli (The Georgian Chronicles 1953, VI-VIII). It's indeed interesting to examine how the toponyms from the Georgian source were transferred into the Armenian translation. The key question is whether the translator retained the native Georgian forms of these toponyms or substituted them with Armenian equivalents.

The toponyms related to Samtskhe-Javakheti in the *Life of Kartli* holds significance for our analysis:

Tsunda - Ծունդա

Khertvisi - Խերթիսի

Undzrkhe - Ունձրխէ

Samtskhe - Սամցխէ

Javakheti- Ջաւախէթ

“The boundary of Javakheti, the city of Tsunda”. - «...գալարիսպն Ջաւախէթոյ՝ քաղաքին Ծունդացոց» (The Georgian Chronicles 1953, 41).

“I, [St. Nino Kh.G.], got up and came to Urbnisi of Armenia. I spent the winter there and reached the Javakheti mountains in June. I arrived at Lake Parnavi and saw fishermen on the lake and shepherds on the shore of the sea...» - «Եւ իմ յարուցեալ եկի յՈւրբանիս Հայոց, և ձմեռեալ անդ, և ի յունիս ամսեան եկի ի լճառն Ջաւախեթոյ. և ի ծովն Փարնաւայ եկեալ տեսի անդ ձկնորսս ի ծովուն, և հովիսս առ եզերք ծովուն...» (The Georgian Chronicles 1953, 80-81).

In conclusion, with the exception of the use of the toponym “Klarjeti,” the Armenian translator, when translating geographical places related to Samtskhe-Javakheti, preserved the Georgian form of the toponyms and did not replace them with the Armenian version in “The Life of Kartli.”

### Colophons of Armenian manuscripts:

In addition to historical sources, we will also examine the colophons found in Armenian manuscripts. These colophons frequently offer valuable insights into the manuscript's history, including its creation, purpose, preservation, and sometimes its journey. Furthermore, colophons, in addition to historical sources, contain significant details about various historical figures, noble families, churches, monasteries, and the contemporary political landscape. The information found in these colophons frequently supplements and enhances our understanding of our history.

An important historical event is the capture of Tmogvi Castle. The colophon of the manuscript found in the Armenian collection of the National Center of Manuscripts, which belongs to the last benefactor of the *Four Gospels* (NCM Arm 23), provides intriguing details about the donation. This colophon relates the campaign of Div Sultan (referred to as Deva Ali in Armenian) to Samtskhe and his subsequent surrender: «Ես Շաժադես վերստին ստացող սուրբ աւետարանի գնեցի Ճ թակայ իմ հոգու համար... ստացայ գալիդ ժ[...] նեդ ժամանակիս, որ եկն Դնայ Ալին և էառ **զԹՄՈՔ** և շատք ի սուր մատեցաւ և շատք գերեցայն և շատ աւերած Սամցխայ»: [I, Shazhades, the final possessor of this holy gospel, acquired it for 100 takas for the sake of my soul. I made this purchase during

a period of adversity and hardship when the warrior Ali arrived and conquered Tmogvi, offering sacrifices and wielding the sword, capturing many and killing many in Samtskhe} (Chitunashvili 2012, 192-196).

Until now, Hasan Rumlu's Chronicle ('Ahsân al-Tavârikh') was the only source known about this Iranian campaign, and no additional sources could be found regarding it. However, the Armenian *Four Gospels* (NCM Arm 23) dating back to 1516/17, has once again affirmed and partially clarified the information regarding the surrender (Chitunashvili, 2012, 192-196). What is most significant is that the colophon uses the Georgian form "Tmogvi" ("Tmok"), not the modern Armenian name ("Tmkaberd") applied by the contemporary Armenian population.

Information about Tmogvi can be found in the colophons of other manuscripts as well. Bishop Hovhanes of Ani, who copied the *Iadgari* (Hymnary) in 1426, mentions Tmogvi as "impregnable Castle": "[Written] in the year "Hpe" (1426), in impregnable Castle in Tmok..." (Abdaladze 1978, 45).

It is particularly intriguing that in 1442, Hovhanes Tmogveli's colophon, appended to the manuscript *Festal* copied in Serkeville (Ararat region), provides a detailed account of Jahanshah Mirza's capture of the Tmogvi fortress, a siege that lasted four months, and the ruthless massacre of innocent Christians within. The author of colophon, who hailed from Georgia, more precisely from Tmogvi, narrates this account. "Hovhanes, unworthy of the name of a loner, from the province of Georgia, from the great fortress of Tmogvi, I wrote this [book] on the traces of my unworthiness, so that our contribution may be in it" (Abdaladze 1978, 64-67).

According to the colophons, it becomes apparent that in the 14th-15th centuries, Armenians were present in significant numbers in Tmogvi. This suggests that the resettlement of Armenians in this area was already underway. The favorable living conditions seem to have enabled the displaced Armenians to be actively engaged in the copying and reproduction of manuscripts.

In 1416, Grigor, in his ascribed *Grigor Tatevatsi's Sermons*, mentions Kara Yusuf's attack on Akhaltsikhe: "Filled with evil, a wicked strongman named Kara Yusuf went and rushed to the country of Georgians, took the city of Akhaltsikhe. He killed the men, captured the women and children" (Abdaladze 1978, 34). Grigor Khlatetsi also tells us about the capture of Akhaltsikhe by Kara Yusuf in his colophon dated back to 1422 (Abdaladze 1978, 42).

According to the colophons of Armenian manuscripts, the copyists of the manuscripts were sometimes individuals who immigrated to Georgia from Armenia, while at other times, they were born in Georgia and later moved to different places. An example of this is found in the colophon attached to the *Iadgari* (Hymnary) manuscript copied in Crimea in 1423, where the author of the colophon, Stephanos, is described as "from the province of Georgian, born in **Akhaltsikhe**" (Abdaladze 1978, 43-44).

Akhaltsikhe is highlighted as an exceptional and renowned city in the colophons: "One excellent Mahdas named Amir-Pasha, from the renowned Nahang and the distinguished, visible city of Akhaltsikhe... went to Jerusalem to receive blessings at holy places..." (Abdaladze 1978, 63).

The colophons of Armenian manuscripts from the 14th-15th centuries reveal the significant interest of Armenians in Tmogvi Castle and Akhaltsikhe. Akha-

Itsikhe is predominantly depicted as the focal point of the struggle against the enemy, containing two types of information. In one instance, it is portrayed as a site of hostilities, while in another, there are examples of manuscript creation and copying in the area.

The process of resettling the Armenian population in Georgia had indeed begun during this period. Many Armenians had started to concentrate in these areas. However, it is worth noting that neither Armenian historians nor the authors of Armenian colophons considered these areas to be part of Armenia. For Armenian chroniclers and the copyists of Armenian manuscripts living in southern Georgia, these geographical locations were seen as integral parts of the state of Georgia.

### **Armenian Cartographic Data about Samtskhe-Javakheti**

The area of relocation of Armenians to Georgia was enhanced and got an intensive character later, at the beginning of 19 century, by influence of the Russian Empire Politics

The processes are well elucidated through the analysis of Armenian cartographic materials, as presented in Robert Hewsen's Historical Atlas of Armenia. Huysen's Historical Atlas comprises 278 maps, each accompanied by a concise historical introduction and a chronological table. To compare the information from the R. Hewsen's atlas, we referred to the Historical Atlas of Georgia published in 2003.

According to the data from the R. Hewsen's atlas, during the rule of the Artashesian dynasty in the 2nd to 1st centuries BC, Samtskhe-Odzrakhe and Lower Javakheti (Erusheti) - Tsunda were part of the Georgian kingdom. Upper Javakheti, on the other hand, was included in the borders of Armenia (Hewsen 2001, 46). In the 1st century AD, Upper Javakheti is shown as a constituent part of the Kingdom of Kartli according to the atlas.

During the 1st-4th centuries, due to the political conflicts between Armenia and Georgia, the scenario frequently changed, leading to the exchange of border territories. According to the R. Hewsen's atlas, in the 4th century, Samtskhe-Javakheti was part of Iberia. The map indicates that the Samtskhe region included places like Samtskhe-Odzrakhe (Odzrkhe), Askureti, Aspindza, Khozabir, Lomsia, and Vardzia. Iberia includes both Upper and Lower Javakheti, but the border between Georgia and Armenia, as well as disputed territories, are represented by diagonal lines. Regarding the geographical locations in Javakheti, the atlas mentions the following: Lower Javakheti - Tsunda; Upper Javakheti - Foka, Lake Paravani (Hewsen 2001, 39). According to the map, these geographical boundaries remained unchanged from 363 to 387. Even at the beginning of the 5th century, the border points of Javakheti continued to be part of Georgia (Hewsen 2001, 46).

A comparison of R. Hewsen's atlas data with the information presented in the "Historical Atlas of Georgia" reveals a consistent picture. During the first half of the III-IV centuries, the territory of Upper Javakheti was part of Armenia, and from the second half of the IV century onward, it once again became part of the borders of Georgia (Historical Atlas of Georgia, 2003, 13).

R. Hewsen provides a separate map of Armenia during the Arshakid period (62-428 AD), and it closely resembles the previously described maps. However, this map includes more geographical points from southern Georgia, such as Samtskhe - Odzrakhe (Odzrkhe), Askureti (Askura), Aspindza, Khozabir, Jer-

muk, Vardzia, Lomsia?, Lower Javakheti / Erusheti (Georgia's inclusion), Upper Javakheti - Zreski, Abuli, Khospia, Gogasheni, Kajatuni / Tsunda, Gandzaki, Foka, Mount Abuli, Lake Abuli, Karnuti, Šteay, (Tendava?) (included in Armenia as border and disputed territories) (Hewsen 2001, 63).

We should single out a map of 387-591 in R. Hewsen's Atlas, which is related to the first Byzantine expansion into Armenia. Kumurdo is marked on the map along with other geographical points of Georgia (Meskheti mountains, Odzrkhe, Gugareti, Samshvilde, Tsurtavi, Kajatuni / Tsunda, etc.) (Hewsen 2001, 85).

During the period of Arab domination, under the Abbasid dynasty (750-885), according to the map data, Odzrkhe, Tmogvi, Kumurdo, Kajatuni / Tsunda, Samshvilde were constituent parts of the Kartli kingdom (Hewsen 2001, 106), this is also shown in the historical atlas of Georgia [Historical Atlas of Georgia, 2003, p. 16]. We have a similar situation in Armenia at the beginning of the rule of the Bagratids (884-962) (Hewsen 2001, 111).

According to the R. Hewsen's atlas, the geographical picture in Armenia does not change much after the reign of the Bagratids. On the map of the years 962-1064, Samtskhe - Zazma, Zanavi, Odzrkhe, Atsquri, Akhaltsikhe, Skvilosi, Aspindza, Khozabiri, Javakheti - Tmogvi, Kumurdo, Tskarostavi, Akhaltsikhe, Tsunda, Zernaki, Akhalkalaki, Paravani Lake are the territories of Georgia, Karnuti, Dlivis, Šteay remains outside the borders (Hewsen 2001, 115). Karnuti is the name of one of the villages in Shirak province, but Šteay could not be identified. As for Dlivis designation within the borders of Armenia, this fact is not confirmed according to the historical atlas of Georgia in the 10th-11th centuries. Dlivis, like other toponyms, is part of Georgia according to the Historical Atlas of Georgia (2003, p. 19-23).

According to R. Hewsen's map of 1199-1236, during the period when Armenia was under the rule of the Georgian state, the Georgian territories, including Samtskhe - Odzrkhe, Akhaltsikhe, Erusheti, Vardzia, and Javakheti - Tmogvi, Kumurdo, Akhalkalaki, remained as part of Georgia. This aligns with the historical context of the time, as the Kingdom of Georgia was expanding its borders and consolidating its strength (Hewsen 2001, 130).

During the period of Ottoman domination, the historical-geographical borders of South Georgia underwent significant changes. According to the R. Hewsen's atlas from the years 1590-1639, several regions, including Odzrkhe, Okrostsikhe, Chorchani, Akhaltsikhe, Kvelistsikhe, Dzamistsikhe, Aspindza, Anza, Khertvisi, Gobieti, Tmogvi, and Mgelistsikhe, became part of Samtskhe-Saatavago and were under the rule of the Ottoman Empire. However, Akhalkalaki remained within the borders of the Kartli Kingdom (Hewsen 2001, 153). According to the historical atlas of Georgia, Akhalkalaki is also shown as a part of Samtskhe-Saatavago (Historical Atlas of Georgia, 2003, 45).

After Russia annexed Georgia, the Akhaltsikhe region initially remained part of the Ottoman Empire, and only in 1828 did Russia manage to conquer a portion of this region. After the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-78, Russia annexed the remaining part and declared it as Akhaltsikhe Governorate.

The map by R. Hewsen details the geographical locations in the Akhaltsikhe-Akhalkalaki region as territories of the Russian Empire: Akhaltsikhe - Atskuri, Chilvana, (Bodela), Khertvisi, Akhalkalaki - Didi Abuli, Bogdanovka, Orlovka, Gorelovka, Efremovka, Troitskoe, Foka, Saghamo, Khando, Kom, Aragosa, Radionovka, Aleksandrshilfi, Gomareti, Karabulakhi, Ormasheni (Hewsen 2001, 215).

R. Hewsen separately provides a map of the Akhalkalaki district, indicating the modern-day geographical points of the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts (Hewsen 2001, 216).

When analyzing Armenian cartography, we should also take into account the map made by S. Yeremian. This map aims to restore the geographical borders of Armenia from the 7th century using modern cartographic data, based on the “Ashkharatsuits” (“Armenian Geography”). On Yeremian’s map, Samtskhe, Upper Javakheti, Lower Javakheti, the Javakheti Plateau, and Kajatun (Tsunda) are within the borders of the Kingdom of Kartli, specifically in the region of Gugareti (Yeremyan 1963).

An analysis of Armenian cartographic records suggests that, excluding the initial centuries when the kingdoms of Kartli and Armenia vied for influence over the border regions during the state formation process, these territories have historically been integral parts of the Kingdom of Kartli. The settlement of Armenian populations in these areas appears to have been sporadic.

### **Conclusion**

Summarizing the information uncovered in Armenian historical writings about Samtskhe-Javakheti, we are confronted with the undeniable reality, one that should not be disputed when it comes to the history of this integral region of Georgia. Unfortunately, both in the past and in our modern era, there have been individuals with vested interests who question the rightful ownership of Javakheti, specifically the Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda districts, and continuously strive to claim this area as part of Armenia. These forces have no valid basis to support their claims, except for the fact that the majority of the population in these areas today is Armenian. The evidence that has been discovered and studied clearly demonstrates that Armenians began to immigrate to Javakheti in large numbers after 1828. At that time, they were fleeing from the Ottoman Empire, specifically from the regions of Kars and Erzurum, and sought and found refuge in Georgia. This mass migration was the primary reason behind a significant shift in the demographic composition of Javakheti. The Russian government resettled a substantial number of Armenians in the Akhalkalaki Mazra and a smaller group in Akhaltsikhe, providing them with certain privileges and benefits. Every Armenian residing in Javakheti carries in their memory the history of when and why their community settled in this native Georgian land. They also remember the historical places from which the Armenian population had to flee and seek refuge in various areas. Today, these individuals see themselves as fully-fledged citizens of Georgia, and many are well-integrated into Georgian society. This is especially true for the younger generation, who actively engage in building the Georgian state, contributing to the development of Georgian culture. They do this while retaining their own language, traditions, and most importantly, while preserving the memory of their historical past.

## **The Names of Ninotsminda Municipality Villages according to the 5-volume Dictionary of „the Toponyms of Armenia and its Adjacent Regions“**

In 1986-2001, “The Dictionary of the Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions” in five volumes by H. Barseghyan, T. Hakobyan, and M. Bakhshyan was published. The five-volume dictionary has a short preface informing that foreign and Armenian authors had been working on the Armenian toponyms since ancient times. It widely focuses on the origin of the ancient Armenian toponyms, their explanations, legends, and folk narratives.

The authors of the publication set the goal to collect, process, and research the material about toponyms in Armenia and its adjacent areas. This encyclopedic dictionary will be useful for those who are interested in the ancient history of Byzantium, Persia, the Caucasus, and other countries.

The five-volume dictionary includes more than 136 thousand geographic names. The author covers the toponyms spread from the river Mtkvari from the north, the watershed of the western Tigris from the south, Amasya and Caesarea districts, together with Cilicia from the westside and the Caspian Sea from the east. It covers several neighboring districts and countries. (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 7-8).

The dictionary mainly describes villages and other types of settlements, and as the authors mention, attention is less paid to the names of the lakes, rivers, mountain chains, and meadows.

It is impossible to study the history or language of any nation without toponymy. It helps the study of such important historical and ethnographic issues like tracking and specifying the location of the ancient nations, the etymology of the names, etc.

The proper names greatly help archeologists understand the discovered inscriptions.

The place names are conditioned by historical developments. Their history is reflected in the geographical names, especially, in the names of the villages. It can explain when Armenians, Azerbaijanians, Russians, and Greeks settled on the territory of Georgia and when the toponyms linked to the language of the mentioned people emerged. Some names of the villages directly indicate the activities of its population in the past. The etymology of many geographic names, the location of the relevant geographic objects and population, and phonetical and morphological changes of the oikonoms are studied, and structural and historical analysis of the toponyms are conducted.

In the five-volume dictionary, some of the toponyms are given in the wrong form. The article compares such names to the older sources and gives the right forms. Proper explanation of the toponyms gives the possibility to study ethnography, economic, cultural, and religious history.

In the dictionary, the greater part of Georgian toponyms is given by the phonetic and morphological changes, caused by the misspelling of the Georgian toponyms by the Armenian population. In the toponyms of the region, Turkish



words are applied quite frequently, therefore it is required to learn it deeply and comprehensively to identify the etymology precisely which has great importance for the history of a language.

The five-volume dictionary reads the phonetic-morphological peculiarities of the toponyms. Diversified vocabulary is the result of the influence of various languages. The combinations like Georgian-Turkish, Armenian-Turkish, Turkish-Russian, and word combinations of other languages are found due to the language mixture. A study of the geographical names is required considering the peculiarities of those languages.

It is interesting to analyze the problem of nominative case markers when pronouncing Georgian names in Armenian. The majority of the Meskhetian toponyms are presented without the marker of the nominative case in the dictionary. As the marker of the nominative case highlights the Georgian origin of toponyms, it is removed in many Russian maps of the 19th and 20th centuries, like the Russian documents of the same period.

In the dictionary, none of the consonant final names of the villages have the nominative sign left. Seemingly, this non-significant fact plays an important role in Javakheti toponymy, as the nominative case marker – o (i) is understood not just as a Georgian suffix added on the inherent Georgian root, but as the general sign of Georgianization of the root. Therefore, not only linguistic but also ethnic and social factors play a role in its removal. For instance, the villages of Ninotsminda municipality are given in the following forms: არაკალ [Arakal], დილით [Dilit], ოროჯოლარ [Orojolar], ღილალის [Ghilalis], ხოჯაბეკ [Khojabek'], ხანჩალ [Khanchal]<sup>1</sup> etc.

The dictionary of toponyms describes the historical data about the resettlement of Armenians based on the information of the local Armenian population. The province from where the Armenian population came in each village is also given here. The majority arrived from Ottoman Turkey, in particular from **Erzurum**, **Khnus**, **Kilua**, and other villages, as well as from **Aiazma** and **Nadevan** of Tsalka district.

In 1828-30, when Armenians were resettled Javakheti was fully emptied of Muslim Georgians. Exiled Georgians took the place names with them; therefore, resettled Armenians gave their names to the gorges, mountains, and villages, causing linguistic, lexical, and phonetical changes in the toponyms.

The toponyms of 32 villages of Ninotsminda municipality according to the *Dictionary of the Toponyms of Armenia and Adjacent Regions* are provided below to learn the problem better. These villages are:

1. **Bogdanovka** village council includes Bogdanovka town, Khojabeki, Katanatu, Jigrasheni, Didi Khanchali and Patara Khanchali
2. **Gandza** village council includes Gandzani; Poka; Vladimirovka
3. **Gorelovka** village council includes Gorelovka, Epremovka, Orlovka, Spasovka, Kalinino, Zhdanovi
4. **Eshtia** village council includes Eshtia, Toria, Ujmana, Kaurma

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1 In this section the toponyms from original document are presented unchanged, transcribed in Georgian script as given in the Georgian version of the monograph. Georgian pronunciations in English for (Georgian, Russian and Armenian scripts) are given in square brackets. Georgian consonants ფ, ზ, თ, ტ, ქ, ჳ, ც, წ, ჩ, ზ, ხ, corresponding IPA transcriptions of p<sup>h</sup>, p', t<sup>h</sup>, t', k<sup>h</sup>, k', ts<sup>h</sup>, ts', t<sup>h</sup>, t<sup>l</sup>, d<sub>3</sub>, χ are given in Romanized form of p, p', t, t', k, k', ts, ts', ch, ch', j, kh. (Trans./ED.)

5. **Gondrio** village council includes Didi Gondrio; Diliti; Kulalisi; Mamtsvara; Patara Gondrio

6. **Satkhe** village council includes Satkhe; Patara Arakali; Didi Arakali; Orojolari

7. **Tambovka** village council includes Tambovka; Aspara; Akhali Khulgumo; Radionovka (Paravani)

The problems related to the phonetic processes are found in the toponyms of Ninotsminda municipality presented in the five-volume dictionary. Those phonetic changes are caused by the lack of some Georgian sounds in the Armenian language. For instance, the consonant ყ [q'] is pronounced by the Armenian population as ლ [gh] or კ [k']. Some sound changes are the result of the difficulty in pronouncing voiced consonants, therefore, they turned into voiceless ones, for example, თ [t] or ტ [t']; დ [d] or თ [t]; ფ [p] or პ [p']; ჩ [ch] or ჭ [ch']; ჯ [j] or ჩ [ch], in addition, the third language (Turkish or Russian) also influences the phonetic change;

Let's discuss the names given in the five-volume dictionary according to its phonetic versions: არაკალი [Arakali], არაკალი [Arak'ali]; ავნია [Apnia], აპნია [Ap'nia]; გარილოვკა [Garilovka], გორელოე [Goreloe], გორილოვკა [Gorilovka], კორელოვკა [K'orelovka]; დილითი [Diliti], დილიფი [Dilipi]; თორია [Toria], ტორია [T'oria]; მამცვარა [Mamtsvara], მაგმარა [Magmaara], მამგარა [Mamgara], მანგარა [Mangara], ნამგარა [Namgara]; ორაჯალარ [Orajalar], ოროჯოლარ [Orojolar], ორჯალარ [Orjalar]; სათხე [Satkhe], სატხა [Sat'kha], სატლა [Sat'gha]; უჩმანა [Uchmana], უჭმანა [Uch'mana], უჯმანა [Ujmana]; ფოკა [Pok'a], პოგა [P'oga], პოკა [Pok'a]; ყულალისი [Qulalisi], ღულალისი [Ghulalisi], კულალისი [K'ulalisi], ღულალუ [Ghulalu], კულალისი [K'ulalisi]; ყაურმა [Qaurma], კაურმა [K'aurma]; ხოჯაბეკ [Khojabek'], ხოჭაპეკ [Khoch'ap'ek'], ხოჭეპეკ [Khoch'ep'ek'], ხოჯაბეგ [Khojabeg], ღოჯაბეგ [Ghojabeg], ღოჯაბეკ [Ghojabek']; ჭიკრაშენ [Ch'ik'rashen], ჯიკრაშენ [Jik'rashen], ჯკრაშენ [Jk'rashen]; ხანჯარ [Khanjar], ხანჩარ [Khanchar] and etc.

The five-volume dictionary reads that **Bogdanovka [Bogdanovk'a]** (current Ninotsminda) is located on the Leninakan (Gyumri) and Akhaltsikhe road; Ninotsminda municipality administration center was named - Bogdanovka till 1991. There were 2,366 residents in 1969. The main part of the population were Armenians, a few Georgians, and Russians. (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 714-715).

**Didi Arakali [Didi Arakali]** // დიდი არაკალი // առաքալ մեծ - a village in Ninotsminda municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Akhalkalaki district. It is referred to as არაკალი [Arak'ali], არაკია [Arakia], არაკულ [Arakul].

**Patara Arakali [P'at'ara Arakali]** // პატარა არაკალი // առաքալ փոքր - a village in Ninotsminda municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Akhalkalaki district. In the dictionary, it is mentioned like არაკალი [Arak'ali], არაკია [Arakia], არაკულ [Arakul] (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 399).

**Patara Gondrio [P'at'ara Gondrio]** // პატარა გონდრიო is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion<sup>2</sup>, 11 km from the center. The village is mentioned

2 Raion is a term used in the former Soviet Union, to denote an administrative division smaller

in the five-volume dictionary of toponyms as გიონდურა, პატარა [Giondura, P'at'ara], გონტიურ პატარა [Gont'iur P'at'ara, გონდურა პატარა [Gondura P'at'ara], კონტურა პატარა [K'ont'ura P'at'ara]. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there were 38 households here, while there were 50 households (600 residents) at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and 791 people in 1969 (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 944-945).

**Didi Gondrio [Didi Gondrio]** // დიდი გონდრიო is the village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, on the side of the Khanchali Lake, 9 km from the center. The village is mentioned in the dictionary in the following forms: გიონდურა [Giondura], დიდი გიონდურა [Didi Giondura], გიონტუ [Giont'u], გიუნდურა დიდი [Giundura Didi], გონდურა [Gondura], დიდი კონტურა [Didi K'ont'ura]. In the village, according to the dictionary, there were 810 in 1907, and 1,500 Armenian residents in 1969. Their ancestors moved from **Erzurum** in 1829-30 (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 944-945).

**Diliti [Diliti]** // დილითი is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, situated 20 km to the south-west of the Bogdanovka, in Javakheti. The village is mentioned in the Armenian bibliography by the name of “**Dlivek**” in 988 and it is referred to as “**Dliv**” in the Persian Empire tax registers in 1595.

**Toria [T'oria]** // თორია is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 10-12 km from the center. In the dictionary, the village is mentioned as ტორია [T'oria]. It had 542 residents in 1907, and 900 residents in 1969, their ancestors moved from **Erzurum** in Western Armenia, in particular from the village **Khnus** and **Kilua** (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 477).

ტორია [T'oria] is an Armenianized form of თორია [Toria]. The voiceless თ [t] becomes voiced. It is marked as ტორია [T'oria] on the Russian maps and sources as well.

**Mamtsvara [Mamts'vara]** // მამწვარა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 4 km from the town center. In the dictionary the village is referred to as მამცვარა [Mamtsvara], მაგმარა [Magmara], მამგარა [Mamgara], მამცვარა [Mamtsvara], მანგარა [Mangara], ნამგარა [Namgara]. In 1907, it had a population of 653, and by 1969, there were 1,000 Armenian residents, comprising 170 households (Hakobyan et al. 1991, 670-671).

**Orojolari [Orojolari]** // ოროჯოლარი is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 4 km from the center. In the dictionary the village is referred to as ორაჯალარ [Orjalar], ოროჯოლარ [Orjolar], ორჯალარ [Orjalar]. In 1907, it had a population of 876, and in 1969, there were 1,542 Armenian residents. Part of the population moved from **Erzurum** in 1830 (Hakobyan et al. 2001, 503).

**Satkhe [Satkhe]** // სათხე is a village in Ninotsmind Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 4-5 km from the highway to Paravani Lake from Bogdanovka. In the dictionary, the name **Satkhe** has the following variations: საბხა [Sabkha] (Սաբխա), სადხა [Sadkha] (Սադխա), სათღა [Satgha] (Սաթղա), სატხა [Sat'kha] (Սատխա),

than a region or oblast (province) and larger than a municipality or district. (Trans. / ED.)

სატხე [Sat'khe] (Սատխէ) . It had 1,587 residents in 1895, 2,500 residents in 1903, 2,594 in 1907, and by 1969, there were 2,303 Armenian residents. Their ancestors moved from **Erzurum**, from the villages **Sogitli**, **Tsalka**, and **Jeni** in 1829 (Hakobyan et al. 1998, 463).

**Ujmana [Ujmana]**//უჯმანა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 10 km from the center. In the dictionary, the village is referred to as უბმანა [Uchmana], უქმანა [Uch'mana], უჯმანა [Ujmana]. The village had 345 residents (40 households) in 1895, 547 Armenian residents in 1907, and by 1970, the population had increased to 1,500, including approximately 700-800 Armenians (Hakobyan et al. 2001, 197). According to the historical data, the residents of Erzurum moved to Ujmana in the 30s of the XIX century.

**Kaurma [Q'aurma]**//ყაურმა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion. In the dictionary the village is referred to as ღავურმა [Ghaurma], კაურმა [K'aurma], ქიოპრი [Kiopri]. It had 146 households in 1975, including 797 Armenian residents. The ancestors moved from **Erzurum** in 1830 (Hakobyan et al. 1991, 549).

Kaurma [Q'aurma] (Ghaurma [Ghaurma] as the local Armenians pronounce it) is a famous village, marked on the maps next to Jigrasheni as Каурма [Kaurma]. Ek. Takaishvili applies the form Каурма [Kaurma] as well. One of the documents of the 30s of the XIX century names it as Гормаки [Gormaki]. In the 1930s, Kaurma was resettled once again, this time by people from Erzurum<sup>3</sup> (Jikia 1958, 331). The general rule of translating the ყ [q'] sound into the ღ [gh] confirms that the toponym entered Armenian from Georgian.

**Kulalisi [Q'ulalisi]**//ყულალისი is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 12 km from Bogdanovka. In the dictionary the village is referred to as ღულალის [Ghulalis], კულალის [K'ulalis], ღულალუ [Ghulalu]. There were 1,000 Armenian residents in 1970. Their ancestors moved from Tsalka in the 1970s and 1980s (Hakobyan et al. 1991, 583).

Georgian ყულალისი [Q'ulalisi] is represented using the voiced consonant ღ [gh] in Armenian.

**Didi Khanchali [Didi Khanchali]**//დიდი ხანჩალი is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in the Bogdanovka raion (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 698).

**Patara Khanchali [P'at'ara Khanchali]**//პატარა ხანჩალი// ხანჩალი is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion. There is St. Hacob Church in the village. (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 698- 699).

Didi and Patara Khanchali are not registered in the “Defter<sup>4</sup>”; the population could appear here later.

3 According to the original citation (Jikia 1958, p. 331), during the creation of the 'Defter,' the village was inhabited by only three households. Later, it became completely depopulated, and in one document dating from the 1930s, it was listed among the former villages (“по названиям бывших там некогда деревень”). Subsequently, in the same 1930s, the village was repopulated by people resettled from Erzurum. (Tran. /Ed.)

4 Is referred to *the Great Defter of Gurjistan Vilayet*. (Tran. /Ed.)

**Khojabegi [Khojabegi]** // ხოჯაბეგი is a part of Ninotsminda town. According to the five-volume dictionary, it is a village located in the Bogdnovka district. In the dictionary it is referred to as ხოჯაბეკ [Khojabek'], ხოჭაპეკ [Khoch'ap'ek'], ხოჭეპეკ [Khoch'ep'ek'], ხოჯაბეგ [Khojabeg], ღოჯაბეგ [Ghojabeg]. It had 35 in 1885, and 749 Armenians in 1907. The ancestors moved from Erzurum, specifically from **Dzitogh** and other villages in 1830. There is a very beautiful arched church here dated 1830. It was joined to Bogdanovka (present-day Ninotsminda M.B.) in 1969. There were 1,474 Armenian residents at that time (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 778).

**Khulgumo [Khulgumo]** // ხულგუმო is a village in Akhalkalaki Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Akhalkalaki district, 3 km from Akhalkalaki. In the dictionary, the village is referred to as ხულგუმო [Khulgumo], ხულგუმა [Khulguma]. There were 556 Armenian residents in 1907. Their ancestors moved from Artaan in 1829. There are 2 ruined churches preserved in the village. The new church is known as Stepanos (1903-1907) (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 818).

**Jigrasheni [Jigrasheni]** // ჯიგრამენი is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 5 km from the administrative center. In the dictionary, the village is referred to as ჭიკრამენ [Ch'ikrashen], ჯიკრამენ [Jik'rashen], ჯკრამენ [Jk'rashen]. The village is on the bank of the river Parvana. There were 1,288 Armenian residents in 1903, 1,216 in 1907 and 1,655 in 1969. Their ancestors were resettled from Erzurum, in particular, from the village **Nahi** in 1828-30 (Hakobyan et al. 1998, 405).

**Eshitia [Esh'tia]** // ეშტია is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 8 km from the center, on the bank of the river Parvana. In the dictionary, the village is referred to as ეშტია [Esh'tia]. Armenians are the main part of the population. In 1881 there were 1,519, residents, in 1907 3,803, and in 1970 3,600 residents (Catholics). Their ancestors resettled from the village **Kiulli**, the **Basen** region, Western Armenia (Hakobyan et al. 1991, 402).

In the five-volume dictionary, there are names with the plural formed by "Nar-Tan"<sup>5</sup>, later on, "N" was removed and left like Gandza and not Gandzani, Poka instead of Pokani. Some names were included in the five-volume Dictionary in the plural forms of "Nar-Tan". later on, the letter "წ" [n] was omitted and instead of Gandzani, remained Gandza, instead Pokani – Poka.

**Gandza [Gandza]** // განძა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. It is met in the form of განძა [Gandza], განძანი [Gandzani].

The five-volume Dictionary reads about Gandza, that it is located in Ninotsminda District, Javakheti Plateau, on the south of the Paravani Lake, on both banks of the river Paravani, at 2,020 m above sea, in 22km from Bogdanovka and 18 km from Akhalkalaki. There were 1,400 Armenian residents at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, 1,882 in 1907, and 3,978 in 1969. Their ancestors came from **Erzurum, Kars, and Ardahan**. There is a church built from cut stones. There is the Koroghli castle, Hovanes Chapple, worship places, and two destroyed churches

5 The plural forms in Georgian language are typically formed using suffixes such as "-eb" (known as "ebiani" plural form), and "-n" or "-t" (known as the "Nartaniani" plural form), which are added to the noun stem.(Tran. /ED.)



built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century here (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 784-785).

According to the Georgian historical sources, the name of the village Gandza is Gandzani.

S.Jikia mentions that the village **Gandza** is given in the form of **Gandzani**. It is situated in the village of Poka. The village is preserved till now and is marked on the maps as Кандза. There is the marker “-n” of the plural number in the name „Gandzani“, which was lost later (Jikia, 1958, 343).

**Poka [Pok'a]**//ფოკა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality, near the Paravani Lake. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village Poka is located in Bogdnovk district, 30 km from the administrative center. In the dictionary village **ფოკა** is referred to as პოგა [P'oga], პოკა [P'ok'a], პოლა [P'ogha], ფოგა [Poga], ფოკატ [Pok'at']. In Russian – პოგა [P'oga], პოკა [P'ok'a]. In 1907, it had 1,152 Armenian residents, and by 1969, the number had increased to 2,000 Armenians. Part of the population moved from Ardahan (Hakobyan et al. 2001, 272).

According to S.Jikia, in *the Grand Deftor of Gurjistan Vilayet*, the village Poka is referred to as Poka. “The name of the village is found in the plural form in the version of Queen Ana of *the Georgian Chronicles* “Liparit called for Kakh and reached *Puk'ata*” (versions: *Pok'ata*, *Puk'ata*)<sup>6</sup>, “to the south of ზ was Gandzani” ... Pok'ani was supposed to be in the nominative case, and the editor of *the Georgian Chronicles*, Prof. S. Kaukhchishvili, has listed it similarly in the index. Later, this Georgian affix was lost (for comparison: Gandzani → Gandza); M. Brosset already mentions this village as *Phoca*. In the new era, particularly, in archival documents and other written heritage from the 19th century, it appears already as *Pok'a*. After resettlement from Erzurum and establishment here, the name *Pok'a* has already been Armenianized in everyday speech as well. It is marked as Пора...in the 5-verse and other Russian maps. Thus, the village Poka, referred to in the history of Georgia many times, holds significant importance. Its old Georgian name is *Pok'ani*; later, the suffix ‘-ni’ was removed, and it is currently called *Pok'a*.” (Jikia 1958, 343)<sup>7</sup>.

This is the variety of how the names of Javakheti villages are given in the five-volume dictionary of the Armenian Toponyms.

The dictionary also reads the phonetic transformation of the names entered through the Russian maps. The names of writers, individuals, and geographic locations are translated differently across literature, television, radio, the press, and

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6 “-ta” in toponym “Poka-ta” I another form of Nar-Tan plural. “Pokani” and “Pokata” both represent the plural form of “Poka” and both are used in the historical sources. (Tran. /ED.)

7 “ამ სოფლის სახელი „ქართლის ცხოვრების“ ანადედოფლისეულ ნუსხაში მრავლობითი რიცხვის ფორმაში გვხვდება: „ხოლო ლიპარიტ შეკ- რიზნა კახნი და მოადგა ფუკათა“ (ვარიანტები: ფოკათა, ფუკთა), „ფოკათა სამხრეთით იყო განმანი“. სახელობით ბრუნვაში ფოკანი სახელობით ბრუნვაში ფოკანი უნდა ყოფილიყო და „ქართლის ცხოვრების“ რედაქტორს პროფ. ს. ყაუხჩიშვილს სამიუბელში ასეც აქვს მოცემული. შემდეგში ეს ქართული აფიქსი დაიკარგა (მდრ. განმანი → განმა); მ. ბროსე ამ სოფელს ახსენებს უკვე Phoca-დ. ახალ დროს, კერძოდ XIX საუკუნის საარქივო და სხვა წერილობით ძეგლებშიც უკვე ფოკა-ა...არზრუმიდან გადმოსახლებულთა აქ დამკვიდრების შემდეგ ფოკა სახელწოდება უკვე ცოცხალ მეტყველებაშიც გადასომხურდა. ხუთვერსიან და სხვა რუსულ რუკებზე - Пора გვაქვს...ამრიგად, სოფ. ფოკა საქართველოს ისტორიაში არა ერთხელ მოხსენებული მნიშვნელოვანი პუნქტია. მისი ძველი ქართული სახელწოდებაა ფოკანი, შემდეგში -ნი დაბოლოება ჩამოეკვეცა და ამჟამად ფოკა-დ არის წოდებული.” (Jikia 1958, 343) (Tran. / ED.)



most notably, on maps. It causes full chaos and misunderstanding. It is caused because Georgian names are interpreted into Armenian through the Russian language. The Russian language has no sounds like ჰ [h], ფ [p], ყ [q'], ძ [dz], წ [ts], ჭ [tʃ], ჳ [gh], characterized for Georgian and Caucasian languages. Therefore, when the names of foreign origin were translated into Georgian through the Russian language, they gained quite a different form compared to the original version. For instance, there is no sound h in Russian and it is substituted by the sound g.

All the languages, including Georgian, have certain difficulties in translating proper names. It is important to write Georgian names correctly, to correct names distorted by Russian on the maps and in the translated literature.

Naturally, the names are marked in Russian and therefore they are mostly phonetically changed or distorted. Different sounds are rendered with approximate accuracy, just as it happens today: Georgian ჳ [gh] corresponds to Russian р [g], ჭ [ch'] to Ч [ch], ყ [q'] and ქ [k] to к [k'], წ [ts'] to Ц [ts], etc. <sup>8</sup>(Khornauli, 2003, 121).

Such matching is not always followed. Though ყ [q'] corresponds to к [k'], in some cases it is transcribed as x[kh]. Similarly, Russian к [k'] generally corresponds to Georgian ყ [q'] and კ [k'], but in some cases, ხ [kh] and გ [g] are transcribed through к [k'].

When researching names based on maps, it's important to consider the historical context and the system used for naming places. Understanding toponymy is crucial for rectifying incorrect place names on maps and ensuring the accuracy of new place name entries. If the micro toponyms are lost, it becomes impossible to correct them on the map.

The names of some villages are specified in the forms influenced by Russian maps. For example, the clear Russian influence is traced in the names of აფნია [Apnia] and ფოკა [Pok'a] given as აპნია [Ap'nia] and პოკა [P'ok'a], პოგა [P'oga] in the five-volume dictionary. On the Russian maps, Georgian ფ [p] is transcribed as პ [p'] and these transcriptions are reflected in the entries of the five-volume dictionary.

**Epremovka [Epremovk'a]**//ეფრემოვკა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, on the way to Gyumri. The dictionary refers to it as ეფრემოვკა [Epremovka]. It had 860 Russian residents in 1893, 382 in 1907, 500-600 residents in 1909 (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 254).

**Gorelovka [Gorelovk'a]**//გორელოვკა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in the Bogdanovka raion, 10 km from the town. In the dictionary the village is referred to as გარილოვკა [Garilovk'a], გორელოე [Goreloe], გორილოვკა [Gorilovk'a], კორელოვკა [K'orelovk'a]. It had 1,500 residents at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and 2,200 Dukhobors lived there in 1969 (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 951).

**Orlovka [Orlovk'a]**//ორლოვკა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 7 km from the administrative center. The village name is given by the distorted

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8 Khornauli provides following examples: კაწალხევი [K'ats'alkhevi] – Кацалхеви [K'atsalkhevi], ჩანჭახი [Ch'ach'akhi] – Чанчахи [Chanchakhi], ყოფა [Q'opcha] – Копча [K'op'cha], etc. (Khornauli, 2003, 121).

form არლოვკა [Arlovka] in the dictionary. There were 952 Russian residents in 1907 and 501 in 1696. It had an Armenian church (Hakobyan et al. 2001, 501).

**Spasovka [Sparovk'a]**// სპასოვკა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 6-7 km from the administrative center. There were 623 residents in 1907, and 401 in 1969 (Hakobyan et al. 1998, 807).

**Kalinino [K'alinino]**// კალინინო<sup>9</sup> according to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 25km from the administrative center. There were 600-700 Russian residents in the 1970s (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 899).

**Rodionovka [Rodionovk'a]**// როდიონოვკა<sup>10</sup> according to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, located on the bank of lake Parvana. In the dictionary the village is referred to as ფარავან [Paravan], ფარევან [Parevan], ფარავნა [Paravna], ფარვანა [Parvana]. There are 1,000 Russian and Armenian residents in the village. Armenian population moved here from the villages **Aiazma** and **Nadevani** of Tsalka district (Hakobyan et al. 1998, 432).

**Vladimirovka [Vladimirov'k'a]**// ვლადიმროვკა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 22km from the administrative center. There were 150 Armenian and several Dukhobor residents in 1970 (Hakobyan et al. 1998, 807).

The former name of **Vladimirovka** is **Publikani**. Currently, Russians do not live in Vladimirovka, they were substituted by Armenians who moved from Esthia and Gorelovka.

Accordingly, mainly Dukhobors lived in **Bogdanovka, Gorelovka, Orlovka, Spasovka, and Tambovka**.

The five-volume dictionary mentions several villages founded by resettled people, for instance, **Aspara** founded in 1924, **Katnatu** in - 1928, and **Tambovka** in - 1840. There is a certain misunderstanding here. Aspara and Tambovka existed as villages long before the 1930s of the 19th century. It would be more accurate to state that they revived the ruined villages rather than founded them. For example, Aspara, known as Aspana in historical sources and oral transmissions, is recognized in Georgia.

**Aspara [Aspara]**// ასფარა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka raion, 33 km from the administrative center. In the dictionary, ასპარა [Asp'ara] and ასფარა [Aspara] are given in the parallel forms. According to data from January 1, 1969, there were 328 Armenian residents in the village and 331 in 1970. (Hakobyan et al. 1986, 353).

**Katnatu [Katnat'u]**// კათნატუ is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in the Bogdanovka raion, southeast of the Khanchali Lake, at 2,000 m above sea level, 7 km from Ninotsminda. It was founded in 1928. The ancestors moved here from Western Armenia (Hakobyan et al. 1988, 884).

**Tambovka [T'ambov'k'a]**// ტამბოვკა is a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. According to the five-volume dictionary, the village is located in Bogdanovka

9 Present-day Sameba [Sameba]/სამება, a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. (Trans./ED.)

10 Present-day Paravani [Paravani]/ფარავანო, a village in Ninotsminda Municipality. (Trans./ED.)

raion. There were 375 in 1907, and 1,000 Russians in 1960. There are also Armenians resettled from the village Khulgumo in 1924 (Hakobyan et al. 2001, 24).

The study of the toponyms of Javakheti is important not only from a linguistic perspective but also holds significant theoretical and practical importance. Examining the Georgian toponyms provided in the five-volume dictionary of the *Toponyms of Armenia and its Adjacent Regions* will aid linguists, historians, geographers, ethnographers, and those interested in social linguistics.

The findings of the study will be of interest to scientists in neighboring countries. Through research, the etymology, roots, and vocabulary of many words will be specified. Furthermore, it will be possible to determine the locations of hundreds of geographic objects and identify their types, etymology, and their original, undistorted names using the toponyms provided in the dictionary.

## Dukhobors in Ninotsminda Municipality

Russian Empire arbitrarily dealt with the occupied territories in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It interfered especially in the history of the people living on that territory. The whole 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed migration, settlement and resettlement of the people inside and outside of the empire. The process was especially active in the Caucasus, Georgia and its ancient region, Meskheti. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Empire resettled the big groups of Armenians from Ottoman Turkey, even though, it appeared later, that neither Turks nor Armenians had the desire to leave their historical places and move to Javakheti. Russians and Ukrainians from the Volga regions became the victims of internal displacement as well. The sect of Dukhobors established in the XVI-XVII centuries, considered as an anti-church movement, being against military actions and going to army, distinguished with the unique lifestyle (See Beridze 2008, 294-300) was a problem for the Empire and therefore, it exiled Dukhobors to the borderline region, in particular, to Samtskhe-Javakheti. The empire solved two problems this way. The problem created by the sectarians by not going to the army was neutralized, they were removed from the central part of Russia at least and sent to Javakheti. Moreover, Dukhobors (“the fighters for the soul”) turned into the support and active defenders of the Russia in Javakheti.

The first historical fact about Dukhobors was recorded in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was described by Ivan Skavarada, the poet and theologian of that time in the Kharkov Province.

In 1667, the reforms of Patriarch Nikon caused the protest of Dukhobors. The Movement of Dukhobors was spontaneous. Dukhobors, similar to many other *Old Believers* (староверы, старообрядцы) refused from a new model of the church, they denied a mediator (a Priest) between God and a man, baptizing in water and the symbols created by a human (icon, cross). They believed that a man is baptized by the holy spirit by birth.

Dukhobors took some of the prayers from the New Testament, and created some by themselves. Dokhobors also changed into their manner and preserved the Byzantine chant. This movement spontaneously expanded in the middle part of Russia, Novorossia and Malorossia, so that, it covered the entire Empire. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Dokhobors were resettled on empty lands in Militopol, Tavria Governorate. Dukhobors made their first steps and started a happy life, because they loved to work. The government did not like this strong community and in 1841 they were exiled to Akhalkalaki Mazra, in Kutaisi Governorate of Georgia.

The board at the entrance of the Kalmikov’s cemetery in the village Orlovka gives information about their arrival to Javakheti in 1841. The inscription is interesting both as a historical and a linguistic document” (Beridze 2008, 296). We took a photo of the inscription in the 70s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and published in 1992. (Beridze 1992, 115). The inscription with a translation is given below:

„Вечная память правидных радителии именованных духобурцевъ погребенныхъ и поклоняемыхъ отцу и сыну и святому духу спасали и спасаимъ души свай кротастию и смирениемъ любовью правды ради было угодно богу и государю собрати насъ на обитаванную землю втавричиска

губернию въ 1805 году а въ 1841 году переселены Закавказь Кутаиской губернии силения Тирпени и хто сию повистъ чувствовать не должень потерять сие дело“.

**“Eternal memory of the deceased parents, called Dukhobors, being the faithful worshipers of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, being savers and survivors of their soul and the souls of others, through meekness and obedience. For the sake of truth, it was the will of the Lord and the King that we gathered in the promised land of Tavrich Governorate in 1805 and in 1841 we moved to the Terpenie settlement of Kutaisi Governorate, the South Caucasus. Those who remember it should not forget the story”.**

Almost similar inscriptions were made near the cemeteries of the Dukhobor villages telling a kind of history of their arrival and life in Javakheti.

The Russian government did not support the resettled to the empty land, where was no infrastructure. People had to stay in very difficult conditions requiring great efforts during long winters and short cold summers. During that time, they started preparation for the severe winter late autumn. It was the most difficult period for them. They started digging holes and reinforcing them with stones due to the lack of natural materials other than rocks. A rocky place near the river was chosen for the cattle and the shelter was made as it was possible. They spent the winter in such conditions. Many died during this winter. Because of the first difficult winter, many did not want to stay here and decided to leave. Most of them went to Kars, Turkey, where they founded several villages, some went to the Elizavetpol Governorate in Azerbaijan and others stayed in Javakheti, who were called “the Cold” Dukhobors. The first village, established by Dukhobors on the territory of the current Orlovka village, was called “Patience” (Terpenie). Due to the lack of forest, they had to go to Aspindza, Bakuriani and Akhaltsikhe to buy wooden materials to build houses. They transported the material by horses. They began to cultivate fields, grow wheat, barley and oats. They also started large-scale cattle breeding. All this had an amazing result, people managed to build rich villages. Dukhobors founded eight villages in total, including Bogdanovka (Ninotsminda), Tambovka, Rodionovka, Spasovka, Orlovka, Gorelovka, Epremovka and Kalinovka. The first village called “Patience” was renamed as Orlovka. Within five years, Dukhobors had greatly developed agriculture and strengthened this part of Georgia; Dukhobors also bred their own breed of horses and repeatedly received gold and silver medals at the exhibitions.

According to the aforementioned inscription the initial name of the village was Terpenie. The village was named this way when Dukhobors’ came there. The maps of the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mark Orlovka next to Terpenie, but it is given in the brackets. In the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, only Orlovka was registered in the administrative-territorial structure of Georgia.

According to the elderly people there was the officer Orlov in the 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the village Terpenie was forcedly named after him (Beridze 2008, 297). The name Orlovka could also be the transmitted name, as Orlov was the center of a Governorate in the Melitopol Mazra: “By the order, the Dukhobors were allowed to settle in Tabriz Governorate, near Molochnye Vodi (Melitopol Mazra). At the same time, Dukhobors lived in Salobodo-Ukraine (Kharkov), Ekaterinoslav, Kherson, Voronezh, Tambov and Orlov Governorates.” (Beridze 2008, 297).

In the linguistic literature the term “Speech island” (островные говоры) denotes the speech of the people who are surrounded by a different language community. If we call the main dialect (or language) mainland one, then the question of the relationship of the mainland language with the speech island will come up.

If we deal with the “speech island”, we can apply “the island toponyms”. Russian names of Javakheti villages is interesting as along with Russian toponyms there is the issue of relationship of the village names with the toponyms from where they have been displaced.

Russian toponyms of Javakheti shall be considered as speech island, as they became separate from the mainland speech since arrival of Russian population. It became isolated and turned into “the island”.

The following can be said about the Russian speech island in Georgia, in particular, in the region of our interest:

Based on the comparative analysis of the island and mainland speech, the main and mainland speeches regardless minor difference formed by remoteness and surrounding of foreign language, due to strong linkage with the dialect structural elements still represent the same language. The same refers to the island toponyms. Though there is one difference, that both island and mainland speeches are discussed from the prospective of similarity or minor variation. Island micro toponyms are also studied similarly, though when it comes to the iokonyms, the problem of interrelationship (between island and mainland) is more important rather than similarity between them. The iokonyms reflect certain attitude towards the former names. Some kind of social nostalgia appears here because the exile was forced, the duplicate toponyms with minor changes are formed. Dukhobors resettled from Tambov Governorate call their village Tambovka. It is also the history of the migration in Javakheti, it means linguistic, social-psychological and historical factors determine naming.

The term “Rusi” and toponyms derived from it in Javakheti require separate study. The term has been appeared since 1828 when the first Russian came in Javakheti and it is associated with name of Paskevich. The local population named the route crossing the whole Javakheti as **Rusigza**. The **Rusitskali** should also be linked to the 1828’s developments. It begins at the Turkish border and is merged with the Lake Khanchali at the farms. If naming were related to the Russians living in Javakheti, then it would be named like the *Dukhoboris Gza* and not *Rusis Gza*, or be named as *the Dukhoboris Tskali*, similar to the Dukhoboris Tskaro running around the Khanchali area.

Other “Russian Toponyms” are also the names given by Russian (Dukhobor) population.

As mentioned, Dukhobors were the successors of the movement against church. The name itself „духобори“ demonstrates the active nature of the new sect, like fighter for the spirit.

Dukhobors claimed that they were a special people in the entire Russian people. For this purpose, they altered not only religion, but they artificially made significant changes in their lives as well, established new customs, changed clothes, the burial rituals and other ceremonies. The Dukhobors of Javakheti are distinguished by their dressing and living styles.

Dukhobors changed even the vocabulary related to close relatives based on the religion. They used new words to address their relatives.



This religious sect was distinguished and isolated even in Russia and aspiration to be original influenced not only its daily life, but also linguistic environment. They established communes, they had the common property which is traced in the toponyms of Javakheti, where the naming of the places take place not according to the owner's name (for instance, Kalmikova Balka, etc.), but Balka I, Balka II, Balka III. The similar numbering became the toponyms. The "Balkas" stand on roadside and the order is maintained from the opposite side, like III, II, I.

The sect of Dukhobor was unique in Javakheti and naturally, it was shown in the toponyms. Greeks, Armenians, Kurds and others people had resettled here before Dukhobors arrival. They did not change the names of the villages, while Dukhobors brought their Russian names; they either changed the name or gave the new name to the settlement they resettled.

Their special cemeteries, more precisely sarcophagi, are attracting the attention. However, the surnames are given only to the tombs of leaders, like Kalmikov and Verigin, in the village of Orlovka, in Ninotsminda district.

The first leader of Dukhobors was Ilarion Kalmikov who died very soon after arrival to Javakheti. Until 1854, his wife Melania led the community, and after 1854 his 18 years old son, Ilarion Petrovich, became a leader. Actually, that time the council of the strongest families led "Dukhoboria". Petre Kalmikov died on January 10, 1846, the leadership of the community was moved over his wife Luke-ria Kalmikova (the daughter of Vasil) based on his Will.

When Lukeria held the position of a leader, a community-based barn was built and savings were kept made. During non-productive years, people came and got their share. Lukeria Kalmykova, the daughter of Vasili, was a famous figure in the second half of the 19th century. He enjoyed unlimited rights among the Dukhobors. She was called the Queen (Царица). Famous people, foreigners who described Javakheti of that time, visited her. She hosted the guests in her palace, which was different from historical and modern architecture in entire Javakheti. She had very rich wardrobe. The influence of Lukeria Kalmikova reached Dukhobors of the whole Caucasus, as she became both spiritual and secular leader. Accordingly, there were rumors about her divine features. (Линч, 1910, 126-153).

Originally, Dukhobors were Pacifists. They were against military service. They did not obey other rules as well, for instance, they refused to pay taxes. Gradually everyone got used to and accepted this closed and stubborn community. At the request of the Russian government, Dukhobors took part in the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878. Due to religious and moral principles, they did not use weapon. They had to take the wounded from Gyumri to Batumi and bring weapon for the soldiers. The government paid a large sum of money, 500,000 gold rubles. To compare, the price of a cow was five gold rubles.

Dukhobors built an orphanage which had several functions, it served as a chapel and the shelter for orphans, lonely old people and travelers.

In 1886, the movable and immovable property of the orphanage amounted to about half a million rubles

After death of the Lukeria Kalmikova Peter Verigin, the son of Vasil became a community leader. His coming to the community leadership caused confrontation, protest because of accumulated huge resources.

Further developments, which was called "the split", divided the Dukhobor community into two parts, larger and smaller. Gorelovka left in a smaller part and

other villages came into the larger part. Due to the revenge, fear and rebellion of a small part, Verigin was exiled to the Siberia, but he still continued to rule a larger part from the Siberia. On June 10, 1895 by the Verigin's orders, weapons were burnt in the village of Orlovka by the name of peace on the earth and it provoked the government's indignation and repressions. The majority of the activities lived in the villages of Georgia. This situation made the life of Georgia very hard. Russian writer and public figure, Leo Tolstoy was also aware of the problem and tried to help people. The philosophy of Dukhobors was very interesting for him and he treated Dukhobor's culture with great respect.

In 1899, resettlement of Dukhobors started to Canada. Many people participated in the exile. Everyone who was not indifferent to the fate of the Dukhobors helped them. English Quakers also were involved. Leo Tolstoy sold his novel "the Sunday" in Europe and donated his entire honorarium to the Dukhobors.

After the October Revolution Dukhobors, similar to other people, became the part of a new country, with a new political system. In the Soviet era Collective Farms started development and Dukhobors contributed to it as well. They established successful Collective farms. It is noteworthy, that Georgia was the most important place, the homeland, for two centuries. Despite this people changed many places and faced many hardship, they have preserved traditions. The linkage between the generations was so strong that they have not lost any rituals or prayers. For two centuries, the orphanage and other sacred places were not abandoned. During the holidays and every Sunday chants are heard from the orphanage, which means that the Dukhobors pray for their homeland, soul and families. After collapse of the Soviet Union, several Dukhobors moved to Russia, both in groups and individually. That time only 130 people out of 7,000 Dukhobors living in the Ninotsminda district left here, they continue living with their customs, traditions and culture. Certain cultural and social changes followed to the resettlement of Dukhobors to Georgia, namely, in Javakheti. As mentioned, their speech turned into speech island dialect. It was isolated from Russian, they created original residences and special lifestyle and more importantly, they selected Russian names to the places they lived.

The name of the village Tambovka originated from the name of the Governorate center, Tambov. Armenians came from Khulgumo to the river Taparavani bank in 1924 and the Russian population were reducing gradually. Newcomers brought their name of the village "Akhali Khulgumo" (New Khulgumo). The previous village name sounded Russian when there were Russian population in the village. Social factor caused winning of the name "Akhali Khulgumo" over.

The village Gorelovka, in Ninotsminda district had the namesake near Tambovo and one of the Dukhobor preachers was from that place by origin.

Eighteen years after this story, the Dukhobor doctrine had its preacher, Sava Tobirukhan. This person lived in the village Goreloe situated in 25 verses north of Tambov on the road to Marshanks. (Максимов 1887, 88). In about 1775-85 he came to the village Goreloe, in Tambov Mazra, to the north of Tambov. (Новицкий 1882, 23-24).

During the Soviet period, the name of the village Troitskoe turned into Kalinino, which is likely replicated name with a little phonetic variation. There was the village Торицкое (Toritskoe) in Tambov. Change of the sounds from Toritskoe into Troitskoe by means of metathesis does not look impossible, moreover, that

the Troitsa is an important celebration day of Dukhobors and change in meaning could take place as well.

In the scientific literature, there is the opinion that Dukhobors brought seven names to Javakheti and “The Dukhobors in Javakheti built the villages with the identical names with the villages in Molochnye Voda and those which are near Tambov. In addition, they renamed the local villages 1. The Publican was named as Vladimirovka. More precisely, the village was built in front of the former village, closer to the Paravani Lake, with stones from that ruined settlement. *Currently, Russians do not live in Vladimirovka, Armenians displaced from Eshtia and Poka took their places. The trace of Dukhobors still noticeable, as their naming was preserved not only for the villages but also for the valleys like Sukhoe Rech, Matryoshka Balka, Venitsky Balka, etc.*

2. They named Paravani as Rodionovka. Now Armenians live in Rodionovka
3. They renamed Bughdasheni into Gorelovka.

The other four villages were probably called by local Georgian names, the ruins of the fortresses on the villages territory can serve as a proof for it and in addition, historically, this area was densely populated. (Berdzenishvili 1964, 68-69).

There is one noticeable tendency, Russian names for local people (Ninotsminda district is mainly settled by Armenian population) means that there are Russians necessarily at that place. As Armenian population prevails or they are only ones in the villages, the names given by Dukhobors are used less and they are applied just as official names. Therefore, not only Akhali (New) Khulgumo but also use of Publican and Paravani is becoming more common.

There are minor changes in naming of the villages until now. It was Vladimirovskoy and now it turned into Vladimirovka. It was Спасская (according to Russian map and Spaskoe in Georgian), now it turned into Spasovka. The forms were generalized and all the names applied the suffix -к(а). Accordingly, we have the following Russian names in Javakheti iokonyms: Tambovka, Rodionovka, Orlovka, Epremovka and Bogdanovka

It also worth to note that Efremov, Vladimirov and Gorelov are not found as surnames in Ninotsminda.

Adding of suffix -к (а) to a determiner, when a determinant is lost is a usual for Russian language (Русская грамматика 1980, 171), though this process includes Turkish linguistic phenomenon as well in Javakheti. There are two Tavshantafa (the hill of a rabbit) in Akhalkalaki and in Gandzani and the parallel form for both is Tavshanka. Suffix is added because of loss of a determinant. These two toponyms do not represent the speech island, as Dukhobors do not live there.

The suffix is annexed to the verb stem and produces a toponymic name, **Kutanka** is the name of a mountain in Epremovka, while its Armenian form is Gutanka (this is how the Zhdanovakan residents call the same mountain). The original word is кутить (проводит время в кутежах) (Словарь Русского языка 1982, 138). The local residents call that way the picnic places in this mountain)

The name of the oat field is also formed by the suffix -к (а), Овсянка (field, Epremovka).

Former castle in Vladimirovka is called Матрешкина, but here -к(а) will not be a toposuffix, it is an appellative producer, the place name comes from resemblance with “matryoshka”.

Russian toponyms are used in Javakheti, though formation by -к(a) suffix is more characterized for the iokonyms but it is rare for microtoponyms.

Dukhobors follow their historical route with great love to God and strive for purity of soul. The Dukhobor philosophy is about healing of the soul and constant linkage with the Lord. All Dukhobors are proud that their homeland is Georgia, and the name of Dukhobors is very positively represented in the history of Georgia.

## Language Situation in Javakheti (Ninotsminda Municipality)

### *Javakheti and the Population of Javakheti*

Javakheti is an ancient, strong, fertile, southern borderline region of Georgia having an important political and economic role for the state.

In Zemo Kartli, i.e. Meskheti, Georgians with Georgian language and culture lived from the very beginning. Meskheti is a general name for the whole Zemo Kartli area. It includes Samtskhe, Javakheti, Tori, Kola-Artani, Shavsheti, Klarjeti, Erusheti, Achara, Imerkhevi, Tao, Speri, etc. accordingly, “Meskhi” is the collective name of the mentioned province residents (Lomsadze 2011, 280).

Geographically, Samtskhe-Javakheti was the part of the southwest Kartli bordering Rome and Greece from the west, Armenia and Iran from the southeast (Makalatia 1938, 8). Accordingly, the region has its crucial military and strategic function.

Javakheti is part of the ethnographic region of Georgia, Zemo Kartli i.e. Meskheti. Zemo Kartli (Meskheti) includes Tori, Samtskhe, Javakheti, Erusheti, Kola, Artaani, Shavsheti, Klarjeti, Achara, Imerkhevi, Ligani, Tao, Speri... (Topchishvili 2000, 3).

Samtskhe-Javakheti is a part of Georgia which in the historical past *played an important role in the political and cultural advancement of Georgia. It was a leading flag-holder of Georgia and it experienced many attacks and hardship. The tragedy of Samtskhe-Javakheti began in the 16th century, when, as a result of the harmful policies of the Ottoman Sultan, the region was torn away from its homeland - Georgia, its population was turned into Muslims, and led the region to its degradation* (Makalatia, 1938, 5).

According to Vakhushiti Batonishvili, *Javakheti, like Trialeti, is without vine, without fruit, without forests, where people burn manure bricks, but the land is mainly fertile and cultivated here. The climate is likewise, severe, with heavy snowy and freezing winters. There are lots of sheep, cattle and herd, many fish, birds, lots of honey. The men and women similar to the farmers of Kartli, are big size, beautiful and airy-fairy....* (Vakhushiti 1973, 672).

The border of Samtskhe-Javakheti started from “Panavari” and went along the ridge: the mount Tavkvetili, the Shavnabada, the Kodiani, the lake Tabisquri, the mount Sharvasheti (Vakhushiti 1973, 128). Javakheti included the villages located on the southern part of the Taparavani: Pokani, Makharovani, Gandzani and there were the villages Shaori, Parvana, etc. to the west side of the lake. The northern-east part of the Tavparavani Lake reached the border of the Kartli. Presumably, Kartli owned some part of it and the lake was divided in the middle, the same can be said about the northern part of the Tabitsquri Lake (Lomsadze 2011, 270).

The doctor of medical sciences of the XVIII century, a naturalist, the true member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Johann Anton Guldensstädt provides some information about Javakheti: *Javakheti, and not Gaka-*

*veti, is Georgian region, which is completely in the hands of Turks and it belongs to Akhaltsikhe Province. It includes 5 regional towns 1. Akhalkalaki, Turks call it "Akhalkalek", it is located on the river between the foothill of the Caucasus and Ararat Mountain. It includes big villages, Vachiani and Khulgumo (and not Khuturdo), as well as Gogia (not Gogua), which was an important castle which is destroyed now. 2. Gole and not Kola. 3. Ardahani (not Atrah). The settlement Tsqarostavi belongs to it. 3. Childiri, not Kherdil; There is the lake with the same name; the castle Nakalakevi of great importance also belongs to it. The river runs from the Ararat mountains, from south to north and on its tributary, which joins to the river running from Akhalkalaki and there is the fifth regional city, Khertvisi on the connecting place of the rivers. There are following village near Khertvisi: 1. Toloshi, 2. Kuketi, 3. Adzgvita, 4. Kuntsa, 5. Dadeshi, 6. Bnela, 7. Erkota, 8. Khizabavra, 9. Nishgora, 10. Saro, 11. Tseraqinta, 12. Shadrevanta, 13. Toki, 14. Varevani, 15. Khando, 16. Kotelia, 17. Chunchkha, 18. Murjikhani, 19. Prtena (Ptena), 20. Chunchkha, 21. Aljua, 22. Kvarsha, 23. Kilda, 24. Pia, 25. Zedatmogvi, 26. Gelsunda 27. Orkhopia 28. Tskheknela 29. Danieti 30. Shola 31. Vani 32. Davitasubani 33. Gunda 34. Shalosheti 35. Tolerta 36. Alandzia (Güldenstädt 1962, 215-217).*

The life of Georgia depended on well-being of *Javakheti very much* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 11). The region borders with the Trialeti-Kartli from the east, with Samtskhe from the north and the northwest, with Turkey from the southwest and west and with Armenia from the southeast.

According to the study of M. Beridze, there are only few villages settled by Javakhs. The situation was changed during the last centuries, when Javakheti was settled by different ethnicities, like Greeks, Armenians, Kurds and Russians. „In the village Khando, Akhalkalaki district, no Georgians live today. Though there is the list of the residents of the place at the end of the XVI century, in particular, in 1595. They were the son of Guliabazuka, his brother Kakaba, his brother Tevdore, his son Papa, his brother Bereka, his son Balia, his son Iakob, by the name Asita, Khareba, Matsatsa, his brother, his son Shakara, his son Khareba, His brother Iaza, Meraba, Badura the son of Mirza, Mamuka, Khukhuna his brother, Papuna, Khukhuna the son of Mate, Shio the son of Davita, Gela the son of Guba, Kitia his brother, Davita the sone of Ship, Gela the son of Guba, Kitia his brother, Indua the son of Gula, Vardzel, his brother”, and many others. The list includes only men, and the family heads, as only they are imposed to pay taxes and therefore only their names are referred during census. The list would be longer if it included the names of the women and children. The Ottomans surveyed the entire Meskheti. We know the names of men living in all 69 villages by that time. In 1595 only Georgian population lived in Javakheti (Beridze 2002, 12-13).

In 1800 Samtskhe-Javakheti was fully settled by Georgians. At the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup>, the population of Samtskhe-Javakheti was 37 thousand, of which more than 30 thousand were local, inhabitant Georgians and more than 6 thousands Turks were exiled to Turkey in 1828-1831 (Jaoshvili 1984, 77).



In 1880 mostly Georgians, Armenians and Tatars lived in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Sbornik Svedenii O Kavkaze 1885, 1-446). In total 22,499 Georgians and 49,590 Armenians lived in the region. Georgians prevail Armenians in the villages of Akhaltsikhe Mazra (17,300 Georgians and 3,749 Armenians). Yet there were more Armenians (3,532 Georgians and 29,919 Armenians) in the villages of Akhalkalaki Mazra, which is the subject of the study. It means that Armenians who escaped from Turkey and displaced to Akhalkalaki Mazra, were mainly settled in the villages, where Georgians lived before. This is attested by the *Gurjistanis Vilaietis Didi Davtari* (*The Great Registering Book of Gurjistan Vilayet*), according to which, the villages populated by Armenians at present were entirely inhabited by Georgians in the 16<sup>th</sup> century (Lortkipanidze 1994, 35-36).

According to the registering lists of households of 1886, in the villages of Akhalkalaki Mazra the number of Georgian population was increased, though the share of Armenian population was also significantly raised (The number of population – 59,496, Georgians – 9,771, Armenians – 42, 301).

The first and nation-wide census of 1897 carried out by Russian Empire showed that the number of Georgian population of Javakheti in Georgia was significantly decreased. The total number of the population in Akhalkalaki Mazra was 72,709, including 6,451 Georgians, 52,539 Armenians, 6,572 Tatars and 296 Turks (Lortkipanidze 1994, 38-39). In 1897-1902 55 000 Armenians came to Georgia, who mainly settled in Samtskhe-Javakheti (Lortkipanidze 1994, 40). This settlement changed the demographic situation of the region totally.

There were 11,391 (12,2%) Georgians, 68,592 (73, 4%) Armenians, 3,619 (3,9%) Tatars, 2,438 (2,6) Turks, 542 (0,6%) Kurds, 6,859 (7,3%) other nationalities in 1917 in Javakheti (Lortkipanidze 1994, 56).

According to the census in 1926 in Javakheti the number of Georgian population is decreasing again and they comprise 7,565 (9,6%) persons, there are 57, 791 (73,2%) Armenians, 6,940 (8,8%) Turks, 2,492 (3,1%) Russians, 2,679 (3,4%) Ukrainians and 1,470 (1,9%) others (Lortkipanidze 1994, 58).

During the census of 1939 there were two districts, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda in Javakheti, where the situation is poor in terms of the number of Georgian population, in particular, there are 93 (3,3%) Georgians, 27,376 (79,2%) Armenians, 1,009 (2,9%) Azerbaijanians, 5,862 (17,0%) Russians, and 77 (0,2%) Kurds (Lortkipanidze 1954, 60).

**The majority of the population registered as Turks were Georgians by origin and their identification as Turks happened on their language and religion basis.**

In 1944 the forced-migration of Georgian population from Samtskhe-Javakheti to Central Asia reduced the number of Georgians significantly and worsened the situation.

*In 1944 around 90 thousand people were exiled from Samtskhe-Javakheti* (Lortkipanidze 1993, 20).

In 1959, in Javakheti, the number of Armenian population achieved 88.7%, while Georgians were 3.8% and Russians reached 6.6%. Majority of Russians, 4,616 people lived in Ninotsminda district.

In 1959 in Ninotsminda, there were only 50 Georgians (Lortkipanidze 1993, 21).

For 1970, the number of Georgians was increased in Samtskhe, while Armenians became more only in Javakheti.

In 1989, there were 205 Georgians in Ninotsminda; there were 378 people relocated from Achara to Ninotsminda in 1991. During that period there were already 3,784 Georgians in Javakheti (Lortkipanidze 1993, 22).

The name *Javakhi* is linked with the ancient Georgian tribe – *Taokhi* (Ingorokva 1954). Taokhians were the main population of Diaokhi (Tao) residing in the North part of current Turkey and the South Georgia, including Javakheti region. The transitional form between the *Taokhi* and *Javakhi* should be *Chaokhi* (ჭაობ) (Berdznishvili 1975).

*The Life of Grigol Khandzteli* by Giorgi Merchuli gives comprehensive information about **Javakheti**. An important council for the country with the participation of both secular and higher religious hierarchs, where the issue of electing of Arsen as Catholicos should be resolved, is held in Javakheti: *That time the ruler Gvaram Mampal the Great was was angry on Mirean and called for the council of Bishops and the fathers of the desert; and all of them came together in Javakheti* (Giorgi Merchuli 1987, 585).

One of the episodes of Javakheti Council is starting by the following phrase: *The bishops of Kartli felt quite offended from Mirean, the father of Arsen, because he made Arsen as catholicos without their consent and through the force of laymen of Samtskhe...* (Giorgi Merchuli 1987, 585).

The special importance of Javakheti influenced solution of many problems of Kartli. Javakheti was an economic backbone of Georgia and it is verified by the folk poetry:

(მე ჯავახეთს რა მიჭირდა,  
მთვარე იდგა მზესავითა,  
ხორბალი და ქერის პური  
წინ მეყარა ბზესავითა  
(ხალხური).

*I was fine in Javakheti, the  
moon shined like the sun,  
I had wheat and barley like  
the chaff (folk)*

მე ჯავახეთში ნავალი, ქალი  
მინახავს მრავალი,

I have seen many women being in Ja-  
vakheti

ტანთჩაცმულ  
თავდახურული, მოვის  
პერანგით ნავალი

well-dressed, wearing silk cloths

(Makalatia 1938, 122).

According to the current administrative structure, Javakheti covers the territories of Akhalkalaki, Ninotsminda and partially Aspindza and Borjomi municipalities. Any research related to Javakheti is of state importance.

Ninotsminda was the part of Akhalkalaki Mazra in Tiplisi Guberniya until 1917. In 1917-1930 it belonged to Akhalkalaki Mazra and since 1930 it had been separated under the name Gorelovka district. In 1933 it was called as Bogdanovka district (the Toponym Bogdanovka was verified by the document of 1942 found in the archive: In 1842 in the settling area of Bogdanovka, in Akhalkalaki district there were 13 households of Dukhobors (Vasilenkovs, Gremyakins, Grichins, Makhonins, Lukyanovs, Biryukovs, Barabanovs, Galushchevs, (is not well-readable), Shlyakovs, Zhelyaevs). In total 67 Dukhobors lived in the village Bogdanovka (Fund 254, record 1, case 1946, pages 68, 69, 70, 71). It is called Ninotsminda district since 1991 and Ninotsminda municipality since 2006.

### *Javakheti in the Epigraphic Monuments*

The epigraphic monuments are very important for description of the language situation. The materials of South Georgia are of special importance, as we attest the dated inscriptions here.

The epigraphic inscriptions provide the obvious picture of communication language, language development tendencies, language contacts and vocabulary of the ethnic groups, settling on this territory.

The inscriptions in Javakheti are found into four languages, Georgian, Greek, Armenian and Ottoman.

During the epigraphic expedition of 1978-1980 by the Institute of Manuscripts in the south Georgia, including Aspindza, Ninotsminda (Bogdanovka), Akhaltsikhe and Adigeni districts, as well as during working in Akhalkalaki district in 1977 300 manuscripts were collected and studied (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti , 257). The expedition worked in Ninotsminda itself in 1979 (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 257).

The inscriptions discovered, confirmed and studied in Ninotsminda cover the period from the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries to the 17<sup>th</sup> -18<sup>th</sup> centuries and most of them are lapidary style. The inscriptions are cited fully, as they are one of the most complete and informative sources about the unit of Georgian state, Georgian kings, nobles, settled ethnos, material and spiritual cultures, Georgian anthroponomy and language situation.

The Ninotsminda inscriptions preserved the oldest vocabulary of Georgian language created by different classes of the people inhabited here since ancient times.

The inscriptions of 10<sup>th</sup> century on the images of ktitors of the reliefs in the village Orjalari, Ninotsminda municipality: *Dardagan, the beast, angel, Dlk, Simon* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 97).

The 10<sup>th</sup> century inscription of Mkhetsi, in the village Orjalari, Ninotsminda municipality: *† Christ show mercy on Mkhetsi* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 98).

The Georgaisdze's inscription of the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the middle church, the village Saghamo, Ninotsminda municipality: *Christ, have mercy on your servant Georgaisdze and his parents* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 108-109).

The fragment of the inscription of the second half of the 10<sup>th</sup> century in the middle church, village Saghamo, Ninotsminda municipality: *Christ your servant: Christ, your servant...* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 109).

The fragment of the 10<sup>th</sup> century inscription in the middle church, village Saghamo, Ninotsminda municipality: *† Tsemai Barnab [...]* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 109).

The inscription of Kvirike of the X-XI centuries, in the middle church, village Saghamo, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ have mercy on Kvirike* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 110).

The inscription of the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries in the upper church, village Paravani, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ have mercy on Pavle* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 112).

The fragment of the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries' inscription in the upper church, on the head of pillar, village Paravani, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ have mercy* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 112).

The construction inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century of Parsman Eristavi Eristavi in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *May the God glorify Parsman Eristavt Eristavi, this church was built to glorify them and to pray for their parents* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 99).

The inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century of Bagrat Kouropalates in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, Praise Bagrat Kouropalates* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 117).

The Bavreli inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *† By the name of God, I, Bavreli, had the honor to laid the foundation for building this holy church; I was the artisan of Ioane Okropiri, the Catholicos of Kartli* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 118).

The inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century of Catholicos Iovane-Okropiri in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, the son and the world of the God, praise Iovane Okropiri, the Catholicos of Kartli, in both worlds, Amen* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 119).

The inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century of Momtsulisdze in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ have mercy on Momtsulisdze* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 119).

The inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century of Khelais in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Khelai* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 120).

The inscription of Baia of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Baia* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 121).

The inscription of Mtsevari of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Mtsevari* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 121).

The inscription of Gabriel and Elisabed of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in the village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ have mercy on Gabriel and Elisabed* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 121).

The inscription of Bagrat the king of Apkhazians and Giorgi Kouropal-

ates of the 11<sup>th</sup> century in village Ghulalisi (Kulalisi, Qulalisi) Ninotsminda Municipality: *Jesus Christ, praise Bagrat, the king of Apkhazians and Georgians Sevastos and their son Giorgi Kouropalates, help them, give them sight, be kind to Wipatos, the son of Tod, I built the church to make them stronger, on choronicon* (Byzantine 532-year cycle) *SP* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 126).

The inscription of the King Giorgi of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the village Qaurma (Tontio), Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, praise the king Giorgi and his sons* (Silogava, Akhaladze 2012, 127).

The inscription of Melkisedek Catholicos of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, in the village Qaurma (Tontio), Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, praise Melkisedek the Catholicos of Kartli and help him that day, Amen* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 128).

The inscription of the XI century of Okropir Catholicos in the village Qaurma (Tontio), Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, praise Okropir Catholicos of Kartli* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 128).

The inscription of the 11<sup>th</sup> century by Iovane and his sons in the village Kaurma (Tonthio) Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Iovane and his sons that day, Amen* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 129).

The inscription of the 10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> centuries by Iuna in the village Eshtia, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ have mercy on Iuna* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 44-45).

The fragment of the inscription of 2<sup>nd</sup> church of the 11<sup>th</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> centuries in village Poka, Ninotsminda Municipality: *[.....]'s soul was forgiven by God* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 44-45).

The inscription of Datvia of 12<sup>th</sup> century cut on the stony cross in the village Paravani, Ninotsminda Municipality: *The sons of God, Christians, let's pray for poor Datvia* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 113).

The inscription dated by 1247-1270, the hand of David the king of kings in the village Saghamo, Ninotsminda Municipality: *† God, glorify and make the king of kings Davit, the owner of all the east and west, strong* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 108).

The inscription of Jeremiah of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Ieremia* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 100).

The inscription of Kharaisdze of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Kharaisdze* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 100).

The inscription of 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries by Giorga in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Giorgi* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 101).

The inscription of Beshken's servant of 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Chogai, the servant of Beshken* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 101).

The inscription of the Iovane of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Iovane* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 101).



Two inscriptions of Tskhoreba of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Tskhorebai* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 102).

The inscription of Giorgi of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Giorgi* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 102).

The eastern wall inscription of Satkhe church: *Christ, have mercy on Iremai. Christ, have mercy on Kharadze* (Tsiskarishvili 1959, 37).

The agape inscription of Giorgi Shazelisdze of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries in the village Satkhe, Ninotsminda Municipality: *† Have mercy on Giorgi Shazelisdze and his sons... Amen* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 103).

The inscription dated by 1247-1270 – the Hand of King of Kings Davit in the village Saghamo, Ninotsminda Municipality: *† Lord, glorify and make powerful the King of Kings Davit, the ruler of the entire east and the west* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 108)...

The inscription of 13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> century to Lord, St. Iovane'church in the village Gandza, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Do not have mercy on* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 42).

The inscription by Shalva, a treasurer (1334-1346), Upper church in the village Gandza, Ninotsminda Municipality: *† Christ, glorify Shalva, a treasurer, powerful and invincible from enemies, as on the earth as well as in heaven, who made the whole Persia worry by the force of God and by his own arm* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 40).

The inscription of Kaba and the Nikoladzes (1334-1346), Upper church, in the village Gandza, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Lord Christ, glorify Shalva together with his son, brother and all living persons of their family in both lives, we, Keba and the Nikoladzes built this holy church* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 41).

The construction inscription of the Nikoladzes (1334-1346), Lower church, in the village Gandza, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Lord Christ, glorify Shalva, chancellor at the court of King together with his son and brother in the both lives, as we, the Nikoladzes built the second holy church, God, make the church of Virgin Mary help Manglapa, the servant of Shalva* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 41).

The inscription of king Giorgi (1334-1346), Lower church, village Gandza, Ninotsminda Municipality: *† The Mother of Savior, save the King Giorgi, his army and kingdom* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 42).

The Asomtavruli (Capital) inscription is confirmed in the village Jigrasheni, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on the builders* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 139).

The inscription with addressing to St. Stepane in the village Eshtia, Ninotsminda Municipality: *St. Stepane, have mercy on my soul* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 44). Dating of the inscription is not possible.

The fragment of the inscription on the eastern wall in the I church, in the village Toria, Ninotsminda Municipality: *Christ, have mercy on Khl-maki* (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 63).

There is the trace of the Asomtavruli (Capital) inscription in the II



church, in the village Toria, Ninotsminda Municipality (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 63).

The materials of the inscriptions present the language state in the specific epoch; in particular, it shows that:

1. Ninotsminda is the territory, land of Georgians, where information is preserved and transferred in Georgian language by epigraphic monuments;

2. In the 10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries, in Ninotsminda, the family names are given according to Georgian pattern, particularly, by Georgian suffix: **გობგაისძე, მომტსულისძე, ხარაისძე, შაზელისძე, and ნიკოლასძე...**

3. Georgian Anthroponyms are confirmed here: **Datviai, Khelai, Mtsevari, Kvirike, Iremai, Tskhoreba, Beshken..**

4. It includes the naming, glorifying of **Bagrat, the King of Apkhazians and Georgians, King Giorgi, King Davit, the Eristavt Eristavi Parsman** and their supplication to God because of construction activities in Javakheti;

5. Toponyms **Kartli**, which included Javakheti as its part;

6. Georgian names of state officials: **Mechurchletukhutsesi (treasures), Mandartukhutsesi (chancellor at the court of king)...**

7. The lexis from ancient Georgian vocabulary: **mshobeli (parent), deda (mother), dzma (brother), shvili (child), suli (soul), tavi/tualni (head/eyes) (Tavi (head) - according to E. Takaishvili's Interpretation of Qulalisi inscription (MAK 1909, 26), tualni (eyes) - according to the interpretation issued by V. Silogava and Akhaladze (Epigraphic Corpus of Javakheti 2012, 126), sapudzveli (foundation), mklavi (arm), sopeli (village), zedashe (fine wine), samlotsvelo (church), tsotskhali (alive), satsqali (poor), tsmidai (saint), dashureba (willing), shetsqaleba (mercy), kmna (doing), damqareba (establish), shedzrtsuneba (terrify), datkboba (enjoy), ageba (built), gadzliereba (strengthen) ... Naming of Catholicoses of Kartli, Melkisedek and Ioane, the fact of construction of the church by Kartli Catholicos in the Qaurma inscriptions, indicates that the church belonged to the Mtskheta church (Tsiskarishvili 1959, 31). The same is true for Poka inscriptions, where constructing of Poka church by the catholicos of Kartli, indicates that this land was the domain of the Mtskheta Church (Tsiskarishvili 1959, 33).**

The information proceed in the inscriptions proves the being of the part of the state, which is the domain, which language is the communication means of the state, church and different social groups. **However, most of the inscriptions are totally disappeared, or painted, or the stones with the ancient Georgian inscriptions are used for building of Armenian churches or reconstructing Armenian churches; currently, the most of the inscriptions are disappearing quite quickly.**

The information preserved by the inscriptions represents Georgian ethno-linguistic image of Ninotsminda according to the historical persons, as well as by Georgian vocabulary and it is the reliable source for description of the history of Javakheti, Georgian state, church history and language situation even after centuries.

### *Javakheti According to Ecclesiastical Writings*

The ecclesiastical writings are rich for description the language situation in Samtskhe-Javakheti, that was varying according to the political situation for centuries, but it kept moving.

In the 8<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries, Meskheti became the center for unification of Georgia. The movement of hermits by leadership of the great spiritual figure, Grigol Khandzteli was followed by the great construction of monasteries and development of the ecclesiastical literature. Georgian language became a basis for all the mentioned activities and development of ecclesiastical literature: *There are many parts in Kartli (i.e. Georgia), where the service and praying takes place in Georgian* (Giorgi Merchuli 1987, 591). The language was announced as the cornerstone for the Georgian state, from where the process of unification of Georgia had started.

The *Life of Serapion Zarzmeli* by Basil Zarzmeli is the important source for studying the language situation, describing the life, miracles of Serapion Zarzmeli and the story of establishment of Zarzma Monastery in Samtskhe. The story tells how Serapion and Iovane reached “the places of Samtskhe” (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 643). The toponyms applied in the story reflect the language situation of the surroundings of Samtskhe that was completely shared by Javakheti of that time. Basil Zarzmeli, the worker of 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries gives the information about those toponyms, which were constantly produced by Georgians living in the region for centuries.

The ancient Georgian vocabulary is preserved and structured in the toponyms that can be divided by their structure:

1. Simple toponyms: **Chorchani, Zanavi, Zarzma, Opiza, Atsquri, Goderdzi, Arsiani, Satakhve, Sadzmo, Umstai, Qvelis Khevi, Bakta, Bobkha, Dzindze...**

2. The composite toponyms: **Berasjvar, Ioanetsminda, Sheshistav, Tsiskvil-Sakhlta, Shuartgeli...**

... *They were going without any trouble until they reached the mountains with a peak to the sky. They stayed at that place and called it **Berasjvar*** (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 644).

*This man visited many churches and places, whose first name was Giorgi and the second name was Chorchaneli, whose churches were in **Chorchani** and **Zanavi** places* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 646).

*They had no desire to build and develop the great and high desert at that place of **Zanavi**, what should be done?* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 651).

*There was a mill, house in the middle to collect water, called **Sadzmo** and there were bad, evil people there ...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 652).

... *We reached the deep ravine, called **Goderdzi**...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 653).

... *It is the place of wild animals called **Bakta*** (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 654).

*and other animals...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 654); ... *We asked that man to travel with us until the **lake Satakhve**...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 658).

*The mountain is higher than all these ridges, which is called Tavi **Sheshatai**, as there are many trees here, it is called **Sheshistav*** (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 655).

... When we reached the place, called **Babgen**, we saw the little valley

called **Bobkha** (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 655).

*...The place, named **Tsiskvil-Sakhltai**, was washed-away and invisible* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 659).

*The man, who escaped from the place, called **Dzindze** ...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 660).

*Since that, the place was called **Zarzma** from the people of the area, as it caused the horror and fear* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 660).

*The name of the place is **Umtsai**, which is remoted by twelve millions* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 663).

*We talk about Giorgi, the bishop of Atsquri; Giorgi was from the valley of **Shuartqeli**, with noble parents and grown in the famous desert of **Opiza*** (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 663).

*... When they crossed the mountain, called **Arsiani**, they reached the valley of **Qveli**...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 668).

*...**Ioanetsmida** is called to that place* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 669).

Proper names: *There was the man who visited many churches and places, whose first name was Giorgi and the second name was Chorchaneli, whose churches were in Chorchani and Zanavi places* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 646).

**Kurdia** (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 669); **Sula, Beshken** and **Laklaki, Latavris, Tekla** (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 670).

*...God blessed the High Priest, **Giorgi Shuartqleli**, who hold the cathedral of **Atsquri**...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 671).

*The Blessed Father Serapion was with Giorgi **Matsqvereli**...* (Basil Zarzmeli 1987, 671).

Declaring the Georgian language as the basis of statehood, provided the advancement of literature and producing the masterpieces of ecclesiastical writing: The Gospel of Hadishi (897), the Gospel of Jruchi (1036), the Gospel of Tbeti (955), the Collection of Shatberdi (973), *Samotkhe* or *Limonari* by Ioane Moskhi (977), The *Life* of John Chrysostom copied by Ioane Chiraki (977), The Oshki Bible (978), Giorgi Merchuli's *Life of Grigol Khandzeli* (10<sup>th</sup> century)...

The Tao-Klarjeti special literary school was established here, which was developed on the national ground, which developed its own grammar, language, style and direction. *Creative energy of Georgians was grown to that extent in those monasteries that it went out of Tao-Klarjeti, overcame its borders and reached different destinations in the Minor Asia and then to Athos peninsula, where a new center of our literature was created in the form of Monastery of Iviron. Initially the Mount Athos Monastery of Iviron and literary community was one of the branches for the huge church tree of Tao-Klarjeti* (Kekelidze 1937, 100-101).

Economic and cultural strength of Samtskhe-Javakheti in the 10<sup>th</sup> century made the region the center of Georgian education, where only Georgian was spoken.

Shota Rustaveli the author of masterpiece (*The Knight in Panther's Skin*) of Renaissance period was from Meskheti (12<sup>th</sup> century).

### *Language Situation in the 16<sup>th</sup>- 18<sup>th</sup> centuries*

Since the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries, Samtskhe-Saatabago became the place of fighting of Ottoman state and Iran and in 1578 the Ottomans conquered it. It was followed by spreading of Islam and Ottoman language.

Despite of this difficult situation, before occupation by the Russian Empire the official language of Samtskhe-Javakheti (in Akhaltsikhe Pashate as it called that time); Akhaltsikhe Pashas and Beys conducted their clerical work in Georgian language in the offices. Georgian was the only native language for local population. While discussing the language situation of Javakheti, the words of Vakhushti Batonishvili confirms the above-mentioned: *All the peasants are Christians; they have no shepherd bishop, but priests who are Georgians. Their language is Georgian and their heads knew Tatarian (i.e. Ottoman language) for Ottomans in the case of necessity* (Vakushti 1973, 672).

It is important to highlight that they have Georgian priests, as Georgian was the language of service in churches, despite many controversies, and people listened to prayers and services in Georgian, and Beys, governors spoke in Georgian and they knew “Tatarian”, i.e. Ottoman language just in case of need.

Russian Tsarist policy was able to achieve what Ottomans could not during several centuries of their rule in Samtskhe-Javakheti. Russia tried it by making region diversified in terms of ethnic, religious and language in Samtskhe-Javakheti. Firstly, it established Akhaltsikhe and Akhalkalaki Mazras, Artaani, Kars and Artvini districts, made Muslim Georgian population marginalized and provided the conditions for being ignorant of Georgian language, which would be followed by change and absence of the nationalconsciousness. During travelling to Georgia Evlia Chelebi calls Samtskhe-Javakheti as a part of “Shavsheti of Georgia”, the language of local Georgians “the language of Shavsheti Georgians” and the people “the people of Shavsheti of Georgia” (Chelebi 1971, 297).

There were 13 dioceses only in Samtskhe-Saatabago... Meskheti was densely settled and the country with many people in the middle centuries... a fair number of parishes caused increase in number of the dioceses... Establishment of the Georgian dioceses in the adjacent provinces of Meskheti (Ani, Kars, Valashkert, and Erzurum) was the result of the active politics of Georgia that time. Sometimes it happened on the contrary; Georgian borderline provinces (Imier Tao, etc.) were under the influence of other (Armenian-Greek) spiritual leader (Lomsadze 2011, 283). This factor influenced Georgian language and the indigenous Georgian population of Meskheti by difficult Georgian-Armenian, Georgian-Greek and Georgian-Turkish relations.

According to Shota Lomsadze, study of archive documents proved that Georgian language and even Christianity was mostly preserved in those villages of Akhaltsikhe Pashate which were domains of Pasha and enjoyed a kind of immunity. Regarding this, the borderline villages, that served Kalaibeg, had a privilege and were obliged to serve only castles in the form of Esar and Azab. Such villages had the tax immunity (Lomsadze 2011, 299).

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century mullahs

were completing the work had been started before, they finally converted people to Islam and in the wide-spread Madrassas regularly and intensively taught Turkish language to the young people (Lomsadze 2011, 309).

Despite that fact, in the 30s of 19<sup>th</sup> century the travelers used to write that local population had Georgian appearance, traditions and lifestyle. They had Georgian family names, used to pray in Georgian language in the churches, protect icons, cross, celebrate the Easter, color eggs into red again, sing Georgian songs, and were distinguished with hospitality... (Evetskii 1828; Kavkaz 1868; Zagurskii 1872; Ivanova 1888). Dubois de Montperreux noticed that Georgians lived in Samtskhe-Javakheti, they were Muslims but spoke Georgian well, and almost everybody in Akhatsikhe was literate of Georgian, though they understood Turkish. This is how he describes the language situation in the villages Ghobieti and Akhasheni, populated by Georgians turned into Muslims here, but they spoke only Georgian (Dubois, 288-289, 299-300). The publications of that period (The newspaper Kavkaz 1868, 1869) also mentioned that the inhabitants of Samtskhe-Javakheti speak Georgian and their Ottoman language was distorted.

The period of conversion of Samtskhe-Javakheti population to Islam was very long which should make the strong foundation for dissemination of Turkish language. *There are many cases when one part of the family names was Christian and another Muslim. Many Muslim Georgians were moved from Javakheti to Turkey after joining Russian Empire... Georgian language remained a native language, mother-tongue for majority of Muslim Georgians* (Topchishvili 2000, 59).

Many Turkish words and terms penetrated in Georgian spoken in Meskheti. It took centuries to fight against it. The Georgian language was trying to be survived. Georgians of Meskheti, who turned into Muslims, were forced to link their nationality with their religion, as they used to called "Tatars" and "Turks" in all the official documents. Their Georgian nationality was preserved just with Georgian language and traditions.

For that period two hundred and fifty-years of Turkish domain destroyed Georgian culture, though it could not eliminate Georgian language, the population became poor. *The language, sacred for Georgians, their laws and traditions, the culture and belief of ancestors were persecuted brutally and in inhuman way. They spread Turkish language and Islam by fire and sword. Disobedient population was massively force-migrated from their inherited lands* (Janashia, Berdzenishvili 1945).

The materials found in the archive by us prove the mentioned. The data from cameral census of 1842 shows the hardship of Georgians who turned into Muslim, to prove their Georgian origin. Ignorance of Georgian writing and reading and illiteracy were beneficial for Ottoman Empire and due to this, Georgian Muslims hardly tried to find the literate person in the village who could write their names with Georgian letters and list the reasons of this tragic situation.

We, inhabitants of Ude, Ovantan Merabovi with the witness are signing this document with support of the head of the village and with a finger of Osei Aghsaqali Salei. As they do not know writing, we sign by handclasp



at Gikor Khutsi (Fund 254, record 1, case 1945, p. 420; Cameral Census of State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Uezd, Abastumani Uchastok, 1842).

The inhabitant of Vale, the head of the village Kitesa (supposedly, it is illegible) Bebnadze, as they do not know writing, I, Gabriel Khmaladze, sign the document based on their request, the witness Khitro (supposedly, it is illegible) Petreshvili, Guli Mamaloshvili (Fund 254, record 1, case 1945, p. 499; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Mullah Mustapa from Skhvilisi does not know writing and I am signing based on his request, Toma Iasilovi (Fund 254, record 1, case 1669, p. 9; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Arali Asaqali Niko Stapanashvili, as he did not know writing, based on his request and shaking a hand, I am signing (Q. Tavazovi – presumably, illegible) (Fund 254, record 1, case 1669, p. 29; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Iovanjan Merabashvili, as he does not know to writing, based on his request, Toma Iasilov (Fund 254, record 1, case 1669, p. 48; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Akhsakhali Galust Tupanosi from Tamala (*It is not clear whether it is e or u*), witness Khav Ovanesov, based on their request, as they do not know letter, I am signing Onas Eremovi (Fund 254, record 1, case 1945, p. 38; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Qvaltakhevi (*Koltakhevi - I.Gh.*) Akhsakhale Asan Mirzos's son **Mullah** (? - *I.Gh.*) Mamad Asanashvili, as they do not know writing, I Simon Kharscharov (? *I.Gh.*) **Am signing** (Fund 254, record 1, case 1945, p. 92; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Akhsakhali Mustafa, Alia's son, from Aspindza, the witness Bakhala's son Iseinai Chakhali Alisi, Bakhala's son, as they do not know the letter, I am signing for them, Onas Eremovi (Fund 254, record 1, case 1945, p. 96; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Akhsakhali Useinai Ibrama's son from Idumala, Pechitni **Iniqa** (*illegible*), Mamada Ispira's son Mutoi (*illegible*), Ghanja's son, as they do not know writing I am signing for them, Onas Eremovi (Fund 254, record 1, case 1945, p. 98; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

Akhsakhali Qaraosmanai Selima's son from Kvesha Oshora, the witness Usein Tiso (*illegible*), Mahmada Osmana's son, as he did not know writing, I am signing for them, Onas Eremovi (Fund 254, record 1, case 1945, p. 109; Cameral Census of the State Peasants of Akhaltsikhe Yezd, Abastumani district, 1842).

An absolute majority of Javakheti population was Georgians and it is proved by anthroponyms, which are based on the ancient Georgian roots. Majority of the nicknames are produced by the suffix – **ა**; *Aghdgomel, Bero, Vardzel, Lomkatsi, Sikharuli, Chitia, Makharia, Vepkhia, Akhala,*



*Khatia, Gogicha, Datuna, Irema, Kakala, Kakaba, Kvirika, Lashkara, Mamisa, Matskhona, Tqemala, Khokhoba, Khareba, Tsiskara, Tsamala, Khizana...* (Topchishvili 2000, 8-9).

### *Language Situation in the 19<sup>th</sup> -20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

The condition of Javakheti worsened after entrance of Russia here: “Entrance of Russia in 1828 was followed by exile of Georgian inhabitants from here, more from Javakheti (current Akhalkalaki Mazra) and less from Samtskhe (Akhaltzikhe Mazra). When Russians took Akhaltzikhe, Georgian nobles came to the head of the Caucasus, and presented the deeds of grant from Georgian Kings, which proved their ownership right in Samtskhe-Javakheti and asked for recovery of their rights based on those documents. However, Paskevich did not consider their request, moreover, he was upset. At the same time, Armenians were running from Ottoman Turkey, from Kars and Erzurum Pashates, seeking shelter in Georgia... The special settlement committee was established, and around 30,000 Armenians were settled in Akhaltzikhe and especially, in Akhalkalaki Mazra (Javakhishvili 1919, 35). This is how the history of settlement of Armenians started on Georgian land of Javakheti.

**Until 1830 there were no densely settlements of Armenians in Javakheti confirmed in any source, accordingly, toponyms are Georgian.** Until 1830 in Javakheti Armenians lived only in Gokia and Baraleti (Lomsadze 2011, 289), which is proved by the scissors and measurers carved on the tombs of Armenian merchants (ibid., 289).

Thus, not only the forms artificially removed suffix – “i” of nominative case, which are artificially spread today, but also the Armenian toponyms can only be found in Javakheti since that period.

The Georgian names of places changed in Armenian could be appeared since that period within the area of our study, in Ninotsminda (Bogdanovka, which was the name of that time).

In 1828, Akhaltzikhe Pashate was taken and exiling process of local Georgian population from their residential places started. Armenians were moved on their places from Northeast Turkey, Kars, Erzurum and Bayazet vilayets.

In 1830, the group of Greeks settled in Tsalka and Akhalkalaki.

In 1841-1845, the Tsarist Russia relocated Russian sectarians, Dukhobors, who were settled mainly around the lake Paravani (Beridze 2008, 13). Dukhobors were settled on the dwellings of Georgians and applied their own toponyms.

Dukhobors from Tambov Province called their village *Tambovka* (Beridze 1992, 113).

The toponym *Russian Road* describes the situation of that time (Beridze 2008, 50). *Russian Road* crosses Javakheti and it keeps the history of those wars which experienced by Paskevich for joining this province.

The language situation is changing together with the political situation, proved by the history of Javakheti. The existed political situation led to intensive movement of Armenians and their settlement in Javakheti, following the spread of Armenian language.

The names of places are spread in Armenian in the territory, where Armenians are settled. It includes the whole *Ninotsminda district except the villages of Dukhobors* (Beridze 2008, 286-287).

Armenians preserved the Georgian names of the villages of Javakheti, what is very important for the region history.

Armenian names are quite productive in microtoponymy and the changes are dated back to about hundred and fifty years, while macrotoponymy, the names of villages, as mentioned above was remained Georgian.

According to M. Beridze, settlement of Armenians in Meskheta took place not slowly, but **administratively**. After taking of Akhaltsikhe Pashate Tsarist Russia emptied especially highland of Javakheti from the inhabitant population in 1828-1830. Exiled Georgians took the names of places with them, which were not seen by resettled Armenians in order to introduce with local microtoponyms. However, macrotoponymy was left unchanged with support of administration. Respective documents were developed, where the names of villages were registered unchanged and adopted by the newly arrived Armenians (Beridze 2008, 288).

*Language Situation in accordance to the Constitution of Democratic Republic of Georgia of February 21, 1921*

The Chapter XIV of the Constitution of February 21, 1921 - *The Rights of Ethnic Minorities* refers to the broader rights of the minorities highlighting the language as a key issue. Chapter XIV of the Constitution of February 21, 1921 includes 5 articles out of 9 dealing with the language:

Article 129

No obstacle shall be brought to the free social, economic, and cultural development of the ethnic minorities of Georgia, *especially to the teaching in their native language* and the interior management of their own natural and cultural affairs. *Everybody shall have the right to write, publish, and speak in his/her native language.*

Article 130

*Entry the national union depends on the speaking language.*

Article 135

*Schools of national minority education shall be administered in the native language of the national minorities.*

Article 136

*In the territory of the local self-government, bodies where the proportion of the national minority exceeds 20 per cent of the whole population proceedings in state and public institutions shall be held in the state language together with the native language of the said minority if the minority desires it.*

Article 137

*Any deputy of non-Georgian origin not knowing the state language sufficiently enough to express his opinions may use his native language in Parliament on condition that he has previously submitted to The Presidium of Parliament an exact translation of his speech.*

*Law (Constitution of Georgia 1921, 36-37) shall regulate the application of this article.*

According to this law, similar to other regions of Georgia settled by different ethnic minorities during different times, the wide-range of rights were given to different ethnic groups residing in Javakheti, which was followed by **the ultimate restriction of the state language**.

In Georgia, during the Soviet period it was possible to get an education on a native language, in addition, the right of “the minorities residing in the republic” to get education on their native language was regulated by all the Constitutions of our country (Markozia 2015, p. 86).

**Accordingly, for 80s of 20<sup>th</sup> century the education in the schools of the republic was delivered into eight languages, including Georgian, Russian, Apkhazian, Ossetian, Armenian, Azerbaijanian, Estonian and Greek. This was confirmed by language diversity schools in the country. Such intended diversity encouraged careless and irrespective treatment of different ethnic groups to the state language, the results of which are so visible, including in Javakheti.**

#### *Transformed Toponyms, of Javakheti*

The toponyms, that preserved the economic strength and lifestyle of Javakheti, are Georgian, for instance: *Napurali, Naselari, Natsertsvali, Nadikvari, Nakalvari, Naospari, Shapkha (Shavpkha)*. Javakheti preserved *Sabaduri* as the name of the forest, hill, arable land and shrubbery (Beridze 2008, 49).

The toponymy of Javakheti are also preserved by the names of villages and lakes of Javakheti, as the names of the lakes are used as the names of the villages, like *the village Paravani the lake Paravani... the village Tabatsquri the lake Tabatsquri ... the village Saghamo and the lake Saghamo... the village Duma and the lake Duma* (Jikia 1958, 341).

Currently, the villages of Ninotsminda are mainly populated by Armenians. The Russian toponyms named by Dukhobors are still applied by the administration, including *Tambovka, Rodionovka, Vladimirovka, Spasovka, Gorelovka, and Orlovka* as well as the name *Zhdanov*, the heavy legacy of the past and the trial of ethnic Armenians, to turn Georgian toponyms into Armenian is added to the mentioned. Despite thirty years of independence of Georgia, the problem of naming is still unsolved.

The long-term attempt to establish *Javakheti* in the form of “Javakhk”, in speech, as well as on the posters, buildings requires attention.

*Bogdanovka* - former **Khojabegi** (Chikovani 1982, 16).

*Rodionovka* – it was called as **Paravani** before by Georgians (Chikovani 1982, 16).

*Qaurma* - called as **Gormake** before by Georgians (Chikovani 1982, 7).

*Khanchali* - called as **Khancheri** (Chikovani 1982, 10).

*Gorelovka* – called as **Bughdasheni** before (Chikovani 1982, 18).

*Vladimirovka* – called as **Makharovani** (the same as **Makharo**) before (Chikovani 1982, 18).

*Vladimirovka* became the name of **Publican**; more specifically, the village was built at the ruins of previous village closer to the lake Paravani. Now Russians do not live in Vladimirovka any more, Armenians moved

from Eshtia and Poka replaced them (Beridze 1992, 116).

Dukhobors named valleys by Russian names: *Sukhoe Rech*, *Matrioshki Balka*, *Venitski Balka*, etc. (Beridze 1992, 116).

*Tambovka* – Its name was **Chachka** before (Chikovani 1982, 18).

*Orlovka* – Its name was **Akhma** before (Chikovani 1982, 18).

*Diliti* - Armenians distorted the toponym in their own manner, – its name was **Dlivi** (Chikovani 1982, 17).

*Gandza* - Armenians distorted the name in their own manner, – its name was **Gandzani** (Chikovani 1982, 17).

The rule of Ottomans of several centuries in Javakheti left its sign in the toponyms, especially, in microtoponyms (Beridze 1992, 97).

The mountain is called **Koroghli** in Ninotsminda municipality, which was proved several times during the expedition of 2023 almost in all its villages, in Ninotsminda.

### ***Language Situation in Ninotsminda Municipality According to the Scientific Expedition in 2023***

*The scientific expedition was conducted in June 2023* within the framework of the project *Research and Documentation of Onomastic Material of the Ninotsminda Municipality* funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia. The project gave possibility to document all the villages and studying language situation in Ninotsminda Municipality.

According to the census of 2014, the size of Ninotsminda Municipality is 1, 354.0 square meters, population is 24, 491 persons. The density of the population is 18.1 men per 1 km<sup>2</sup> (Geostat, 2018).

There are one town, 9 communities (village clusters) including Gandzani, Gorelovka, Gondrio, Eshtia, Satkhe, Tambovka, Poka, Khanchali and Jigrasheni communities and 31 villages, like Gandza, Saghamo, Gorelovka, Epremovka, Orlovka, Zhdanovi, Sameba, Spasovka, Didi Gondrio, Diliti, Mamtsvara, Patara Gondrio, Qulalisi, Eshtia, Toria, Ujmana, Qaurma, Satkhe, Didi Arakali, Orojolari, Patara Arakali, Tambovka (Akhali Khulgu-mo), Aspasa, Rodionovka (Paravani), Poka, Vladimirovka, Didi Khanchali, Katnatu, Patara Khanchali, Jigrasheni, and Patara Khorenia in Ninotsminda Municipality (Geostat, 2018).

Ninotsminda is quite diversified in terms of ethnicity, religion and language.

The number of Georgians according to the census of 2014 was 4.2%, the number of the ethnic Armenians was 95%, Russian population were 0.8% (Geostat, 2018).

35.8% of the population have higher education, 41.4% has vocational education, 88.3 % had full secondary education, 16.8 % had the basic education and 23.1 % just the primary one.

As for the religious situation, here are orthodox Christians, Muslims, Catholics, Grigorians and Dukhobors.

Currently, there is 4 Georgian schools and 1 Georgian sector of school in Ninotsminda Municipality, including 1 school in the town Ninotsminda itself, 1 in the village Sameba, 1 in the village Gorelovka, 1 Georgian sector of school in the village Orlovka.

**Eshtia** community:

1. Village **Eshtia** – Armenians, living here, use this toponym like *Heshtia*, in an Armenian way. According to their ungrounded discussions and etymology, it was the free place, when they saw the spring here; they said that *it was easy to live here*. There is the poster at the entrance of the village with the incorrect and artificial naming, *Heshtia*, requiring attention.

Armenian population arrived here in 1828 from the village Ikili, Mush (Erzurum Province). Currently, there are about 470 Catholic Armenian households here.

There are two Armenian schools in the village and Georgian language is taught 5 hours per week.

The Armenian population does not speak about Georgian microtoponyms of Eshtia. While interviewing, they tried to create the artificial names for mountains, sources and places or translated toponyms to remove the Georgian origin. Despite the trial, the artificial forms shall not have the future for establishment.

Near the village Eshtia, there is a Georgian church with Georgian inscription. Armenian population turned that Georgian church into Armenian one (Nikolaishvili, Sartania et al. 2016, 93).

The population above 40 cannot speak Georgian, though they understand it well. According to them, it is not because of them that they are ignorant of Georgian; the state had to take the measures and support their knowledge of Georgian. The language competence of people within 30-40 ages shall be assessed as A2. Schoolchildren and the people under 30 try to achieve B1 level.

2. The village **Toria** – In the archive it is named as *Toria*, but the form *Torio* is also attested (Jikia 1958, 332). According to S. Jikia, it is clear from the document of 1847, that the village was not settled and the farmers from the village Khulgumo (14 households) were asking to relocate there. In the documents of 1886-1887, Toria is already the village with 45 households (Jikia 1958, 332).

Currently, the village is settled by Armenian population who came here from the village Ditiankoi, Mush (Erzurum Province) in 1828. There are about 130 households. Catholic Armenians live in Toria.

There is an Armenian school in the village, where locals teach Georgian language.

The population do not refer village mountains, springs and other places by Georgian toponyms, they just list the names are either indication of the object, ad-hoc designed or translated, like *Akhbiur*, *Karotsar*, *Balalik*, *Iergarsar*.

There was an old Georgian church in the village and the new temple after Surp Dominico was constructed on its ruins. There are the ruins of Georgian church preserved and there is a graveyard with 2 horses and a ram.

There was not any need and obligation to know state language for Armenians relocated just couple of decades before, in the nineteenth century, neither in this village, nor in entire Javakheti. Today, both issues are on the



agenda for the population, even more, the population highlights about the need and usage problems during the interviews.

As for the knowledge of the state language, the population thinks that the majority of their daily problems are linked with the ignorance of the language. The people of age 50-60 mentions:

- They started learning the Georgian language 20 years ago;
- They communicate with each other only in Armenian;
- They do not use Russian any more during speaking with each other
- They cannot speak Georgian;
- They would like to know Georgian language very much;
- The age group of 30-40 know writing and reading but it is difficult for them to speak;
- The age group 15-20 know Georgian language almost at B1;
- The children of the age group of 10-15 know the Georgian language comparatively well than other age groups now.

The population adds the following reasons to the listed ones in other villages;

- They actually started learning of Georgian language before 20 years, as Georgian was delivered just one hour by the curriculum before;
- Absence of a kindergarten; they think if starting learning of Georgian from kindergarten makes learning of a language easier for a child;
- Lack of job opportunities; employment helps to better knowledge of the language;
- Lack of Georgian TV channels due to objective or subjective reasons.

Respondents note that they speak with Georgian population by a mixed language, Georgian-Russian or Georgian-Armenian, though for the last years they try to speak with Georgians into Georgian-Armenian and substitute Georgian-Russian speech in that way. They also highlight that they would speak Georgian with pleasure.

3. The village **Ujmana** - Armenians call it *Uchmana* mistakenly. Currently, Armenians who came here from Mush (Erzurum Province) in 1828 live in the village. There are about 100 households here and the village is settled by the Catholic Armenians.

There is an Armenian school in the village, where both Georgians and ethnic Armenians teach Georgian.

As for toponyms, they named **Patara Abuli** as **Koroghli** (the name of a mountain – I.Gh). As they say, they call the local mountains, springs and places as *Entukogh* (another side -I.Gh.), *Takhcha mountain*, *Khorkhor* (proper name), *Khalu* (proper name), *Geghi Akhbiur*, though **they have not official names**.

According to the villagers, they speak different kind of Armenian; they have another speech. They call it *Msho Bar* (Speech of Mush – I.Gh.) and according to them, other Armenians do not understand their speech. During the fieldwork, it appeared that there are words in their speech, which is not understandable for the residents of other villages, though they understand the speech of other villages.

The language situation shall be described as follows:



- The representatives of the age group of 20-30 assessed their knowledge as follows: we know Georgian at an intermediate level, youngsters *know Georgian, adults and my peers do not know so well, some of them knows;*

- For them the first language is Armenian (native), the second one is Georgian (state language) and the third one is Russian (the first foreign language). They also mention, that English is already the third (compulsory foreign language) for the age group of 10- 20;

- Some people studied Georgian in Batumi, who participated in the project. Joint projects are very important with the villages and towns settled by Georgians to learn language better;

- The cultural activities are very rare in the village; therefore, there is less communication between Armenians and Georgians.

4. The village **Qaurma** – The ethnic Armenians resettled from Turkey in 1830s called the village **Qaurma. Gormake** is considered its Georgian oiconym, **which is proved by the** archived lists (Jikia 958, 330). It is also called **Tontio**.

The village is populated by Armenians; there are about 90 households and Armenian school there.

There is the church of 11<sup>th</sup> century with the ancient Georgian inscription, proving the wide spread of Georgian language in this area. Despite the mentioned fact the population cannot remember even the trace of Georgian population here and microtoponyms created by them. The village is famous for its five-arch Tontio bridge (13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> centuries). According to the legend, King Tamar constructed the ancient bridge.

### **Gondrio Community:**

1. The village **Didi Gondrio** – Local population calls the village *Didi Kondura/Gondura*.

Currently, Armenians who came here from Mush, Tarkhun (Erzurum Province), Chipot, Kars in 1828, live in the village. They came here from several places, in total there are about 250 households here.

There is one Armenian school in the village with about 200 students.

The population who resettled to the village do not confirm the Georgian toponyms of the river, mountain or other places. The Georgians who lived here and left the place before arrival of Armenians took the historical names of the places with them. Nowadays, the river, the spring, the mountain have no name for them in the village, they just say that it is a river, a spring and a mountain.

The mountain, which is called *Malako*, is the mountain **Dlivi**.

The age group above 40 mentions, that during schooling they had only one hour for Georgian language, they know writing and reading, but it is hard for them to speak. New generation study Georgian language every day and as they say, it is good. As they say, the teachers are good, 1 Georgian and 2 ethnic Armenians teach children Georgian language.

2. The village **Patara Gondrio** – according to the population it is called *Gondrio* now, while the former name was *Gonduro/Gondura/Kondura*. We found the toponyms version *Gendira* as well.

Today, the village is populated by Armenians, came from Saladzior, Vani (Erzurum Province) in 1829. According to them, around 7,500 households resettled in Akhalkalaki who were seeking for the good places for living. Initially There were 11 families in Patara Gondrio. After 1918, the part of the population moved to Bakuriani. Currently, there are about 120 households there.

The river *Dlivis Tsqali* is met in the form of *Dilipsky Voda*, the *Dlivi* Mountain as *Dilivsky*, forest as *Dilifi* are met in the speech of the villagers.

The mountain is called *Surf Sar* in the village, what means *Saint Mountain* in Georgian. Georgian dwellers who left this area took the local toponyms, what enabled Armenians who came here later to generalize *Surf Sar* and used many different variations of it.

The village residents proved the toponym **Varzetvani**, which should be the transformed form of **Vardisubani**. It was located between Didi and Patara Gondrio. The microtoponym **Telerta** was also confirmed.

The level of Georgian competence is B1 for the age group below 40. They say that they learnt Georgian at school, as Georgian language teacher did not know Armenian at all and she talked only in Georgian. It helped to better knowledge of the language and achievement of that level.

Compulsory military service in Tbilisi was also named as one of the supporting factors for learning Georgian language.

Majority of local population studies Georgian language at the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration. They use Armenian for communication with each other; while Georgian is required during service in the state structures and communication with Georgians.

3. The village **Diliti** – Former Georgian and old name of the village is **Dlivi**, which is found in the speech of locals differently like *Diliti/Dilifi/Dilif*.

Currently there is Armenian population in the village, which settled on this territory from Mush (Erzurum) in 1828-1832.

There is one Armenian school in the village with 4 teachers of Georgian language, who are ethnic Georgians.

According to Armenian population, there is the spring in the village Diliti *Kqrkbulakh/Sorok Radnik*, which is Georgian *Ormotstsqali*.

The mountain is called *Davoi Surf*, which shall be the **Davitis Mta**. There should be the toponyms for other mountains as well in the village, which have been changed into Armenian names by Armenian population.

The toponym **Chinkebis Veli** is also attested in the village, which is called as *Khelo Haghli* by Armenians.

There were the ruins of the 5<sup>th</sup> century Georgian church in the village, and the Armenian Church was constructed on it later.

According to the population, they speak on a different dialect and it is very different from the speech of ethnic Armenians living in Ninotsminda, Akhalkalaki and Akhaltsikhe.

According to the people below 60, they know Georgian poorly, as they were not taught at school, they had just one hour per week for language and the teachers did not fulfil their responsibility well. At present they do not like, that they are ignorant of Georgian language and say that it would

be better if they know Georgian. *When Georgians* (who they call “our people” in this village) *come here, it would be good if we can talk with them in Georgian* – they mention.

As they say, young people of 30-40s know few Georgian, while 10-25 years old ones know it better. For the last period, ethnic Armenian young people get higher education in Georgia.

4. The village **Qulalisi** – in Russian they call it *Kulalis*, while Armenians call it *Ghulalis*.

There are ethnic Armenians came from Erzurum province in the village. There are about 100 families. In the village there is an Armenian school, where about 80 children study. There are three teachers of Georgian language in the school.

The river of the village is called **Ormotsqsqali**, another variant is the **Kgrkbulakh**.

The names of the place recorded: **Tskalgaghma Eklesia**/Jeren Antun (the field name), **Murjakhētis Taraf** (the field name), **Puchina** – the name of the pastureland, which is used for hay cutting on the side of Gorelovka-Tavparavani.

The villagers said that there was Kachkar with the 13<sup>th</sup> century Armenian inscription. The expedition members carefully observed the grave and Kachlar, but could not find any Armenian inscription of 13<sup>th</sup> century. The ancient Armenian inscription is not proven if we consider the period of arrival of Armenian population in this territory.

Age group above 40 mentioned that they did not know Georgian during graduation from the school. Who knows Georgian they learnt it during work in the public services. Just two people of the mentioned age knew the language, because the first one had a Georgian mother: *the family name of my mother was Nozadze, she came from Khashuri*; and the second person had an aunt, Georgian by origin and it occurred the decisive factor for language learning: *I learnt Georgian in the village, as I had a Georgian aunt. I respect Georgians*. The first respondent answered the question, if he speaks in Georgian with children at home, that he does not do it because of lack of time.

It shall be noted here, that majority of the people under 50 are aware of Georgian writing and reading, their speech is poor, but they speak poorly, though understanding is intermediate. They say that they know Russian better, than Georgian, as they had just few hour to study Grammar at school.

It was interesting that a respondent listed the family names of the village households by the suffix – *i*: *Gevorkiani, Sarkisiani, Antoniani, Nalbandiani, Muradiani, Arabiani...* Today, Armenians living in Javakheti pronounce and write Armenian surnames without the ending *-i*, what is against Georgian language rules.

Young people highlighted an importance of the language study; they understood that knowledge of the state language is necessary requirement for living in the state of Georgia and employment in the public service. Their level of knowledge of the Georgian language is mostly A2, and partly B1. 18 years old respondent noted: *Georgia is our country and Georgian*

*language is necessary for us. My dream is to study Georgian well. It is not enough just to dream, you need to work for it.*

5. The village **Mamtsvara** – the population came here from Erdazur (Erzurum province) in 1828.

In the village, there is one secondary Armenian school with about 35 pupils.

All big geographic objects are simply *Dagh*, *Gor* or *Radnik* for the Armenians settled here in the nineteenth century. The respondents from the village tell us toponyms of the different villages: **Parvana**, **Dilifsky Vada** (Dlivi Tsqali), **K̅rkbulakh** (Ormotstsqali).

According to the respondents, their ancestors used Turkish language as well, but at present days nobody knows Turkish here. They also mentioned that the speech of the Armenians in Ninotsminda is different from the Armenian of Akhalkalaki.

Young people know Georgian language: writing, reading and speaking, because the teachers are Georgian.

#### **Satkhe** Community:

1. The village **Satkhe** – Current Armenian population of the village came from Erzurum in 1830. They lived first in Sogiuti, Tsalka, and then they came here. The villages were empty when the Armenians came (Beridze 2010, 48).

There are following versions for the village name: *Satkhe*//*Sat'he*//*Sat-kha*//*Sat'kha*//*Sabkha*//*Sadkha*//*Sathgha*.

There is an Armenian school in the village with around 120 students. One Armenian and one Georgian teacher teach Georgian.

As for Georgian toponyms, the resettled population does not say anything. As they mention, there was not anybody in those villages when they came here. The Georgian population who were forcedly exiled from here took the names with them, but not in the way that the newcomers did not find any traces here. Due to that reason, settlement of Turks, Greeks in this territory is accepted for them, but the existence of indigenous Georgians here never and under no circumstances. When the ethnic Armenian resident decided to provide certain impartial information, others did not let him to do it. There are three sources in the village, which are not named and are just called “springs”.

The river flows in the middle of the village – **Bughdashenis Tsqali**.

The population above 30 speaks Georgian poorly. They understand the state language and they name the reason for ignorance the fact that it was Russian the second language and it was priority and people were encouraged to learn it.

There is a Georgian church of the 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries, where the Armenian Church was built on in the 70s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

2. The village **Patara Arakali** – several versions are verified: *Arakali* (*Didi*, *Patara*), *Arakalebi*, *Irkan*, *Irgan*, *Aragall*//*Arageal*, *Arakal* (Jikia 58, 613). The residents of the village call it **Aragial** and they do not say anything about etymology of the toponym.

Currently, Armenians live in the village, moved here from the

village Umud/Umut of Karsi and Erzurum. They relocated to the village Khando, in Akhalkalaki first and then they moved from Khando to Arakali in 1836. According to them, there were Azerbaijanians before their coming. It is obvious the matter deals with **Muslim Georgians**, who were referred to by various ethnonyms, except **Georgian**.

The village Patara Arakali is located on the right bank of the river Tavparavanis Tsqali.

There are about 85 households in Patara Arakali. There is an Armenian school with 6 teachers of Georgian language, 3 Georgians and 3 Armenians.

The residents of Patara Arakali refer the Tavparavani Tsqali as **Parvana, Taparvana, Taparvani, and Taparvanchai**.

As for the microtoponyms, they call the mountain **Koroghli/Keroghli**. The spring is running from the top of the mountain, which has no name.

According to the evaluation of the population, their Armenian speech is different by 30% from the Armenian, spread in the Republic of Armenia.

Although the general situation is the same in the terms of assessing the knowledge and competence of the state language, each village adds a new feature to the issue:

- They even were not interested in Georgian language before: they had just one hour, but there was no interest towards it, I know a bit (the age of the respondent is 66), young people know;

- An elder generation understands speaking but they are not able to answer;

- Elder generation is not able to work in the public institutions because of ignorance of the language for the last decades;

- After 1993, they realised that knowledge of the state language is important: *you live in Georgia and you are ignorant of Georgian, is it possible?*

- Their Georgian vocabulary includes the following phrases: Hello, goodbye, please, where do you go? Come here, sit down, eat, bread, water, girl, boy, cost...

- The problem of the lack of Georgian TV channels is also mentioned.

In 1878, an Armenian church was built. In the entrance of Patara Arakali, on the right bank of the river, on the higher place, there is the billboard written in Armenian Patara Aragiali. There are no billboards made by State at the entrances of the villages.

In 1878, an Armenian church was built. In the entrance of Patara Arakali, on the right bank of the river, on the higher place, there is the billboard written in Armenian **Patara Arageal**. There are no billboards made by State at the entrances of the villages.

3. Village **Didi Arakali** is located on the left bank of the river Tavparavani. There are around 200 Armenian households in the villages.

*There are just two walls in the village of he told Georgian church and they are totally looted. There is a big cross stone with the inscription. The author of those words travelled to Javakheti in the 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and recorded the mentioned fact. Today there is no more Georgian church as well as cross stone. The Armenain church after Surf Stefanos was built*

on the Georgian church, in which the stones of the old Georgian church are used. Academician Sergi Jikia preferred the form *Arakal* among village names (Jikia 1958, 339-340). Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani explains *Arakali* as following: *venakhis eti, eti venakhisa* (Sulkhani-Saba Orbeliani 1991, 60). In Georgia, *eti* has many meanings: 1. the part of the vineyard or garden; 2. the furrow made for irrigation; 3. the furrow used as a border in the land plot; 4. one piece of the land divided for irrigation (Beridze 2008, 123).

The language situation is the same in the village as *Patara Arakali's* one.

4. The village **Orojolari** – according to the respondents the name of the village comes from **Orachala**, as there were two meadows on both banks of the river Tavparavanis Tsqali, one of them was in Orojolari, on the left side and the other on the right bank, in Batkana. The population came here from Erzurum in 1930s in Tsalka first, then from Ashkala (Tsalka) moved to the village Batkana. They indicate that now **Batkana** and **Orojolari** are one village.

They also mentioned that *they had many lambs* there and it named after it. The neighboring village **Satkhe** (place for goats) with the transparent etymology strengthens the assumption.

The river is referred in the form of **Taparvana, Toparvana and T'aparvana**. It is important that the Tavparavanis Tsqali be also called the **Kura** (the same as **the Mtkvari**).

As for the toponyms, similar to other villages of Ninotsminda, the microtoponyms of the Armenian population of the village Orojolari arrived here in the 30s of 19<sup>th</sup> century is limited by the *Radnik*, *lotakhpur* (translated as seven springs), as for the mountains they verify only the already met *Kachalgora*. According to the locals, *Sakartvelo (i.e. Georgia) is my earth; I was born here and grown here*. They highlight the necessity for the knowledge of the state language, as they live in Georgia. While working on the field, all the details are interesting as it helped to make the proper conclusions. The following remark drew our attention; they said, *Georgian language is necessary at our school now*, it meant that there was no need for teaching state language before.

Armenian population highlighted the necessity of knowledge of Georgian history: *you should know the history of Georgia from the beginning to the present day*.

Their assessment, that Georgian and Armenian are together and the state should support it, is very important for the process of integration.

### **Poka** community

1. The village **Poka** - Armenian population arrived here in 1828 from Mush (Erzurum), Kars, Gela (Ardahan). *Gel* derived from the Turkish *Göl* and it means "a lake". As population explains, they lived at the bank of the lake in their historical homeland. When they found the lake in the village, they decided to settle there.

Today there are about 300 Armenian households in the village.

The village Poka was special in terms of language situation before and the same can be said now. The Armenians say that their ancestors were



forced to speak Turkish by the Turks residing there due to the political situation at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Their Armenian speech is mixed because the residents had arrived from different places and therefore it is little bit different from Armenian language spoken in other villages. Armenians, living in Poka, has the similar speech with those who live in the village Baraleti, in Akhalkalaki district and it is easier to understand.

As for knowledge competence of the state languages, Georgian:

- The most people who knows Georgian language are from the villages of Ninotsminda (below 30);

- The young people who know Georgian best are from Poka (B2 level);

- The most students are from the village Poka;

- The students from Poka are main guides for the future students from the villages of Ninotsminda and Akhalkalaki municipalities;

- The youth from Poka are translators for the elder generation at the hospitals and court facing problems related to language barrier;

- The respondents mention that this generation (up to 30) changed the situation, they have another requirements and knowledge of the state language played a great role in it;

- The people up to 30 indicate that they were able to speak Georgian with great support of their Georgian teacher (Klara Potskhverashvili), who arrived here 26 years ago and was the only one in this field. As a result of great efforts, she was able to overcome the most difficult obstacles for years, she was able to teach Georgian language to the generations, and made them to love it;

- They were the representatives of the third generation who stayed in Georgia and got higher education here (in 2012). During starting study at the higher educational institution, they understand everything at the lectures and seminars, but it was difficult for them to speak. Communication with Georgian students and study of the professions in Georgian language helped them to overcome the barrier.

- Due to ignorance of the state language, young people went to Armenia to study, what was more expensive for the population. Everybody says that getting education in Armenia was much expensive.

- The level of teaching of Georgian language has been improved for the recent years;

- School children (the generation up to 18) are more eager to study and there is a readiness to study state language;

- Today, knowledge of Georgian language helps ethnic Armenians to stay in Georgia for getting higher education here;

- The study tours in all the parts of Georgia were very important for teaching language, organized by the teacher of Georgian language and literature (Klara Potskhverashvili);

- The students of Poka School visited the whole Georgia by the performance *Gikor* by Ovanes Tumanyan conducted with support of the teacher of Georgian language and literature and they were able to communicate with their Georgian peers. The Ministry of Culture and its management contributed in it very much;

- Ethnic Armenians choose Georgian philology as their future profession;
- They motivate elder generation and the part of their parents started learning Georgian language in the age of 55;
- During the official meetings, the state officials mention that the level of knowledge of the state language is high in Poka.

Locals say, that the first language for them is **Armenian**, the second **Georgian**, which substituted Russian language and the third one is **English**.

Currently, there are about 5 teachers of Georgian language at Armenian school of Poka.

2. The village **Vladimirovka** – According to the respondents, the village had another name, **Publikani**, before. Vladimirovka was the village of Russian sectarian, Dukhobors. Now, nobody from Dukhobors live here, there are only Armenians resettled in 1830s in the village, in total 23 households.

They mentioned just **Koroghli** and **Kachalgora** from the microtoponyms in the village. There is an Armenian school in the village. Due to the harsh climate, there are only seven students. The students are very motivated to study and they can speak Georgian.

#### **Gorelovka** Community:

1. The village **Gorelovka** – Gorelovka is one of the largest villages of Ninotsminda. Gorelovka is the distinguished village of Dukhobors, as there is their shrine, which is called *Orphanage* here. Dukhobor Lukeria Kalmikova heard the cry of a child here and therefore she made the orphanage here.

Today in Javakheti, there are around 35 households of Dukhobors. According to the local Dukhobor Andrei Smarodin, 28 families live in Gorelovka, 1 family lives in the village Sameba, 5 in the village Epremovka and 1 family lives in the village Spasovka. The greater part of Dukhobors returned to the historical homeland and lives in Tula, the other part went to Canada. Some of the migrated Dukhobors are still visiting their residential places in Georgia and they refer to the nostalgia, which they have about those years, they lived in Georgia

Their remark was very interesting in terms of ethnic self-perception, that they are called **Georgian Dukhobors**, to those who left for Russia.

Currently, in Gorelovka there are about 65 Georgian households, they are Georgians migrated from Adigeni in 2009, who arrived from Achara (Khulo district) in 1976. There are 2 families from Meskhети, one from Imereti and others are Armenians.

**There is the graveyard of Muslims in the village, which should be of Georgian Muslims.**

There are three schools in the village - Georgian, Russian and Armenian. Dukhobors go to the Russian school.

The residents of age below 25 speak Georgian in Gorelovka. According to the locals, the part of ethnic Armenians knew Georgian, though they did not speak Georgian deliberately. Who did not know, they even did not learn it. **Now the situation is different, they speak about the need for**

## knowledge of Georgian language.

In general, Javakheti, as well as Samtskhe both are the place for meeting different dialects. The record from Acharians' speech is given at the end of the paper.

2. The village **Sameba** (former Kalinino, Troitskoe), the village of Dukhobors who settled here since 1841. The toponym *Kalinino* was brought by Dukhobors.

Based on the obtained archive material, there were 16 households in the village Troitskoi: the families of Stroev, Skachkov, Ponomorev, Verigin, Putulin, Fominov, Vereshchagin, Kornusov, Ribin, Diakov, and Nadin (*illegible*) (Fund 254, record 1, case 1946, page 51, 52, 53, 54, 55; in total 75 persons in the village Troitskoi)

There were 73 households in the village. In 1990s, the majority of them moved to Tambov (their homeland) and others to Canada.

According to the locals, tens of Dukhobor families arrive to Sameba during the summer period. They still would like to return, as they *consider Georgia as their native land* and feel themselves like immigrants in Canada. They visit the graves of their ancestors when they arrive to Georgia.

Currently, there are 10 Georgian, 1 Dukhobor and 10 Armenian families in the village. Georgians moved from Akhaltsikhe, Nakalakevi and Aspindza for living. Armenians, similar to the Armenians from other villages came here from Erzurum. They lived in Eshtia first, and then they moved here.

*Bughdasheni* – this is the name of a river, *Kachalgora* is the name of the rock, **Chairebi** - this is the name for the meadows. This is the whole toponyms for the village today.

As for the language situation:

- There is 1 Georgian school in Sameba, with 10 students. The part of Armenians go to Georgian school, another part goes to Armenian one in the adjacent village;

- The special interest is noticed towards Georgian language for the last period. If nobody highlighted the necessity and need for knowledge of Georgian before, now the situation is different. Everybody is willing to learn Georgian;

- Parents would like their children know Georgian well, they oblige them to play with Georgian children in order to communicate with them;

- The students of the grade IX-X-XI know Georgian well;

- All the IX-X-XI graders are involved in the activities of Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration, which provides course of state language together with schooling;

- Due to mentioned factors, many Armenians entered the Georgian state higher educational institutions by passing examinations in the history of Georgia and Geography;

- They say, that some of the students directly pass the national examination and start study at the bachelor level without 4+1 program because of good knowledge of State language;

- Currently, 80% of ethnic Armenians go to Tbilisi for getting higher education and very few to Yerevan unlike previous time;

- Dasha Strukova, Dukhobor, also entered Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, who was a wonderful student and had an excellent academic performance;

- The population, especially those (under 45), who had some linkage with teaching and learning process, knows Georgia at an intermediate level. It is noticeable, as they have linkage with the educational field, though they do not speak Georgia, Russian is their communication language with Georgians;

- Georgian children know Armenian very well and the fact that they know each other's languages makes their relationship good between Georgian and Armenian population of the village;

- They declare that the school should be the key player here, as they are at the borderline area.

3. The village **Spasovka** – has the hard and interesting history. It was the village of Dukhobors, who arrived here in 1841 and they celebrated 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of living in Georgian in 1991.

According to the archive material obtained by us, there were 25 households in Spaskoi. There were the families of: Sh(m)alov (illegible), Babaev, Tsibulkin, Gerasimov, Shirosnikov, Kolesnikov, Fadeev, Voikin, Golubov, Vbitnev, Strelyaev, Kurbatov, Verigin, Shcherbakov, Dorozhov (illegible) Trubshchin (illegible), Kutnyakov (Fund 254, record 1, case 1946, page 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67; in total 129 persons in the village Spaskoi).

There are Georgians, Armenians and Dukhobors living in the village today, including 71 Georgian families (68 households from Achara, 3 households from Meskheta), 10 Armenian households and 1 Dukhobor.

In the late 90s of 20<sup>th</sup> century Dukhobors left the village: *They were here in 1996, they left after our arrival, we were neighbors about 5 years, and they were good people* (Nodar Mekeidze). Some of them left for Tula, other to Rostov and Canada. There is one Dukhobor's family left in the village, they did not go, according to them all their people are here.

The family of Maskalskis arrived to Spasovka 33 years ago, in 1990 (According to Nodar Maskalski, Polish, German and Jewish families arrived in Georgia in 1935. They went to Telavi first, then they spread to other cities or villages).

In May 1990, the families of Mekeidze, Vanadze, Nakaidze, Beridze, Davitadze, Shavadze...were settled from the village Ghorjomi, in Khulo district to Spasovka. The part of them came here in 1996: *I arrived here in ninety sixty. I lived in Khoni, but I left Khoni, lived in the fifth zone.* It turned out to be very difficult for Georgians to live on their own land, in Javakheti. The hard conditions were made for them first. Dukhobors and Armenians who lived in the village were against arrival of Georgians. They did not want to have Georgians there. As Iuri Vanadze remembers, there were 305 families on the list. Merab Kostava Fund worked on it and it was going to buy land and houses for 305 families. But finally only 11 families were left out of those 305, for whom the fund bought the houses. *They did not want us to be here, I thought I would not leave and I would die here,* - mentions Yuri Vanadze (born in 1941, settled in the village Spasovka, Ninotsminda district from the village Ghorjomi, Khulo district).

They gave the worst lands to Georgians. Armenians had the best ones. Dukhobors did not create any microtoponyms; they called *Terpenie* for the name of hayland.

The names of the places found by Georgians are preserved until now without change. As they said, they tried many times to rename the village, but nothing worked.

There are 2 schools in the village, one is Georgian secondary school, and another one is Armenian basic school. Georgians had struggled much for opening Georgian school in the village. Yuri Vanadze said: *I was struggling for seven years to get the building for Georgian school. I was able to open the school for 16 students when I arrived.*

- The fact that there are many Georgians in the village Spasovka changes the language situation. While meeting Georgian and Armenian youngsters, their communicative language is Georgian;

- Knowledge of the state language is the key factor and the reason for good relationship between Georgian and Armenians;

- Local Georgians try to speak only Georgian in the municipality, if they find it very difficult, then they turn to Russian language;

- It was identified, that all ethnic Armenians know Georgian language in the village. The fact that Georgians turned out the majority in the village, also supported by the need of state language, changed the situation;

- This village is a meeting zone of dialects, this is the place, where the Meskhetian, Acharian and even Gurian dialects are crossing; our respondent (from the family of settlers from Achara) who partially was grown in Guria mentioned, *I have the Gurian accent, Acharian and local accents too, I get it very easily, I take different accents easily;*

- Georgians of elder generation speak Acharian dialect, while the representatives of the medium and younger generations have mixed speech due to frequent relations with Meskhetians and Javakhetians, already have a mixed speech;

- Young generation of Georgians already knows the Armenian language from school age, however, they speak Georgian with Armenians peers.

4. The village **Epremovka** - the village of Dukhobors. They came to Georgia in 1841, as evidenced by the inscription on the stone placed at their cemetery. In this period, there were 18 households in Epremovka settlement, such as the families of Perstov, Iliasov... (Illegible), Larin, Poponov, Tolmachev, Sapunov, Bagurin, Sherstobitov...

In 1992, Dukhobors left Georgia and moved to Tula. Presently, there are 3 households of Dukhobors (by some sources they are 5), in total 15 persons. The migrated Dukhobors sometimes visit the village, as locals say.

Since Dukhobors left the village, Armenians settled in their places who moved from Patara Arakali, Satkhe and Poka (1 family) in 1990s, who were moved from Erzurum and Kars before. Currently, about 36 Armenian families live in Epremovka, as well as 2 Georgian families, the Kenchoshvilis and Beridzes, moved from Aspindza in 1990s.

Currently only preserved micro-toponym is **Madatafa** in the village

indicating the late arrival of Armenians and Dukhobors alongside the data of other villages.

There is an Armenian school of 9-years in the village. The interviews with the schoolchildren demonstrated the high desire of children and their parents to know a state language well. They think that it ensures finding of state and good job in the country.

**5. The village Orlovka** – the village of Dukhobors. The name of Orlovka before was *Terpenie*. According to the local Georgians, Dukhobors left the village for Tula in 1990-94. They arrive here every holiday; they have their *Peshera* and pray there. Today there are 3 Dukhobors left in the village.

In parallel to their leaving, the process of movement of Georgians and Armenians took place to those places. Currently, there are 65-70 households in the village. 20 Georgian families arrived from the village Khizabavra, Aspindza Municipality. The Merab Kostava Foundation purchased houses for them. Several families were not able to stand even for a year, on the one hand, due to cold climate, and, on the second, resettled Armenians (Armenian foundation purchased houses for them), who tried to oppress Georgians. They misappropriated all the arable land and used to say Georgians to go back from there they arrived. According to the informants, they beat each other quite heavily.

Naming of the geographic objects in the village is weak, Georgian micro-toponyms are almost disappeared, though the name of the mountain *Uziki Balka* given by Dukhobors is referred, here are both Georgian and Armenian churches. There are Georgian inscriptions in the Georgian church. There were ruins of houses; one can find the places of former houses.

There is a place in the village, which is called *Ozero* by Dukhobors. There was a village here before; there was the church, which was flooded.

Those who arrived on the place of Georgians' residential place were not able to create new toponyms. The simple naming of the mountain *Svetoi* indicates it.

The river is called *Taparvana*.

- In the village Orlovka there is one public school, which includes Georgian and Armenian sectors. Georgian and Armenian sectors are in different buildings. As it was said, when new building had been constructed for Georgian sector, Armenians would like to place Armenian sector in the new building and they received refusal from Georgian teachers. Georgian sector was opened in 2012. They considered that there should be Georgian school and not be Georgian sector in Orlovka. There are 30 schoolchildren study on Georgian sector while there are 48 on Armenian one;

- Georgians of elder generation (above 60) mention that they knew neither Russian nor Armenian; The representatives of the age group above 40 were growing together with Russian and Armenians; therefore, they know Armenian and Russian fluently.

- The representatives of the age group above 40 were growing together with Russian and Armenians; therefore, they know Armenian and Russian fluently;



- The younger generation knows Armenians well in the village;
- The part of the teachers have the higher education received in Tbilisi, another part got education in Yerevan;
- As mentioned above, ethnic Armenians created the land-related problems; they belong to the middle age generation. It is also reflected in the language situation, as they do not know languages of each other. Currently, Georgians and Armenians have good relationship and it is strengthened because of teaching Georgian language in the village.

6. The village **Zhdanovi** – The population refers the village as *Zhdanovakan*. *Zhdanovakan* was the former name of the village and as they say, it turned into *Zhdanovi* now. The village was named as *Ezhovakan* until 1939. There are around 100 households with 350 persons in the village. The Catholic Armenians live in the village who were migrated from Mush (Erzurum Province), Artaan, Kars and Vani, who were resettled to the village Eshtia first and then moved from Eshtia here.

There is one public school in the village Zhdanovi with about 80 children. As for the language, the situation is the same. Elder generation blames relevant institutions for their negligence to teach them Georgian at school. We (I. Gh.) should mention here, that no ethnic groups had such a desire and concern before in Georgia, especially in Javakheti. Today there is the need for knowledge of a state language on the agenda, and younger generation understood it earlier.

According to the population, Georgian TV channels would help them learning and strengthening of the language, which is not available in the village until now.

As for the name of the village, it has not been possible to change the nomenclature toponym *Zhdanov* till the present day.

### **Tambovka** Community:

1. The village **Tambovka** – this is the village of Dukhobors on the Northside of the Tavparavani Lake. According to the materials available in the archive obtained by us, there were 12 households here in 1842, the families of Panerarov, Nikitin, Ilin, Shchekin, Larin, Goncharov, Kondratiev, Voronov, Laryonov, Siburyaev, Andreev, Rastenkov (Fund 254, record 1, case 1946, page 72, 73, 74, 75, 76; in total village Tambovka - 74 persons).

Nowadays Dukhobors left and there is only one family in the village.

**Chachka** (ჭაჭკა) is the former name of Tambovka. **Chachka River** flows in the village which is also used as *Chashka* (ჩაშკა). It originates from the Ormotstskaro (*kʰrkbulakh*). The river divides Tambovka and Akhali Khulgumo settlement included in it. The residents of the village Khulgumo from Akhalkalaki moved to this place in 1969 therefore it is called *Akhali* (new) *Khulgumo*.

The population did not give the name to the second river. They mention only the toponyms **Shaori**, **Koroghli**, the names of the mountains and the name of the place called like **Kartoshni Balka** by Dukhobors.

There are 36 households in the village Tambovka.

As for the language prospective, the majority of the Tambovka residents are the descendants of Georgians moved from the village Veli who later were changed their ethnic identity. According to the respondents, their ancestors were not forced to change the belief, though they were forced to change a native language. Some of them have Georgian relatives; accordingly, it is important, that the residents of Tambovka, especially teachers, speak Georgian fluently. The representatives of the age group above 50 note, that they spoke better Georgian when they were younger.

There is a Russian school in the village with 28 students. In Tambovka Georgian language is taught 5 hours per week as it is everywhere and children speak Georgian only at the lesson. Due to the crucial role of the school and education language, the children know Russian better than Armenian.

2. The village **Rodionovka** - The former name of the village was **Paravani**, which was changed by Dukhobors settled here since 1840. The village is located on the cost of Tavparavani Lake, on which the historical road of Georgia passed. The preserved unique Caravansary highlights the importance of the village.

According to the archive material, found by us, there were about 15 households in the village Rodionovka including the families of Lukianov, Evsiukov (illegible), Vorobyov, Matrosov, Parokhin, Emelyanov, Telushkin, Zinoviev, Abezhkov (illegible), Porshin (Fund 254, record 1, case 1946, page 56, 57, 58, 59, 60; In total 97 persons in the village Rodionovka).

Now the descendant of the migrated Armenians from Erzurum and Kars live in Rodionovka on the ruins of the Georgian and then Dukhobor's places. There are about 65 households in the village.

The local population, whose older generation understands Georgian and can speak it at a basic level well, calls the **Paravanis Tba** (The Paravani Lake).

Two toponyms are verified which had been left from Dukhobors in the village, as the names of the mountains, such as *Kurgan* and *Krasni Kurgan*.

In Rodionovka there is one Armenian school. The schoolchildren know Georgian well and they know Russian more and more rarely unlike their parents. While interviewing with the locals, it was noted the need to know excellent Georgian well and that the state language should be on the first place for all the ethnic groups in Georgia.

3. The village **Aspara** – The initial name of the village is **Aspana**, while *Aspara* is the later form, which is confirmed by the folk ballad “The Young Man from Tavparavani” („თავფარავნელი ჭაბუკი“): The Young Man from Tavparavani/loved a girl from Aspana/ he had to cross the sea/ he did not back down from doing this (თავფარავნელი ჭაბუკი/ ასპანას ქალსა ჰყვარობდა,/ ზღვა ჰქონდა წინად სავალი,/ გასვლას შიგ არა ზარობდა) (<https://www.aura.ge/103-saskolo/7967-xalxuri-balada--tav-faravneli-tchabuki.html>.)

Now the village became fully empty from the population, only one wall of the Georgian church has survived.

#### **Khanchali** Community:

1. The village **Didi Khanchali** – The name of the village is associated

with the *Khanjali (dagger)*, it is verified by the part of the local population. There are 350 Armenian households in the village. The ancestors of the local Armenians moved here from Handza (Erzurum Province) in 1830s. They moved to another place first and then they arrived to Khanchali in 1890. As they told, there were nobody when they came that place, but just the ruins of the houses and castle. Apparently, it was the former residence of Georgians, who had left this place by force and for different reasons.

The mountain name **Eldoghdi**, what could mean the **Mount Elia**, attracted the attention out of toponyms and it was fixed and recorded first in this village. The mentioned toponym is important for naming process in Ninotsminda Municipality.

As for the rest of the toponyms, the most widespread one is the name of the river **Agri**, what is translated as winding water.

- The representative of the elder generation demonstrated his attitude towards the state language, like that *It is a Georgian land and it is impossible not to speak Georgian here*;

- There is one Armenian public school in the village. Armenian population understands the need of knowing language. Their statement *As we do not know the language, cannot read the law is very important*.

- **Highlighting the economic value of the language was interesting. After for being aware of laws, the need for language knowledge becomes crucial for trading and, in general, running a business. As all the official documents has to be filled in the state language they would like to learn themselves what is written in the documents, on other hand, they say that it is hard to trade without knowledge of Georgian. Now they mainly deal with Georgians during trading and it requires knowledge of the language.** They also noted that Georgians and Armenians experienced the similar difficult history, Georgians received them and it should be valued.

- The majority of the young people from the village mainly study at the higher educational institutions in Samtskhe-Javakheti or Tbilisi. They like Tbilisi very much, that even the representative of the elder generation mentioned: *Tbilisi is such an amazing city, you will not find a city like Tbilisi anywhere. Yerevan is also very good, yet it is not like Tbilisi*.

2. The village **Patara Khanchali** – Armenian population came to this village from Kochki, Meghu, Dinar Kum (Erzurum Province) in 1828.

During the work with the young people on the field and interviewing, they mentioned:

- The representatives of the age above 30 speak Armenian and Russian, they say that they do not speak Georgian language;

- 80% of the representatives of the mentioned age group knows Georgian writing and reading, they understand 30% of the read material;

- Majority of them notes that they were going to Armenia (most of them in Yerevan) to get education and therefore they do not know it;

- The age group of 20-25 and schoolchildren know Georgian;

- Majority of the students studies in Tbilisi, at the medical institutions, 5-6 students studies in Yerevan;

- They mention that if you live in Georgia you should know Georgian.

Their opinion regarding teaching of foreign languages is similarly interesting. The age group of 30 and above thinks that Russian is the first foreign language, and English is the second foreign language. The situation is opposite with schoolchildren. Now they say that English is a compulsory language, in addition, they note, that there is no wide choice in terms of foreign languages, as they do not teach French and German.

3. The village **Katnatu** – the name of the village is linked with *much milk*. Armenian population of the village came here from Mush.

The toponym **Eldaghi**, the same as **Mount Elia** drew attention, what was verified in the village Didi Khanchali as well. They call one of the mountains the widespread name **Sufsarkis (Saint Mount - I.Gh.)**

- There is nine-grade school in the village, therefore, the children go to the village Khanchali to get full secondary education;

- The schoolchildren say that they study Georgian language five hours per week, but it is not sufficient to know it properly;

- In order to learn language better, majority of young people study at Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration. As they say, this school ensures passing of the Georgian language examinations well;

- All ethnic Armenians in Javakheti are willing to get vocational or higher education. One of them mentioned that he would like to study Geodesy in Tbilisi. They also mention the high level of vocational education (the vocational programs for cooks) in Georgia.

#### **Jigrasheni Community:**

1. The village **Jigrasheni** – According to the locals **Jigrasheni** means the *place of revenge* and Tikasheni is close to Jigrasheni, which is associated to Dika and means *much wheat*. Both are folk etymologies and have no scientific ground.

Currently up to 200 Armenian households and some Georgian families live in the village. Armenians came to Jigrasheni in 1828 from Mush (Erzurum Province) and Kars, they settled in the village Klde first, though they did not like the place for living and moved to Tikasheni, where Georgians lived before, as they infrom. They moved from Tikrasheni to Jigrasheni. It was the geography of their settlement.

According to the young generation:

- Ignorance of the language is one of the key problems;

- They consider themselves as citizens of Georgian state and knowledge of the state language is linked to fulfilment of their goals;

- The part of the young people studies in Tbilisi now, another part still goes to Armenia because of language problems;

- The part of them think that the program 4+1 operating in Georgia made them to lose one year for getting higher education. Therefore, they prefer to study in Armenia, though they would like to get education and live in Tbilisi. Tbilisi is very beautiful city for them;

- The barrier for passing exam is much higher in Armenian than in Georgia, but compared to Georgia prices are higher;

- The school has 3 teachers of Georgian language, two ethnic Armenians and one Georgian;

- They think that the quality of teaching Georgian had to be improved.

2. The village **Patara Khorenia** – the initial name of the village should be **Khorania**. It seems that *Khorenia* was used later. The knowledge of the village about the toponyms is limited by **Taparavani Tsqali**. There is an old Georgian church in the village, which was turned into Armenian Church and is named after Surp Jeremiah.

- The level of Georgian of the schoolchildren and the age group under 25 in the village is A2, they like that they can speak and they think it is because of their Georgian language teacher;

- The tourists often visit the village and the Armenians try to speak Georgian, which is translated by a guide.

**Gandzani** Community:

1. The village **Gandza** (it should be **Gandzani**) - Armenian population of the village Gandza came from Kərzjəngod (Erzurum Province) and Kars to the village in 1830s, in the village there are 750 households.

The river is called *Taparvana/Thaparvana*, the lake is called *Parvana*, one of the springs out of four is named after Vahan Teryan and the rests are just simply springs.

- There are 2 secondary schools in the village: named after Shota Rustaveli and after Vahan Teryan;

- They consider that language **is not just needed, but necessary, as they live in Georgia;**

- They mentioned that many of them have the diploma of excellence, they are attractive for the employers, but they can't start working because they are ignorant of the language;

- The part of the elderly and middle age generation knows Georgian, as they had close communication with Georgians;

- Georgian children know Armenians and Armenians know Georgian in the village;

- This was one of the rare villages where it was mentioned that Georgian and Armenians communicate in Georgian;

There are two Georgian churches constructed by the Jaqeli family in the XIV century. There is also an Armenian Church named after Surp Karapet built in 1859, in Gandzani.

2. The village **Saghamo** – the village is distinguished with multiple Georgian architectural monuments of the X-XIII centuries, where Armenians resettled from Kars live today.

The language-related situation is not different from other villages here considering the fact that the 10<sup>th</sup> grader guy announced in Russian that it was his own territory (next to one Georgian church), shouted in Russian: “Я Армян” (I am Armenian) and ended with that he knew neither Russian nor Georgian.

**Khojabegi** – The village *Khojabegi* was a separate administrative unit until 1980s. Now it is the part of Ninotsminda town, though it is still called as *Khojabegi*.

The archive materials of 1842 obtained by us verify the toponym **zogdanovka**. It belonged to Akhalkalaki district (Uchastka) that time. In the settlement of **Bogdanovka**, Akhalkalaki district (участке) lived 13 households of Dukhobors in 1842 (which included the families of Vasilenkov, Gremiakin, Grichin, Makhonin, Lukianov, Biriukov, Barabanov, Galushchev (illegible), Shliakov, Zheliaev (Fund 254, record 1, case 1946, page 68, 69, 70, 71; in total 67 persons in the village Bogdanovka).

As locals say, Dukhobors named the place *Bogdanovka*.

Armenian population of Khojabegi came from Kars, Erzurum Province and the village **Khojal** from Alashkert district, therefore the place is called **Khojabegi**.

The river is called **Agrichai** (it means *winding water*). Noteworthy, that the population of the Khojabegi used the name **Kura** (resp.: Mtkvari) for the river Javakhetis Mtkvari.

Today, the Armenian population settled in Khojabegi in 1830s calls a place in the nearby forest *Surp* (*the sacred place*). There is one more *Surp*//*Surpsar* **Ghalacha**. The fortress was found under this *Ghalacha*. On the north of *Ghalacha*, in the parallel ridge (where there is a farm), the toponym **Ghartula** with the variations K'artula//Kartula is attested. It is possible that **Ghartula** and **Ghalacha** are the same, what requires further study.

### Conclusions:

- Ninotsminda Municipality is the meeting area of different ethnic groups, like Georgians, Armenians, Russians, different languages, like **Georgian, Armenian, Russian** and dialects - **Javakhetian, Meskhetian, Acharian**, leading to many important problems for scientists and for state institutions;

- The speech of Armenians living in Ninotsminda is different from those who live in Akhalkalaki;

- According to the population, there are about 30% difference between their communication language and the state language of Armenia;

- Ethnic Armenians say that their ancestors used to speak Turkish language as well, though now nobody knows Turkish;

- The population in the age 60 and above knows Georgian poorly. They had Georgian classes only one hour per week at school and the teachers were not fulfilled their duty. Now they worry about their ignorance of Georgian language and would like to know it;

- According to the age group 60 and above, the state had to support and take the measures for them to learn the state language;

- Majority of the 40-50 age group is literate in Georgian. They speak poorly, but as for understanding, they indicate A2 level. They know Russian better than Georgian, because they were not taught Georgian grammar well at school;

- The age group of up to 40-noted that they were not aware of Georgian when they graduated the school, and those who know it well learned it while working in the public service;

- According to the age group 30- 40, they know “language a little”, they are able to write and read, understand the language but it is hard to speak for them;



- The language competency of the age group 15-25 is much better and it varies within A2-B1; The language competency is mainly A2 but certain part knows it at B1;
- Currently the children from 10-15 are better aware of language comparing to other age groups;
- All the students of the X-X-XI grade are enrolled at the Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration which ensures study of a state language together with schooling process;
- The population considers that the most of the daily problems are linked to ignorance of the language;
- They actually started learning the Georgian language 20 years ago in Javakheti; before that just one hour was given to the Georgian lesson in the curriculum and bearing just a symbolic character;
- Just two decades ago, the knowledge of the state language was neither a need nor an obligation for the Armenians, settled in Javakheti in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Today, both issues are on the agenda for them, however, problem of need and use is more emphasized while interviewing them;
- Their statement was more important: *As we do not know the language, we can not read the law*;
- The economic value of the language is highlighted. Knowledge of the language is very important not only for understanding the laws, but also for trading and in general, for business activities. As for the official side, all the documentations are filled in the state language and they would like to know what is written there. They say that due to ignorance of Georgian it is difficult for them to trade. Now they mainly deal with Georgians and they need to know the language;
- They say that many people have *Red Diploma* (i.e. Diploma of excellence), they are good resource for the employers, but they can not work as they are ignorant of Georgian;
- They indicate: **if you live in Georgia, you should know Georgian.** They consider that **the language competence is necessary, as they live in Georgia**;
- They also express attitude towards the state language in the way: **It is a Georgian land and it is impossible not to speak in Georgian**;
- They consider themselves as Georgian citizens and achievement of their future goals is linked to the knowledge of the state language;
- The population mentioned that **the state language shall be on the first place for all ethnic groups in Georgia**;
- Young generation highlighted the need for learning a state language, Georgian. They understand that the knowledge of the state language is a necessary condition for living in the state of Georgia. It is hard to be employed in the public services without knowing of a state language;
- During the last decade the special interest is noticed towards study of Georgian. If nobody spoke about the obligation and the need of learning Georgian before, now the situation is different, they are eager to learn Georgian;
- The respondents mentioned, that young generation (age group below 30) changed the situation in Javakheti. They have another demands and

the knowledge of the state language played a great role in it;

- Armenian population highlighted the importance of the knowledge of the history of Georgia;

- Ethnic Armenians communicate with Georgian population in Georgian-Russian and Georgian-Armenian. However, for the last years, they tried to speak in Georgian-Armenian and substitute Georgian-Russian speech this way;

- Ethnic Armenians have the desire that their children know Georgian well and they force them to play with Georgian children, to communicate with them;

- In Ninotsminda the village Poka is special by knowledge of Georgian language. Young people from Poka act as translators, assist elder generation in the hospitals and courts because of the language barrier. Young people below 40 mentioned that they have started speaking Georgian with support of the teacher of Georgian language and literature (Klara Potskhverashvili), who arrived here 26 years ago. Because of a great effort she was able to overcome the hardest obstacles for years and was able to teach and make the generations love Georgian language;

- The level of knowledge of Georgian language was much improved for the last years;

- The school should play the key role as it refers to the borderline area;

- Due to ignorance of the state language, young people used to go to Armenia for study, what required much more funding from the population; All of them says that getting an education is more expensive for them in Armenia;

- Knowledge of Georgian caused that now 80% of ethnic Armenians either stay in Samtskhe-Javakheti or goes to Tbilisi to get higher education. Very small part goes to Yerevan unlike previous years;

- They understood everything at the lectures and seminars at the beginning of the study at the higher educational institutions, though it was difficult to speak for them. Interaction with Georgian students and study of the specialty in Georgian language helped them to remove barriers totally;

- In recent years, ethnic Armenians choose Georgian philology as a specialty;

- They stimulated the elder generation and some of their parents started learning the Georgian language at the age of 55;

- In two villages, in Spasovka and Gorelovka, settling of Georgians contributed to understanding of the need of knowledge of Georgian language and changed the situation in terms of language. Almost all the ethnic Armenians know Georgian language here;

- Georgian children also know Armenian very well and the fact that they know the languages of each other supported to establishment of the good relationship between Georgian and Armenian people;

- Inclusion of young people in different projects supported to learning of the language;

- The study trips organized by the teachers of Georgian language and literature in all the parts of Georgia was beneficial;

- The school children from Poka visited the whole Georgia with the

performance “Gikor” by Ovanes Tumanian produced by the teacher of Georgian language and literature and they had relationship with their Georgian peers;

- And finally, establishment of the State University in the 90s of the twentieth century in the region had a crucial role for starting and supporting to teaching of the state language, which is called the Samtskhe-Javakheti State University now.

### **The Listed Reasons for Ignorance of the State Language:**

- Failure to take required and proper measures for learning language by the state, relevant structures for decades. On the other hand, we would add that any ethnic group in Georgia, especially in Javakheti, has not expressed similar desire or claim before;

- In addition to the fact that Georgian language language was given just one hour per week, they mention that Russian was the second language before, which was the priority and its study was encouraged;

- There was no need for study of the state language before;

- Lack of joint projects with Georgians for study language better;

- Lack of communication in Georgian language in the kindergarten; ethnic Armenians think that it is important to study Georgian since kindergarten to make the learning process easier;

- Lack of employment opportunities; their employment would contribute to better knowledge of the language;

- Lack of Georgian TV channels due to subjective or objective reasons;

- Very rare cultural events preventing improvement of the language competencies together with other reasons.

**Speech examples in the villages of Ninotsminda Municipality**

<p>მე სომეხი ვარ, მაგრამ ამ ქვეყნის მოქალაქე ვარ. ჩემი მშობლები წუხან, რომ ენა არ იციან. მე ამ ქვეყანაში ვაპირებ ცხოვრებას და მინდა კარგად ვიცოდე. ახალ ამბებს ვუყურებ, რომ ენა დავხვეწო. მუნიციპალიტეტში ენა არ იციან და მაინც ამუშავენ, მე ადგილი ვერ ვიშოვე.</p> <p>(მარუკ ბიჩახჩიანი, დაბადებული 1991 წელს, სოფელი პატარა გონდრიო)</p>	<p><i>I am Armenian, but I am the citizen of this country. My parents are sorry that they do not know the language. I am going to live in this country and I would like to know the language well. I watch news to improve my language. In the municipality, they do not know the language and they still work. I could not find a job.</i></p> <p>(Maruk Bichakhchyan, born in 1991, the village Patara Gondrio)</p>
<p>საქართველო ჩვენი ქვეყანაა და ენა გვჭირდება. ჩემი ოცნება ქართულის კარგად სწავლაა. მარტო ოცნება არ არის, ამისთვის უნდა იშრომო.</p>	<p><i>Georgia is our country and we need the language. My dream is to learn Georgian well. Just dreaming is not enough, you should work for it.</i></p> <p>(Arusiak Arabian, Born in 2005, the village Qulalisi)</p>

<p>(არუსიაკ არაბიანი, დაბადებული 2005 წელს, სოფელი ყულალისი)</p>	
<p>აქური სომხური სხვა სხვაგვარია, <b>მშო ბარ</b> (resp.: მუშის მეტყველება). სხვა სომხები რომ ლაპარაკობენ, ჩვენ რომ ვლაპარაკობთ, იმათ არ ესმით. არის სიტყვები, რომ არ ესმინ, ჩვენ გვესმის ყველა კილოები. ადრე მქონდა გრამატიკის რვეული (ქართული ენის სასწავლო რვეული - ი. ღ.), რადაც (რადაც-რადაცები - ი.ღ.) ვისწავლე ბათუმში. წელს პირველ კლასში ბავშვი აღარ გყავს (გვყავს - ი. ღ.). სამი ძმები ვართ, ერთი სწავლობს სასომხეთში, მეორე დაამთავრა ლენინაკანში, ეკონომიჩესკი დაამთავრა, ჩემზე ერთი წლით დიდია, მე ლენინაკანის სახელმწიფო</p>	<p><i>Armenian, speaking here, is different, <b>Msho Bar</b> (resp.: The speech of Mush). <i>Other Armenians do not understand our speech. There are words, they don't know. We understand all the dialects (speech I.Gh.).</i></i></p> <p><i>I had a grammar book (Georgian language workbook – I.Gh.) before, I studied some things in Batumi.</i></p> <p><i>We don't have students at the first grade.</i></p> <p><i>We are three brothers, one studies in Armenia, another graduated in Leninakan (city in Armenia – I.Gh.); He graduated the faculty of</i></p>

<p>უნივერსიტეტი დავამთავრე. ჩემი პირველი ენა სომხურია, მეორე ქართული, მესამე რუსული. მე მგონი, ჩემი ცოლისთვის პირველი (ენა - ი. ლ.) ქართულია.</p> <p>ბათუმში ვისწავლე ქართული, პროექტი იყო სკოლიდან, მანამდე ცოტა ვიცოდი.</p> <p>სკოლაში რომ დავდიოდი ადრე მე, მქონდა იმედი (ტელეარხი - ი. ლ.), მე იმით ბევრს ვსწავლობდი. თურქული კინოები არის, ქართული თარგმნილი რომ არის (ქართულად თარგმნილ თურქულ სერიებებს ვუყურებდი და იმით ბევრს ვსწავლობდი - ი. ლ.). გრამატიკულად რომ ლაპარაკობენ, 80% მესმის. საშუალოდ ვიცი ქართული,</p>	<p><i>economics. He is one year elder than me. I have finished the Leninakan State University. My first language is Armenian, the second is Georgian and the third language is Russian. I think, the first one (language – I.Gh.) is Georgian for my wife.</i></p> <p><i>I learnt Georgian in Batumi. It was the project from school, I knew few before it.</i></p> <p><i>When I went to school before, I had the Imedi (TV channel-I.Gh.). I learnt with its support. There are Turkish movies, translated into Georgian (I watched Turkish series translated into Georgian and I studied much from them - I.Gh.). They speak good language properly, grammarly, I understand 80% of</i></p>
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<p>რუსული საშუალოდ (რუსული საშუალოდ ვიცი - ი. ლ.).</p> <p>სამი წყარო გვაქვს, ერთი ვამბობთ ხორხორი (საკუთარი სახელია, წყაროსთვის ხელოვნურად შერქმეული - ი. ლ.), გელიახბიურ (სოფლის წყარო - ი. ლ.), ხალუ ახბიურ (საკუთარი სახელია - ი. ლ.). ერთი წყარო კიდევ სოფლიდან შორს არის, იქნება კილომეტრ-ნახევარი, პალახბიურ (ცივი წყარო - ი. ლ.), ძალიან ცივია, ერთი როდის უნდა დალიო (რა დროსაც უნდა დალიო - ი. ლ.), ერთ გრადუსშია. ზამთარში რომ სვამ თბილია, ოქტომბერში რომ სვამ, რა ცივია, იცი?</p> <p>ცხენი პატარა რომ ვარ, იმიდან (იმ დროიდან - ი. ლ.) მიყვარს. ზამთარში რომ საქონელი ჭამს, დანარჩენი ცხენი ჭამს (საქონელი რასაც ჭამს, იმას ჭამს</p>	<p><i>it. My Georgian is intermediate as well as my Russian.</i></p> <p><i>We have three springs. We call one of them Khorkhor (a propername, artificially assigned to a spring- I.Gh.), Geghiakhbiur (village spring - I.Gh.) is the name of the second spring, and Khalu Akhbiur (a proper name- I.Gh.) for the third one. There is one more spring which is far from the village, it will be around a kilometer and a half, Paghakhbiur (cold spring – I.Gh.), it’s very cold, no matter when you drink it. It’s at the same temperature. If you drink it in winter, it’s warm, but in October, do you know how cold it is?</i></p> <p><i>I love a horse since my childhood. In winter, a horse eats the same as cattle do. I think, one bale dry hay</i></p>
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<p>ცხენი - ი. ლ.). თივა ხომ მშრალია, ერთი პრესი. მე მგონი სამი დღე ეყოფა. დაბანა იცი, როგორია ცხენის? ზამთარში დაჯდება თოვლზე, შენ მოატრიალებ (თოვლს დააყრი და დაასრეს ცხენს - ი. ლ.), მერე დადნება და დასუფთება (გასუფთავდება ცხენი - ი. ლ.).</p> <p>გაზაფხული რომ მოვა, გარეთ ბალახს ჭამს, თმები ჩავა (დასცვივდება - ი. ლ.), ახალი თმები ავა (ამოუვა - ი. ლ.). გრძელი თმები ქონდეს ზამთარში რომ გაცივდეს, მერე ის ჩავა გაზაფხულში და მოკლე თმები მოვიდა (ზამთარში რომ გრძელი თმები აქვს, ის გაზაფხულზე გასცვივდება და გაზაფხულზე ახალი ამოსდის - ი. ლ.). ცხენს მარილს აჭამო (მარილი უნდა აჭამო - ი. ლ.), რომ ირბინებს, რომ ცუდი სუნი არ მოვიდეს (სირბილისას და</p>	<p><i>will be enough for three days. Do you know how the horse washes itself? It sits on the snow, you throw snow on it and rub a horse with snow, then it will melt and the horse becomes clean.</i></p> <p><i>When spring comes, it grazes outside, hair falls, and the new one grows. The horse has a long hair in winter, it will fall in spring and new one grows in spring. You have to feed a horse with salt, to avoid bad smell. It is for years since I have not been for racing. I am not eager now. There are two or three horses in the village now. There were seventeen before.</i></p>
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<p>გაოფლიანებისას ცუდი სუნი რომ არ აუვიდეს - ი. დ.). ოთხი წელია არ წავალ (ოთხი წელია საჯირითოდ არ დავდივარ - ი. დ.), მეზარება ახლა. ახლა ორისამი ცხენია სოფელში, ადრე ჩვიდმეტი ცალი იყო.</p> <p>ჩემს შვილს გიორგი დავარქვი. აქ ურთიერთობა ნაკლებია, არავინ ჩამოდის კულტურული ღონისძიებით.</p> <p>(ალიკა ამირხანიანი, დაბადებული 1997 წელს, სოფელი უჯმანა).</p>	<p><i>I called Giorgi to my son. The communication is less here, nobody visits us with cultural events here.</i></p> <p>(Alika Amirkhanyan, born in 1997, the village Ujmana)</p>
<p>ჩვენ საქართველოში ვცხოვრობთ, ქართული უნდა იცოდე. ახლა ჩვენ სკოლაში ქართული აუცილებელია. სუყველა ენა იცოდება (უნდა იცოდე - ი.დ.). საქართველო ჩემი დედამიწაა, მე აქ დავიზადე, აქ გავიზარდე. თბილისში ექიმთან მივდივარ. საქართველოში</p>	<p><i>We live in Georgia. You should know Georgian. Now Georgian language is necessary at our school. Everybody have to know language. Georgia is my land. I was born here. I was grown up here. I am going to Tbilisi for a doctor. I live in Georgia. I should know the history of Georgia from the</i></p>

<p>ვცხოვრობ, საქართველოს ისტორია უნდა იცოდეს დაბლიდან ზემოთ (დასაწყისიდან დღევანდლამდე - ი.ღ.) მე სომეხი ვარ, თბილისში ვცხოვრობდი და ვიცი. ხუთი კაროვა მყავს. მთელი 40 წელი მუშაობდა საქართველო (ხუთი ძროხა მყავს, მამაჩემი 40 წელი მუშაობდა საქართველოში - ი.ღ.)</p>	<p><i>beginning to now. I am Armenian. I lived in Tbilisi and I know the Georgian language.  I have five cows. My father worked in Georgia for 40 years.</i></p>
<p>სახელმწიფომ უნდა იცოდეს, რომ ადგილობრივს უნდა უწყობდეს (ხელს უნდა უწყობდეს - ი.ღ.). სომეხი, ქართველი სულერთიანი კაცი ვარ (სომეხი, ქართველი ერთნი ვართ - ი.ღ.). ქართული სკოლაში ვისწავლე, თბილისში ვცხოვრობდი და ვიცი. მე სომეხი ვარ, როგორმე ქართული ვიცი (ასე თუ ისე ქართული ვიცი - ი.ღ.). მდინარეს ქვია ტაფარვანა, ქურა</p>	<p><i>The state should support the locals. Armenian, Georgian are the same. I studied Georgian at school, I lived in Tbilisi and I know. I am Armenian, know Georgian more or less.  The river is called <b>Taparvana,</b> <b>Kura.</b></i></p>

<p>(რაფიკ ელოიანი, დაბადებული 1953 წელს, სოფელი ოროჯოლარი).</p>	<p>(Rapik Eloyan, born in 1953, the village Orojolari)</p>
<p>წალკიდან რომ გადიხარ, ბევრი სოფელი პერიმენოვალი (სახელები შეუცვალეს - ი.ღ.) გამსახურდიას მომენტიდან დაიწყო. ახლა ბატკანა და ოროჯოლარი ერთი სოფელია. ბატკანაში ბევრი ქონიათ ცხვარის ისა ხომ (ბატკანი - ი.ღ.). წყაროებს სახელი არა აქვს (გარეგინ ქაზაიანი, დაბადებული 1964 წელს, სოფელი ოროჯოლარი).</p>	<p><i>When you leave Tsalka, many villages were renamed (the names were changed – I.Gh.). It has started since the period of Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Now Batkana and Orojolari are one village. There were many lambs in Batkana. The springs have no name.</i></p> <p>(Garegin Kazayan, born in 1964, the village Orojolari)</p>
<p>სკოლიდან დავიწყე ლაპარაკი. კლარა (ფოცხვერაშვილი) მასწავლებელმა დამაწყებინა. თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტში ჩავაბარე საერთაშორისო ურთიერთობაზე. ოთხი წელი ვისწავლე მანდ. 2017 წელს დავამთავრე, 2019 წელს დავიწყე</p>	<p><i>I have started speaking since school. My teacher Klara (Potskhverashvili) helped me to start. I entered Tbilisi State University, faculty of International Relationship. I studied there for four years. I graduated in 2017. In 2019, I started working at the Public Hall.</i></p>

<p>მუშაობა იუსტიციის სახლში. ადრე იყო საზოგადოებრივი ცენტრი, წელს გახდა იუსტიციის სახლი. ეს ააშენეს 2013 წელს.</p> <p>როცა ჩავაბარე უნივერსიტეტში, მესმოდა ყველაფერი, ლაპარაკი მიჭირდა, ურთიერთობიდან მოდის ხოლმე. 70%-ს კლასის ესმოდა. დედას და მამას ესმოდა. დედაჩემმა ახლა დაიწყო სწავლა სპეციალობიდან გამომდინარე, დაწყებითის მასწავლებელია.</p> <p>ჩემმა თაობამ ნახევარმა იცის. ახლა ურთიერთობა ნაკლები გახდა. სახლში მარტო სომხურად ვლაპარაკობ, სამსახურშიც პრინციპში, მარტო კლარა მასწავლებელთან ვლაპარაკობ. ქართულ არხებს აქ არ იჭერს. როცა გავდივარ სოფლიდან, მაშინ ვლაპარაკობ.</p>	<p><i>There was the community center first and then it turned into Public Hall. It was built in 2013.</i></p> <p><i>When I entered the university, I could understand everything; it was hard for me to speak. It comes from communication. 70% of class could understand. My mother and father could understand. However, my mother has just started learning because of her specialty. She is a teacher of a primary school.</i></p> <p><i>The half of my generation knows. Now we communicate less. We speak only Armenian at home, at work as well. We speak Georgian only with Klara, my teacher. There is no coverage of Georgian channels. We speak Georgian only when we leave the village. My generation does not speak even in Ninotsminda. They do not speak</i></p>
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<p>ჩემი თაობა ნინოწმინდაშიც არ ლაპარაკობს, მერიაშიც არ ლაპარაკობენ. როცა ქართულად კარგად მცოდნენი ერთად ვართ, მაინც დგას ერთი ისეთი, რომელმაც არ იცის ქართული და ამიტომ მაინც სომხურად ვლაპარაკობთ.</p>	<p><i>even in the town hall. When those who know Georgian well are together, but there is the one who does not know Georgian, we still speak Armenian.</i></p>
<p>სწავლის დონე ქართულის უფრო ამაღლდა. ახლა უფრო დამოკიდებული არიან, რომ ისწავლონ. უფრო ბევრი დადის უნივერსიტეტში, ადრე დადიოდნენ სომხეთში, ჩვენ ვიყავით მესამე თაობა, ვინც საქართველოში ისწავლა, 2012 წელს ჩავაბარე. ენა არ იცოდნენ და ამიტომ მიდიოდნენ. იქ უფრო ძვირი ღირს სწავლა. აქ კავშირი მეტია, მარშრუტკა დადის თბილისში.</p>	<p><i>The level of teaching Georgian has improved. They are more motivated to study. More people go to the university. They used to go to Armenia before. We were the third generation who studied in Georgia. I entered the university in 2012. They did not know the language and therefore they used to go. The study is more expensive there. There is more communication here. The minibus goes to Tbilisi.</i></p>
<p>ჩვენი სოფლიდან ყველაზე მეტმა აქ (ნინოწმინდაში - ი.ღ.) იცის</p>	<p><i>The majority who knows Georgian here (in Ninotsminda – I. Gh.) are from our village with support of Ms. Klara (Potskhverashvili). Georgian</i></p>

<p>ქართული ქალბატონ კლარას (ფოცხვერაშვილი) მეოხებით. ყველაზე გამართულად აქ საუბრობენ და ყველაზე მეტი სტუდენტი ფოკიდან არიან. ფოკელი სტუდენტები არიან თარჯიმნები ახალქალაქისა და ნინოწმინდის დანარჩენი სტუდენტების.</p> <p>საავადმყოფოშიც აქაური სტუდენტები აღმოუჩენენ დახმარებას, სასამართლოშიც (მელიქ ქოსიანი, დაბადებული 1994 წელს, სოფელი ფოკა).</p>	<p><i>language is spoken most fluently here and the more students are from Poka. The students from Poka are translators for the rest of students from Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda. The local students support in the hospital and court.</i></p> <p>(Melik Kosian, born in 1994, the village Poka)</p>
<p>ადიგენში სამოცდათექვსმეტ (1976 წელს - ი.ღ.) წელში ჩამოვედით, შევარდნაძის დრო იყო. სკოლა გაიხსნა, კულტურა ჩამოიტანეს (აჭარლებმა - ი.ღ.), დაგვილი რო დაინახეს, აქ აჭარელი ცხოვრობსო.</p>	<p><i>We arrived in Adigeni in seventy-six (1976 - I.Gh.). It was the time of Shevardnadze. The school was opened. They brought the culture (Acharians-I.Gh.). When they saw the cleaned places, they said that Acharian lived there.</i></p>

<p>სომეხს აქვს ათასობით ჰექტარი, აჭარელის მიწაში ამოდის 6 ჰექტარი. ჩვენ სახელმწიფო პროგრამაში არ მოგვახვედრებენ. ბოსელი რომ გავაკეთო, ჩემი ფული არ მყოფნის, კრედიტს ვერ დავფარავ, სახლის ყიდვის ფასი აქვს. არ გავიფორმებთ ახლავ (მიწებს - ი.ღ.), როცხა იქნება, გავიფორმებთო. მიწები ოღონდ არ აიღოს აჭარელმა... გაზი სპეციალურად არ არის. 60-ზე მეტი ოჯახია. ზოგიერთი ღიად იბრძვის, რომ აქ ქართველი არ შემოვიდეს. ველარ დგას უკვე აქ ხალხი, სულ გვატყუებენ. ჩვენ ჩვენი პრინციპი გვაქვს.</p> <p>წარმოიდგინე, ადიგენში მეტი საშუალება ვნახე საქონლის შენახვის, ვიდრე აქ. ერთი სომეხის მიწა 100 ქართველს მოგვეციო, ვთქვიო,</p>	<p><i>Armenians have thousands of hectares. Only 6 hectares are given to the Acharian. We are never involved in the state program. I have not got enough money to make a cattle-shed. I cannot repay a loan; it has the same prices like buying a house. They said that they would not register lands now; when it is time we will do it... They try not to give lands to Acharian... They do not provide gas intentionally. There are more than 60 households. Some of them struggle openly to prevent coming of Georgians here. The people cannot stand any more. They cheat us all the time. We have our principle.</i></p> <p><i>Imagine there were more possibilities to keep livestock in Adigeni than here. We asked to give the lands of one Armenian to 100 Georgians. They were not able</i></p>
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<p>ეს ვერ გააკეთეს. თხუთმეტი კვამლი კარგად ცხოვრობს.</p> <p><b>აჭარელი არის საქართველოს სინოპტიკოსი, თავით სომხები ვერ შრომობენ.</b></p> <p><b>შეხებოდი, ქართული იცოდენ (სომხებმა ი.ღ.) არ დეილაპარაკებდენ.</b></p> <p>სკოლის უმაღური მე არასდროს ვყოფილვარ. ახალგაზრდა გოგოები იყნენ, სახელის დარქმევა ხომ არ გინდათო (სოფლისთვის ქართული სახელის დარქმევა ხომ არ გინდათო - ი.ღ), მოგეხმარებითო თბილისში. გვინდოდა სუფთა ქართული სახელი, ჩვენ ეს ვერ მოვახერხეთ. ვერცერთი სომეხის ხმა ვერ გაიღებს (სოფელს ქართული სახელი რომ დავარქვათ - ი.ღ.)</p>	<p><i>to do it. Just fifteen families live well.</i></p> <p><i>Acharian is the forecaster of Georgia. Armenians do not work by head.</i></p> <p><i>They (Armenians – I.Gh.) knew Georgian. When we met them, they never speak the Georgian language.</i></p> <p><i>I have never been dissatisfied with the school. The young girls arrived and asked, if we would like to rename a village by Georgian name. We can help you in Tbilisi, -said they. We would like to have a purely Georgian name, but we were not able to manage this. No Armenian will say anything (to name a village by Georgian name - I.Gh.).</i></p>
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<p>აქ თქვენ მოსლამდინ აქურობას რა ერქვა, შევეკითხები სომეხს, არ ამბობს (ომარ შავაძე, დაბადებული 1941 წელს, ხულოს რაიონის სოფელი ღორჯომიდან გადმოსახლებული, სოფელი გორელოვკა).</p>	<p><i>If you ask an Armenians what was the name of this place before their arrival, they do not say anything.</i> (Omar Shavadze, born in 1941, migrated from the village Ghorjomi, Khulo district, the village Gorelovka)</p>
<p>ადიგენში ხულოდან მოვედით. ადიგენი კარგია ძალიან. აქ ჭალები არ გვაქვს, 2 ჰექტარი გვაქვს. გამგებელი სომეხია, სომეხს მიეხმარა (სომეხს ეხმარება - ი.ღ). ძალიან საცოდავათ ვართ, მიწები რომ არ გექნება, რით უნდა იარსებო? მათ აქვთ 4000-5000, პრესები აქვთ, ჩვენ ზეით დარჩენილები გვაქვს, ტრაქტორი არ მიუდგება. წყალი რამხელა ძვირია! აქ მიწა იყო (სახლში - ი.ღ.), ერთი ათასი ვედრო,</p>	<p><i>We arrived in Adigeni from Khulo. Adigeni is very good. We have no meadow here. We have 2 hectares. Ruler is Armenian. She helps to Armenians. We are very poor as we have no lands, how can we survive? They have 4,000- 5,000, they have bales; we have just leftovers in the upper part. A tractor cannot access there. Water is so expensive!</i>  <i>There was a thousand buckets land in the house, it was not normal for</i></p>

<p>ნორმალური არ იყო. გავწმინდეთ, კედელა გავაკეთეთ, შიგნით არ იცხოვრებოდა. გაგვიხსნეს ეს კარი (სახლის კარი - ი.ღ.), მიწა იყო სულა.</p> <p>(ფატი დიმიტრაძე, დაბადებული 1961 წელს, ხულოს რაიონის სოფელი ღორჯომიდან გადმოსახლებული, სოფელი გორელოვკა).</p>	<p><i>living conditions. We cleaned it, built the walls. You could not live inside. They opened the door of a house. The house was full of dirt.</i></p> <p>(Pati Dimitradze, born in 1961, migrated from the village Ghorjomi of Khulo District, the village Gorelovka)</p>
<p>ჩემს ერთად 3 ოჯახი ჩამოვიდა 2012 წელს, მე ახალი ვარ (ახალჩამოსული - ი.ღ.). აჭარაში ეროზიაა. პირველად კახეთში მომცეს, ახმეტის რაიონის სოფელი ფიჩხოვანში სახლი. დედა, მამა იქ ცხოვრობენ. მე გამიჭირდა სამსახურის შოვა. აქ ვნახე სამუშაო, გორელოვკაში ვცხოვრობ. სამებაში და</p>	<p><i>3 families arrived together with me in 2012. I am a newcomer. There is erosion in Achara. First, I was given a house in Kakheti, the village Pichkhovani, Akhmeta district. My mother, father live there. It was difficult for me to find a job. I found a job here. I live in Gorelovka. I teach history and</i></p>



<p>ორლოვკაში ვასწავლი ისტორიას და გეოგრაფიას. ბათუმში დავამთავრე.</p> <p>სომეხი ვერ ვისწავლე, ყველა სომეხი რუსულად მელაპარაკება. ბევრს ვამჩნევ, რომ იცის იმიტომ, რომ ბაზასთან (სასწავლო ბაზასთან - ი.ღ.) ურთიერთობა ყველას აქვს. ამ ბოლო მომენტში ქართულს ეძალებიან, უნდათ რომ იცოდნენ, ავალებენ, რომ ქართველ ბავშვებთან ითამაშონ, ურთიერთობა ჰქონდეთ. ჩემმა ბავშვებმა (5 შვილი ჰყავს - ი.ღ.) კარგად იციან სომხური. ძალიან კარგი ურთიერთობა აქვთ სამებაში ქართველ და სომეხ ბავშვებს. გორელოვკაშიც ძალიან თბილი ურთიერთობა აქვთ. ორლოვკაში ვერ ურთიერთობენ იმიტომ, რომ არც ქართველ ბავშვებს აქვთ</p>	<p><i>geography in Sameba and Orlovka. I graduated in Batumi.</i></p> <p><i>I could not learn Armenian, as everybody speaks in Russian to me. I understand that many of them know, as everybody is linked with the base (educational system base – I.Gh). Recently they are more eager to study Georgian; they would like to know it. They demand from their children to play with Georgian children. My children (he has 5 children – I.Gh.) know Armenian well. Georgian and Armenian children have very good relationship in Sameba. They have very warm relationship in Gorelovka as well. They do not communicate in Orlovka, because neither Georgian nor Armenian kids have a desire.</i></p>
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<p>სურვილი, არც სომხებს. მიწასთან დაკავშირებით პრობლემები ჰქონდათ მეზობლობაში და ბავშვებზე აისახა. სკოლის ხელმძღვანელზეც ბევრია დამოკიდებული. სომხებს 6-7 ჰექტარი აქვს, ქართველს ჰექტარ-ნახევარი, 2 ჰექტარი მაქსიმუმი. სახელმწიფო ამას საერთოდ არ უყურებს.</p>	<p><i>They had the land-related problem in the neighborhood and it influenced the children as well. School management can also do much. Armenians have 6-7 hectares, while Georgians have maximum 2 hectares. The state does not care about it.</i></p>
<p>ბიბლიოთეკა არ გვაქვს სკოლაში (სამებაში - ი.ღ.), ორლოვკაშიც არა აქვთ. სკოლა აქ უნდა იყოს დედაბოძი, საზღვარზე. რაც აქ ვარ, შარშან პირველად ჩატარდა ჟდანოვის სასოფლო კლუბში საცირკო წარმოდგენა. მეოთხე წელია აქ ვარ და პირველად იყო. ჩვენც არ გამოგვიჩენია ინიციატივა.</p> <p>                  აქედან წასვლა არ მიფიქრია (ზურაბ შავაძე,</p>	<p><i>We have no a library at school in Sameba, there is not in Orlovka as well. The school should be the main place here, at the borderline. Since I have been here, there was circus performance in the Zhdanovi community club for the first time. It is my fourth year here and it was the first time. We did not show any initiative either.</i></p> <p><i>I have never thought about leaving. (Zurab Shavadze, born in</i></p>

<p>დაბადებული 1979 წელს, ხულოს რაიონის სოფელი ღორჯომიდან გადმოსახლებული, სოფელი გორელოვკა).</p>	<p>1979, migrated from the village Ghorjomi, Khulo district to the village Gorelovka).</p>
<p>2002 წელს ჩამოვედით ხულას რაიონის სოფელი ღორჯომიდან. ჩვენ, აჭარლები, ხულოდან ვართ ყველა წამოსული. ახლა კაი ურთიერთობა გვაქვს, ადრე ჩვენი ტვირთი, ბარგი მოკოჭვილი გვქონდა და მივდიოდით (აქედან - ი.ღ.), ძნელი იყო. ჩვენი სოფელი ერთი ქუჩა არის.</p> <p>ადრე გასაქანი იყო ბავშვებისთვის. ახლა არა, ადრე ყველაფერი გვქონდა, ახლა შეზღუდვებია. მაშინ ყველაფერს შევექცოდით (ყველაფერს ვთამაშობდით - ი.ღ.), ამდენი სათამაშო სად იყო? ადრე</p>	<p><i>We arrived here in 2002 from the village Ghorjomi of Khulo district. We, all the Acharians are from Khulo. Now we have good relationship, before we had packed our luggage, baggage and were going to leave this place, it was difficult to stay here. Our village is one street.</i></p> <p><i>There were many things for children before. Now the situation has been changed, we had everything before, now there are limitations. We used to do everything, we played everything. There were not so many toys before! We had sledges, skis before. We were skating, we were</i></p>

<p>ციგები, თხილამურები  გვეონდა, ვცურაობდით  (ვსრიალებდით - ი.ღ.). რკინის  ციგებს დასვარკვედენ, ადრე  თუმს ვეძახდით. რომ  გაგვიკეთებდენ,  დავჯდებოდით და  ვსრიალებდით. ასე გვეტყოდენ,  თუში ქვიაო. ასე გრძელები იყო,  ხისგან გაკეთებული,  დავდგებოდით ზედა,  გადასაკრავები ქონდა, თოკებით  გვიკეთებდენ, დროხის  ტყავისგან კეთდებოდა. დროხას  ხომ გავხდიდით, გავაძრობდით  ტყავს, ის რომ გახმებოდა,  გვერდიდან ჩამოვაჭრიდით  ვიწრო ტყავს, იმას  გავასუფთავებდით,  დავაკრავდით ამ ხეზე ფეხის  ზომაზე, ჩავიცმევდით, როგორც  თასმებს შევიკრავ, ფეხზე რომ არ  გაგვძრომოდან. მე არ მაქვს  ჩაცმული, მაი ბიჭების იყო. ჩვენ</p>	<p><i>tobogganing. The iron toboggans  were welded for us, we called  them "Tushi" before. When they  made tushis for use, we used to sit  and toboggan. We were told that  its name was Tushi. They were  long, made from wood. We stood  on them. It had the rope covers,  made from the cow leather. When  we would skin a cow, it was dried,  we cut a narrow piece of leather  from the side, clean it and tie it to  the size of the leg, put it on, tie  them like lace to fix them on our  feet. I have never worn it. It was  for boys. The girls skated by Tushi.  (Tobogganed - I.Gh.). I wore new  galosh at school. Everybody was  happy with new ones.</i></p>
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<p>თუშებით ცვურავდით (ვსრიალებდით -ი.ღ.) იმით ცვურავდით გოგოები. მე სკოლაში ახალ კალოშს ჩავიცმევდი, ახალი ყველას გვიხაროდა.</p> <p>მე ათი კლასი მაქვს დამთავრებული. ოთხი წელი ვისწავლე დაწყებითებზე, მეოთხე წელი აღარ დამიმთავრებია, აქ ჩამოვიბარგე, დრო აღარ მეონდა, ბავშვებს, ოჯახს მიხედვა უნდოდა.</p> <p>აქ უფრო გაადვილებულია ცხოვრება, არაფერი არ გამჭირვებია. აქ ფერმებში დევიწყეთ მუშაობა. ერთი ფერმა მუშაობდა მაშინ. ძროხას ვწველიდით. რძეს იბარებდნენ და მიქონდათ. შარშან ოქტომბერში ორი ლარი იყო, მერე გაგვიაფეს, ლარ-ოთხმოცზე ჩამოვიდა</p>	<p><i>I finished ten classes. I studied for four years at the faculty of elementary education, but I have not finished the fourth year. I was resettled here. I had no time, children, and family required my care.</i></p> <p><i>The life is easier now. Nothing was difficult for me. We started working in the farms. There was just one farm that time. We were milking cows. They collected milk. The price was two lari last October, then it became cheaper, it was reduced till one Lari and forty Tetri.</i></p> <p>(Pati Tsintskaladze, born in 1962, moved from the village Ghorjomi, Khulo district, the village Spasovka)</p>
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<p>(ფატი წინწკალაძე, დაბადებული 1962 წელს, ხულოს რაიონის სოფელ ღორჯომიდან გადმოსახლებული, სოფელი სპასოვკა).</p>	
<p>გამგეობასთან მომივიდა კამათი, ყანა წამართვეს, კაცი მეუბნება, წადი შენ ხულოშია. დედაჩემი ბათუმელი ქალი იყო, იქ გავიზარდე.</p> <p>90-იან წლებში (გვითხრეს - ი.ღ) აქედან წადითო.</p> <p>რუსული ზედმიწევნით კარგად ვიცი, მაგრამ რაიონში ქართულად ვლაპარაკობ, თუ მან გამიჭირდა, მაშინ გადავდივარ რუსულზე.</p> <p>სუყველამ იცის ქართული. თბილისიდან იყვნენ ორი ბიჭები, შემეკითხეს,</p>	<p><i>I had the conflict with an administration; they took my land, a man said, go to your Khulo. My mother was a woman from Batumi. I was grown there.</i></p> <p><i>Asked (They say –I.Gh.) to leave this place in 90s of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.</i></p> <p><i>I know Russian very well, though I speak Georgian in the district center. I use Russian if it becomes very difficult. Everybody knows the Georgian language. Two people came from Tbilisi and asked me, if I were in the</i></p>



<p>მთავრობაში რომ იყო, რას იზამდიო, მეწყინა.</p> <p>დუხობორებთან ოჯახებით სიახლოვე გვექონდა, კრიმში (ყირიმში - ი.ღ.) წავიდნენ. აქ დარჩენილმა ერთმა დუხობორმა უთხრა (ეთნიკურ სომეხს, როდესაც ეკითხებოდა წასვლას აპირებდა თუ არა - ი.ღ.), ჩემი სამშობლო აქ არის, რად მინდა თქვენი რუსეთიო (გურამ წინწკალაძე, დაბადებული 1962 წელს, ხულოს რაიონის სოფელი ღორჯომიდან გადმოსახლებული, სოფელი სპასოვკა).</p>	<p><i>government, what I would do. I did not like it.</i></p> <p><i>We had close relations with Dukhobors by families. They left for Crimea. One of the Dukhobor, who stayed here said to ethnic Armenians, when he was interested if he was going to leave: My homeland is here, why do I need your Russia?</i></p> <p>(Guram Tsintskaladze, born in 1962, migrated from the village Ghorjomi to Khulo district, the village Spasovka)</p>
<p>ოთხმოცდათექსმეტში ჩამოვედი, ხონში ვცხოვრობდი, გავაგდე ხონში (დავტოვე ხონი - ი. ღ.), მეხუთე ზონაში ვცხოვრობდით. მეხუთე ზონა პატიმრების ნამყოფი ადგილია. ადრე გაგვიჭირდა, რომ ახალად</p>	<p><i>I came here in 1996, I lived in Khoni. I left Khoni, we lived in the fifth zone; the fifth zone is the former settlement of prisoners. It was difficult for us before, when we were newcomers. They did not want Georgian people here. They</i></p>

<p>ვიყავით ჩამოსული. არ უნდოდათ ქართველი ხალხი, არ უყვარან, ჩვენი ხალხი არ უნდათ, მიწა, წყალი უნდათ ჩვენი. ახლა ღმერთს მადლობა, ქართველები, სომხები ერთი ოჯახი ვართ.</p> <p>სომხური ცოტა ვიცი, პატარას ვლაპარაკობ, პატარას ვიგებ. დუხოზორებს რუსულად ველაპარაკებოდით. 1996 წელს იყვნენ აქ დუხოზორები, ჩვენს მერე წავიდნენ (ჩვენი აქ ჩამოსვლის შემდეგ წავიდნენ - ი. ღ.). ერთი ხუთი წელი მაინც ჩემი მეზობლები იყვნენ, კაი ხალხი იყვნენ. მაგენი ცხოვრობდნენ რუსების წესი არ იცი, დალევა უყვარდათ, სასაფლაოზე გადიოდნენ. ახლა აქ ერთი კოლია კურბატოვია, ქართული ჩვენ ვასწავლეთ (ნოდარ მეკვიძე, დაბადებული 1970 წელს, ხულოს რაიონის სოფელ</p>	<p><i>did not love us. They did not like our people. They would like our land, water. Now thanks God, Georgians, Armenians, we are one family.</i></p> <p><i>I know little Armenian, I speak a little, I understand a little. We used to speak with Dukhobors in Russian. In 1996 there were Dukhobors here, they left after our arrival. They were my neighbors around five years. They were good people. They lived like Russians, they loved drinking; they used to go to the graveyard. Now there is only one Kolya Kurbatov, we taught him Georgian.</i></p>
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<p>ლორჯომიდან გადმოსახლებული, სოფელ სპასოვკა).</p>	<p>(Nodar Mekeidze, Born in 1970, displaced from the village Ghorjomi, Khulo District, the village Spasovka).</p>
<p>გურიაში ვარ დაბადებული, ხულოდან გურიაში, ნასაკირალში წავიდნენ საცხოვრებლად, ბებია, ბაბუა, მამაჩემი. მამაჩემი მესამე-მეოთხე კლასში იყო, რომ გადავიდნენ. დედა ოზურგეთელია, მურმანიძე. ხულოში ნამყოფი ვარ, ნაცხოვრები არ მაქვს. დედა და მამა აქ რომ არიან, ხან აჭარულად ლაპარაკობენ, ხან გურულად. მე ხუთი წლის ვიყავი, აქ რომ წამოვედი. მე გურული კილოც მაქვს, აჭარულიც და აქაურიც. ადვილად ვიკიდებ (ვითვისებ - ი.ღ.) კილოებს. აქ ზოგი სუფთა აჭარულად ლაპარაკობს, ზოგი</p>	<p><i>I was born in Guria, my grandma, grandpa and my father went to Nasakirali, Guria from Khulo. My father was in the third or fourth grade when they moved. My mother is from Ozurgeti, Murmanidze. I have been to Khulo, but I have never lived there. When my mother and father are here, they sometimes speak Acharian, sometimes by Gurian dialects. When I left, I was five years old. I have a Gurian accent, Acharian and local as well. I learn the dialects easily. Some people speak purely Acharian here. The Achharian dialect of the elder and younger generation is the same. I graduated stylists'</i></p>

<p>შერეულად. უფროსები  აჭარულად ლაპარაკობენ.  უფროსი და შემდეგი თაობის  აჭარული დიალექტი აქ ერთია.  სტილისტობა მაქვს  დამთავრებული, ბათუმში  დავამთავრე, იქ ნათესავები  არიან. ორი წელი მაქვს  ნამუშევარი.  ჩვენ (ქართველები - ი.ღ.)  და სომხები ახალგაზრდები  ქართულად ვლაპარაკობთ  ერთმანეთთან.  ოჯახი მყავს, ცოლი არ  მუშაობს სადმე ჯერჯერობით.  ცოლს ყველაფერი ეხერხება -  ძროხის მოწველა, საჭმლის  კეთება. მე ხინკალი მიყვარს,  ქალაქური, გამომდის კიდევ.  ჩაკვეთილი ყველი ჰქვია,  იმას გამოვიყვანთ, მერე  ჩავწურავ, შრატს გამოვიყვან,  მერე კარგად დააწვები, რომ  სიმაგრე ქონდეს, მერე ამოიღებ,</p>	<p>course. I did it in Batumi. My  relatives are there. I worked for  two years.   We (Georgian-I.Gh.) and  Armenian young people speak in  Georgian with each other.   I have a family. My wife is not  working yet. My wife can do  everything, milking a cow,  cooking. I love khinkali. I can do  kalakuri khinkali.   It's called curdled cheese, we take  it out from milk, then we squeeze  it, we take whey out, then we  press it so that it has firmness, then  we take it out, cut it evenly and  finely, then we pour boiled water,  rub it together well, take it out</p>
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<p>ბტყლად და თხლად დაჭრი, მერე მდულარე წყალს დაასხამ, მერე ერთმანეთში კარგად შეიზილება, კოვზით რომ ამოწევ, გაიწელოს უნდა; მერე ჩვეულებრივ ბურთივით მრგვად გააკეთებ ცხელ წყალში, ცხელ წყალში უნდა ზილო. ბურთივით რომ იქნება, პატარა ჯამები რომ არის, ჩადებ შიგნით, პრიალა რომ იყოს. მთლიანი კვერცხი ცივ მარილიან წყალში უნდა ჩადო, ზემოდან კვერცხი რომ ამოტივტივდება, საკმარისია. მერე შიგნით (ამ წყალში - ი.ღ.) უნდა ჩააგდო ეს ყველი და ოთხი-ხუთი დღე ყოფნის, რომ შეუვიდეს მარილი. ჭამაც მიყვარს და კეთებაც.</p> <p>ოთხი ძაღლი მყავდა, პატარა ფინია, მეცხვარე ჯიში, კიდევ მყავდა ბომბორა, ნაჯვარი ჯიში იყო; ერთი გოგო ძაღლი</p>	<p><i>with a spoon. It should stretch; As usual, you should make it round like a ball in hot water, you have to roll it. When it is like a ball, put it in the small bowl to be shiny. You should put an egg in cold salted water. If the egg floats on the top, it is enough. Then you have to throw into this water and leave it for four or five days to absorb salt. I like to eat and do it.</i></p> <p><i>I had four dogs, a small lapdog, and a shepherd breed. I had a Bombora, a crossbreed as well; I had one female dog, mare. The shepherd grew elder and died.</i></p>
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<p>მყავდა, ჭაკი. მეცხვარე შევიდა ხანში და მომიკვდა.</p> <p>ორი წელიწადია უკვე რო უნდა ისეთი თოვლი აღარ მოდის. კლიმატი შეიცვალა (შოი ვანაძე, დაბადებული 1999 წელს, ოზურგეთის სოფელი ნასაკირალიდან გადმოსული (მამა და ბებია-ბაბუა ხულოდან ნასაკირალში ჩასახლებული აჭარლები), სოფელი სპასოვკა).</p>	<p><i>It has been almost two years since we have not such snow as before.</i></p> <p><i>The climate has changed.</i></p> <p>(Shio Vanadze, born in 1999, moved from the village Nasakirali, Ozurgeti district [father and grandparents are from from Khulo, Achara, moved to Nasakirali], the village Spasovka)</p>
<p>ძროხა ხბოს რომ მოიგებს, დავებმარებით. თუ არ დაეხმარე, არ შეიძლება. ზოგ ძროხას შეუძლია (მშობიარობა - ი.ღ.), ზოგს - არა, ხბო რომ დიდი იქნება. მსხვილ თოკს მივაბნევთ ფეხებზე (ხბო - ი.ღ.), რომ არ მოჭრას ფეხები. ხბოს ადგილი ცალკეა, თუ გინდა, დაუტოვე ძროხას დილაამდე. დილას სხვა ადგილზე შევიყვანთ, სახბორე</p>	<p><i>If a cow delivers, we have to help. Otherwise, it cannot. Some cow can (delivery- I.Gh.), others cannot, if a calf is big. We tie a thick rope on the legs to a calf, in order not to cut the legs. We have the separate place for a calf, if you would like, you can leave a calf to a cow until morning. In the morning we move it to another place, called calf-shed. We do not milk a cow maximum for five days.</i></p>



<p>ჰქვია. დიდი-დიდი ხუთი დღე არ ვწველით, ხბოს ვაწოვებთ.</p> <p>ახლა არის რუსული ვარიები, პატარა. ჩვენებური ვარიაც იყო, აღარ გვაქვს. ახლა არის ტარიანი ვარია, პაჩვენიკზუა. ძველი აჭარული უფრო გემრიელია (აჭარულ ვარიაში შედღვებილი კარაქი უფრო გემრიელია - ი. ღ.), ხიდან არის გაკეთებული, ზოგს აქნენ (ნოდარ მასკალსკი, დაბადებული 1957 წელს; ირა ქუქჩიშვილი, დაბადებული 1960 წელს, სოფელი სპასოვკა).</p>	<p><i>Now we have Russian churn, little one. We had our ones, but now we have not. Now the churn is with a handle, with bearing. The butter made in the old Acharian churn is more delicious, it is made from wood, some people still have it.</i></p> <p>(Nodar Maskalski, born in 1957; Ira Kukchishvili, born in 1960, the village Spasovka)</p>
<p>მყავს დედა, მამა, ბებია, ბაბუა და ერთი და. არი სოფელში სკოლა, ცხრაწელიანი. მე ხანჩალში დავდივარ, მეთერთმეტე კლასში უნდა წავიდე. არის სკოლა, მაგრამ არ არის კარგი, ბავშვები იქ არ სწავლობენ, შენობა არ არის</p>	<p><i>I have a mother, a father, a grandmother, a grandfather and one sister. There is a school in the village, nine-grade. I go to school in Khanchali; I have to go to the eleventh grade. There is a school here, in the village, but it is not good, children do not study there,</i></p>

<p>კარგი. ქართულად არ ვიცი სახელი ამ პროფესიას. მათემატიკა ვიცი ცოტა. უნდა წავიდე თბილისში და იქ ვსწავლობ (ვისწავლი - ი. ლ.). ქართულად არ ვიცი სახელი ამ პროფესიას, გეოდეზია მინდა.</p> <p>კლუბი ეს არის, ნაძვის ხე დგას (ზამთარში - ი. ლ.), არის ერთი საბავშვო ბაღი, სად (სადაც - ი. ლ.) ბავშვები თამაშობენ. მისი (ბავშვების - ი. ლ.) დედა და მამა ნინოწმინდაში მიდის (დადიან - ი. ლ.)</p> <p>(16 წლის ახალგაზრდა, დაბადებული 2007 წელს, სოფელი კატნატუ, რომლის საუბრის ჩაწერისა უნებლიეთ გამოგვრჩა სახელისა და გვარის მითითება).</p>	<p><i>the building is not good. I do not know the name of this profession in Georgian. I know a little math. I have to go to Tbilisi and study there. I do not know the name of this profession in Georgian, I want to study Geodesy.</i></p> <p><i>This is a club. There is a Christmas tree (in winter-I.Gh). There is one kindergarten, where children play. Their mothers and fathers go to Ninotsminda.</i></p> <p>(16 years old young man, born in 2007, in the village Katnatu, during recording his speech, accidentally, we forgot to write his name and surname)</p>
<p>მე და ჩემი მამიდაშვილი წავიდნენ (წავედით - ი.ლ.) ქვანიაში (ზურაბ ქვანიას</p>	<p><i>My cousin and I went to Zurab Zhvania School of Public Administration. A teacher is very</i></p>

<p>სახელობის სახელმწიფო  ადმინისტრირების სკოლა -  ი.ღ.), მასწავლებელი  (ქართულის - ი.ღ.) ძალიან  კარგი მასწავლებელია.  ვლაპარაკობ, რომ გამოცდა  ჩავაბარო. მე რომ ვლაპარაკობ  (ქართულად - ი.ღ.), კარგია ეს.  კარგია, რომ ვწერ. მინდა  კოლეჯში ვისწავლო შეფ-  მზარეული (შეფ-მზარეულობა -  ი.ღ.). ჩემი ბიძას ერთი  რესტორანი აქვს, მინდა იქ  მუშაობა. წელს ბევრია  სტუდენტები.</p>	<p><i>good. I speak to pass an exam. I  speak Georgian and it is good. It is  good that I write. I would like to  study at the college to become a  chef. My uncle has a restaurant  and I would like to work there.  There are many students this year.</i></p>
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<p>მიყვარს თუ არ მიყვარს,      ვმუშაობ ბაღში, კარტოფილის      ვიტამინი (სასუქი უნდა      გავუკეთო - ი. ლ.), კარტოფილი      დიდი, კარგი, ლამაზი (რომ      მოვიდეს - ი. ლ.). რომ მუშაობა      არის (როცა სამუშაოა, ვმუშაობ -      ი. ლ.), რომ არ არის,      მეგობრებთან ვატარებ დროს.      ვთამაშობ ფეხბურთს,      კალათბურთს, მანქანით      ვსეირნობ სოფელში      (ვაზრიკ ხაჩატრიანი,      დაბადებული 2006 წელს,      სოფელი კატნატუ).</p>	<p><i>I work in the garden it does not      matter I like it or not, I have to      apply the vitamin, I have to treat      by a fertilizer for a potato to make      it big, good and nice. When I have      not to work, I spent time with my      friends. I play football, basketball,      drive a car in the village.</i></p> <p>(Vazrik Khachatryan, born in      2006, the village Katnatu).</p>
<p>ჩვენ საქართველოს      მოქალაქეები, ვართ სომხები. აქ      ყველა ადამიანები სწავლობენ:      მეიქაფი (ვიზაჟისტობას - ი. ლ.),      ტორტები აცხობენ (ტორტების      ცხობას - ი. ლ.), პარიკმახერი      (პარიკმახერობას - ი. ლ.),      ნეილარტი (მანიკიურის</p>	<p><i>We are the citizens of Georgia. We      are Armenians. All people study      here make-up art, baking,      hairdressing, nail art. The students      study either in Tbilisi or in      Yerevan. Knowledge of the      Georgian and English languages</i></p>

<p>სპეციალისტი - ი. დ.). ან თბილისში სწავლობენ, ან ერევანში. მნიშვნელოვანი არის ქართული და ინგლისური, რომ მიზანები ახდეს. ინგლისური A2 დონეზე ვიცი, ვსწავლობ. მე ვიზამდი (მინდა - ი. დ.), რომ გავხდე პროფესორი მედიცინის. ჩვენ (ჩვენს - ი. დ.) პატარა სოფელში გოგოები და ბიჭები არიან აქტივები (აქტიურები - ი. დ.), გოგოები უფრო. ბიჭები ტრენინგებზე ცოტა არიან, მე წავიდე (დავდივარ - ი. დ.) ტრენინგებზე. ბიჭები არიან, რომ სწავლობენ უნივერსიტეტში, მაგალითად, ჩემი მეზობლები თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტში. სომხეთში სწავლობენ მედიცინა (მედიცინას - ი. დ.), მენეჯმენტში (მენეჯმენტს - ი. დ.), თბილისში ვერ მიდიან, ენის პრობლემაა.</p>	<p><i>are important to achieve your goals.</i></p> <p><i>I know English at A2 level, I am learning, I would like to become a Professor of Medicine.</i></p> <p><i>Girls and boys are active in our little village. Girls are more. There are less boys attending the training. I am going to the training courses. There are boys who study at the university, for example, my neighbors study at Tbilisi State University. Some of them study medicine, management in Armenia.</i></p> <p><i>They cannot go to Tbilisi as they have problem of language. The</i></p>
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<p>ენა არის პრობლემა (პრობლემა - ი. ლ.) იმიტომ, რომ ერთი წელი უნდა სწავლობდნენ ქართული ენა (ქართულ ენას - ი. ლ.). საქართველოში უნდა სწავლობდნენ ნული კურსი, ერთი წელი (საქართველოში ერთი წელი მოსამზადებელ კურსზე უნდა ისწავლონ - ი. ლ.), რომ ვიცოდე ქართული ენა. სომხეთში არ არის პირველ კურსზე ესეთი პროგრამა, ვინ არის ჯავახეთში სომეხი (ჯავახეთში ვინც კი სომეხია - ი. ლ.), ვინც გინდა თუ სწავლობდენ სომხეთში (ვისაც კი სომხეთში სწავლა უნდა - ი. ლ.) და გიყვარს სომხეთში (სომხეთი - ი. ლ.), იქ გამოცდაზე ბალები არის დაბალი სომხებისთვის. ეს წელს მეტი თბილისში წავიდნენ ბიზნესის აკადემიაში, თბილისში მეტი შანსები არის. ჩვენ საქართველოს</p>	<p><i>language is problem, as you have to study the Georgian language for a year before entering the higher educational institutions. We have to study at the preparatory course for a year to know the Georgian language. There is no such program for the first year in Armenia. For those, who are from Javakheti (who is Armenian in Javakheti – I.Gh.) and would like to study in Armenia and love Armenia, they have low scores at the exams.</i></p> <p><i>This year more people went to Tbilisi, to business academy, there are more opportunities in Tbilisi. We are citizens of Georgia, we are Armenians, but the chances are</i></p>
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<p>მოქალაქეები, ვართ სომხები, მაგრამ შანსები ცოტაა.</p> <p>სტომატოლოგია თბილისში უნდა ვისწავლო, ფასები ცოტაა, სომხეთში მაღალია.</p> <p>ტრენინგზე როცა წავიდე (მივდივარ - ი. ლ.), კომუნიკაცია მაქვს ქართულად. მოსწავლეები არ სწავლობენ, ეგაა პრობლემა. არიან ბიჭები, არ უნდათ სწავლა, ოჯახდებიან.</p> <p>თბილისში მინდა ცხოვრება, ლამაზი ქალაქია, ჩემი მამიდა იქ ცხოვრობს (ლუსიანე კობელიანი, დაბადებული 2007 წელს, სოფელი ჯიგრაშენი).</p>	<p><i>little. I have to study stomatology in Tbilisi, the prices are low here, but higher in Armenia. When I go to the training, I communicate in Georgian. Students do not study. This is the problem. There are boys who do not want to study. They got married. I would like to live in Tbilisi, it is a beautiful city, my auntie lives there.</i></p> <p>(Lusiane Kobelian, born in 2007, the village Jigrasheni).</p>
<p>ჩვენი სამცხე-ჯავახეთი ძალიან მიყვარს. ორ ერს გაუმარჯოს! ქართული ბავშვობიდან ვიცი, აქ ხალხი არიან კახეთიდან, თათრებთანაც კარგად ვიყავით, თათრულიც ვიცი ჩემი ენის</p>	<p><i>I love our Samtskhe-Javakheti very much. Cheers to both nations! I know Georgian since my childhood. There are people from Kakheti region. We were with Tatars well too. I know Tatarian in</i></p>

<p>გარდა. სამხედროში მარტო მე იყო (სამხედრო სავალდებულო სამსახურში მარტო მე ვიყავი - ი. ლ.) სომეხი, დანარჩენი იყო 200 კაცი თათარი (მაჰმადიანი ქართველები - ი. ლ.), მაგდენი იყო თათარი (მაჰმადიანი ქართველები - ი. ლ.). ჩემმა კამანდირმა ვინ ხარ ბოლო-ბოლო (უფროსმა მკითხა, ვინ ხარ ბოლოს და ბოლოს, ამდენი ენა რომ იციო - ი. ლ.). მე გულით და სულით ვიცნობ ქართული ენა (ძალიან მიყვარს ქართული ენა - ი. ლ.).</p> <p>არი რომ წითელი დიპლომი გაქვს, ენა არ იცი, მზად კადრები არიან (კარგი სპეციალისტები არიან - ი. ლ.), ვერ მუშაობენ. მე ეგრე ვიცი, რომ ენა საჭირო კი არა, აუცილებელია, რახან აქ ვართ, გენაცვალე. როცა ძნელი მომენტია, ხანდახან რუსული</p>	<p><i>addition to my language. I was the only Armenian in the military compulsory service, others, 200 people, were Tatars (Muslim Georgians - I.Gh.). It was the number of Tatars (Muslim Georgians - I.Gh.). The commander (My supervisor - I.Gh.) asked me how I know so many languages. I know the Georgian language by my heart and spirit. I love the Georgian language.</i></p> <p><i>You may have the Diploma of Excellence, you are the good specialists, good staff, but if you do not know the language, you cannot work. I know that language is not only necessary, but it is compulsory, as we are here, my dear. When it is a difficult</i></p>
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<p>(რუსულს ვიყენებთ - ი. ლ.).  ქართველმა ბავშვებმა იციან,  ესმით, ელაპარაკებიან (სომხებს  სომხურად ელაპარაკებიან - ი.  ლ.). ერთმანეთთან ქართულად  ელაპარაკობთ (ქართველები და  სომხები - ი. ლ.).  აქ ერთი დიდი პოეტი არი, მისი  დღე არი (საუბარია ვაჰან  ტერიანზე - ი. ლ.),  პრავიტელსტვა (მთავრობა - ი.  ლ.) იყო.  ვინ რო შუსტრია, იყავი  განძაში (ვინც ყოჩაღია, რჩება  განძაში - ი. ლ.), ააშენე სახლი,  ხელი გაქ. ახალგაზრდები  რუსეთში მიდიან, ამ ბოლო  დროს ევროპაში მიდიან,  ჩავარდნილია რუსული ფული.  მოდით, ეგრე გავაკეთოთ,  მშვიდობა იყოს!  (მანველ აბგარიანი,  დაბადებული 1963 წელს,  სოფელი განძანი).</p>	<p><i>moment, sometimes we use  Russian. Georgian children know,  understand, and speak (They  speak the Armenian language with  Armenians). We communicate in  Georgian with each other  (Georgians and Armenians -  I.Gh.).</i>    <i>There is one famous poet (Vahan  Teryan-I.Gh.) here, we have a  commemoration day. Here was  the government that day.  Who is smart, he stays in Gandza.  Built a house, you have a hand;  young people go to Russia, they  prefer to go to Europe for the last  period, Russian money has fallen  down.</i>    <i>Let it be peace!</i>    <i>(Manvel Abgaryan, born in 1963,  the village Gandzani).</i></p>
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## **The Problems of Migration Caused by Environmental Reasons and Acharian Environmental Migrants in Ninotsminda Municipality**

Various factors have caused the population of Javakheti to change over time. Reportedly, Armenians were exiled from Turkey, and fewer Greek and Russian families, so-called Dukhobors, from internal regions of the Russian Empire lived here along with the local population in the first half of the XIX century.

In the twentieth century, Javakheti sheltered the Georgian population from Achara, the people, who left their homes due to environmental problems. The environmental migrants (eco-migrants) became an inseparable part of the Javakheti population. It is interesting that, in parallel with the migration processes of the people displaced for environmental reasons in different parts of Georgia, a state policy with an appropriate legal framework was created in the country. At different times, attitudes were different, which directly reflected on the socio-economic conditions of the population, and the sustainability of resettled families in a new place.

Unfortunately, the problem of displacement is still very important in different countries of the world. According to the latest data, 64 million displaced people try to seek shelter and avoid famine, war, and environmental threats, which became crucial for the last period. The UN estimation is less promising stating that the number of migrants will be increased from 25 million up to 1 billion by 2050 because of the environmental conditions caused by climate change. Therefore, climate change is directly linked to the migration processes. Accordingly, analysis and problem solution shall take place through consideration of many interrelated factors.

Environmental changes and natural disasters have always been the key reasons for migration, however, predicted changes in climate for the 21st century should increase the migration of people. Displacement risk for extreme weather developments, such as floods, droughts, and hurricanes become frequent and intensive (IPCC, 2014), seriously affecting the livelihoods and safety of the people.

Although there has always been an interdependence between human migration and climate and the issues related to them have been discussed in a unified context, the recent processes of global warming, and rising sea levels as a result of extreme weather changes have intensified the sense of instability and added a new dimension to the study of the problem.

The 2018 Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM), as well as the first Global Negotiating Framework on Migration, recognizes that migration in the context of disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation is a reality and commits to supporting both migrants and states.

International organizations such as the UN Refugee Agency UNHCR are not currently involved in addressing eco-migrant issues. The UNHCR mandate for refugees and IDPs does not include persons displaced by ecological disasters at present. However, UNHCR is concerned about the environmental implications of refugee and IDP resettlement, and most importantly, is considering ecological displacement itself as a future area of its work (UNHCR Guideline, 2008).

Climate change is followed by gradual, though well-known environmental

changes and unexpected disasters; both influence nature and the size of the human displacement differently. Experts agree that while sudden hazards lead to massive displacement of people, affected people can still return to their homes. Slow-onset hazards, like gradual environmental erosion, desertification, reduced soil fertility, and change of sea level, may directly be linked to climate change, leading to long-term migration. Both are caused by climate and require different adaptations and strategies.

Strategy development depends on the vision and understanding of the migration process. In general, a person considers migration as the change of residence permanently or temporarily. It does not depend only on the displacement distance and nature. It is known that there are different types of migration, which are caused by seeking employment, study opportunities, war, persecution, environmental conditions, and other reasons. Based on different data seasonal migration is becoming quite popular.

The growing number of environmental migrants increased the interest of scientists towards social or other types of adaptation. Before discussing the research findings, it will be appropriate to overview the terminology-related issues, which, naturally, is much more than just a discussion of the term, as it also refers to legal problems.

„Climate refugee“ or „environmental refugee“ are the terms applied by the media quite often. The situation and needs of environmentally displaced people are actually very similar to the refugees for other reasons. They need the same protection and support even though they do not belong to any specific category according to the applied legal framework. The terms such as „climate change refugee“ or „environmental refugee“ have no legal basis in international refugee law.

There is no internationally recognized legal definition of displaced people for the sake of environmental changes. However, many organizations work on the problem. The IOM offered the draft definition for the migrants displaced due to the environmental changes in 2007. „Environmental migrants are the persons or groups of persons who, for compelling reasons of sudden or progressive changes in the environment that adversely affect their lives or living conditions, are obliged to leave their habitual homes, or choose to do so, either temporarily or permanently, and who move either within their country or abroad“ (IOM 2007, 33). The International Organization of Migration (IOM) is part of the UN system and supports human and orderly migration for the benefit of all. It has been working in Georgia since 1993. The organization made a general definition intentionally to make it more flexible and consider the various types of mobility caused by all kinds of environmental factors. The definition shows, that environmental migration is complex. It can be forced, voluntary, temporary or permanent, internal or international, individual or collective, done at close distance or farther. The nature, duration, and size of the environmental migration depend on, whether it is a slow-onset hazard and process, like a change in sea level, rise in temperature, etc., or a sudden-onset one, like flooding, storm, etc. strengthened by the environmental change and degradation adverse impacts. The definition highlights that migration depends on the interaction of other social-economic, cultural, and political reasons influencing the decision or necessity for displacement. Because of such complexity and the number of factors, environmental migration shall not be taken as a totally negative or positive outcome. On one hand, migration can make the condition of the vulnerable group harder, but on the other hand, it makes people

more resilient towards the challenges. Several statements were also formulated because of the lack of an international definition for describing people's mobility.

According to scientists, environmental migrants are people who have to leave their residences temporarily or permanently due to deteriorated environmental conditions or natural disasters within or outside of their country (CENN 2013, 45). The number of environmental migrants varies worldwide. It is worth noting, that the status of the refugees defined by the Genève Convention of 1951 does not refer to environmental migrants. It was created to protect people fleeing persecution, war, or violence. UN agencies, UNHCR and UNDP, which are mostly involved in the protection of refugees' rights, agree not to apply the term "Climate refugee" to describe environmental displacement. The UNHCR tries to provide decent support to quite a large number of refugees (there are 22.5 million refugees in the world because of war and persecution) and there is quite a modest assumption for enhancing the term "refugee" by the UNHCR to support the new category of displaced people. It is unclear if there is the political readiness to provide the required funding.

One of the terms is "climate migration", which indicates that a person or group of people is dislocating specifically due to climate change, caused by the sudden or progressive change in the environment. (IOM 2020, <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/111/>). Accordingly, climate migration is part of environmental migration, defining a separate type of ecological migration, when environmental change is caused by climate change. Although the IOM has developed a draft definition that does not have any specific legal meaning, the term is used in the legally binding Cancun Agreements on Climate Change Adaptation adopted by State Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The Cancun Agreements identify three forms of "climate change induced" movement: displacement, migration, and planned relocation. The term has also been employed by the World Bank in projecting future movements due to the adverse impacts of climate change.

**Planned relocation** is considered in the context of disasters or environmental degradation when due to the effects of climate change, individuals or groups of people move from their homes or temporary residences to a new location and are provided with conditions for rebuilding their lives. The term is generally used to identify relocations that are carried out within national borders under the authority of the State and denotes a long process that lasts until "relocated persons are incorporated into all aspects of life in the new setting and no longer have needs or vulnerabilities stemming from the Planned Relocation" (IOM 2020, <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/111/>).

**Disaster displacement** is a term that "refers to situations where people are forced to leave their homes or places of habitual residence as a result of a disaster or to avoid the impact of an immediate and foreseeable natural hazard. Such displacement results from the fact that affected persons are exposed to a natural hazard in a situation where they are too vulnerable and lack the resilience to withstand the impacts of that hazard" (Nansen Initiative 2015, 24). This term is mostly used to identify forced movements of people triggered by sudden-onset events in the environment. The concept of "cross-border disaster-displacement" is also sometimes associated with this term, particularly identifying the destination of population movements, to another country.



**Human mobility** is “a generic term covering all the different forms of movements of persons. The term human mobility reflects a wider range of movements of persons compared to “migration”. The term is usually understood as also encompassing tourists that are generally considered as not engaging in migration” (IOM 2020, <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/111/>).

Several international organizations have created the “Advisory Group on Climate Change and Human Mobility.” In this context, human mobility is understood as encompassing three forms of “climate change induced” movement from the Cancun Agreements, namely, displacement, migration, and planned relocation. The term is increasingly used in multi-stakeholder engagements, actors working on the different types of people’s movements can easily converge it. While this terminology analysis focuses on movement, it is important to note that the concept of “vulnerability” needs to be put at the center of current and future responses to environmental migration. The most vulnerable maybe those who are unable to or do not move. They are at risk of becoming ‘trapped’ or having to stay behind, where they will be more vulnerable to environmental shocks and impoverishment. The notion of trapped populations applies in particular to poorer households who may not have the resources to move and whose livelihoods are affected” (IOM 2020, <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/111/>).

Many scientists would like to identify environmental migration as a specific field in the migration studies. There is the tendency that environmental migration is another type of migration, accordingly, it should be separated and discussed apart from the classic theories of migration. It is also necessary to take into account the excessively exaggerated attitude of journalists and politicians towards numbers and forecasts. These numbers obviously need to be based on a clear definition of who is an ecological migrant. Different definitions reflect different numbers; Though the broader definition of environmental migration will harm those who are the most vulnerable (Dun & Gemenne 2008, 10-11).

In conclusion, in the contemporary scientific literature, the international organizations concerned with the environmentally induced mobility of the population apply terms and concepts, like environment migration, climate change migration, environmental refugees, climate change migrants, and environmentally induced displaced migrants.

The main reason for the lack of a precise definition of migration caused by environmental degradation or its change is the difficulty in distinguishing environmental changes from other environmental factors causing migration, as well as the ambiguity of the distinction between involuntary and voluntary migration. Environmental migration is a form of involuntary displacement, though it can be voluntary as well; what is the difference between involuntary and voluntary migration? These questions affect the typology of environmental migration and the definition of the term. The definition is a crucial issue for conceptualizing environmental migration and the development of relevant policies for population mobility. However, different factors, which make definition required, may prevent development, like an increase in population, different types of governance, low level of social life translated into poverty, human safety, and increased conflicts, which have no connection with environmental migrations. All those mentioned factors influence climate change. Such an approach makes it difficult to define

the number of environmental migrants in the world. The prediction of the IOM is alarming, which should make the public discourse for the development of the policy leading to the solution of the emergency condition caused by the worsening of the climate. It is worth noting, that the studies about displaced people for environmental reasons are included in the research about migrants in general. According to the scientific literature, the international study of the social integration of migrants is found in the neoclassic economics macro theory, highlighting the role of the skills of the migrants in their social integration. The researchers noted that geographic differences between the labor supply and demand and differences in the salary cause the movement of highly skilled workers from capital-rich to capital-poor countries to reap high returns on their skills in a human capital-scarce environment, leading to a parallel movement of managers, technicians, and other skilled worker to the local regions (Massey et al. 1993, 334). In addition to the micro factors, the studies highlight the role of immigrants in social integration, which includes policy, institutions, and cultural background. Those studies are more focused on urbanization, harsh national policies, and their key traits and less on environmental immigration. Only a few researchers (Maoa et al. 2012, 13; Tai et al. 2020, 324–330) analyzed the process of adaptation of the environmental migrants to the new settlements in China. The joint study by Tai and other researchers says that environmental migrants face quite serious problems, as their initial organizational structure and social contacts are weakened, their cultural features and habits are damaged, and their supporting mechanisms are destroyed, leading to reduction of perception of social identity and acknowledgment of the public norms by migrants. At the same time, environmental migrants had limited experience in private production, literacy, and social organization creating a non-balanced model for material, social, and spiritual development (Maoa et al. 2012, 11; Jeworrek et al. 2021, 482–499). It is noted, that the majority of the environmental migrants relied on governmental support and 72% of them were irrelevant for the new working requirements of the environmental resettlement. The majority of migrants worked in an informal economy in exchange for the capital needed for education, medical services, and living costs. Herslund (Herslund 2021, 239–240) considers that the aforementioned could become the reason for dense settlements in small towns, where the migrants have overloaded daily life, and their lifestyle and they were communicating with the local residents of the town during production or daily routine. It finally should lead to social isolation, what happened actually. Based on the studies of Romoli et al. (Romoli et al. 2022, 19–20), environmental migration includes optimal distribution of the population and resources; it reflects the conflicts and integration of the social and cultural spaces at the same time. It is proved by the fact, that the displaced population faces problems, like weakening of the spatial identity, and a lack of proprietary feeling (Ozkazanc 2021, 112–117). Misbalance of the special production and the show of spatial perception (e.g. social marginalization) Lim 2021, 108–120; Dun&Gemenne 2008, 34–35). Because of the migration, the displaced people often get to new cultural environment, creating certain barriers and obstacles for them. According to John Berry (1997), displaced people in another environment experience social-cultural, economic, and especially psychological adaptation stages. Berry highlights potential acculturation, as the phenomenon when a group changes its cultural characteristics. According to the French scien-

tist, Camiler (1990), acculturation i.e. adoption of different groups' cultural values during the adaptation process is very often. Mao and others think that environmental migrants move to displacement places for work and living. However, their different experience of spatial distribution, adaptation, knowledge and culture, spatial conflict, and negative social conditions may come up. It prevents adaptation in the space and organizational efficiency, production of irrelevant positions in production and life, and delays their social and spatial integration. Accordingly, there is an urgent need to study the problem of environmental migrants' adaptation and integration into society. It is gaining more importance for urban management. As mentioned, the change of climate and environmental problems make millions of people move. Despite this, it puts all the people under the threat of migration, and the risk is not equal for everybody. The risk depends on the temporary condition of the population, geographical conditions, social positions, and the society they belong to. The studies related to environmental migration reflecting some ethnic issues are especially important. The author highlights two significant ethical problems, such as fairness and responsibility, moral responsibility, and environmental mobility. (Dwayer 2020, 24)

There are many examples of global migration crises related to climate change. One of the recent well-known mass migrations happened from Central America to the USA and the call of President Trump about building of the wall on the US-Mexican border caused the "media frenzy". At first glance, the process was less connected with the environment change, though the recent studies and reports highlighted the role of climate change in this migration crisis, moreover, it becomes clear, that climate change is the key factor. In particular, the average temperature has increased by 0.5 degrees since 1950 in Central America and scientists think that it will increase by 1-2 degrees by 2050. In addition, the number of hurricanes, floods, and droughts is increasing in the region. According to the prediction of USAID, the frequency of droughts will be proportional to the reduction of the precipitation. The Guardian reported that, El Salvador would lose 10-28% of its coastal area until the end of the century. There are many examples of how climate change causes mass migration, what is the obvious challenge, how the region's population will survive, where they will go, and is mobility the only option? Yet mass migration and climate change are interrelated, an unstable environment causes public instability, violence, and lack of protection. As some fields are harmed more than others are, in a short-term period in any case, it causes massive mobility of the people, who are seeking better and more stable alternatives. Accordingly, understanding the linkage between climate and migration may become the key to the solution of the climate crisis, as well as the migration crisis. If discussed separately, it will be hard to see a general picture and provide a respective response.

If we look at Georgian reality, so-called "Eco-migrants" are a special category of Internally Displaced People. According to Georgian legislation, a displaced person due to a natural disaster is not entitled to the status of IDP (Lyle, 2012). The majority of eco-migrants are the population of Achara having two main tendencies, high-speed growth of the population and land shortage. The majority of the Acharian families have many children. They cut forests and apply highland areas for agricultural activities to meet increased needs, leading to an increased risk of natural disasters (Hakkert, 2017).

Individual legal acts were adopted in Georgia in order to solve the problems of the families (eco-migrants) being subject to displacement due to natural hazards and to develop state policy. The majority of acts were related to the consequence liquidation measures of natural disasters and the allocation of compensation amounts from the reserve fund of the Government of Georgia for the financial assistance of those who were left homeless.

There are the following legislative acts/norms for legal regulation of the environmental legislation (The source: The affected families subject to displacement (environmental migrants): state support and registration, The Report of the Institute of Democracy, 2016)

- Issued and adopted legal acts related to environmental migrants (law, subordinate law), the Ordinance # 67, February 6, 2007, of President of Georgia “About Approval of the Program (1998-2005) to solve the social and legal problems of the families affected by the natural disaster since 1987”. The ordinance of 1997 aims to solve the problems and gaps for the families affected by the natural disaster.

- Ordinance of Government of Georgia # 40 as of June 3, 2004 „About establishment of the state commission for management migration processes caused by the natural disaster from the highland Achara to Tsalka, Akhalkalaki and Ninotsminda”. The ordinance aimed to improve management of the environmental migration processes and establishment of the special commission for inclusion in the legal regulations, in order to provide specific recommendations and proposals. However, the information about the specific outcome of the commission is not searched. In 2004 the attempt of the state to manage problems and sort the information was reflected in Article 42 (4. f) of the void The Organ Law about Local Self-governance, according to which the community Gamgebeli (Administrator) was obliged to find information about the number and condition of the affected families (environmental migrants) from the natural disaster and to submit to the municipality administrator (Mayor)

- The Ordinance #358 of the Government of Georgia of September 8, 2005 “About establishment of the state commission for ensuring participation in the legalizing ownership and privatization of the land by the resettled people arbitrarily in Tsalka, Tetrtskaro, and Gardabani districts”. The goal of the commission was to solve the problems emerged in the process of land legalization in the settlement zones of eco-migrants in connection with the implementation of the Georgian law "On the privatization of state-owned agricultural land". However, the mentioned ordinance and commission was abolished based on the Ordinance of Georgian Government of March 15, 2006 “About Approval of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories of Georgia” in six months.

- The Resolution # 34 of Government of Georgia as of February 22, 2008. The Resolution (Article 2 (b), Article 7 (6.1) formulates the duties and responsibilities of the affected people subject to social and legal protection, migration control and housing.

- The Order # 779 of the Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia dated November 13, 2013, about Approval of the Resettlement Criteria of the Affected Families and the Subject of Displacement due to the Natural Disaster in 2008 and establishment of the regulating commission of the resettlement issues. The order refers

to the rules and criteria of the families affected because of natural disasters and subject to displacement according to which the housing program of the affected people is implemented.

- The Order # 1206, of the Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia dated June 17, 2014, about Approval of the Regulation of the Environmental Migrants' Department under the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia. It currently ensures implementation of the state program for the affected families and is subject to displacement because of the natural disaster.

- The Resolution #5 of the Government of Achara Autonomous Republic of February 2014 on "General rule for supporting affected families from the natural disaster residing on the territory of the Achara Autonomous Republic". The resolution regulates the duties and responsibilities of the Government of the Acharian Republic, the rules and criteria for support of the affected families by natural disasters (including fire and earthquake)

- Decree of the Government of Georgia N996 dated as May 18, 2015 "About measures required for ownership transfer for assets temporarily used by families affected by natural disaster"

- The letter #04/07/25967 dated as October 1, 2015 of the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Accommodation and Refugees to ensure safe housing of the families affected by the natural disaster (eco-migrants) subject to displacement in 2004-2015 (the data, earlier than 2004 are not available in the Ministry). As of July 1, 2015, the Government of Georgia allocated 7, 320, 168 GEL and it is the only resettlement program for eco-migrants in the ministry. The dynamics of allocated amounts look as follows 1. The Decree considers a survey of the residential houses purchased for the eco-migrants and families during 2004-2012, preparation of the land plot drawings, and registration in the public register.

- Order No. 01-17/N of the Minister of IDPs from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Labor, Health and Social Protection of October 10, 2018, "About the resettlement procedure of families (eco-migrants) affected by natural disaster and subject to displacement, resettlement criteria, approval of the rules for maintenance of a unified electronic database and the regulatory commission for resettlement issues", on amendments of the order No. 779 of November 13, 2013, of the Minister of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories of Georgia, Accommodation and Refugees.

The first organized resettlement of the people due to environmental reasons in Georgia took place at the beginning of the 1980s. In 1981-83, the resettlement of 1,010 families was decided in Dedoplistkaro, Gurjaani, and Sagarejo districts, Khobi, Aspindza, and Adigeni districts and in Kaspi district from highland Achara (Putkaradze, 2006).

Currently, the greatest flow of environmental migrants comes from the highland of Achara, as mentioned, because of the lack of land and the frequent natural disasters. Some experts consider that environmental migrants appeared in Georgia before the start of active natural disasters. During the Soviet period, massive and structured displacement of the population was an ordinary measure. Sometimes it has a punishment nature for the population; sometimes it is like an experi-

ment. Abolishment of the villages was part of the huge projects of Soviet industry. <https://for.ge/view/594/saqarTveloSi-ekomigrantTa-raodenoba-kidev-ufro-gaizr-deba.html>.

The experts bring the example of 1949 when 12 villages of the Enguri River valley were relocated and submerged because of the Enguri HPP. The residents of these villages can be named as the first eco-migrants. At the end of the 1980s, suddenly activated natural disasters in Svaneti and mountainous Achara led to the abandonment of the historical villages. The villages for eco-migrants (Environmental migrants) were built in Kakheti and Kvemo Kartli. Since the 1990s, they have settled in the Armenian and Greek villages in Kvemo Kartli and Javakheti.

The housing of the environmental migrants and governmental programs in Georgia was more organized at the beginning of the 80s of the past century during the soviet period by applying required and sufficient resources. The majority of the environmental migrants were moved to the regions settled by the minorities in Georgia, such as Samtskhe-Javakheti and Kvemo Kartli, where the number of migrants was in total three thousand families for 1981-1990 (Trier and Turashvili 2007).

The problems, which came up, during the process are studied by the non-governmental and international organizations.

In April 1989 5,657 families (24,287 people) were resettled in the mentioned regions, where according to the plan 5 thousand houses in 17 districts had to be built but finally, only three thousand were constructed. At the end of the 1980s, the problems related to the support and distribution of land plots for environmental migrants were linked to the collapse of the Soviet State and a high level of corruption. Naturally, it was not the only reason though it played a crucial role. During the immediate post-independence period in the early 1990s, reports portrayed the settlement of eco-migrants as an additional function of resolving ethnopolitical conflicts: "Ethnic Georgian eco-migrants were often resettled to the regions compactly populated by minorities – such as Abkhazia, Kvemo Kartli, and Samtskhe-Javakheti – as part of a campaign to 'Georgianise' these regions. Alongside state actors, influential political organizations such as the nationalist 'Kostava Foundation' and 'Rustaveli Society' bought houses abandoned by departing minority populations and gave them to the ethnic Georgian eco-migrants." We consider the afore-mentioned assessment exaggerated. The period of the first president of Georgia, Zviad Gamsakhurdia was deliberately often assessed as stirring up the so-called nationalist hostility, and all the steps or activities were considered as part of this trend. To be fair, it should be noted that the houses were indeed purchased by the aforementioned funds, although the expedition confirmed from ethnic Armenian respondents that at the same time, the Armenian National Fund purchased houses in the villages of Javakheti for part of the Armenian population, and such a possibility existed under the first president of Georgia. As for the extremely tense situation between the newly settled eco-migrants and the local population, it constantly accompanied the resettlement process. In the 1990s, the vast majority of confrontations resulted in the creation of hardships for eco-migrants, which ultimately resulted in the sale of their new homes, abandonment of their new environment, and the return of eco-migrants to their home regions.

Under Shevardnadze, the issue of eco-migrants was almost completely ig-



nored. During the privatization process of agricultural land in Georgia during 1992-1998, the environmental migrants received the land plots the same way as local population. As for the funds allocated by the Shevardnadze government for the purchase of houses in 1997-2002, they were spent inappropriately and without purpose. It should be considered as a positive fact that in 1998, procedures for monitoring eco-migration were defined for the first time. Initial monitoring was also carried out, but everything was of a formal nature, and no response was made to any identified fact.

After the „Rose Revolution brought Saakashvili to power, several new initiatives on eco-migration were launched. The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia collected assessment data on housing conditions in the highland regions, and in 2004, the government initiated several new approaches to providing houses for eco-migrants. In June 2004, a Presidential decree established a Commission for Regulation of the Eco-Migration Process in Tsalka, Akhalkalaki, and Ninotsminda districts, in order to regulate the tension between ethnic-Georgian eco-migrants and the ethnic-Armenian recipient population. The purpose of the commission was to provide legal support for the eco-migration process, to place them within a legal framework, and to develop new approaches to resettlement, although none of them led to any practical application. Moreover, in 2005 Georgia ratified the Europe Council Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, article 16, which forbids measures that alter the demographic balance of regions populated by national minorities. Finally, the interest actually developed more in this latter aspect.

In March 2006, a Programme was launched to create an official database of families affected by natural disasters and in need of immediate resettlement. An evaluation system for eco-migrant entitlements was introduced based on assessments involving geologists, with the following assessment categories: 1. House destroyed 2. House damaged 3. House damaged but restorable 4. Only lands around the house were destroyed. Only those people placed in Category 1 were entitled to state resettlement. Although the aforementioned steps taken by the Saakashvili government are a clear manifestation of the government's desire to make positive changes in the field of eco-migration, these efforts are only sporadic in nature and are not integrated into a complex and well-funded state policy. (Lyle 2012);

The government of Georgia allocated 6,804,567GEL for safe housing of displaced families (eco-migrants) affected by the natural disaster during 2004–2014, the government acquired 1,057 houses for the affected families from it. The attitude towards environmental migrants has changed since 2012. The change is positive and this tendency is reflected in different reports as well: „In Georgia before 2013, based on applied practice, the opinion of the affected families by the natural disaster was less considered during selection of their future resettlement place. The affected families were settled densely in the different areas, where they had to start living in totally unknown and new places. The majority of those families have not legalized the ownership of the residential places and land plots “had been transferred” to them. Moreover, the state had never offered any target programs oriented on integration, adaptation to the new places, and creation of new income-generating sources for them. Since January 2014, the state approach towards the eco-migration has been changed. In particular, compact settlement

of families affected by natural disasters is no longer happening. . The new system gives a possibility to the affected family to get state funding within certain limits and purchase a residential house per desire. This model is certainly positive, but it also has many gaps that need to be addressed” (Report 2017, 5).

The Department of Eco-Migrant Issues, established on June 1, 2013 within the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia works on resettlement of eco-migrant families in Georgia. Its main function is the implementation of social protection and housing programs for families affected by natural disasters and subject to displacement. The Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgian ensures the resettlement of eco-migrants within the framework of the special state program. The special role and activities of the Autonomous Republic of Achara requires highlighting. As the number of the affected population by natural disasters is quite high in Achara, the government of the autonomous republic intensively works to support the affected population from natural disasters. For this purpose, the Department of Disaster Victims started functioning under the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of the Autonomous Republic of Achara in 2014. Since 2015, the operating system has been fairer and more oriented on the interests and needs of the affected, as in such cases the affected people are selecting their residential place and get about 25,000 GEL for the purchase of the house (as of February 1, 2017). The procedures related to the purchase of a house are following, an affected family by the natural disaster applies to the municipality, which organizes the visit of the geological service to the family residential place. If the statement says that the affected family requires resettlement, a municipality or an affected family submits the application to the Ministry of IDPs from the occupied territories, accommodation, and refugees, which will register the family in the unified e-database of the affected families requiring resettlement. The e-database has the function to assign the scores to the registered families according to the priorities and based on it to identify the families to be funded first. The ministry informs in a proper way to such families about the right of house acquisition, related procedures, and terms. Two programs were implemented to ensure a residential place for the affected families by the natural disaster in Georgia. The Ministry of IDPs from the Occupied Territories, Accommodation and Refugees of Georgia administers one program and e-database and the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs of the Autonomous Republic of Achara implements another similar program. If we look at the number of registered and resettled eco-migrants according to the regions for 2015-2018, there are 55 registered and 22 resettled eco-migrants in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Referring back to the topic the environmental migrants’ resettlement to Samtskhe-Javakheti was especially intensive during 1981-1990. It took several stages. The majority of the initially resettled people were settled in Aspindza and Adigeni municipalities. The key motivation was the closeness to the highland Achara and access to the roads, but now Acharians live in all the municipalities of Samtskhe-Javakheti. State resettlement to the village of Gorelovka, Ninotsminda district of Samtskhe-Javakheti, started in 2004; since that, the state has taken 68 families from Achara to Javakheti (where 95% of the population are Armenians). Currently, the environmental migrants live in the town of Ninotsminda, villages Gorelovka and Spasovka in Ninotsminda municipality.

Since the late 19th century, the ethnic Russian Dukhobors settled in the aforementioned and adjacent areas. Gradual immigration of Dukhobors started in the 90s of the previous century, which continued in 2000s and became massive for the last few years. As a result, they finally left the mentioned area (Lyle, 2002).

The materials of the dialectological expedition of 2023, which took place within the framework of the project of Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia, "Research and Documentation of Onomastics of Ninotsminda Municipality", based on the information of the interviewees, confirmed again that the houses left by the Dukhobors in Gorelovka were purchased by both the state and Armenian population. Ethnic Armenians did not respond similarly to the housing of the environmental migrants to the village Gorelovka in the 90s. There were some confrontations. Currently, both eco-migrants from the Achara region and Armenians live in the former houses of Dukhobors. Unlike Marneuli district, the houses are in satisfactory condition here. Each resettled family also received a one-time compensation of 1,000 GEL (420 Euro) from the Achara authorities. Eco-migrants were not provided with furniture directly but received whatever furniture remained in the houses they moved into. Eco-migrants could obtain apartments and register in their names, only if their status was confirmed based on relevant research and all family members were legally evicted from their previous place of residence. They were not allowed to sell the houses provided to them until 25 years after their resettlement, which failed to control (Trier and Turashvili 2007). The houses had electricity but no gas connection, but now, they have both electricity and natural air supply. The water needs of most houses have traditionally been served by individual or shared wells. In recent years, the state program was supposed to provide the water supply system for free and provided drinking water to homes, although during various times the local government required each family to pay a fee to bring water to their home. Some eco-migrants received from the state a two-hectare plot of land far from the village, although many of them still remain landless, despite numerous promises from the local authorities. Those eco-migrants without land are forced to take on poorly paid work as wage laborers, where they can find it or they have to rent the land or use a land lease. In the region population commonly subsists on their own crops. The eco-migrants struggle to raise the credit they would need to launch agricultural enterprises. Unlike the neglected resettlers to Marneuli, eco-migrants resettled in Gorelovka have regular contact with an official employed by the ministry in Tbilisi. This member of staff is responsible for buying the houses for resettlement and supervising their allocation, as well as for representing the concerns of the eco-migrants at the district administration and reporting to the ministry eco-migrant division. This regular communication with a member of staff makes it much easier for eco-migrants to raise concerns. Still, the respondents highlight that this support has not enabled the eco-migrants to secure agricultural land, and the municipal authorities have been largely unresponsive to their concerns. Eco-migrants express dissatisfaction on such an important issue as land ownership and are quite skeptical about protesting in the district administration, as they believe that talking to the local government about it will not bring results. Due to the small number of eco-migrants, the local ethnic Armenian population does not consider them a threat at this stage.

Conclusion: It is worth to be noted, that there are quite many problems,

which are faced from the day of resettlement of the environmental migrants. According to the locals, it is necessary to improve the economic conditions of the displaced people and to elaborate on the proper form for their adaptation. They understand internal and external challenges, but the state should take care of the people who find themselves in a difficult situation. Today, firstly the condition of eco-migrants should be considered in Ninotsminda municipality, as they live in a borderline, strategic place. The following problems and causes were identified during the studies 1. Unfavorable environmental (natural) conditions; 2. Possibility of the political, ethnic, religious, and social conflicts 3. Lack of support for the integration processes; 4. Realizing of Georgian national interests 5. Psychological, social-cultural and economic adaptation; 6. Integration with local population and social-cultural adaptation; 7. Unclear proprietary rights; 8. Difficult economic conditions, unemployment; 9. Land and forest resources are not accessible and sufficient; 10. Deficiency of potable and irrigation water; 11. The problem of the internet; Interviewees consider the challenges artificially induced. As they reported, they are quite easy to solve in case of the political will. Accordingly, they think that the problem of negligence is an intentional suppression, a trial to make them find shelter at another place. They ask for state involvement to solve the problem and give them the lands at an accessible price, introduce a flexible taxation system as eco-migrants can use the resources, hire machinery for land cultivation, and market their product. The majority of respondents mentioned that they had the problem of adaptation at the beginning for a certain period because misunderstanding of the local population based on their different cultural values. The situation is improving gradually. They mention the “Ghorjomeloba” celebration, which is held in Ninotsminda municipality annually. The celebration was named after the village Ghorjomi of Khulo municipality from where the majority of the migrants were by origin. In addition, the Georgian dance group was established in the municipality in order to teach Georgian dances to the youngsters both eco-migrants and ethnic Armenians. The dance group actively participates in the “Ghorjomeloba” celebration. The administration of Ninotsminda municipality hires a dance teacher and organizes the celebration of the event on an annual basis (Report 2017, 14).

The Order N779 of the Minister issued in 2013 regulates the definition of the eco-migrant family. 8,492 environmental migrant families are registered in the common electronic database of environmental migrants for that time. The part of them are settled in a safe environment, another part is applied for a residential place. Order N779 which is developed by participation of the international and local non-governmental organization defines the category of injury of the environmental migrant families. The first category includes the environmental migrant families whose house or part of it is destroyed, or damaged as a result of the natural disaster and cannot be restored. The second category includes the families affected by the natural disaster, whose house is not destroyed, but the natural disaster in the neighboring area is threatful to the life and health of the people living there and their property. Environmental migrant family applies to the agency by the request to receive accommodation and at the same time, to define by the municipality the category of the injury. The Regulating Commission for the Resettlement of the Families Affected and Subject to Relocation due to Natural Disaster” makes the decision about the settlement of the environmental

migrant families. The representatives of the state departments, as well as the office of a Public Defender of Georgia, and the international and non-governmental organizations, are involved in the work of the commission. In case of a positive decision, families are given the opportunity to search for and offer a residential house for purchase at any place in Georgia. The purchased houses are given to the environmental migrants into ownership. The government of Georgia has started awarding the ownership right to the eco-migrant families for those houses, which had been given to them during moving from the affected regions by the natural disaster. Though the discussion should be sped up on whether the new law about the protection of environmental migrants shall be introduced or the current law shall be applied to them (Nicholson 2017, 50).

Despite everything, as mentioned in numerous studies, the problems of eco-migrants have not been deeply investigated and thoroughly studied (Saldadze and Mushkudiani 2018, 5) and the interest of the state and private organizations is not very high.

## A Monasterial Life

**We obtained the information about the Poka Nunnery with the blessing of Hegumenia Elisabed (Meskhishvili). We decided to present the data from the monastery website, the information from the Poka Monastery booklet, and the history of the nunnery given separately to the readers:**

### **The Poka St. Nino Nunnery**

Georgia is one of the ancient countries of the Caucasus. It is considered as allotted to the Virgin Mary. However, the Holy Virgin could not visit Georgia herself and preach there, but by the will of God, the Apostle Andrew came to preach, and founded the first apostolic church in Georgia together with Simon the Canaanite and Matthias. The apostles converted many to this true faith, but the king and most of the country's population remained idolaters.

With the preaching of St. Nino, the enlightener of Georgians and the equal to the apostles, Christianity was declared a state religion in Georgia in 326, when King Mirian and Queen Nana held the royal throne.

St. Nino was from the town Kolastra of Cappadocia. His parents were believers and noble Zebulun, the enlightener of French, while the mother, Sosana was the sister of Houbnal, the Patriarch of Jerusalem. They are announced as Saints. St. Nino was twelve years old when his parents sold out all their property and gave it to the poor. Saint Zebulun was secluded in the desert beyond the Jordan River. Saint Susanna was appointed to be the caretaker of feeble mothers by the patriarch, and Saint Nino was given to Sarah of Bethlehem, the woman who took care of the Savior's tomb, to be brought up. The lady, who deeply believed in God, knew the Old and New Testament thoroughly and taught them to St. Nino well. St. Nino learned from her that the Robe of Jesus was buried in Georgia, in the royal city of Mtskheta.

Once, a divine power took Nino praying at the Theotokos. Holy Virgin appeared to her and said "Go to the North country, Georgia, which was assigned to me, bravely and without fair, and preach the truth". Concerned St. Nino asked "The Queen how can a fragile and illiterate woman, perform such a task, and what will lead me as a sign for it?" Then the Holy Virgin removed a branch of a grapevine, made a cross, gave it to her and said, "You will overcome all the devices of Devil and preach, I will support and never leave you".

After the vision, St. Nino saw that she held a vine cross in her hand, and she praised the God and Holy Virgin. She told the Patriarch everything and showed the sign of this miracle, the cross given by the Theotokos.

Before her leaving to Georgia St. Nino arrived in Ephesus, where he got close to a noble lady Hripsime, her nurse Gayane, and fifty virgins, who were baptized by St. Nino's preaching. Soon, Emperor Diocletian started the persecution of Christians and they left Greece, reached Armenia, and sheltered in the royal garden. By the order of Diocletian, the Armenian King Tiridates found them and tortured them severely. God saved St. Nino, as another assignment awaited her. The divine voice called her to go to the East. St. Nino arrived in Georgia from the mountains of Javakheti in early summer. She stayed for two days at the Paravani Lake and gained strength from the food served by the fishermen. He saw a brilliant man in her dream while lying on the ground to rest. He gave her a printed letter and said: "Give this letter to the king of the Pagans, since you were sent here for this reason". The name of Jesus was written on the top of the letter in Roman and there were ten



commandments written on it similar to the stone tables of Moses:

1. Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, there shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.
2. "So, there is no difference between men and women; you are all one in union with Christ Jesus."
3. "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and the Holy Spirit."
4. „A light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel."
5. "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."
6. „Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me."
7. The Lord loved Mary very much because she always listened to his true words.
8. "Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul."
9. „Jesus said to Mary Magdalene, "Woman, go and make my brothers happy."
10. Preach everywhere in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

After the vision, St. Nino prayed for a long time, fervently begged St. Mary, and asked for support. She arrived in Mtskheta, the capital of Georgia at that time having experienced many troubles and hardship. She turned the completely Georgian nation into Christianity by praying and fasting, tireless working, and passed away in Bodbe town.

The sacred place where St. Nino set foot in Georgia and had a vision is called Poka. It is located in Zemo Javakheti, on the coast of the largest lake in Georgia, Paravani. The climate is very harsh and severe here. The frost is about -37 degrees Celsius in winter and the average temperature reaches 20 degrees.

In Georgia, there have been monasteries in the places where St. Nino lived and died from then on, though the place where she entered was completely abandoned without praying.

In 1988 Ilia II, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, visited the village of Poka, the place which was associated with the place of entrance of St. Nino to Georgia, when he traveled to Javakheti. He purchased a house next to the XI-century Basilica church and registered as a resident so that he would be allowed to visit the area, which at that time was closed to the public.

In 1989 the patriarchate of Georgia received 22 hectares of land plot around the village Poka, near the Paravani Lake, where the open-air communion altar was built to memorize the entrance of St. Nino to Georgia and the friary was established. The same year the tradition of the 40-day pilgrimage of St. Nino's route was started from Poka to Mtskheta.

In 1992, a nunnery was established in the patriarch's house and Hegumenia Elisabeth (Meskhishvili) was appointed the head of the monastery. The nunnery was assigned a missional role, and for years, it has been the only Georgian-speaking enclave in a nearly alienated environment.

Javakheti until the XVII century was Christian like the entire Georgia, though

in 1625 Ottomans conquered and ruled it for 200 years. During that time, Georgians lost their religion and turned into Muslims. In 1828, Javakheti was released from the rule of Ottomans, though Georgians, who became Muslims, left their homeland and this region became empty. Russians resettled Armenians here, who established, grew in number, and still live here. Traditionally, they are followers of the Gregorian church. Two Orthodox monasteries were established on such a difficult historical heritage. There were no other monasteries before their establishment. There were just the ruins of the church of St. Nino of the XI century preserved. The religious service which was suspended for more than three centuries in this region, was restored in the monastery as soon as it was founded.

The population met the establishment of a monastery with caution, but with the support of God and the prayer of St. Nino, the monasteries became stronger, established, and became an inseparable part of that place.

In 2000, the anniversary of the church was widely celebrated. The annual expeditions of Tbilisi State University students started in Poka to support a monastery and introduce Javakheti.

Since 2001 the Monastery has been located in several houses located around the church, reconstruction of the houses was started according to the modern architectural projects and considering traditional elements of Javakheti.

In 2002, Nunnery opened the enamel studio significantly contributing to the revival of the enamel production in Georgia. For years, the studio produced famous and important wares both religious and secular jewelry.

In 2005, the Monastery established the photo workshop, traveled to different parts of Georgia, and issued the photo-albums. It lays the foundation of the modern library of albums.

In 2010, the Monastery, after many years of hard work, experiment, introduction of traditions preserved among the local population, literature, and French technology of production, began to produce the European type of Georgian cheese, which has no analogue in Georgia. The monastery produces and sells 16 types of cheese, different confectionery, pastries, and other products. Currently, the monastery has 7 members, Hegumenia, 5 nuns and 1 novice. The monastery is Stavro-pygian and is directly subordinated to the Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia.

### **Village Poka**

Poka, the village of historical importance is located in the south of Georgia, in Ninotsminda Municipality, on the south coast of the largest lake of Georgia, Paravani, at 2,080m above sea level.

The name of the village Poka is found on the roadmap marked by the Roman geographer Castorius in the 4<sup>th</sup> century, according to which the caravan used to move from the east to the west. The famous historical route called “the Silk Road” also crossed that place.

The historical importance of the village is also determined by the fact that St. Nino, who turned Georgians into Christianity came here from Jerusalem, spent two nights in the village Poka, and followed the Paravani River to Mtskheta.

St. Nino's entrance to Georgia is celebrated on June 1.

## **A Church**

St. Nino Church was built in 1030-40, during the reign of Bagrat IV Courapalates by the blessing and support of the Catholicos Ioane V (called Okropiri, in translation - Chrysostom).

The church was rehabilitated in 2000. There is the main icon of St. Nino granted by Ilia II to the monastery. There is the miraculous Iberon Icon depicted in the Iberon Monastery of Athos, the Hearer Icon of the Holy Mother, and the iconostasis decorated by mosaic icons. All the icons are decorated in the workshop “Pokani”, which was established with the blessing of the Catholicos-Patriarch, Ilia II in 2000.

## **Architecture**

The houses (Mitsuri, Georgian: მთწვერი) covered by the green grass helped locals to become invisible to the enemy. There were favorable living conditions for the residents in the “Mitsuri”; they had natural heat in winter and coolness in summer. The monastery had started the restoration of the “Mitsuri” houses following the traditions since its establishment. The constructions were covered by modern technologies to protect them from rain and snow and preserve the Javakhetian architecture.

## **Catacomb Church**

The catacomb church named after the Nativity of the Savior was built immediately after the foundation of the monastery, in 1992. It is located in the house that belongs to the Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia personally. In the church, there are icons of the vitreous enamel with up to 70 sacred parts.

## **The Monastery Regulation**

Monastery Typikon—regulation is based on the traditional Monastery Rule. The service has a central role in the life of the monastery. Interchange of the prayer and labor is the rule of the monastery life. The day starts at 02.00 with the dawn prayer and ends at 22:00 in the Poka Nunnery.

## **Monastery typikon**

02:00-05:00 Dawn prayer	16:30-17:00 Dinner
05:00-08:00 Rest in the cell	17:00-19:00 Obedience
08:00-11:00 Obedience	19:00-20:00 Nightfall prayer
11:00-11:30 Dinner	20:00-22:00 Free time
11:30-16:30 Obedience	
22:00 - The rest	

## **A School**

The monasteries always had an educational function in Georgia. In Poka, the monastery established a small school for local, non-Georgian children. The nuns teach different subjects to children for free. The summer course is provided for the students from Tbilisi in the same school.

## **Enamel**

In 2000, production of the church items was restored from Georgian vitreous enamel and goldsmith art by the blessing of His Holiness and Beatitude, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, Ilia II, and the afford of the Poka Nunnery head, Hegumenia Elisabed. Religious items, icons, and medallions created in the workshop of the monastery decorate many churches in Georgia. Among them is the main church of Poka Monastery, where the icons produced from vitreous enamel and mosaic are available.

## **Glazed Ceramics**

After organizing a vitreous enamel workshop, the monastery had a desire to make Georgian ornaments on the ceramics, glazed ceramics, and porcelain. The nuns and the secular people being close to them paint Georgian motifs, the biodiversity characteristic to Javakheti on the French and Italian material, Biscuit.

## **Honey**

Javakheti is distinguished by numerous curable herbs and flowers characteristic of the Alpine zone. Chicory, Calendula, Chamomile, Yarrow, Georgian Snow Rose, and Cornflower, this is the incomplete list of those curable herbs that are grown in the village of Poka. This region has been famous for its wild bees and wild honey. In 2006, the monastery had 2 hives, when they started with beekeeping. Later Ilia II, the Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia, granted 10 hives. Over time, the farm was increased and now nuns have 60 hives. The honey is taken once per year, it is white, with medium sweet and it has a soft, pleasant flavor. It is distinguished by its healing properties.

## **Chocolate**

The monastery became interested in Theobroma Cacao, the unique herb good for health, in 2010. Cacao grows in a totally different climate. It was very difficult to bring it to the monastery, though the monastery living in the cold, extreme conditions needed its benefits. Nuns used to eat the cocoa seeds first, then they started consuming in the patisseries and finally, they came to the chocolate with its mark of origin.

## **Cattle breeding**

Cattle breeding has been practiced since ancient times in Javakheti. The pop-

ulation had a great number of cows and sheep. The monastery acquired cattle since its establishment and now it has its farm. Cows are fed in a natural way in the field. Several varieties of cheese are produced from the received milk.

### **Cheese**

The alpine zone, forestless meadows, clean air and water, and lots of grass enabled the development of animal husbandry around Lake Paravani since ancient times. It happened during previous centuries, during the entrance of St. Nino who overnighted at the lake, got food from anglers and the shepherds showed her the way to Mtskheta.

The monastery established in 1992 started to study cheese production techniques according to old traditions, after several years of work they received the Alpine noble mold cheese, which is produced in Javakheti mud-hut, in storage with natural ventilation. Currently, the monastery produces 18 types of cheese seasonally.

### **A Shop**

In the shop of the monastery, visitors can buy the products and gifts produced by nuns.

The shop offers to its visitors 18 types of cheese, alpine honey, chocolate, 50 varieties of jam produced from the local alpine berry, tea of local alpine flowers, the oil of the local flax with unique qualities, the sea and mountain salt with different herbs, liqueur of berries, as well as porcelain painted manually, silver and golden ware and vitreous enamel.

## **The Fathers' Monastery after the Beheading of St. John the Baptist - "Tavkvetula"**

In Akhalkalaki municipality, near Vardzia, close to the right bank of the Mtkvari, there is the church of St. John the Baptist in the cave of the VIII-IX centuries. The place was known only for the small scientific community. However, the population of our country heard about it since the 90s, when Father Job (Akiashvili) traveled and found the cave in the rock, which became famous later and is called "Tavkvetula" i.e. the church after the Beheading of St. John the Baptist. The day is celebrated on September 11. Gradually many people started visiting the church from entire Georgia during the celebration. People had to cross a river by foot to get to the church. It is worth knowing that every September 11 the level of the river reduced significantly for years and people were able to cross it safely. Later on, it was impossible because of the hydropower station, which had started functioning on the territory of Turkey. Therefore, there was the need for and the footbridge was installed to access the monastery.

"Tavkvetula" monastery has been active since 2016. Monk Ioane Paichadze lives in a small cell cut in the rock close to the Church.

## **St. King Tamar Nunnery of Saghamo**

In the village Saghamo, Ninotsminda Municipality, the Nunnery after St. King Tamar operates by the blessing of Catholicos-Patriarch of all Georgia, Ilia II, and the endeavor of Akhalkalaki, Kumurdo, and Kari Bishop Nikoloz (Pachuashvili) and with support of Hegumenia Elisabed of Poka nunnery. The monastery was opened on November 21, 2004. The eparchy purchased the house in the village, which was equipped and a monastery had started operation.

In the monastery, the teacher of Georgian language and literature from Tbilisi started living. She spent a year in the monastery together with the nuns and delivered the lessons in the village public school. During summertime, in different years, the students from Tbilisi State University visited the monastery. They learned about the monastery's life and helped nuns in different activities.

There is the church of the 9<sup>th</sup> century after Jonah the prophet at the monastery. The church was ruined and damaged for a long time. In 2013, the National Agency of Cultural Heritage of Georgia, started rehabilitation works by the design of the architecture of Tamar Nemsadze. The central part of the church was restored and roofed with stone slabs. The second phase of the work was implemented in 2018-2019. The chapel was restored and a stone floor was made. As it is known, since the end of July 2023, the third stage of the works will be started and restoration of the church and organizing of the adjacent area will be completed.

There are two more old churches in the village of Saghamo. Unfortunately, it is unknown the names of those churches.



## **Ninotsminda Nunnery after Annunciation to the Holy Virgin**

Ninotsminda Nunnery after Annunciation to the Holy Virgin was established on February 1, 2001, by the Archbishop Seraphime (Jojua) of Borjomi and Akhalkalaki. Nun Mariam, the late Schemanun Matrona (Mother Mariam was the aunt of the bishop Seraphime).

The monastery was located in a house consisting of two parts. One belonged to the Merab Kostava Foundation. A teacher from Tbilisi, Klara Potskhverashvili lived there. Another part of the house was in the ownership of the local Armenian-Georgian family. Klara Potskhverashvili gave her own house to the eparchy and a nunnery was opened there. The bishop Seraphime bought another part later. Both parties were joined and repaired as much as possible. The cells and a chapel were made.

At the end of October 2002, the Akhalkalaki and Borjomi Eparchies were divided. Akhalkalaki and Kumurdo Eparchy was established and Archbishop, Nikoloz (Pachuashvili) was appointed as a head.

Since that time the spiritual children of Bishop Nikoloz moved to the monastery to live: young novice Nino, now deceased Nun Nino Kavelashvili, and at that time Rassaphore Seraphime, present-day Nun Ioana Partsvania. Since that time, the following lived in Ninotsminda monastery for different times: Hegumenia Nino Pachuashvili; Nun Nana Agladze; Nun Nana Kapanadze; Nun Marta Khet-suriani; Nun Marine Jikashvili; Now deceased Nun Natalia Chkadua

Since 2016, there have been four members in the Monastery: Schemanun Nino Kavelashvili, Nun Ioana Partsvania, Nun Natalia Chkadua, and Novice Ilaria Osorauli. In 2022 two of them passed away. Nun Nino Kavelashvili died on January 27, 2022, and Nun Natalia Chkadua passed away on October 14, 2022.

Mother Nino was buried in the yard of the same monastery. She made a great contribution to the Georgian church, in particular, to the flourishing and strengthening of monastic and church life first in the Bolnisi Eparchy, and then in Javakheti. She had a great role in the opening of the churches, that had been closed during the communist regime.

Nun Natalia is buried in Zugdidi and Tsaishi Eparchy, in the yard of the Nunnery after St. King Tamar. Mother Natalia was the mother of the Nun Ioana. She granted her residential place to the Eparchy of Zugdidi and Tsaishi after her daughter had left for the monastery. In 2001, on this place, the Nunnery after King Tamar was opened with the blessing of the Patriarch and leadership of a local bishop Gerasime. Since that, Mother Natalia lived under the name of Novice Nona in the eparchy of Zugdidi and Tsaishi. In 2017 due to her physical condition, she moved to her daughter in Javakheti, Ninotsminda town. She was ordained as a nun by Bishop Nikoloz and was named Natalia. Nun Natalia is buried in the yard of St. King Tamar Monastery, as a builder of a monastery.

In the monastery of Ninotsminda, there is a chapel named after the Holy Virgin. This chapel was made and painted by Metropolitan Bishop Seraphime and diocesan icon painters. Liturgies were held here at different times with different frequency.

In the beginning, Archimandrite Ioakime (Chikviladze) was a prayer. Together with Bishop Seraphime, Father Joakim made a great contribution to the construction of the St. Nino Monastery and its spiritual life. He is the leader of the

Mtsvane Monastery now. The priests who served in Ninotsminda were the now deceased Schema-archimandrite Andria Purtseladze (he was the head of Poka Friary for years), Archpriest Nikoloz Chikovani, Archpriest Giorgi Tetrushvili, Archpriest Alexandre Kasrashvili, Priest Avtandil Mchedliani.

The territory was allocated for constructing a church in the town of Ninotsminda with the support of the local government and the great afford of Priest Avtandil Mchedliani in 2015. Metropolitan Bishop Nikoloz blessed the church foundation in the name of the Holy Father Gabriel the Fool for Christ and Confessor.

Currently, construction of the church has been started and is going on which is led by Priest Avtandil Mchedliani.

## **Pokani Friary**

I was appointed to the Poka friary on August 28, 1992.

On August 28, on Holly Virgin's Day, I was ordained as a monk in Vardzia by Bishop Daniel (Datunashvili) with the blessing of Patriarch, Ilia II. The same day we arrived at Poka, where there were only two wagons near the Lake of Poka. Novice Papia (Archimandrite Makari Kitiashvili) was with me.

There were difficulties, especially, during the first months.

The territory of Poka Friary, 20 hectares, was transferred to the Patriarchate in 1989, by the signature of Mr. Jumber Patiashvili. Archpriest Bariel (Sichinchelashvili) used to arrive here before me. Novice Vital (Archimandrite Andra Tariadis) and Monk Naum were the first heads.

We started the first regular service in the wagons that summer. The archpriest Pavle (Metropolitan Bishop Nikoloz Pachuashvili) used to arrive frequently.

In 1992, in October, I was ordained a deacon and on November 26, the Patriarch ordained me as a priest-monk. It was the period of the Abkhazian War. It was difficult to supply the monastery. The frost was 20 degrees Celsius in winter. The entire lake was frozen; we used to bring potable water from a long distance and took ordinary water by buckets from the lake. The Prayer started at 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. In addition, each member used to get up for one hour at night and served the Canon by prayer. We went to sleep at 10 in the evening. We conducted a service in the wagon on Sunday and during celebrations.

Eating meat was forbidden in the monastery. One day per week, we went to the Nunnery to conduct a service and helped nuns this way.

The main things we did, it was obedience, construction, and preparing a dinner. We baked bread in the wagons, on the stove, on the pans.

We had no electricity and no phone. We mainly used letters, which we used to send with support to local Armenian drivers, as there were no Georgian villages around. The road from Tbilisi was difficult, train worked with delays. The infrastructure developed gradually for the next years.

We held the first water consecration on the lake on January 19, 1993, in the frost of 15 degrees, everyone, mothers, and fathers were first blessed and then poured water from the lake with buckets. Then the ice broke in the waters and we entered the water on that day, thus restoring the ancient church tradition.

Sometimes relationship with the locals was difficult, there was irritation against us, misunderstandings, but we, with great patience and love obtained the respect of the villagers.

In 1994 Patriarch visited us and awarded me with the degree of the Hegumen. Patriarch tried to visit us once per year, which was a great joy for us. Once he stayed with us in our wagon, in my simple cell.

The members of the monastery were changing. Michael (Bishop Michael Gabrichidze) came as a novice. Bishop Daniel sent a novice Zura (Hegumen Elise Belkania) from Sukhumi.

In 1995 by the resolution of Synod, I was elected as the Bishop of Borjomi and Akhalkalaki. The eparchy included Borjomi, Akhalkalaki, and Ninotsminda (For-

mer Bogdanovka) districts. Samtskhe-Javakheti was divided into two eparchies.

The establishment of Poka Monastery was an ecclesiastical and national victory of historical significance. It was possible only by the blessing of Patriarch, Ilia II.

The first Armenian, Leon with his son was baptized as Orthodox in the Poka Monastery. I became the godfather of his son, Bagrat. Today, the monastery of Poka is a perfect building.

The natural stone, where the Patriarch lit a candle during his first visit and predicted the establishment of churches, is still preserved. The Patriarch bought a house and therefore he registered in the village of Poka. Without such kind of registration, he was not allowed to buy a house in Poka and arrive there. Our church experienced such a hard time. Thanks God for everything.

## Memoirs of Archimandrite Poka (Markozia):

The friary was located in the residential wagons in Poka. In the summer, we brought drinking water in buckets from the springs on the shore of Lake Paravani. In winter, the lake was covered with ice about 1 meter thick, and the banks were filled with snow. We rarely were able to dig the 10-meter tunnel in the snow and get spring water there. It was very hard work; therefore, we preferred to cut ice by 1 meter and use boiled lake water for drink. Boiling was necessary because of the spread of tapeworm in the lake. I had seen fish with burst stomachs from a tapeworm. We used a crowbar to break the ice. The crowbar was so bent from hitting that it hurt our arm. Therefore, we did not grasp a crowbar after blowing to avoid pain when the ice was thick. But when the ice was becoming thinner, we had to hold it firmly not to throw it in the lake. A novice Davit Konjaria (a priest Davit Konjaria) made such a mistake. The broken crowbar slipped from his hand and dropped into the lake. He returned to the monastery and informed us about it. We faced the reality that our monastery was to stay without water. We immediately went to the village, to the nunnery to ask for the crowbar. It appeared that they had borrowed it from the local population. We started taking off a crowbar from the bottom of the lake. The ice pit was 20-30 meters from the shore and the depth was 2 and half meters. We fixed a long handle on a hoe. We used to lay on the belly at a pit, the length of our arm was added to the length of the hoe handle and it was possible to reach the bottom. Almost every member of the monastery had the desire and possibility to try to take a crowbar themselves, when one was tired another substituted him. We heard the sounds of reaching a hoe to the crowbar, rubbing, and then falling to the bottom. It happened that none of us was able to take a crowbar. We returned to the monastery. It is 200 meters from the monastery to the lake. The next day we prepared a spade, made the sharper top to it, and fixed the handle, but it seemed that we could not rely on it. Every morning we cut the ice for 20-30 meters, from morning to morning, the water froze to this thickness. Therefore, the tip of the spade was often bent and broken. One perfect day the miracle happened. One of the novices found the lost crowbar. When he went to fetch water, he saw the black spot in the pit. He thought it was a dead fish. He cut the ice around carefully so as not to cut the fish and pollute the water. As soon as he decided to take it carefully, he found that it was the lost crowbar. I.e. the iron with a raised head on the side of the pit was floating at three meters of height. You probably understand why so many priests and high-ranking persons, together with the successful businesspersons and respectful fathers of many children from the secular people joined the monastery. I have listed their names and surnames, who are the life witnesses of those amazing miracles (Father Svimon; Priest-monk Michael (Bishop of Tianeti and Pshavi, Father Michael Gabrichidze); Father Svimon (Abramishvili) who serves in the Trinity Lavra; Father Anton (Osiashvili), who serves in Odessa; Priest Davit (Konjaria) who serves in Tbilisi, a young novice then; Hegumen Gabriel Kajaia, young novice then. The secular people: Giorgi Nadareishvili (a businessman), Zaza Mirianashvili, Giorgi Merebashvili, Omari Kelbakyan, Zura Aleksandre).

## **A Monastery**

In 1988 His Holiness and Beatitude, Catholicos-Patriarch of All Georgia, Ilia II travelled around Samtskhe-Javakheti. When he came to Poka, to the Paravani Lake, at the place of entrance of St. Nino, he kneeled, lit a candle on a stone, prayed, crossed, and blessed the founding of St. Nino Monastery at that place.

In 1989, an open-air communion altar named after St. Nino was built at that place. On June 1, during the celebration of the entrance of St. Nino to Georgia, the Patriarch conducted a service himself, and the friary subject to the Georgian Patriarchate was established with the blessing of the Patriarch of Georgia.

Several wagons were installed close to the open church and fathers lived and served there for years.

In 1999 construction of St. Nino church and monastery was completed. Traditionally, on June 1, the day of St. Nino's arrival to Georgia the solemn service is conducted on the open-air communion altar.



## Javakheti Megaliths

Early humans, almost from birth, began contemplating the need for shelter to protect themselves from natural and climatic conditions and the animal world of their time. With the mastery of fire, adoption of foraging, domestication of animals, and the commencement of agriculture, they not only secured a stable food supply but also considered bartering and the necessity to safeguard accumulated resources. This evolution has forced humans to think about shelter from heat and cold, and protection at the same time.

From the outset, early humans instinctively began utilizing natural storage spaces that had been shaped over millions of years through volcanic, glacial, or tectonic processes. Numerous crevices and caves evolved into makeshift shelters, dotting the slopes of mountains, nestled in river valleys, and lining the shores of lakes and seas. Some of these spaces were enhanced by adding doors, securing and fortifying them. Through this process, humans gradually acquired the knowledge of construction, honing certain skills and qualities in the pursuit of shelter. Over time, the manual construction of shelters, huts, and houses, as well as defensive structures, commenced. Humans utilized the natural resources available in their respective regions as construction materials. The skill of building adapted to local natural conditions was continually refined and developed across centuries. Through peaceful interactions or conflicts between civilizations in various corners of the earth and at different periods, the local construction culture either flourished or faced destruction, often merging with the knowledge of other civilizations and ascending to even greater levels. From time immemorial to the present day, the overarching human culture of construction has evolved. The construction art of individual countries, regions, or peoples is marked by distinct features derived from local natural conditions and the lengthy historical development of their cultures. Despite these unique characteristics, common human features are readily apparent in each, reflecting shared elements that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

The old and relatively gentle lower Caucasus mountain range of South Georgia, encompassing the Trialeti, Javakheti, Abul-Samsari, Niala, Arsiani, and Shavshet-Erusheti ridges, along with the intervening hills, plateaus, river, and lake basins, boasts an abundance of natural caves, volcanic or glacial stone moraines, tuff, and granite boulders, which stand out as particularly excellent building materials for constructing megalithic buildings, whether for defense or residence. Of course, humans also made use of whatever resources local nature provided them in their construction without reproach. Hence, in Tao, Klarjeti, Javakheti, Samtskhe, and Trialeti, a myriad of natural and artificial forms of dwelling, shaped by human mastery over time, endure to the present day. Across different parts of historical Meskheti, housing adapted to local natural and climatic conditions, distinguished not only in form but also significantly in the materials employed for construction. While Achara, Imerkhevi, Shavsheti, and Lazeti predominantly feature wooden buildings, areas such as Kola-Artaani, Samtskhe, and Javakheti exhibit a preference for stone structures<sup>1</sup>. In certain places, where feasible, a combination of both wood and stone was utilized concurrently.

In South Georgia, specifically in Zemo and Kvemo Kartli, human habitation

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1 Achara, Imerkhevi, Shavsheti, Lazeti, Kola, Artaani, Samtskhe, and Javakheti are historical parts of Georgia. (Trans./ED.)

dates back to ancient times, as attested by the variety of monuments spanning almost all eras that dot its mountains, meadows, and river valleys. Remarkably, numerous human settlements from the Stone Age still exist in the region, although only a limited few have undergone thorough study and examination.

Javakheti stands out as particularly abundant in natural caves, serving as sites for early human habitation. The valleys of both main tributaries of Mtkvari (Javakheti and Artaani), and their branches, including Buzakhevi (Kartsebi), Korkhi, Khando, and Nialistsqali housed both large and small settlements of early humans. The Kartsebi Valley, in particular, preserves the majority of these early settlements.



**Photograph 18.** Prehistoric settlement of Kartsebi

Notably, sizable settlements can be found near Bavra-Khulgumo, Korkhi Gorge, below Nazvrevi, and near Khando.



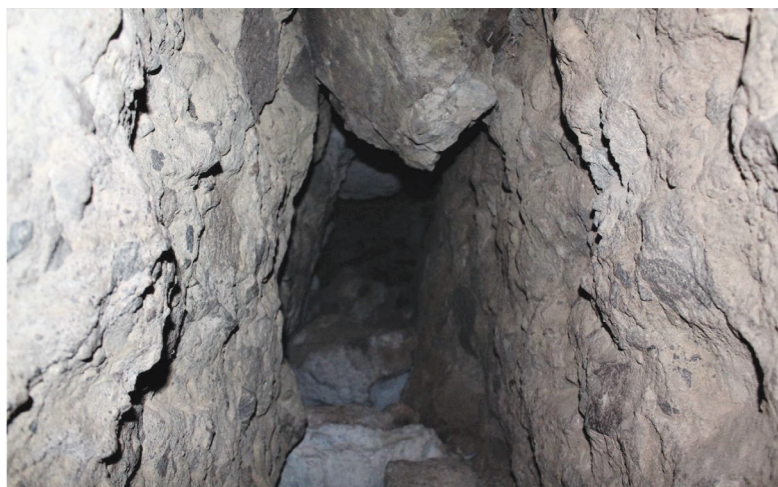
**Photograph 19.** Prehistoric settlement of Korkhi



Some of these settlements remain in an intact state, while others have a constructed front facade with traces of doors.



**Photograph 20** Nazvrevi cave



**Photograph 21.** Tmogvi rock cleft

In times of adversity, people sought refuge not only in caves but also in rock crevices, making the most of their depth and space. An illustrative example of this practice is evident in the clefts of the rock in Tmogvi village, which continue to be utilized for agricultural purposes.

Natural caves and crevices gradually became insufficient, leading to the emergence of architectural developments from the late Neolithic period. During this time, stone became a prevalent material for construction. Alongside simple, dry pile structures, monumental buildings were erected. Although the purpose of many surviving monuments from that period remains unknown, the scale and forms of these ancient structures are occasionally so grandiose and astonishing

that scientists have reason to suspect the use of more advanced technologies than those associated with primitive methods. Consequently, the scientific community is divided into two groups:

**One group** proposes that these structures were constructed by civilizations that once thrived on the Earth but vanished under unknown circumstances. Or they may have been built by extraterrestrial civilizations introducing ready-made architectural forms to newly emerging civilizations, who subsequently adopted them as the basis for their buildings.

**The second group** endeavors to unravel the mystery on-site and trace the primitive technology employed during that era to create such impeccably crafted structures.

Given the relatively limited understanding of prehistoric events, the majority of scientists align with the second group.

**“Megalith”** is a Greek term that literally translates to **“large stone.”** Structures constructed through the dry stacking of single, large, unworked, or partially worked boulders are referred to as **megaliths**. The cultural period in which such structures were built is known as **megalithic culture**.

Megaliths are distributed worldwide, showcasing differences in age and form. In Europe, megaliths are mainly associated with the Eneolithic and Bronze Age (BCIII-II AD). England, specifically, features a significant number of Neolithic megaliths. Meanwhile, in the Caucasus and surrounding regions, megaliths from the Early Bronze Age are prevalent (BCIV-II AD). The cyclopean complexes in the South Caucasus cover the territories of present-day Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkey, and Iran. In Georgia, they are predominantly found in Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti.

According to the information presented in the literature, the construction of cyclopean fortifications in the South Caucasus is primarily dated to the late Bronze and Iron Ages (XV-VI centuries BC). This period holds significant importance in the history of Georgia, as many scientists believe it marks the commencement of the unification of Georgian tribes and the formation of the first Georgian states. **The country of Dayaen**, mentioned in Assyrian written sources from the 12th-9th centuries BC, is regarded as such (Melikishvili 1959, 176), which included relatively small political entities in the neighborhood (Melikishvili 1959, 18). Diaukhi mentioned in the Urartian written sources of the 8th century BC is the same Dayaen (Melikishvili 1954, 58), which included the south-western territories of historical Georgia (Sakartvelo) and is equated with medieval Tao Saeristavo<sup>2</sup>. The Taos are considered to be the Taokhs mentioned in ancient Greek written sources (Melikishvili 1959, 176). During the rise of Urartu, Diaukh united various countries and tribes in a vast territory. This great union extended to the south and west of the present-day Turkish city of Erzurum, to the middle of the Chorokhi River in the north, and to Lake Childiri in the northeast (Melikishvili 1959, 177). Presumably, the cyclopean fortifications found in abundance in these areas belonged to the Dayaeni/Diaukhi coalition states in the region. (Narimanishvili 2019, 7).

As previously mentioned, the function of megaliths remains incompletely understood; nevertheless, it can be asserted that certain megaliths were constructed for burial purposes, associated with funeral rites. Some, with their elevated forms, serve the function of connecting with the sun and the world. Additionally,

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2 Saeristavo - a territorial unit in old Georgia (Trans./ ED.).

certain megaliths are linked to fertility cults, exhibiting shapes reminiscent of whales or fertilization organs. Many megaliths were constructed with astrological purposes in mind, functioning as “observatories”. Some served defensive and operational functions, while others held ritual significance as megalithic monuments. The grandiosity of numerous megaliths necessitated substantial manpower and extended construction periods. However, it is important to note that, in line with certain beliefs and scientific conjectures, there are claims suggesting these megaliths were built in a remarkably short span. Some attribute this to the involvement of mythical or legendary beings, while others propose the intriguing idea of builders representing advanced extraterrestrial civilizations equipped with otherworldly technology.

Conventionally, **two categories of megaliths are distinguished:**

The **first category** encompasses ancient prehistoric architectural structures, including menhirs, cromlechs, dolmens, certain temples, labyrinths, and trackers (individual stones featuring petroglyphs). These structures were typically constructed using minimally processed or completely unprocessed stones.

The **second category** pertains to more sophisticated architectural structures constructed from exceptionally large stones, characterized by precise geometric shapes. These megalithic structures were erected in regions with early statehood and beyond. Examples include the Egyptian pyramids, Mycenaean buildings, the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, South American pyramids, and certain other structures, including some found underwater.

The term **‘menhir’** derives from the Celtic language, signifying an oblong stone. In the classical sense, a menhir is the most basic form of megalith—a vertically or angled positioned oblong stone emerging from the ground. The surface of a menhir may be processed, often featuring depicted figures, or left completely unprocessed.



**Photograph 22.** Menhir of Dankali





**Photograph 23.** Menhir of Tejisi

Menhirs, standing stones that can reach heights of up to 20 meters, are abundant in regions such as Transcaucasia, Iran, and Turkey. In our cultural context, menhirs in Georgia took on various forms, including representations of whales and human figures. Those crafted in the likeness of women or men are referred to as Kvakatsi (Stoneman – Kva/ქვა – stone, Katsi/კაცი - man TN) or Kvakali<sup>3</sup> (Stonewomen, Stone/ქვა, Kali/ქალი TN). Notable examples of menhirs in Georgia include **Tejisi** (Cholaqi) and Rekhi in Trialeti, the **Chikiani** Menhir on the border of historical Trialeti and Javakheti, as well as the **Gandzani** and Murjakheti menhirs, respectively, **Dzikva** and **Lalia** in Javakheti. Beyond the megalithic era, stelae and stone crosses also became prevalent as post-megalithic menhirs.

A **cromlech** refers to a circular arrangement of several menhirs, occasionally connected with flat stones. In some instances, materials such as wood were also used as coverings. In Great Britain, the term ‘henge’ is used with a similar meaning to cromlech. One notable example is the Dankali Cromlech:



**Photograph 24.** Cromlech of Dankali

3 Kvakatsi in translation from Georgian: Stoneman – Kva/ქვა – stone, Katsi/კაცი - man; Kvakali in translation from Georgian: Stonewomen - Stone/ქვა, Kali/ქალი (Trans. / ED.)



A **dolmen** is a structure constructed from monolithic stones, typically forming a house-like enclosure covered by a flat stone slab. Many dolmens feature an intricately crafted circular window at the front. These megalithic structures are believed to be associated with funeral rites. Some dolmens are part of larger complexes, with galleries interconnected by tunnels. In Georgia, dolmens are documented in Abkhazia.



**Photograph 25.** Dolmen from Abkhazia (Ethnographic Museum of Georgia)

While dolmens are prevalent in other regions, their absence does not necessarily indicate their non-existence but rather suggests variations in their forms. Dolmens in different regions may likely exhibit some differences from the classical forms. An analogous example of dolmen galleries can be found in the **Megalithic Pantheon of Dumeila**, such as the Kurgan tombs interconnected by “darans”<sup>4</sup> Some scholars perceive these interconnected structures as a megalithic village, a viewpoint we believe is not accurate.

In addition to the three main types of megaliths—menhir, cromlech, and dolmen—various other forms are also recognized. These include the **Trilith**, **Taula-Cairn**, **Seid** (a stone block placed on a hill or large boulder), and several others.



**Photograph 26.** Buzakhevi Seid

4 Underground buildings, mostly used as shelters. (Trans./ED.)

A notable category among megaliths includes **megalithic or cyclopean fortresses**, which are dry-built defensive complexes constructed from unworked or semi-worked stones. These fortifications were built using either small-sized broken stones, huge boulders, or a combination of both. When such a fortress is primarily constructed from unsupported monolithic stones, it is more commonly referred to as a megalithic fortress.



**Photograph 27.** Megalithic fortress of Saro



**Photograph 28.** Cyclopean castle of Kari

Cyclopean castles were frequently built on elevated hills or mountain slopes, surrounded by a comprehensive residential, cultic, and defensive complex known as a hill-settlement. These **hill settlements** incorporated various structures, including defensive fortifications, residential units, hideouts, and cultic buildings.





**Photograph 29.** Ruined Hill-Settlement of Murji

The world's oldest discovered megalithic structure, dating back to approximately the 10th to 8th millennium BC, is Göbekli Tepe in Turkey. This site features about twenty circles formed by stelae adorned with intricate carvings of animals.



**Photograph 30.** Göbekli Tepe (source of the: Wikipedia, Accessed on October, 2023 [URL: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Pottery\\_Neolithic\\_A#/media/File:G%C3%B6bekli\\_Tepe,\\_Urfa.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pre-Pottery_Neolithic_A#/media/File:G%C3%B6bekli_Tepe,_Urfa.jpg)])

The predominant view in mainstream historical science posits that megaliths were constructed by primitive tribes and tribal associations towards the end of the Stone Age, during the Neolithic era, specifically no earlier than the 7th millennium BC. However, recent research challenges this perspective, proposing that megaliths predate all known human civilizations. According to legends preserved in the collective memory of diverse cultures, there is a suggestion that megaliths

might have been erected by individuals originating from distant lands—often described as ‘white-red-bearded gods and goddesses.’ The proponents of this alternative theory propose that these builders possessed advanced knowledge in geometry, physics, mechanics, geology, and astronomy. Additionally, it is suggested that they employed sophisticated construction technologies, enabling them to create flawless structures swiftly, even using minimally processed stones. Huge boulders and blocks in some megalithic structures exhibit remarkable precision in cutting and fitting, to the extent that the edge of a knife would not penetrate the seams. A significant portion of these megaliths is crafted from quartz sandstone, with quartz being an excellent generator of electric current, and its crystals simultaneously producing ultrasound and radio waves. In the examination of the Royallight Cromlech in Britain, scientists observed that each stone within it possesses a distinct radiation pattern and intensity. This radiation is modulated by the meticulous arrangement of stones within the Cromlech. Intriguingly, these cromlechs emit their most intense ultrasound pulses just before sunrise, reaching their peak during solar equinoxes. Adding to the mystery, many megaliths are strategically positioned above deep faults in the Earth’s crust, known as geopathogenic regions. The alignment of these structures with such geological features raises questions about how Stone Age people discerned the subsurface structure of the Earth, extending kilometers below. Despite these fascinating observations, the significance of these phenomena and the geological structures of the Stone Age communities remain unsolved mysteries, awaiting further scientific investigation and explanation.

Megalithic monuments are abundant in Georgia, displaying various types of structures from the first category. Particularly noteworthy are the regions of Samtskhe-Javakheti, Kvemo Kartli, and Abkhazia, where a rich concentration of megalithic buildings is evident. Significant examples can also be found in the Mtskheta-Mtianeti region and the southeastern part of historical Tao-Klarjeti. Among these, the historical territory of Javakheti stands out as the most intensively covered with such monuments, making it a unique oasis in this regard. Both oral traditions and certain written sources affirm the existence of megalithic structures in Georgia since time immemorial. The people of Meskheta referred to such structures with names like “Karknali,” “Lodovani,” “Devi’s Castle,” and “Kajis Castle.” In Javakheti, they were known as “Koro” (big boulder) fortresses. Monolithic natural or hand-made stone columns were given names such as kva-katsi, kva-kali<sup>5</sup>), dzikva, and more. The builders of these structures were believed to be Goliaths, devs, demigods, or Amiran<sup>6</sup>, as per local lore. These names can also be found in various written sources, complementing oral traditions. For instance, Vakhushti Batonishvili’s *Geography of Georgia* (Vakhushti 1895, 91) mentions “Above the *Nakulbakevi* is the place *Dev’s-Trace*’/„ნაკულბაკევის ზეით არს დევის-ნამუხლი“, and in his work *Description of the Kingdom of Georgia*, he often describes castles “built with a huge stone,” such as the one “there is a castle standing atop of Shaori Mountain, built with huge stones”/„ხოლო შაორის მთის თხემთა ზედა დგას ციხე, დიდროვანის ლოდით ნაშენი“. References to “Huge stones” (“Didrovani Lodi”/ “დიდროვანი ლოდი” in Georgian TN) are also found in *Dasturlamari* of Vakhtang VI (Vakhusti 1895, 68). In the same book,

5 Kvardzali – in Georgian: kva/ქვა - stone, rdzali/რძალი - bride. (Trans. / ED.)

6 Amiran - a hero of a Georgian mythology. (Trans. / ED.)

Vakhushti Batonishvili describes superstitions associated with megalithic monuments, stating, “bellow Pativani, there is a boulder on the plain, if you turn it over during a drought, you will get rain; and when it rains if you throw ashes and turn it over, you will have no rain”/”პატივანს ქვეით ვაკეს არს ლოდი, რომელი გვალვასა თუ გადააბრუნო და შენამო, მოვალს წვიმა, ხოლო წვიმიანობასა შინა თუ შეაყარო ნაცარი და გადააბრუნო, იქმნების უწვიმრობა” (Vakhushti 1985, 70). Similar rituals were practiced in numerous villages throughout Georgia, including Samtskhe-Javakheti. Murjakheti menhirs - **Dzikva** and **Lalia** are one of the most typical and well-known examples.

Interest in megalithic culture has always been great, both in our country and in the world. The first scientific article in Georgia about the fortifications of the three villages of Avranlo, Gumbati, and Edikilisa was published by a local school teacher A. Yoakimov (Ioakimov 1882, 8-9). In 1884, the study of such monuments was already a topic of discussion at the archaeological congress held in Tbilisi. Consequently, renowned scientists, including Ivane Rostomashvili, Aleksandre Gren, and Ekvtime Takaishvili, were interested in this subject. In 1898, Ivane Rostomashvili presented a report on the work conducted in Javakheti before, which included a detailed description of megalithic castles, alongside other architectural monuments (Rostomov 1898, 24-108). In the following years, Ekvtime Takaishvili collected and published more specific information (Taqaishvili 1905, 14-15; 1913, 36). 1923 marked a significant milestone in the study of Georgian megaliths. During research in the Algeti Valley, Leon Melkhiset-Beg made a pivotal discovery by identifying the megalithic site of Gokhnari. This breakthrough prompted the planning of several expeditions aimed at studying megalithic monuments in South Georgia. In 1938, Melikset-Begi published the monograph *Megalithic Culture in Georgia* (Melikset-Begi 1938, 49-73), wherein he compiled a catalog featuring all known megalithic fortifications in Georgia up to that time.



**Photograph 31.** Underground entrance of Gokhnari



The initial archaeological investigation of cyclopean complexes in Georgia is associated with Boris Kuftin, who led crucial studies during the construction of the Tsalka reservoir in historical Trialeti from 1936 to 1948. This work included the examination of several cyclopean complexes and necropolises on the Tsalka plateau (Куфтин 1936...1948). Niko Bedzenishvili's travel diary from the 1930s, published in 1964, is also noteworthy for its contribution to the understanding of cyclopean fortifications (Berdzenishvili 1964). In 1956-58, Taniel Chubinishvili initiated the first reconnaissance archaeological efforts in Javakheti, focusing on Amirani Hill in Akhalkalki. Subsequently, systematic reconnaissance in the same region included observations of cyclopean structures. In 1968, it was Otar Gambashidze, and then, Tornike Tatishvili who conducted archeological reconnaissance in Samtskhe-Javakheti.

Otar Japaridze led the first large-scale archaeological endeavors in historical Javakheti, with a primary focus on the cyclopean fortress. The expeditions in 1974 and 1977 involved excavations at "Okami Hill," with additional reconnaissance trenches dug in Javakheti on several other hills. Subsequently, from 1977 to 1984, an archaeological expedition led by Zaal Kikodze conducted excavations and reconnaissance in the Ninotsminda municipality. In 1987-1988, near the village of Jigrasheni, Dikasheni I and the necropolis were excavated under the leadership of Aleksandre Orjonikidze. Continuing this exploration, in 1991, the lower castle of the cyclopean complex of Saro was studied under the guidance of Otar Gambashidze (Ghambashidze et al., 2000). In the same year, Z. Kikodze and F. Koli resumed archaeological works in Javakheti. In 1993, the Georgian-American expedition initiated the archaeological study of the cyclopean complex of Satkhe. As part of this expedition, reconnaissance trenches were also dug on the hill of Baraleti. This year (2023), a joint Georgian-Italian expedition, led by Tornike Chilingarashvili, a doctoral student in archaeology at Tbilisi State University, commenced archaeological excavations in the area. Devi Berdzenishvili played a significant role in identifying and describing numerous historical monuments in Javakheti. In 2002, he published a dedicated work on the ancient fortifications of Javakheti (Berdzenishvili 2002).

In 2000, a historical-architectural guide of Javakheti was published under the co-authorship of Devi Berdzenishvili, encompassing a significant portion of the cyclopean complexes in the region (Guidebook 2000). That same year witnessed the first complete geodetic and architectural survey of the Shaori and Abuli complexes. In 2013, an expedition led by Goderdzi Narimanishvili conducted excavations in the village of Sulda. The contributions of Goderdzi Narimanishvili, Davit Narimanishvili, and Nino Shanshashvili to the study of megalithic monuments in Georgia, especially in historical Kvemo Kartli and Samtskhe-Javakheti, are of immense value. In this regard, they have authored numerous works, including "The Cyclopean Fortifications of Georgia," published by Davit Narimanishvili in 2019, and "The Monuments of Megalithic Culture of Georgia," jointly published by Goderdzi Narimanishvili, Nino Shanshashvili, and Davit Narimanishvili in 2020.

On the territory of historical Javakheti, an abundance of nearly all types of "first category" megalithic monuments is present. Notably, menhirs, cyclopean structures, and megalithic fortress-towers and castles stand out for their impressive presence.

**Javakheti is notably rich in menhirs and stone crosses (Kvajvari/ქვაჯვარი in**



**Georgian).** Menhirs, representing monuments from the pagan period, were often linked to the cult of fertility. They are predominantly shaped like phalluses, while some are associated with open-mouthed fish or whale forms, earning them the name “whale-like.” There is a scholarly debate regarding their original symbolism, with some, including Melikset-Begi, proposing an association with the fish cult before transitioning to fertility symbolism. The 2.9 meters Dzikva (Rdziskva/რძისკვა -> dzikva/ძიკვა, in Georgian milk stone TN) menhir in the village of Murjakheti in Akhalkalaki municipality is particularly significant. On its western side, a depiction of fertilization is present. Although it’s challenging to conclusively prove, locals believe that this menhir possesses the power to aid in child-birth or provide milk. Women seeking fertility or help with lactation often visit it, spread honey or melted butter on its base, light candles, and pray for assistance.



**Photograph 32.** Dzikva of Murjakheti

In the same village, men visit a menhir located at the edge of a field. This menhir has two notable depressions on one side, and men often seek a cure for infertility by visiting it. To the west of Gandzani village stands a longer and more massive menhir, reaching up to four meters in height. This menhir features a fertility symbol on the top and likely an image of two exotic birds on the waist. Similar menhirs can be found in numerous locations across Javakheti, including Dumani, Merenia, Dankali, Areshti, and others. While some of these menhirs later acquired Christian

attributes, such as crosses, local inhabitants continued to pray for rain, milk, and other desires, adhering to pagan beliefs and rituals associated with the menhirs and stelae transformed into stone crosses. Menhirs, typically, were situated in central locations of ancient shrines, on passes, caravan routes, and at the borders of micro-regions between different “countries.” In the pre-Christian era, menhirs and stelae transformed, adopting Christian attributes and evolving into stone crosses. Despite these changes, their purpose and function remained essentially the same, adapted to the beliefs and practices of the time. For instance, on the southeast side of the Chikiani menhir, positioned on the pass from Javakheti to Trileti, on the opposite side of the mountain with the same name, there is a stone known as “Datvia”/” Ϙσσϗϗσϗ “dating back to the 12th century. Standing up to three meters tall, it was likely erected to mark the passage from Javakheti to Zurtaketi. Similar examples can be found in other locations across Javakheti.



**Photograph 33.** Tavparavani (Datvia) Stone Cross

Stone crosses, both in general and specifically in Javakheti, serve as monuments from the pre-feudal era. They were erected to commemorate significant events, demarcate borders, or signify ownership of a territory. A historical example highlighting the importance of such stone crosses is the inscription of the Khunamisi stone cross, which indicates that Sula Japaridze was one of the rulers of Javakheti in the 9th century. As the various principalities of the region unified in the advanced Middle Ages, stela-hands emerged as symbolic expressions of power, replacing traditional stone crosses. Four such stela-hands are recognized in Javakheti: Ptena and Zreska stelae associated with Lasha-Giorgi, Gomani stela linked to Rusudan and Davit Narini, and Saghamo stela representing the power of David VII. These stela-hands served as powerful symbols of authority.



**Photograph 34.** Saghamo Stela with the hand of David VII

In later centuries, stelae took on the role of demarcating territorial boundaries. According to researchers, the two stone crosses situated on the north side of the village of Khaveti were likely erected to delineate the border between the two dioceses of Javakheti – Tskarostavi and Kumurdo.



**Photograph 35.** Stone crosses of Khaveti



However, during the periods of Ottoman and later Russian rule, the function of marking borders shifted from cross-stones to simple “chorti”/ ჭორტი/, which are long, pointed stones.

Another compelling piece of evidence for the existence of well-established megalithic structures in the territory of Javakheti is represented by the kurgan tombs dating back to the Middle Bronze Age. These tombs, located in Samtskhe-Javakheti, are dated to the first half of the 2nd millennium AD. They are regarded as the Meskhetian version of the illustrious kurgan culture (Ghambashidze 2000, 98-101; Kikvidze 1991, 159)

In the territory of Javakheti, kurgan tombs are predominantly concentrated in the Mtkvari basin, covering both, Artaani and Javakheti Mtkvari. Numerous large or small kurgan tombs, along with their complete complexes and fields, have been identified in various locations. These include Bertakana, the summits of Akhchia, Dumeila, and Panaketi hills, as well as the slopes and ridges of Niala mountains. Additionally, they are found in the areas of Van-Buzmareti, Shaloshet-Orkhopia, Upper Tmogvi, Dlivri Ridge, Elia and Mada mountains, Satkhe, Arakali, and the surrounding hills. Other locations include the ridges and slopes connecting Gormake-Dikasheni, Didi and Patara Abuli, Koro and Dekiani mountains, Toria, Olaverdi, Mimineti, Samsari, Meghreki, Agana-Bozhano, Molit-Tabatskuri, Tetrob-Cheruli, and Sharvasheti Ridges, Shaori-Chikiani, and Gultovla-Kachalgori, among others. The chambers within the kurgan tombs are constructed using large boulders and roofed with flat stones. These structures are covered with fine gravel, and the deceased are typically interred with their hands and feet bent. The burial inventory often includes mainly clay vessels.



**Photograph 36.** Mirashkhani kurgan

Along with ceramic products, bronze and gold artifacts were also brought to the tombs. Kurgans are mostly grouped around one or several bigger Kurgans, accompanied by smaller or thinner ones. Most of the kurgans on the territory of Javakheti have been looted at different times, some of them have been opened recently by archaeologists or illegal excavators. In several locations across Javakheti, stone boxes from the medieval period have also been observed in association with these burial sites.

**Javakheti stands out as one of the prominent centers for the presence of stone sculptures depicting sheep and horses in the entire of Georgia.** In every village, or ruined village area, and within the walls of churches or church ruins, remnants of these sculptures can be found. Although many of these tombstones have suffered damage or have been lost due to neglect, a considerable number of them were taken away either in the capital or in neighboring countries unabashedly. These statues, crafted as tombstones and on large boulders, showcase the deceased's professional or daily activities, as well as their merits. Carvings and sculptures of working or combat tools, symbols, and figures such as plows, hammers, combs, sledgehammers, jugs, bowls, swords, daggers, bows, arrows, needles, threads, sieves, musical instruments, and more, are depicted based on the individual's life and accomplishments.



**Photograph 37.** Dikasheni stone-horse

The stone statues of sheep, rams, and horses, some of the considerable size, that are still preserved in Javakheti cemeteries today, are genetically most closely related to the common Meskhetian and Trialetian analogues. Many of these statues also exhibit highly sophisticated forms. They represent rare megalithic monuments within Georgian folk art and require further attention and research.





**Photograph 38.** Khorenia (Jvarna) stone-ram

In the quarries and moraines, people of that time not only constructed fortresses, ritual buildings, or burial tombs but also built residences. The complex of kurgan buildings situated southeast of Dumeila in the Niala Valley serves as either a pantheon of kurgan tombs or a megalithic residential complex—a kurgan village—where the structures are built similarly to kurgan formations. All these structures have an eastern entrance and are interconnected by a network of tunnels – “darans”. In our interpretation, it could have originally been a pantheon of kurgan tombs, which the inhabitants later transformed into hiding spaces during challenging times, connecting them with “darans” and possibly even using them for prolonged habitation. Regardless, the “Kurgan Village” of Dumeila is likely one of the unique objects not only in Georgia and Transcaucasia.



**Photograph 39.** Dumeila Megalith

In megalithic villages and fortress cities, both small and relatively large chambers were predominantly covered with flat stones arranged in the shape of swallow’s nests. This signifies that the use of a crown-like roof, resembling a



“swallow’s nest,” dates back to the Stone Age in South Georgia. This architectural feature serves as an indicator of the advanced construction culture and continual development of settlements by the Georgians in this region.



**Photograph 40.** “Swallow-type” roofing, Abuli Megalithic Complex, II-I millennia B.C.



**Photograph 41.** “Swallow-type” roofing, Baraleti, Meskhetian “Darbazi” (19th-20th centuries)

**Houses covered with earth** represent a distinct phenomenon, constructed according to megalithic “technologies” and principles, with this tradition persisting until the 1960s. While not delving into all their attributes here, it’s worth noting that, among their various functions, they also served a defensive purpose. These structures were typically inhabited by individuals with the same surnames nearby within villages. The arrangement of these structures of entire villages or districts was strategic, ensuring the interlinked roofing. This layout, especially during the night and in winter with heavy snow, made them practically invisible to external threats. In the early period, houses were connected by “dolabs” (dolabi/დოლაბი in Georgian TN) - holes, cut out intentionally, for signaling or escape. These connections (dolabs) were locked and they were only opened in case of an enemy invasion or another alarming situation. Turns out, even in this early period, a unique form of “cellular communication” existed. Additionally, houses and entire neighborhoods were connected through an underground network – “darans”.

**Darani** is „an entrance into the rock, or under the ground. A house built under the ground is called Darani, regardless of whether it is curved into the rock or the ground.“<sup>7</sup> In fact, all the villages of Meskheta were connected, so it can be said that there is more underground than what is visible above ground in deserted villages.



**Photograph 42.** Entrance to Varditsikhe Darani

Darani is a system of dry-built tunnels dug out of large rocks and covered with thick stone slabs consisting of interlocking entrances and exits and storage rooms of various sizes. Building up of darans did not always occur. Often, if the natural rock allowed it, tunnels and storage were dug. There are also darans dug solely into the ground. Every daran typically had multiple branches. One of them was necessarily near the water and the other was near the church (sometimes the shrines were arranged in the darans), one branch led necessarily to the fortress tower or the castle the other led to the road, animal food storage, earth cellars, the house and all the

7 Definition of Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani. In original: „კლდეში, ანუ მიწას ქვეშ შესასვლელი. დარანად ითქმის სახლი მიწას ქვეშ ნაგები, გინა მიწა და კლდე შეთხრილი უჩინრად “. (Trans./Ed.)

necessary buildings and facilities, which were necessary to survive for a long time in case of enemy invasion. At the time of the enemy's entry, the villagers who were already living halfway in the huts were moving into the Darans. First of all, children, elderly people, and women were moved then if necessary the rest of the population was also moved. A well-organized chain of darans allowed them to live in such a hidden state for a long time. Darans were also equipped with air and water reservoirs. All entrances and exits of darani were arranged in hidden places and were locked by huge rock doors. The chain of darans went from village to village from castle to castle, to rivers, forests, and roads and often their length was tens of kilometres. Along with moving the population through darans secret surveillance of the enemy hidden attacks on them and harassment also took place. Thus, the villages of Meskheta secured by the chain of Darans together with fortresses formed a powerful defense system, which served to protect and save the population as much as possible from incessant attacks of violent enemies from all sides. The most intensive use of darans probably began in the 17th century during the period of Turkish domination and the raids of Dagestan tribes (called – Lekianoba/ლექიანობა in Georgian TN) in Meskheta but their existence even before that is unmistakably proven. In many villages and deserted villages of Samtskhe and Javakheti, there are still a large number of daranas (Chobareti, Lebisi, Gundi, Zedatmogvi, Bertakana, Gelsunda, Old Atskvita, Odisi, Khizabavra, Vardistsikhe, Kvarsha, Dikasheni, Griali, Murji, Sirkva, Samsari, Murjakheti, Gormake, etc.). In some of them, it is still possible to go down to a considerable depth.

It is worth mentioning **the villages artificially cut into the rock:** The Vani Caves, Ananauri, Chachkari, Oloda, Samsari, and of course, the magnificent Vardzia, which was originally conceived as a powerful defensive fortress-city and then turned into a monastic complex. A large number of people lived in these complexes of natural and artificial caves in Javakheti and during the incessant invasions of the enemy, they quite reliably protected and sheltered themselves. Artaani Mtkvari valley from Mgeltsikhe to Khertvisi is actually covered with similar natural and artificial cave complexes.



**Photograph 43.** Oloda Cave Complex



The most striking **megalithic fortresses** are the megalithic complexes of Abuli and Shaori in the territory of Javakheti dotted with megalithic settlements and fortresses.



**Photograph 44.** Abuli Megalithic Complex

The grandiose megalithic complexes of Patara Abuli (2670m above sea level) and Shaori (2752m above sea level) built of largely unworked boulders from moraines of tufa stones, abundant on the site, are unique monuments not only in Georgia but also in the entire Transcaucasia. Both of them have the form of a castle with walls, a citadel, and protective stone embankments. Within the perimeter, in the citadel, as well as outside there are small cells, which are covered with flat slates stacked in a circle. Cells are connected by narrow darans. The triumphal stone pavement of the citadel, covered with large rocks is preserved almost completely, along with several menhirs at Shaori Castle. At the beginning of the last century, there still existed the stela with the Georgian inscription, which is now lost. This stone pavement dating from the III-II millennium B.C. is probably proof that Shaori Castle was used for more cultic-ritual purposes.



**Photograph 45.** The highway leading to the Shaori Megalithic Castle

Slightly above the south-west of Patara Abuli Castle on the eastern slope of a small mountain is a rock of weathered tufa-quartzite which in profile from the side of Abuli Castle so closely resembles the pyramid of the Egyptian Sphinx, that it is hard to believe that it is only a creation of nature and that man had no part in its creation. How can we ascertain that the megalithic fortress of Abuli was not conceived and built as a ritual and chapel shelter for the people who came to this pagan shrine?



**Photograph 46.** Rock in Patara Abuli with a depiction of “Sphinx”.

We have a very interesting truly megalithic complex which is built entirely of semi-processed large rocks with dry piles in the village of Saro located on the lower level of the Javakheti highland. We have two megalithic fortresses in Saro “Shua Sakdari Fortress” and the Kvemo Fortress. The third castle tower is a medieval fortress built with mortared stone. In addition in Javakheti, there are many other big or small megalithic (as we mentioned above it would be more correct to call them by the name of cyclopean castles but still the society calls them by the name of megalithic castles we come to a compromise) castles: Toria, Gormake, mountain Mada, mountain Elia, Pokani, Gandzani, Satkhe, Amirani hill, Khulgumo, Machatia, Olaverdi, Mimineti, Murji, Natsargora, Varditsikhe, Balanta, Moliti, Modega, Akaranti, Tabatskuri, Zeoti, Kadiskhevi, Oldani, Alastani Gokio, Kaltubani, Varevni, Odeti, Tserakunta, Shadrevanta, Tskhekneli, Gocha, Kilda, Areshti, Dankali, Ketileti, Khoreshavani, Samchedlisi, Vani, Buzmareti, Gumbati, Tataleti, Dumeila, Panaketi, Vashlobi, Tskarostavi, Kadali, Kartsakhi, Sulda, Vachiani, Nialiskuri, and many others. Even simply listing them would take us too far. Many of them were still used for defensive purposes in the Middle Ages and have been partially rebuilt with period-appropriate additions.

As we have already mentioned such buildings were called “karknali”<sup>8</sup>, huge rock, Giant Castle, Amirani Hill, and Kaji Castle in folk tales. From the 16th-17th centuries in Meskhети including Javakheti the population ethnically and religiously artificially changed by the influence of the Muslim culture after the Iranian

8 Karknali (in Georgian: კარკნალი), an area covered with large stones or rocks. (Trans./Ed.)

and Ottoman oppressors, associated the inaccessible castles with the hero of the epic of the Turkish peoples, „Koroghli“, and many of them associated Koroghli mountain and Koroghli castle. Even today, if you ask in Javakheti in the villages inhabited by Armenians who emigrated from Erzurum and Baizid at the beginning of the 19th century, about the shortest way to reach any megalithic castle located in their vicinity, they will initially be confused. However, if you mention Koroghli castle, they will immediately understand and teach you the way. It turns out that wherever in Javakheti there is a small “karknali” or a rocky place like a shelter, all of them think or have heard from the elders that Koroghli took shelter here. This makes them proud of it, in their own way. Our historians and geographers also make mistakes. By relying on their dictation and earlier Russian-Turkish maps, these places have been marked with the name of Koroghli on the modern Georgian topographical maps, which is obviously wrong. While the old Georgian names of many of them are already known, it is really possible to determine the names of others if desired.

Even after such an extensive overview, we still cannot list all the types of monuments inherited from the megalithic culture spread in Javakheti, not to mention describe them one by one. Considering the fact, that life in a megalithic existence continued in Javakheti until the 1960s and before that, sacred megalithic oda-houses<sup>9</sup>, huts, cattle sheds, terraces, platforms, earth cellars, etc. were still being built and used, it becomes clear why we must focus only on discussing the most significant among them.

Among the megalithic monuments spread throughout Georgia and Javakheti, the most important and diversely represented are **megalithic defensive fortifications** which in recent years have been referred to as **cyclopean fortifications** in the scientific literature. This type of construction is mainly spread in the valleys and plains of the Lesser Caucasus mountain system, in some places on the plains and hills. The population living in micro-regions, which were already protected by natural barriers, rivers, ravines, and ridges, additionally built cyclopean complexes on the surrounding hills, mountain plains, and elevated hills to control the entrance and exit roads to the region. The combination of such natural barriers and man-made fortifications formed a defensive system that served to protect a specific region. “Complexes obtained by combining such natural and artificial boundaries, in my opinion, represented “local regions”, the territory of which may have included the countries of the Urartian period” (Narimanishvili 2019, 5) It is known from Urartian sources that in the South Caucasus of the Late Bronze-Iron Age there were large political units that united the relatively small countries and tribes around them. Urartu itself was a state consisting of many small political units (Melikishvili 1954, 190). A similar political union was Daiaeni/Diaukhi (Melikishvili 1954, 252), and Etiuni as well (Melikishvili 1954, 57). According to D. Narimanishvili in the Assyrian and Urartian eras, the countries on the territory of the South Caucasus were located in “local areas” thus in plains or highlands protected by mountains, ravines, rivers, lakes, or any other natural formations. In the territory of each “local area”, there are chronologically and structurally homogeneous settlements fortified by cyclopean walls. They are located on ridges, natural hills, mountaintops, and slopes, on the shores of lakes and ravines, on

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9 Oda- house (in Georgian: ოდა-ხაბლი), dwelling in Samtskhe-Javakheti region, with flat roof covered with earth, called “bani”/ბანი. (Trans./Ed.)



capex, in river mouths, and on open fields. Roads connecting local areas were in most cases, controlled by cyclopean castles or checkpoints. D. Narimanishvili also notes that the local area is characterized by the existence of one central extensive settlement in the vicinity of which relatively small settlements are confirmed; in all cases, the settlements are surrounded by a cyclopean wall, which has buttresses, stone walls, and ditches as additional fortifications. Such areas must have some livelihood resource - a lake, a river, a field, etc (Narimanishvili 2019, 35). Herein, the author has given a list of micro areas recorded in the territory of historical Javakheti with their separate descriptions. These are:

Partial **Childir “local area”**- Dzaghini ravine (“**ძვღინის ჳვვი**“), Urartian country **Էջաճո**. Surroundings of Chrdili Lake, from Kars to the Nialiskuri ridge, including the Poso-Chugureti plain (Narimanishvili 2019, 37).

“**Local area**” of **Kartsakhi** - Poso-Urartian country **Pusunia**; Surroundings of Kartsakhi Lake, “Poso or Chugureti” area by Vakhushti. The author localizes it from the north of the Nialiskuri mountain range, in the ravine of Tskarostavi-Kadala (Kodala - KM), Khaveti, in the Sulda mountain area. He identifies the city of **Tsudala** with **Sulda**, and **Alkania** with the settlement on the road from Kartsakhi to Sulda (Narimanishvili 2019, 37-39).

“**Local area**” of **Khanchali - Khenchuri**. Khanchali, (Khenchuri-Khanjali) and Madatapa (Mada) lake areas, are centered on the megalithic hill settlement of Mount Elia. Borders: Basiani, Caucasus, Abul-Samsri, and Javakheti ridges (Narimanishvili 2019, 40).

“**Local area**” of **Niala** - Here the author fully endorses the localization of this area by D. Berdzenishvili. It is a micro-country located on the high mountain plateau on the left bank of the Mtkvari River. It is bordered from the southeast by Artaani Mtkvari, from the north by the Buzmareti mountains, from the west by the Kasri Hill and Gumbati mountains, and from the southwest by the Karzameti or Khingiri water basin (Narimanishvili 2019, 42).

“**Local area**” of **Buzmareti** - Here the author refers to D. Berdzenishvili (Berdzenishvili 1975, 94). The area is localized by D. Berdzenishvili to the north of Niala in the vicinity of the Buzmareti, surrounded by the mountains of Tavtava, Vani, Geleni, Inji, Digras, and Satovlo. Buzmareti, which is called to three villages later, is believed as the center of this micro-world by D. Berdzenishvili. According to D. Narimanishvili, vast cyclopean fortress located near the village of Vani is considered the center of the “local area” of Buzmareti, and the northern border of Buzmareti passes by Ziarati mountain, from where it is possible to visually control a large part of the Javakheti highland (Narimanishvili 2019, 43).

**Local area of Abuli – Apuni**, Urartian country. There is an opinion in the scientific literature regarding the sameness of Abuli to Apuni, that on the road map of the Roman emperor of the 1st century AD - Tabula Peutingeriana (Eremyan 1939, 91; Berdzenishvili 1985, 85; Narimanishvili et al., 2018, 254), on the road from the Armenian city of Artashat to Sebastopol (Sukhumi), three of the six marked points are: Pagas, Apulum and Caspiae (Miller 1887, XI). The names have been identified with three villages of Javakheti since the end of the 19th century: Pagas-Poka, Apulum-Abuli, and Caspiae-Khospia (Tomaschek 1899, 1654).

D. Narimanishvili separates the **southern and northern areas** in the vicinity of Akhalkalaki. He calls the northern area as “local area of Tabatskuri”, but does not discuss it. Instead, he describes in detail his well-studied **Zabakha and**

**the local area of Abuli explored north of Khenchuri** which he localizes around the Abul-Samsari ridge in the basins of the Tavparavani, Saghamo, Avchala, and Levani lakes. Its borders are defined on the perimeter of Khulgumo, Machatia, Olaverdi Koro (Koroghli), Shaori, Chikiani, Gultovla and Aghrikari mountains. From the south, the border ran from the southern mountains of Saghamo Lake to Amirani Hill. It is in the local area of Abuli that the largest number of cyclopean defensive fortifications, menhirs, and most importantly, the cyclopean fortresses of Abuli and Shaori have been recorded.

**“Local area” on the highland southwest of Akhalkalaki — “Country of Zabakha”.** We will talk about the issue of this central and most important local area for Javakheti below.

Determining the borders of small countries represented in the form of such micro-regions after millennia is obviously a very difficult task. D. Narimanishvili (2019) tries to localize the prehistoric “countries” of **Zabakha, Sirimutara, A(p/b) uni, and Puzunia** mentioned in the Urartian inscriptions probably located in the territory of historical Javakheti, by diligently analyzing the Urartian and scientific sources and matching them to the local areas determined by him above. According to D. Narimanishvili, **the country Zabakha** is mentioned only once in Urartian sources. He provides the quote from **“Chronicle of Khorkhor”, Argishti I** (Melikishvili 1960, 212; Harutyunyan 2001, 156; Gordeziani 2012, 95): *„In the same year, I gathered warriors and went to war on Diaukhi country. I made the king of Diaukhi as the king of Diaukhi. I conquered the country of Sheriaz; I burned the cities and destroyed the fortresses; I went to the city of Pute. On the left is the country of Biani, the country of Khushani. On the right, I have mercy on the country of Tariuni. I went to war against the country Zabakha, I conquered the country of Zabakha. I came to the city of Uzinabitarna, to the country of Sirimutara, to the mountainous country. To the right, I had mercy to the city of Mikaltuni of the country of Igani, went to the country of Eriakhi, I went to war against the country of Apuni, I conquered the city of Urieiuni, the royal city of Uterukhi. The deity Khaldi went on a campaign with weapons, defeated the country of Abilianekhi, the country of Anishtirgae, the country of Kuarzani, and Ultuza, and he conquered them before Argishti. Argishti the son of Menua, went on a war with the greatness of the deity Khaldi. God Khaldi preceded him. Argishti says: I conquered the country of Etiuni, I went to the country of [...], to Udurietiukhi”<sup>10</sup> (Narimanishvili 2019, 51).*

10 In Georgian: „იმავე წელს შევკრიბე მეომრები და გავილაშქრე დიაუხის ქვეყანაზე. დიაუხის მეფე მეფედ დავსვი. დავიპყარი მე ქვეყანა შერიაზი; ქალაქები დავწვი, ციხესიმაგრეები დავანგრეე; მივედი ქალაქ პუტემდე. მარცხნივ ქვეყანა ბიანი, ქვეყანა ხუშანი. მარჯვნივ შევიწყალე მე ქვეყანა თარიუნი. გავილაშქრე მე ქვეყანა ზაბახას წინააღმდეგ, დავიპყარი მე ქვეყანა ზაბახა. მივედი მე ქალაქ უზინაბიტარნამდე, ქვეყანა სირიმუტარამდე, მთიან ქვეყანამდე. მარჯვნივ ქვეყანა იგანის ქალაქი მაკალტუნი მე შევიწყალე. წავედი მე ქვეყანა ერიახიზე, გავილაშქრე ქვეყანა აფუნის წინააღმდეგ, დავიპყარი მე ქალაქი ურიეიუნი, უეტერუხის სამეფო ქალაქი. ღვთაება ხალდი გაემართა სალაშქროდ თავისი იარაღით, სძლია მან აბილიანეხის, ქვეყანას, ანიშტირგაეს ქვეყანას, კუარზანისა და ულთუზას ქვეყანას, დაამხო ისინი არგიშთის წინაშე. ღვთაება ხალდის სიდიადით გაემართა სალაშქროდ არგიშთი მენუას მე. წინ უძლოდა მას ღმერთი ხალდი. არგიშთი ამბობს: დავიპყარი მე ეთიუნის ქვეყანა, მივედი მე [...] ქვეყანამდე, უდურიეთიუხიმდე“. არგიშთი I, „ხორხორის მატიანე“ (Trans./Ed.)

D. Narimanishvili outlines the opinions of Melikishvili (Melikishvili 1959, 177 and Asatiani regarding Zabakha. Giorgi Melikishvili believes that the name of Zabakha is preserved in the name of Javakheti and he localizes it as a country to the northeast of Diakhi to the west of Childir Lake or the southwest. In a work published by the same researcher in 1959, the opinion was expressed that the **country of Zabakha** may have extended from the present-day city of Akhalkalaki to the south of Childir Lake. This opinion aligns partly with Shota Asatiani's (Asatiani 1992, map) view, which expands the territory of Zabakha further. Asatiani believes it also spread from the west of Akhalkalaki, encompassing the local areas of Niala and Buzmareti on the left bank of the Mtkvari River, and extended eastward from Akhalkalaki to Saghamo Lake (D. Narimanishvili 2019, 52).

By analyzing the above-mentioned and two bellow-given quotes from Urartian sources and on the ground of the results of the 2019 field works, according to the "local areas" (Poso; Khenchuri, Niala, Buzmareti, Abuli, Akhalkalaki highland), recorded and allocated by him in the territory of historical Javakheti, D. Narimanishvili suggests new localization of country of Zabakha and tries to establish approximate original borders. The first quote from Sarduri II, Northside of Van Wall (Меликишвили 1960: 286-287; Арутюнян 2001: 244; გორდეზიანი 2012: 108-109) reads as follows: *"Sarduri says. When I went to the country of Etiuni, I had mercy on the country of Eriakhi, and on the left, the country of Kuriani; I went to the war to the country of Igani. God Khaldi campaigned with his weapons, he defeated Kapuni, the king of the country of Igani. Sarduri campaigned. Sarduri says: I conquered 35 fortresses and 200 cities; I destroyed the fortresses, I burned the cities, I made the country poor, men and women I took from there to my country Biainili. Sarduri says: During the same war I campaigned the country of Pusunia, the city of Alkania, and the city of Tsudala. I destroyed the castles. I burned the cities, I made the country poor. On my return, I campaigned through the country to Eriki; I burned the cities and took men and women from there. From there I returned and campaigned over the country of Ishteluani, the country of Kadiaini, the country of Apuni, Abilianekhi. Sarduri says: I dismissed the army, none of the country's governors were summoned. And with only one squad I campaigned across the country to Uelikuni. I conquered the country of Uelikuni Sarduri II."*<sup>11</sup> (D. Narimnishvili 2019, 53-54)

The second quote (Melikishvili 1960, 235; Harutyunyan 2001, 187; Gordeziani 2012, 94-95) reads as follows: *"Khaldi campaigned with his weapons he*

11 In Georgian: „სარდური ამბობს. როდესაც მე ქვეყანა ეთიუნისკენ გავემართე, ქვეყანა ერიახის მხარე მე დავინდე, მარცხნივ ქვეყანა ქურიანი; გავილაშქრე მე იგანის ქვეყანაზე. დემერთმა ხალდომ გაილაშქრა თავისი იარაღით, დაამარცხა მან კაპუნი, ქვეყანა იგანის მეფე. გაილაშქრა სარდურიმ. სარდური ამბობს: 35 ციხე-სიმაგრე და 200 ქალაქი მე დავიპყარი; ციხე-სიმაგრეები დავანგრეე, ქალაქები გადავწვი, ქვეყანა გავაღატაკე, კაცები და ქალები მე იქიდან წავიყვანე ჩემს ქვეყანა ბიანილიში. სარდური ამბობს: იმავე ლაშქრობისას მე დავლაშქრე ქვეყანა ფუსუნია, ქალაქი ალკანია, ქალაქი ცუდალა. ციხეები დავანგრეე. ქალაქები გადავწვი, ქვეყანა გავაღატაკე. დაბრუნებისას გავილაშქრე მე ქვეყანა ერიახიზე; ქალაქები გადავწვი, კაცები და ქალები იქიდან წავიყვანე. აქედან მე მოვბრუნდი და გავილაშქრე იშტელუანის ქვეყანაზე, კადიანის ქვეყანაზე, აფუნის ქვეყანაზე, აბილიანეიზე. სარდური ამბობს: ჯარი მე დავითხოვე, არცერთი ქვეყნის გამგებელი არ იყო მოხმობილი. და მხოლოდ ერთი რაზმით გავილაშქრე მე ქვეყანა უელიკუნიზე. დავიპყარი მე ქვეყანა უელიკუნი სარდური II.“ (Trans./Ed.)

*conquered the country of Tiuni, made it fall in front of Argishti. Argishti says: I defeated the kings who came to help the king of Diauekhi. In one year, I conquered the country of Lusha, the country of Katarza, the country of Eriakhi, the country of Gulutakhi, I conquered the country of Uiterukhi. I went to the country of Apuni. I emasculated the king of the country of Lusha and I subdued the king of the country of Igani, I left him in his place, and he paid tribute to the king Argishti. Argishti I<sup>12</sup>.*” (Narimanishvili 2019, 54)

According to the definition of D. Narimanishvili the “local area” of Zabakha is located in the north of Poso (it should be written in the northeast KM), in the northwest of Khenchuri (it should be written in the north KM), in the east of Niala and Buzmareti on the high plateau of the right bank of Mtkvari.



**Photograph 47.** Photo Amirani Hill in the middle of Javakheti Plateau

The mentioned area is protected from the north by the deep valley of the river Paravani. The eastern border of the Zabakha area probably followed the opposite flow of Paravani in today’s village of Kulalisi. To the southeast (should be written southwest KM), it seems to have been bounded by the mountains to the southwest of Kulalisi and to the south by the northern border of Poso - the Kadala Valley and Mount Sulda. Along the Mtkvari valley on its right bank, more than ten cyclopean fortifications have been identified and in the Paravani valley, on

12 In Georgian: „ხალდი გაემართა სალამქროდ თავისი იარაღით, დაამარცხა მან ქვეყანა ეთიუნი, დასცა ის არგიშთის წინაშე. არგიშთი ამბობს: მეფეები, რომლებიც მოვიდნენ დიაუხის მეფის დასახმარებლად მე დავამარცხე. ერთ წელიწადში დავიპყარი მე ქვეყანა ლუშა, ქვეყანა კატარზა, ქვეყანა ერიახი, ქვეყანა გულუთახი, დავიპყარი მე ქვეყანა უიტერუხი. მივედი მე ქვეყანა აფუნიმდე. ლუშას ქვეყნის მეფე მე დავასაჭურისე, ქვეყანა იგანის მეფე კი დავიმორჩილე, დავტოვე ის თავის ადგილზე, მან მეფე არგიშტის ხარკი მისცა. არგიშთი I“ (Меликишвили 1960, 235; Арутюнян 2001, 187; გორდეზიანი 2012, 94-95) (Trans./Ed.)



the Khertvisi-Akhalkalaki section on its left bank, six units have been identified. All the fortifications are located on the bank of the plateau, so the author believes that they controlled the exits in these places and ensured the security of the local area. The Centre of “Zabakha Country” should have been Akhalkalaki’s Amirani Hill however in the territory of this area an extensive settlement can also be observed on the “Red Hill” east of Okami village. An interesting Cyclopean complex is located northwest of Okami village which in his opinion, must have had a „cult purpose“ (Narimanishvili 2019, 44). From this reasoning, it is clear that the author tries to fit the historical Zabakha territory within the delta, bordered by Artaani and Javakheti Mtkvari from Kodala ravine to Khertvisi and from Khertvisi to the present village of Kulalisi (though Karneti would be more appropriate boundary). In our opinion, it is very artificial and who knows it might be provoked by the confusing term of Vakhushti – “on top of Khertvisi “/” ხერთვისის ზეგოთ “, used several times in the *geography of Georgia*. On the left bank of the Tavparavani River on top of the cliffs, several road-blocking megaliths have been recorded by D. Narimanishvili, but there are no fewer fortifications on the right bank as well which clearly, leave the impression of objects constituting the same complex on both sides of the river. So, we do not think it is correct to separate them and even more so to attribute them to different “countries”. Generally, at that time and later, setting borders between countries on rivers was very risky and controversial, especially, on the Javakheti plateau and even more so on the Akhalkalaki plateau. We know Javakheti quite well, including the important cyclopean fortresses and ruined hill settlements, ranging from the northern part of the Javakheti plateau to the Trialeti Range and Tabatskuri. Considering all the above mentioned we think that Zabakha even at that time represented a united historical-geographical unit - a single vast and “centralized country”, the borders of which extended on both sides of these two rivers (Artaani and Javakheti Mtkvari). D. Narimanishvili is correct when he mentions that the local area of “Zabakha country” actually included the central part of historical Javakheti. „ Perhaps, the name of the country of the Urartian period - Zabakh-Javakhi was transferred to the surrounding area in later periods. The example of the transfer of the name of the central settlement to the surrounding “country” or “micro-country” has been repeatedly discussed by D. Berdzenishvili [Berdzenishvili 1975, 1985]. Perhaps in this case we are dealing with a larger scale when after the strengthening of the central country or tribe of a certain vast region, its toponym or ethnonym spreads to the surrounding territories. The strengthening of Zabakha-Javakheti in the later period may be explained by the existence of ancient roads of political importance passing through its territory. Three menhirs located in the village of Murjakheta confirm the existence of an important ancient road here “(Narimanishvili 2019, 44).

Regarding all of the above, we can conclude that the localization of Zabakha-Javakheti is correct. However, regarding its borders, the more realistic is the opinion of Shota Asatiani, and that of Melikishvili’s - partially. Thus it [Javakheti TN] included almost the entire Javakheti plateau including Khenchuri, and Poso, up to Chrdili Lake and Niala-Buzmareti microregions. The local area of Abuli/Apulus may have been a relatively more protected neighboring “country” but due to their contiguous physical-geographical location and the intensive trade-caravan routes passing through it, they developed in such a way that they were gradually integrated into a single region known as Javakheti which was fur-

ther expanded in the Middle Ages and Kola-Artaani and part of Shavsheti became part of it. Thus, as a result of historical-geographical factors, the borders of historical Javakheti were formed logically from the lake of Tavparavani - to the headwaters of Mtkvari, from the ridge of Shalosheti-Buzmareti - to the ridge of Javakheti.

We do not have the opportunity here to discuss in more detail the localization of the countries of the Urartian inscriptions. We will return to this issue in the future. On this issue, D. Narimanishvili has already made many noteworthy findings and conclusions but it is still difficult to share his opinions unequivocally. Based on several considerations, we think it is more appropriate, to conditionally divide the territory of historical Javakheti into the following micro-regions as a result of the analysis of cyclopean fortifications, remains, menhirs, burials, and terrain that have survived to this day on mountain slopes, hills, plains, and ridges in Javakheti:

**-Amirani Hill microregion** (with the megaliths of Khospio, Bavra, Gulikami, Kartikami, Khulgumo, Diliska, Murjikani, Chamdzvrala, Murjakheti, Vachiani, Karneti, Almalo, Dikasheni);

**-Pumice Mountain - Okami microregion** (“Red Mountain”, with the megaliths of Okami Hill, Didi and Patara Natbeuri, Azmana, Kartsebi, Buzakhevi, Apnia-Gogasheni);

**-Dankali microregion** (megaliths of Dankali, Areshti, Kumurdo, Dakhvandi, Kilda, Zreski);



**Photograph 48.** Dankali Megalithic Hill-Settlement

**-Tsunda-Tmogvi microregion** (with the megaliths of Margastani, Tmogvi, Ketileti, Vani caves, Beriskhevi, Alaguri, Gaghma Tmogvi, Tirebi, Cholti, Tsunda, Nakalakevi, Kilda);

**-Khertvisi-Toloshi microregion** (with the megaliths of Gelsunda, Taplakveri, Khertvisi, Khareshavani, Toloshi, Ukantoloshi, Ipneti, Kvabliskhevi, Shadrevan-ta, Tserakunta, Jolda);

**-Kvarsha-Naisa microregion** (with the megaliths of Kvarsha, Aljua, Tskhekneli, Naisa, Gocha, Khatistavi, Toki gardens, Nazvrevi);



- Nijgori-Dadeshi microregion** (with the megaliths of Nijgori, Atskvita, Roketi, Dadeshi, Bnela, Chikhorishi, Khizabavra terraces);
- Saro-Khizabavra microregion** (with the megaliths of Chikhorishi, Kokhta, Oboleti, Khiza, Khizabavra, Saro);
- Kaltubani - Azavreti-Tetrobi microregion** (with the megaliths of Kaltubani, Sanislo, Chobareti, Alastani, Oldani, Gokio, Korosheti, Tapobi);
- Toki-Khando microregion** (with megaliths of Toki, Vargavi, Varevani, Khando, Griali, middle of Griali and Orjua, Chunchkha, Ptena);
- Orjua -Machatia microregion** (with megaliths of Orjua, Aragva, Korkhi, Totkhami, Machatia, Skhalta);
- Varditsikhe-Murji microregion** (with the megaliths of Varditsikhe, Tskhia, Sakaraulo, didi and Patara Murji, mountain Makhvila, Dakiduli, Batieti, Zakvi, Dampaltba, Arkhajas);
- Natsargora-Sirkva-Agana microregion** (with the megaliths of Natsargora, Amaghleba, Sirkva, Kachio, Mimineti, Pampalo, Kachalmta);
- Ghado-Cheruli microregion** (with the megaliths of Azavreti, Burnasheti, Ghado, Kadiskhevi, Cheruli, Ktsia);
- Shavi Klde-Tskhratskaro-Ktsia microregion;**
- Bozhano microregion** (with the megaliths of Modega, Zeoti, Zereonia, Kachio, Alatubani, Tsinubani, Alanta, Balanta, Janjgha, Leknari, Bozhano, Akaranta);
- Tabatskuri microregion** (with the megaliths of Moliti, Saint Nino Mountain, Khando, Tabatskuri, Nariani, Tavkvetili, Sapitiakhsho, Shav nabada, Arknali, Old Kotelia, Khumrisi);
- Khidijvari-Ghrtila-Prtoni microregion** (with the megaliths of Khidijvari, Satkhile, Merenia, Ghrtila, Meghreki, Prtoni);
- Samsari microregion** (with the megaliths of the Patara and Didi Samsari, Navtlughi, Mamishi, Balkho-Bughasheni hills);
- Mimineti microregion** (with the megaliths of Mimineti, Balkho, Koro and Dekiani mountains);
- Gomani-Olaverdi microregion** (with the megaliths of Gomani, Dirknali, Olaverdi);



**Photograph 49.** Ablari surroundings

- Ablari microregion**;
- Buzaveti (Bzaveti) microregion** (with megaliths of Buzaveti and Karistsikhe);
- Toria Gormake microregion** (with the megaliths of Toria, Eshtia, Tontio, Jigrasheni);
- **Chrdili-Nialiskuri microregion** (with the megaliths of northeast of Chrdili lake, South-western slopes of Nialiskuri);
- Tskarostavi microregion** (with the megaliths of mountain Poso, Tskarostavi, Mgeltsikhe, Vashlobi);
- Khaveti microregion** (with the megaliths of Nakalakari, Kodala, Khevi, Murakvali, Khaveti, and Dabnia-Erenji);
- Oloda microregion** (with the megaliths of Ghari, Oloda, Panaketi, Choleti, Artakhi);
- Niala microregion** (with the megaliths of Dumeili, Lebisi, Upper and Lower part of Niala, Digri, Gaveti);
- Akhchia Koriskhevi- Agara microregion** (with the megaliths of Vertashi, Mirashkhani, Akhchia, Korishkevi);
- Chachkari-Vardzia microregion** (with the megaliths of Zemo and Kvemo-Vardzia, Bertsakudeli, Pinetkari, Giorgitsminda, Denieti);
- Zemo Tmogvi – Pia microregion**;
- Karzameti microregion** (with the megaliths of Varneti, Kotasi, Tataleti, Zi-areti, Karzameti, Gumbati, Kasri ridge);
- Vani-Buzmareti microregion** (with the megaliths of Vani, both Buzmareti, Shuadghe);
- Gundi-Salosheti microregion** (with the megaliths of Gundi, Mchedlisubani, Kululeti, Shalosheti, Nadarbazevi, Alandzia);
- Kartsakhi microregion** (with the megaliths of the Kartsakhi Lake surroundings, the Murakvali ridge, and the western part of the Nialiskuri ridge);
- Sulda microregion** (with the megaliths of the settlement of Sulda, Bozali, and Kartsakhi);
- Dlivi microregion** (with the megaliths of Dlivi, Dlivi ridge, Vardisubani, Sakudria, Tsarta (Zarta), Savaneti, Didi, and Patara Kondura, Kulalisi);
- Khenchuri-Mountain Elia-Nialiskuri microregion** (with the megaliths of Ninotsminda, Ghartula (Kartula) big and small Khanjali, Kathnatu, Mountain Elia, Mamuketi, Nialiskuri ridge);
- Mada microregion** (with the megaliths of Trinity, Mada (Madatapa) Lake, Mountain Mada, and Chiliani Lake,);
- Sathke-Kuntsali microregion** (with the megaliths of Satkhe, Kuntsali (Spasovka), Gorelovka, Epremovka);
- Saghamo microregion** (with Megaliths of Didi and Patara Arakali, Upper and Lower Duma, Saghamo, Kachalgora);
- Abuli microregion** (with the megaliths of Gandzani surroundings, Patara Abuli, Abuli village, Samtsubtghete, Levani Lake, Godorebi, Karkliani ridge);
- **Shaori microregion** (with the megaliths of Shaori mountain, Pokani, Publikani, Aspana, Makharovani, Chachka, Akhali Khulgumo, mountain Dali, Tavparavani);
- Chikiani-Javakheti ridge microregion** (Dmanisi on the Javakheti ridge, with megaliths adjacent to Zurtaketi).

In the territory of historical Javakheti, the cyclopean complexes that are

partially still in the Stone Age and were built more intensively from the Early Bronze Age were divided into such micro-regions conditionally in order to make it easier for them later in the micro-states of the Urartian period and later in one of the oldest and largest parts of Zabakha-Javakheti. Perception and study of the logic of the process of unification in the composition. If we look at the location and forms of each Cyclopean building, we will see that they were built in strategically important places carefully selected considering the natural-climatic and landscape conditions, where the materials needed for construction provided the best opportunity for this. All of them ultimately became a part of a single defensive, residential, religious, and ritual space, therefore, taking into account the gradual evolution and historical factors, they were united into small “countries”, and then into a single historical part. Despite its seeming primitiveness, the local megalithic culture was so refined over the millennia that due to the natural and climatic conditions of Javakheti, the megalithic existence was preserved in a partially changed form until the sixties of the last century.

In recent years, due to the increased interest in megaliths among both scientists and the public many previously unknown monuments of megalithic culture have been discovered in Georgia. A large number of cyclopean complexes were discovered in the territory of historical Javakheti and Trialeti in particular 233 objects were confirmed in the Samtskhe-Javakheti region. (Aspindza-54, Akhalkalaki-121, Borjomi-5, Ninotsminda-53. 63 cyclopean objects have been confirmed in Kvemo Kartli (Narimanishvili 2019, 7). The territory of Javakheti is completely covered with megalithic hill settlements, fortresses, fields of kurgan burials, and menhirs, so the number of megalithic monuments is much higher than the numbers given above, and if you take into account that on the slopes of the mountains of Javakheti, on the plateau, in the valleys of the rivers and around the lakes there are many dry stone outlines of buildings of unknown purpose have been preserved in many places and after studying them their number will obviously increase even more.

Finally, the abundant presence of so many different types of megalithic cultural monuments on the territory of Javakheti is a sign that this ancient part of Georgia due to its historical-geographical location has advanced from the cultural-economic point of view since time immemorial and played an important political role for the country.

## The Toponyms of Ninotsminda Municipality According to the Maps

Organizing the toponyms on the maps of Samtskhe-Javakheti remains the key challenge for the region. The problem is especially severe for the maps of Javakheti facing the influences of Russian, Armenian, and Turkish languages. The modern maps are based on the Russian military and Soviet topographic maps. In some cases, minor amendments are made according to the client's orders.

The static (printed, so-called paper maps or its e-versions) and the dynamic i.e. digital maps of Samtskhe-Javakheti were analyzed for demonstration of the toponyms available on the maps of Ninotsminda. Of the static maps following were processed: Three Soviet Topographic Russian maps (1:25,000 – covers 51 years (1953-2004); 1:50,000 covers 17 years (1973-1990); 1:100,000 covers 12 years (1978-1990)) and Georgian Base Map available on the web site of the National Agency of Public Register ([napr.gov.ge](http://napr.gov.ge)); Russian Military Maps, 1877, 1907 and 1926; Georgian map, created in 1930 by the leadership of Prof. Al. Javakhishvili in the Institute of Cartography of Georgia; General Geographical Map of Georgia, 1998 repeating the toponyms included in the educational program; Tourist Guide of Samtskhe-Javakheti, GeoLand Ltd. 2012<sup>1</sup>; Russian maps of Georgian SSR, 1990 and 1959, Russian map of the Georgian SSR, Armenia and Azerbaijan, 1975; Russian Map of the Caucasus, 1834; Russian Map of European Russia and Caucasus, 1834; Russian Road Map of Caucasus, 1870; English Map of the Caucasus by the U.S. Army Map Service, 1941; English Topographic Map, Georgia 1:50000, European Union Satellite Center, 2010, hereafter referred as EUSC, 2010.

Digital maps such as Google Maps and Wikimapia Platforms were analyzed, as well as the digital tourist products using various digital maps, including Georgian Travel Guide, one of the most popular tourist websites in Georgia, two international hiking Apps, Gaia GPS, AllTrails and Samtskhe-Javakheti Hiking App, HikeSJ.

At the very beginning, it should be noted that map analysis did not provide complete information about Georgian toponyms. All the available detailed topographic maps were created in the later period when the influences of the neighboring languages were already felt in the region. Most names of the villages and ruined villages can be verified through the historical document of the XVI century and *the Great Deftar of Gurjistan Vilayet*. In contrast, the names of the physical geographic objects are found only on the Russian Military Maps of the XIX-XX centuries, except for those few toponyms, preserved in the historical sources. Despite the aforementioned, it is still possible to identify some important aspects and demonstrate interesting toponyms based on the maps' analysis.

When analyzing toponyms on available maps of Samtskhe-Javakheti, we are facing with the transliteration of names in three languages. The mapping process likely should have been as follows: First, the Georgian toponyms were recorded from the Georgian population in Turkish in *the Great Deftar of Gurjistan Vilayet*; then Russian military maps were created, where the toponyms were applied as

1 The tourist guidebooks published later are based either on the same maps or the toponyms are amended by the author, therefore it was not considered relevant to analyze them.

they were pronounced by newly resettled ethnic Armenians, recently resettled in the region. The Soviet Russian maps, which were developed later, basically repeat the toponyms from the Russian Military Maps. In turn, Georgian maps, created during the Russian Empire and Soviet period, were made based on the Russian military and soviet maps. This time, the Georgian transliteration of the toponyms from Russian took place, without considering the place names established in the local Georgian population. In addition to the process of distortion of toponyms during transliteration, changes in the place names occur as a result of linguistic interference, especially when transmitting the sounds Ɔ[ts]-ʃ[tsʰ], ɟ[k]-ɟ[kʰ], ɟ[qʰ]-ɟ[kʰ], ʈ[tʰ]-ʈ[tʰ]². It should be noted here that determining the accurate forms of toponyms, even with good will, would be quite difficult since based on the demographic data recorded in Ottoman defters, it can be assumed that during the compilation of Russian military maps, and then the Georgian map (1930 d.), most of the villages must have already been emptied of the Georgian population. Publishing of the translation and comments of *the Great Defter of the Gurjistan Vilayet* by Academician S. Jikia in 1941-1958 filled the gap, with a few exceptions.

Different names of the same object are often found in the maps of Ninotsminda due to the lack of a unified catalogue of the geographic names. There are even cases when the objects are named differently in the same publication. The settlement names are especially noteworthy, legitimized in a distorted form under the influence of the mentioned languages. The accurate forms of the settlement names can be identified based on the analysis of the Ottoman registers with more or less accuracy. The situation is more complicated regarding the names of ruined villages and natural formations, especially in the case of the mountains.

Identifying the names of the former villages is becoming crucial when it refers to the villages developed later in the XIX-XX centuries. Most of them were built on the ruins of the former settlements or nearby locations, which is proved by the preserved ruins on the place (for instance, the ruins of the church, old cemeteries, and the remainder of the houses on the northeast of village Tambovka, just behind the current village, as well as the ruins of the houses and tombs to the north of the village Spasovka), the Ottomans' registers and other historical sources referring the settlements location. In some cases, they are verified by the map. Several former villages near the village Katnatu are tracked on the Russian Military Maps, such as Р. Д. Балахлы, Р. Д. Орзахлы, Р. Д. Садахли, Р. Д. Мамукевъ [R.D. Balakhli, R.D. Orzakhli, R.D. Sadakhli, R.D. Mamukev] (Р. Д. [R.D.] Разрушенная Деревня – Ruined village); There is the former village Р.Д. Бобликанъ [R.D. Boblikan] near the village Vladimirovka.

The history of the current Ninotsminda, the former Bogdanovka is also interesting. There is only ხოჯაბეგი [Khojabegi] – Ходжбекъ [Khodjabek] found on that area by the Russian map of the Caucasus region of 1870; There are the settlements of Dukhobors Орловка, Горьловка, Ефремовка, Троицкая, Тамбовка and Родіоновка [Orlovka, Efremovka, Troitskaja, Tambovka and Rodionovka]

2 In this section Georgian and Russian pronunciations in English for Georgian and Russian scripts, respectively, are given in square brackets. Georgian consonants Ɔ, ʃ, ɟ, ɟʰ, ʈ, ʈʰ, ɣ, ɣʰ, ʋ, ʋʰ, ɸ, ɸʰ, ɰ, ɰʰ correspond to IPA transcriptions of pʰ, pʰ, tʰ, tʰ, kʰ, kʰ, tsʰ, tsʰ, tʃʰ, tʃʰ, dʒ, ɣ, given in Romanized form of p, pʰ, t, tʰ, k, kʰ, ts, tsʰ, ch, chʰ, j, kh; Russian letters е, ё, ж, з, и, й, ф, х, ц, ч, ш, ы, э, ю, я correspond to IPA transcriptions of [je], [jo], [z], [z], [i], [j], [f], [x], [ts], [tʃ], [ç:], [tʃ], [e], [ju], [ja], given in Romanized form of e, jo, zh, z, i, i, f, kh, ts, ch, shch, I, e, ju, ja (Trans./ED.)



marked on the same map. Since 1877, Богдановка [Bogdanovka] appears next to Ходжабекъ [Khodjabek] on the military map. However, it is marked by a smaller font. Ходжабекъ [Khodjabek] is removed from the smaller-scale Military map of 1907 and only Богдановка [Bogdanovka] marking is found on it. Both settlements are marked in all the maps including military, as well as Soviet Topographic Russian maps of 1926. On the Georgian map of 1930, ხოჯაბეგი [Khojabegi] is given in a larger font and ბოგდანოვკა [Bogdanovka] is written in a smaller one to its South. Nowadays, Khojabegi is one of the parts of Ninotsminda town.

**No toponyms are preserved, though topographic markings of ruined castles and churches are found in many places, including in the vicinity of Orlovka, Gorelovka, the Madatapa Lake, confirming the once dense settlement of those places. Such markings disappeared from the maps of later period,** just some of them are found on the topographic maps with unclear markings, like разв. [развалины - ruins]. The ruins of the villages, like Р.Д. Малака, Р.Д. Картуля and Р. Кр. Сгнахъ [ruined villages Malaka, Kartulja, and Р. Кр. - Разрушенная Крепость – ruined castle Sgnakh] to the north and northeast of the Lake Khanchali are totally disappeared both from the Soviet Topographic, as well as Georgian maps. The latter is the megalith construction represented quite a large scale even today. Marble plates and memorial stones are arbitrarily attached to the fragments of the megalithic walls of the castle, a cross has been erected and it has the function of a shrine and so-called picnic place for the Armenian population.

The situation is much more difficult for mountain names. The majority of them have been lost. Only the Turkish versions of the names are preserved on the Russian Military Maps, which are marked in a more distorted way on the later maps. In addition to the fact that most of the toponyms seem to have traces of direct translation (from Georgian to Turkish), various names most likely have been lost in the process of transferring toponyms from map to map. For instance, a very interesting name of the place, **Batkana Mountain** is proven to be lost in Ninotsminda municipality. The toponym was identified quite accidentally during the analysis of the military maps. It is found by the name პადჩანატეპე [P'adchanat'ep'e] (in Russian versions – Падчанатепе [Padchanatepe]) on both Georgian and digitized Russian topographic maps. On the first military map available for us in a printed version, 1907, the village of Патхана [Patkhana] – was depicted, leading us to associations that “Padchanatepe” could have been Batkana Mountain. But on the mentioned map, only the symbol of the mountain is depicted, with no indication of the name or level of altitude. Since the mountain is quite far from the village Патхана [Patkhana] and there are several other villages in between, the assumption did not allow us to confirm the toponym, until the toponym *Patkana T.* was found on the Caucasus Map of 1941 of the U.S. Army Map Service and Г. Патхана-тапа [G. Patkhana-tapa] – on the Russian military map of 1877. Thus, confirmed that the toponym “Padchanatepe” (პადჩანატეპე [P'adchanat'ep'e] on Georgian, and Падчанатепе [Padchanatepe] on Russian maps) is definitely, Batkana Mountain. It later turned out that the village of Batkana, as well as Mount Batkana, were marked on the Georgian map of 1930, although in the form of ფათკანა [Patk'ana].

As a conclusion, the Georgian toponym, like the *Batkana Mountain* - ბატკანას მთა had been lost due to negligence or inattentiveness, for the technical reasons. The fact is especially sad, since, in addition to the given situation that a significant



part of Georgian place names has already been lost, a proper analysis of existing sources was not carried out while compiling Georgian maps, so that at least the toponyms that have reached us could have been preserved.

It is interesting, that all the toponyms, which include the toponym element „-თაჲ” [-tapa] on the Russian maps are given separately on the US maps, like Патхана-тапа [*Patkhana-tapa*] - *Patkana T, G. Madatapa* [*G. Madatapa*]- *Mado Tera, G. Shish'-tapa* [*G. Shish-tapa*]- *Shish Tere*. Even though the Russian Military Map of 1877 is taken as a basis for the Caucasus Map of 1941 of the U.S. Army Map Service, the meaning of the toponym element “tepe” is analyzed, as it has the meaning of a hill, a hillock, or a peak in translation from Turkish, and is separated from the base name. On the contrary, on Georgian maps can be found - მადათაფა [Madatapa], შიშთეფე [Shishtepe], and in some cases even მალ-ზიარეთი [Mal-Ziareti] instead of პატარა ზიარეთი [P'at'ara Ziareti] (Russian: Мал. Зиарет, Georgian: პატარა ზიარეთი)<sup>3</sup>.

Another interesting toponym that disappeared from Georgian maps today, is ფილტიკარი [*Piltik'ari*], the mountain found as Г. Пильти – кари [G. Pilti-Kari] on the maps of 1877 and 1907, ფილტი-კარი [Pilt'i-K'ari] according to the Georgian map of 1930. The toponym is also verified in the oral speech during the expedition in the village Gandzani of 2023. Piltikari is located to the north of the Gandzani and it is the continuation of the Patara Abuli mountain geographically. The toponym is not found at all, neither on the modern Georgian maps nor on the Russian maps of the Soviet period.

It is worth noting the mountain on the south of Gandzani, on top of the Lake Saghamo, which is marked as მ. სურპოგანესი [m. Surp'oganesi] (2327.5 m. 41.3249783 43.7248230). The mountain has no name on the military maps, only the church on the top of the mountain is marked as Р. Ц. Сура-оганесъ [ruined church of Sura-Oganes] (distorted form of Сурп-Оганес, translation from Armenian –St. Oganes). The mountain is found with რ. Сурп-Оганес [g. Surp-Oganes] name on the Soviet topographic maps of a later period and today we have its Georgian version, მ. სურპოგანესი [m. Surp'oganesi], as marked on the Georgian Base Map. Actually, it is the church after John the Baptist of Gandzani, which is considered to have been built in the Middle Ages and according to the cultural heritage monument registration card (N16813)<sup>4</sup> “repair” works of the monument were performed by local Armenian population without any permission and rules. It shall be considered as an illegal action. The document was developed in 2008. In this way, we can imagine how the toponyms were transferred to the maps first during the compilation of the Russian Military Maps and then to the Soviet topographic maps and how those toponyms are legitimized in the modern Georgian cartographic databases over time. In the case of “the Surpoganes”, there is a Georgian medieval monument onsite, the Church of John the Baptist, which serves as the basis to verify that the name of the mountain is incorrect. Unfortunately, there are no similar possibilities of verification for most of the toponyms.

3 In this case “Patara” is a toponymic element, meaning “small” in translation. On Russian maps, most of the toponyms with toponymic element “Patara” is translated in Russian as Мал., or Маленький. Some of Georgian maps have kept the Russian version, instead of preserving the original name of places as is the case of mountain Patara Ziareti. (Trans./ED.)

4 <https://memkvidreoba.gov.ge/list/document/documentObject?id=444873>

However, the frequency of such cases makes us believe that naming of the geographical places, name distorting, or direct translation followed a similar pattern and was quite widespread. To be fair should be noted that the name of the church is given as ი. ნათლისმცემლის ეკლესია [I. Natlismtsemli's Ek'lesia] (the church of J. the Baptist in translation) on the tourist map (GeoLand Ltd. 2012). It is a rare exception since the databases of the cartographic companies accurately repeat the toponyms shown on Russian maps in general.

There is a great misunderstanding on the maps regarding the name of Paravani Lake, the largest lake in Georgia. The lake is marked as Озеро Тапараванъ [Ozero<sup>5</sup> Taparavan] (1877, 1926) and Озеро Топорованъ [Ozero Toporovan] (1907) on the Russian Military Maps. For the Soviet maps of the later period, the name Озеро Паравани [Ozero Paravani] is found everywhere. Accordingly, Georgian maps replicate ტბა ფარავანი [T'ba Paravani] or ფარავნის ტბა [Paravnis T'ba]<sup>6</sup>. As for the river Paravnistskali originating from the lake, it is marked as Р. Тапараванъ [R. Taparavan] (1877, 1926), Р. Топорован [R. Toporovan] (1907), მდ. ფარავანი [Md. Paravani]/მდ. ჯავახეთის მტკვარი [Md. Javakhetis Mt'k'vari] /მდ. ახალქალაქის მტკვარი [Md. Akhalkalakis Mt'k'vari] (three different names are found on three different sections of the river on the Georgian map of 1930), Паравани [Paravani] (Soviet Topographic Maps) and მდინარე ფარავანი [Mdinare Paravani] (Base Map). As for the historical village Paravani, it is marked as Родионовка [Rodionovka] on the military maps, on some of the Russian topographic maps as Радионовка (Паравани) [Radionovka (Paravani)] and on others only as Радионовка [Radionovka]. On the Georgian map of 1930, it is named as როდიონოვკა (*ფონოვარი*) [Rodionovk'a (Ponovari)]. According to the Register of Municipalities, the official name of the village was registered as როდიონოვკა [Rodionovk'a], accordingly, it is marked as როდიონოვკა [Rodionovk'a] on the Base Map. The name of the village onsite, on the village sign, is ფარავანი [Paravani], similar to tourist and general geographical maps of Georgia. On some maps, the name of the railway station next to the village is preserved as თაფარავანი [Taparavani] on the General geographic map of Georgia (1998), Тапаравани [Taparavani] on Soviet Topographic Russian Maps (1:50 000; 1:100 000). On all these maps, this is the only case when the toponym has the component “თა-” [ta-]. The lake, the river, and the village (Радионовка (Паравани) [Radionovka (Paravani) and Радионовка [Radionovka] on the Russian maps accordingly) are marked by the name of ფარავანი [Paravani].

As mentioned above, restoring of the original settlement names is possible with more or less accuracy based on the historical sources. On the other hand, there is a complete confusion of these exact names on the maps, village signs, and official documents. The village Tavparavani is one of them, which is still registered by the name of Rodionovka in the Register of Municipalities. Some examples of the villages whose names are distorted most frequently on the maps are given below.

The old name of the **village Gandzani** has been changed in the Register of Municipalities and is registered as განძა [Gandza]. Gandzani is found like Ганза [Ganza] (1877), Кандза (1907) [Kandza] on the Russian Military Maps, Гандзани

5 Озеро- lake in translation from Russian. (Trans. /ED.)

6 ტბა ფარავანი [T'ba Paravani] or ფარავნის ტბა [Paravnis T'ba] - respectively, the Lake Paravani or the Paravani Lake in translation from Georgian]. (Trans. /ED.)

[Gandzani] on the Soviet Topographic Russian maps, განძანი [Gandzani] on tourist maps, and general geographical map of Georgia. It is listed as განძა [Gandza] on the Base Map, and the Georgian map of 1930, Gandzani on EUSC, 2010. According to S. Jikia, the name of the village is განძანი [Gandzani] in the *Great Deftor of Gurjistan Vilayet* (ჯიქია 1958, 343).

**The village Satkhe** is named as Сатхе [Satxe] on the Russian map of European Russia and Caucasus, 1862, Сатха [Satxa] on the Russian Military Maps, სათხა [Satkha] on the Georgian map of 1930, and Сатхе [Satxe] on the Russian Soviet Topographic map. On all the inspected Maps of Soviet Georgia (1959, 1975, 1990) the village Satkhe is marked among those few settlements showed on the map, and its name is given correctly as Сатхе [Satxe]. On the tourist and general geographical maps of Georgia, there is სათხე [Satkhe]. *Satkhe* is also given on the English map of the European Union Satellite Center. სათხა [Satkha] is registered in the Register of Municipalities and therefore the village has the same name on the Base Map. The village Satkhe is not discussed with S. Jikia (1958). M. Beridze suggests further etymology of Satkhe: “Stems denoting animals and birds are formed by affixes “სა-ე” [“sa-e”] in Georgian toponyms. სა-ირმ-ე [Sa-irm-e], სა-კაკბ-ე [Sa-kakb-e], სა-თახვ-ე [Sa-takhv-e]... are formed this way. It seems that these areas of Javakheti were known by a great number of goats, and therefore they called it სა-თხ-ე [Sa-Tkh-e]” (Javakheti Epigraphic Corpus, 2012). Satkhe is a historical village, famous for its old Georgian inscriptions.

**The village Orjalar** is marked on the military maps of 1877 and 1907 like Ороджаларь [Orojalar], but the form Орджаларь [Orjalar] is found on the military map of 1926. In the Soviet Russian maps of the later period, the suffix – “i” (и) is added and the vowel “a“(ა) is changed, like – Ороджолари [Orojolari], ოროჯოლარი [Orojolari], found on the general geographic, and tourist maps, as well as on the road village signs. However, ოროჯალარი [Orojalar] is registered in the Register of Municipalities and on the Georgian map of 1930 as well. The form Орджолари [Orjolari] is also found in the Russian map of Georgia of 1990. English map of the European Union Satellite Center gives the form *Orojolari*.

S. Jikia links the name of the village to villages ზემო and ქვემო ორჯა [Zemo and Kvemo Orja]<sup>8</sup> mentioned in the Deftor, which differs from the village ორჯუა [Orjua], located in Akhalkalaki (present-day ორჯა [Orja]). At the time of creation, the Deftor, Zemo Orja was already abandoned. Therefore, Jikia believes that the villages were merged in a later period, becoming - ორჯაები [Orjaebi] in Georgian, [ორჯალარი] Orjalari in Turkish<sup>9</sup> (Jikia 1958, 328-329). The 2023 expedition recorded the version of local residents that the village name was “ორჭალა [„Orchala“].<sup>10</sup> The village is actually located on the bank of the Paravanistskali river, and Orchala could be the initial name. In any case, the place name ოროჯოლარი [Orojolari] is not accurate.

7 In translation from Georgian: თხა [Tkha] means goat (სა-თხ-ე [Sa-tkh-e]); ირემი [iremi] – deer (სა-ირმ-ე [Sa-irm-e]); კაკაბი [K'ak'abi] - partridge (სა-კაკბ-ე [Sa-k'ak'b-e]); თახვი [Takhvi] – beaver (სა-თახვ-ე [Sa-takhv-e]) (Trans. /ED.)

8 “Zemo” and “Kvemo” in the village names of Zemo and Kvemo Orja means respectively, “upper” and “lower” in translation. (Trans. /ED.)

9 Orjaebi (Georgian: ორჯაები) is the plural form of village Orja, produced by adding “eb” – Orja-eb-i. Orjalari is a plural form of village Orja in Turkish. (Trans. /ED.)

10 ორ-ჭალა [Or-chala] - two valleys from translation in Georgian. (TN)

**Didi Arakali, Patara Arakali** – The names on the Russian maps do not raise any questions. The villages are represented as Патара -Аракали [Patara-Arakali], *Диди-Аракали* [Didi-Arakali] or М. Аракалъ, Б. Аракалъ [M. Arakal, B. Arakal]<sup>11</sup> on every map. However, tourist maps, as well as the Georgian map of 1930, and general geographical maps of Georgia identify the village names as დიდი არაკალი [დიდი Arakali] and პატარა არაკალი [Patara Arakali]. The same form is registered in the Register of Municipalities and accordingly is transferred to the Base Map. On the English map of the EU Satellite center, the villages are represented as *Didi Arakali and Patara Arakali*. In some official documents, the form არაგიალი [Aragiali] is confirmed as the name of the village. The name არაკალი [Arakali] became the subject of fun due to its meaning<sup>12</sup> as soon as the village signs were installed. S. Jikia points out regarding the villages that “Due to lack of materials, it is difficult to identify the initial Georgian name degraded within the different ethnic cycles”. Though he recommends keeping the name არაკალი [Arak’ali], as in the Defter, the toponym is represented with a sharp consonant “კ” [k’]. (Jikia 1958, 340).

**The Village Ujmana** is found in the form Учмана [Uchmana] on the Russian Military Maps. Уджмана [Udzhmana] is given in the Russian Soviet maps. უჯმანა [Ujmana] is the name on the tourist map and general geographic map, while უჩმანა [Uchmana] is written in Georgian map of 1930. უჩმანა [Uchmana] is registered in the Register of Municipalities and accordingly, we have უჩმანა [Uchmana] on the Base Map. EU satellite center English map marks it as *Ujmana*. S. Jikia considers უჯმანა [Ujmana] as a correct form. According to him, უჯმანა [Uzhmana] found in the Defter is associated with spirantization, while უჭმანა [Uch’mana], a version recorded in his notes as the pronunciation of local Armenians (migrant), the author considers being an Armenianized form. In the same records, the pronunciation of the local Georgians – უჯმანა [Ujmana] is also provided by S. Jikia. (Jikia, 1958, 354). Учмана [*Uchmana*] seems to be a Russian transliteration of – უჭმანა [Uch’mana], the version recorded from the local (migrant) Armenians. Then, the form Учмана [*Uchmana*] was applied on the Georgian map as უჩმანა [Uchmana], and later, it was registered in the Register of Municipalities.

**Village Mamtsvara** is depicted as Мамзара [Mamzara] on Russian Military Maps, Мамцвара [Mamtsvara] on Russian Soviet Topographic maps, მამზარა [Mamzara] on the Georgian map of 1930 and მამცვარა [Mamtsvara] on General geographic map of Georgia, Mamzvara on EU Satellite Center English map, მამწვარა [Mamts’vara] on the tourist map, the Register of Municipalities and the Base Map. მამწვარა [Mamts’vara] is considered an accurate form by S. Jikia as well. He proves that the მამზურა [Mamzura] presented in the Defter is a Turkishized version, which was later transformed into მამზარა [Mamzara] (Jikia 1958, 336).

**The village Eshtia** is found in all the analyzed maps as ეშტია [Esht’ia] (on Georgian maps), Эштиа/Эштия [Esht’ia/Esht’ija] (on Russian maps). S. Jikia reports that the Defter gives the version ეშთიო [Eshtio]; however, the author im-

11 “M” and “B” are representing Russian translation of Georgian words for “Patara” and “Didi”, Small and Great respectively. (Trans. /ED.)

12 არა ქალი [Ara kali] “არა” [Ara] means “no” in Georgian and “ქალი” [kali] , with aspirated consonant “k” (ქ) means “a woman”. (Trans. /ED.)

mediately provides the proof that the Georgian name of the village should have been ეშტო [Esht'io]. He also mentions that the form „ჰესთია“ [“Heshtia”] is recorded in the local Armenians (Jikia 1958, 320). The attempt to rethink this oikonym is still relevant today. At the entrance of the village, the residents have installed an electronic board with the words “HESHTIA” in red Latin letters. The locals seek to explain the etymology of the name in the Armenian language, arguing that “Hesht” means “easy” in Armenian, [Armenian Հեշտ<sup>13</sup>], hence the name of the village - “a place where life is easy”. Etymological reinterpretation is a common process in onomastics. It is only natural, that the population is looking for an understandable explanation of the toponyms. However, the village Eshtia/Eshtio is recorded with its modern name long before the resettlement of Armenians to Javakheti, in the Great Defter of Gurjistan produced in the XVI century, in the archive documents and tens of maps, developed in the XIX-XX centuries. Village Eshtia is linked with two other toponyms in Ninotsminda municipality, ეშტიისმთა [Esht'iis Mta] (Eshtia Mountain TN.) and ეშტიისწყალი [Esht'iists'qali] (Eshtia water TN.).

The **village Dliv** should have been the center of Georgian political events of the X-XI centuries. This idea is supported by the fact that only in Queen Anna's version of *The Georgian Chronicles* the village is mentioned three times. Turns out, that Dliv “had a great political and strategic importance and was the arena of important episodes of state life” in that time in Georgia. (Jikia 1958, 419-420). The summer residence of Bagrat III (975-1014), the first king of united Georgia in Javakheti, was in Dliv (Metreveli 2022, 36). Today, the village of Dliv, unfortunately, is preserved only in written historical sources with the mentioned name. Different maps marked it as Дилифъ [Dilif] (1907, 1877), Дилифи [Dilifi] (1: 25 000), Дилити [Diliti] (1: 50 000, 1:100 000), ტილიპი [T'ilipi] (1930), დილითი [Diliti] (Tourist and General Geographic maps of Georgia, Base Map), *Dilipi* (EUSC, 2010). The municipal register refers to it as დილითი [Diliti]. Only in the Russian map of the South Caucasus of 1834 is marked as Деливь [Deliv]. S. Jikia discusses the phonetical transformation of დლივი [Dlivi] and proves that დლივი [Dlivi], mentioned in the Defter is the village ტილიპი [T'ilipi] (Jikia 1958, 419-422). Village *Dlivek* is found in Armenian sources as well (See Armenian sources about Ninotsminda Municipality by Khatuna Gaprindashvili). It verifies once again that the current village დილითი [Diliti] has to be the village დლივი [Dlivi]. Two more toponyms are associated with village Dliv, such as the დლივისწყალი [Dlivists'qali] – river Dlivistskali and დლივის ქედი [Dlivis Kedi] - Dliv Range. The Dliv range is marked without the name on the maps, while Dlivistkali is referred as Кырх-булахъ [K'irx-bulax] (1907, 1877), კირხ-ბულაღი [K'irkh-Bulaghi] (1930), კირხბულაყი [K'irkhbulaqi] (Tourist map), კირხბულაკი [K'irkhbulak'i] (Base Map).

M. Beridze relates the etymology of კირხბულაღი [K'irkhbulaghi] to the ruined village კირხკილისა [K'irkhkilisa], marked on Russian Military Maps: “According to them (Armenian population N.Kh.), the river source consists of many (forty) other springs and that is why the river is called კირხბულაღი [K'irkhbulaghi], which means forty springs in Turkish (ბერიძე, 2008:187). It is not accidental, that there is the ruined village კირხკილისა [K'irkhkilisa] at the riverhead,

13 მელიქსეთ-ბეგი, ლეონ სომხურ-ქართული ლექსიკონი/ გადაამუშავა, შეავსო და გამოსაცემად მოამზადა მერაბ რობაქიძემ. – თბ. : ნეკერი, 1996



which means forty churches”. M. Beridze proves that “forty” is a famous word for toponymy of Meskheti. One of the examples he refers to is a river flowing from the north into Lake Paravani. The river is also marked as Kirkhbulaghi on the Russian maps. The author discusses the Armenian translation of the hydronym as well, which is literally translation of forty water - “Karasun Aghbiur” and refers to Devi Berdzenishvili (Berdzenishvili 2006, 255) citation, stating that “there is no such name „Karasun Aghbiur (i.e. Forty springs). This is a translation of Turkish Kirkh-Bulagh, which is marked on the 5-verst Russian map. It was called Dlivis Tskali [Dlivis Ts’qali] earlier, while old Georgian historians called it Akhalkalakis Tskali [Akhalkalaki Ts’qali]”. M. Beridze summarizes as a conclusion that “it does not matter in which language “forty spring” is translated, the source is the Church of forty Martyrs. The name of the church passed to the river. This is a typical case of toponym metonymy” (Beridze 2011, 12-16).

Kirkhbulaki is one of the examples of translated Toponyms. The hydronym “ორმოცწყარო“ [„Ormotst’sqaro“] was first translated into Turkish, and then its Armenian version appeared after the resettlement of Armenians. As verified during the expedition in 2023, it is a very famous hydronym used by the local (migrant) Armenian population till today. The name კირხბულაკი [K’irkhbulak’i] is written on the river sign. The expedition in 2023 confirmed that this name also surprised some of the locals, especially the younger population. While listing the toponyms during the interviews, they explicitly emphasized that they were naming the hydronym as read from the stencil. The expedition also recorded the local pronunciation Длифская вода [Dlifskaia voda], which is the closest to დლივის წყალი [Dlivis Ts’qali]. It is a common practice to assign different names to the different parts of the same river. Hence, both hydronyms can be preserved. Especially, if we consider that one out of two big tributaries of the river passes the village of Dlivi and another one runs across the ruins of the village of forty churches. They merge only to the north of Dlivi, near the village of Didi Gondrio. According to the Russian Military Maps, the tributary running to the ruined village of the forty churches is wider, and probably, this is the reason why the hydronym Kirkhbulaki was given to the whole river.

The situation is similar for the digital maps as it is for the printed ones. The map platforms mainly copy the toponyms from the digitalized Soviet topographic maps or the Base Map of the Public Register. Rarely, but still, the distorted toponyms, differing from those on printed maps, can be encountered on digital maps. For instance, the village *Ghulalisi* is found instead of *Kulalisi* on Wikimapia. *Kulalisi* is used consistently on all printed maps (additional information about Qulalisi is available in the article: Merab Beridze, *The Names with the Root of „ყულ“/“qul” in Georgia - ყულაღობი/Qulalisi*). The distorted version of *Ghulalisi* was recorded from the local (migrant) population during the expedition of 2023. It seems that the English transliteration of this form is applied to the digital map, which is created and modified electronically by users.

Another interesting example is found on Google Maps, where the village *Patara Gondra* is marked instead of *Patara Gondrio*, and the village *Didi Konduri* instead of *Didi Gondrio*. The form *Kondura* is derived from the Russian Military Maps (Кондура [Kondura]) and is reflected on the Georgian map of 1930 (კონდურა [K’ondura]), which is based on the Russian Military maps. The soviet maps of later period and modern Georgian maps provide the form Гондрио/



გონდრიო [Gondrio]. The municipality register names the villages as დიდი გონდრიო [Didi Gondrio] and პატარა გონდრიო [P'atara Gondrio]. The form of *Gondra* is not confirmed anywhere; it might be just a technical mistake.

Digital maps have more users than printed ones today. In addition, the information disseminates rapidly in a digital world, making it easier to establish specific names, further exacerbating the existing situation. Digital maps are especially crucial for tourists. The situation, which seems funny at first glance, may be quite confusing for a tourist, who reads one name of a place in the tourist guidebooks, finds another on digital maps integrated into navigation tools, sees quite different one on the road signage, and sometimes, locals may offer a completely different version.

As we have seen, the situation regarding the toponymy of Ninotsminda municipality on both static and dynamic maps is quite unfavorable. Development of the common catalogue of geographic names is urgent to mark or change toponyms. It is more difficult to study the geographic names for a client and verify the toponyms given on the map due to limited resources when the majority of the bibliography is not available in an electronic format and there is only a printed version in a few libraries. Different maps uploaded on the website of the National Agency of Public Register are especially valuable, which include several topographic maps of the Soviet period, a Georgian digital topographic map of 2007 (though it does not cover our target area and we were not able to use it), and Base Map. As was seen above, they require modification, though their availability is obviously, a step forward for organizing the toponyms on the map. The process is very comprehensive and requires a lot of resources. However, due to the importance of the toponyms, it is necessary to ensure consistency on maps, official documents, road boards, school manuals, scientific publications, or tourist guidebooks.

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# Maps

## Borders of Javakheti





# Ninotsminda Municipality



