

**Roland Topchishvili**

**Svaneti and Its Inhabitants**

**(Ethno-historical Studies)**

The Georgian people are one of those, who have maintained selfhood among old nations up to date. The Georgian state, which was formed on the verge of IV-III centuries B.C., besides the Georgian population, included non-Georgians as well. At the same time, according to the Georgian historical sources, the non-Georgian population was thought as a part of the Georgian nation. According to the mentioned historical sources, the linguistic moment did not matter. Georgian-speaking Megrels, Svans and Dvals were considered as Georgians. Megrels and Svans consider themselves Georgians even today and in their opinion, they speak old Georgian language. As for Dvalis, it is difficult to say anything about their language today. As scientists suppose (taking into consideration onomastics data), the Dval language was one of the Georgian languages which was placed between Svan and Megrelian and moreover, it had the common with the latter (R. Topchishvili, *Issues of Settling Ossethians in Georgia and Ethno-history of Shida (Inner) Kartli*, Tbilisi, 1997, pp. 6-72; The same author, *Ethno-historical Etudes*, Tbilisi, 2005, pp.169-189). Tsova-tushi people have their own spoken language (Batsburi). They think that they are Georgians, too. Mentioned languages used to be only the family spoken languages for centuries and from the sociolinguistic point of view, they are equal to the Georgian language dialects. The state, official, church and literary language was only Georgian in Svaneti as well as in Samegrelo and Dvaleti.

Thus the Georgian nation has always been a union of people speaking several languages. The fact that the language is not the basic determiner of ethnos can be proved by several analogies from the ethnic history of the world people. For example, lower German speech is different from literary German – “*platt-Deutsch*”. Mordovians speak two languages (Erzian and Moksha). It is known that during his visit in Moscow, when Mao-Dze-Dun made his speech at M. Lomonosov University, many of Chinese students listened to the text with the help of an interpreter.

During the whole long history of Georgia, Svaneti has been its historical-geographical and historical-ethnographical part. It had the different status both in the unified Georgian state and West Georgia (first it was the part of Egrisi or Colchheti, then Abkhazia). In comparison to other historical-ethnographical parts of Georgia, as mentioned above, Svaneti has been distinguished by having its own family spoken language (one of the Georgian languages). At the same time, the inhabitants of Svaneti have always considered themselves as the inseparable part of the Georgian ethnos. In this case, language was not a precondition for them to realize themselves as different ethnos. Even today the Svans think that the old Georgian lexical units have been maintained by the Svan language. In this view, the question asked by a six-year-old girl is very remarkable: “What is for water in Svanuri?” And the answer was followed by her: “lits”. In Georgian “*litslitsi*” of water (a glass full of water) is the same as Svan or old Georgian word “lits”.

Why the Svaneti inhabitants considered themselves to be the inseparable part of Georgian ethnos is caused by several reasons, which will be more obvious at

the end of the research. Here we think it necessary to mention those historical conditions according to which, the inhabitants in the Svaneti historical-ethnographical region realize themselves as Georgians. The first thing is that historical traditions confirm and as is also said, both Svans and Megrels are the branches of one people (tribe). Second reason, and one of the decisive, is living in one country (Georgian state). And it caused the condition that Svans could participate similarly in the formation of Georgian culture like other representatives of the historical-ethnographical parts of Georgia. Third and of not less importance is the common belief – Orthodox trend of Christianity. As for church, Svans have always been depended on Georgian Church. (at least since the IX century) and the Church language has always been only the Georgian language. It was impossible to imagine that earlier and in the developed middle ages, a group of people the number of which ranged 25 to 30 thousand could create their own written language. Svaneti was a particular region due to the certain view that unlike other mountainous regions of Georgia, feudal society (Georgian Feudal System) was deeply established, although in the later centuries it refused some of its principles in some places. The natural geographical conditions of Svaneti should be taken into consideration. It could not exist independently without being integrated into the Georgian state system. Locally produced agricultural products have never been enough for Svan people (not only for them but for other mountain people as well) and it always had agricultural and cultural links with the rest parts of Georgia. To begin with, examples of looking for outer jobs will be enough. This fact was fixed in the Georgian historical documents even in the XV century. It is clear from the documents that Svans who were going to the lower parts to look for work brought a number of goods or products, especially salt and

necessary sacramental wine for every Christian. The document makes it clear that looking for the seasonal work in the Georgian lowland historical-ethnographical parts was traditional (Svaneti Written Monuments, I, Edited by V. Silogava, Tbilisi, 1986, pp. 112-116). At the same time, this event (looking for outer jobs) helped the population of Svaneti to move comparatively easily to the different parts of Georgia (mostly to the West Georgia). Svan people's movement to look for the seasonal jobs for a long time caused their bilingualism as well. Historically all the Svans could speak Georgian besides the Svan language. Christian belief made it obligatory for them as they could use religious books only in the Georgian language. So that, Svaneti as the mountainous region containing only the certain number of population, always strengthened both the west and the east Georgia with its surplus population. Moreover, from the demographical point of view, historically the lowland always made it possible, as due to frequent invasions, it often experienced the lack of the population. In the west Georgia (in Imereti, Lechkhumi, Samegrelo) there are several kins who consider Svaneti to be their original place (see D. Shavianidze).

Despite the fact that the inhabitants of Svaneti have actively been involved in the Georgian state and cultural system throughout the long history of Georgia, they managed to maintain their language, original ethnographical style of living and customs deep roots of which are inseparable part of the common Georgian culture. They maintained a lot of ethnographical realities (like other highlanders of Georgia) which were lost by the lowland centuries ago. Besides, as they shared neighbourhood with the North Caucasus highlanders (since the XV century with Turkish speaking Balkarian and Karachaelian people), Svans had

tight links with them and these links were carried out by the Georgian central government with the help of the Svans.

It is mentioned in the Georgian historiography that Georgian mountainous parts functioned autonomously in the unified Georgian feudal state system. This particular opinion of the Acad. G. Melikishvili, shared by the most researchers, makes it clear that it refers to Svaneti. This opinion does not spread to Thkheniskali Gorge (or Lower) Svaneti (administrative Lentekhi region) and half of Enguri Gorge (or Upper) Svaneti (so called Below Bali Svaneti) where the feudal relations were maintained until the last period (XIX century). Autonomous functioning of the upper part of Enguri Gorge Svaneti (so called Above Bali Svaneti) was considered since the late middle centuries because the free tribal unions revived there since the period of demolition of the Georgian central state and some representatives of the upper class with noble name (“Vargi”) bore the title only formally.

However, this historical-ethnographical part of Georgia has not been studied yet in full despite the fact that several researches were written in the XIX-XX centuries on Svaneti, its history and ethnography, customs and traditions. First of all, researches made by non-Georgian authors in the XIX century is characterized by carelessness, without going into the depth, frequently with non-objectiveness and inclinations. As for the researches done since the 80s of the XX century, most of them are in the certain frame and are written under the influence of Marxism-Leninism dogmas. For example, having been within the certain frames, ethnographers had to prove the social events of primitive society in their ethnographical materials on Svaneti and see the forms of

remnants of the first tribal society. Although above mentioned does not mean at all that these works do not include essential scientific researches.

From this point of view, the attention of Svaneti as one of the most remarkable mountainous part of Georgia was paid even earlier by an Acad. N. Berdzenishvili. He wrote: "Today it is necessary to do the methodologically right critical work: "the first sources, old or later, data and scientific finds should be criticized severely and processed materials should also be matched and agreed with each other."

Otherwise, there is a big and obvious mismatch which reasonably causes the doubt that we have the proper understanding of the certain essential side in the life of Svaneti.

On one hand, the remnants of the farming and spiritual culture of Svaneti, such as the world known "myth" about the wealth of Svaneti ("Colkheti"), about its farming-metallurgical achievements the proof of which is the archeological finds with high performance. Agricultural rules (cultivation and cattle-breeding), amazing princepieces of wood crafts, highly developed civic and cult buildings of stone crafts, blacksmith's work of farming and combat arms and goldsmith's work of jewelry, highly developed painting. and on the other hand, our superficial knowledge in the cultural backwardness of Svan people and their closed farming system, their "primitiveness". You can agree that to leave this issue in such a state for the Soviet scientists is unforgivable and its proper improvement is the matter of dignity of Georgian scientific historiography" (N. Berdzenishvili, *The Issues of Georgian History*, V, Tbilisi, 1971, p. 67). At the

same time, the scientist also pointed that the scientific study of Svaneti should have been done not separately but in close ties with neighbouring parts (Racha, Lechkhumi, Samegrelo, Abkhazia) (p. 70). As is seen, the scientist named the mentioned parts, first of all not only because that they are bordering Svaneti but Svans were historically settled even there. Besides, the history of Georgia, its ethnographical being represents the close historical-ethnographic relationship between the highland and lowland and Svaneti needs to be seen and studied in this view.

Svaneti is one of the highest mountainous territorial-ethnographic units. It is situated in the mountainous part of the west Georgia, to the south slopes of the Caucasus Range. In the historical-geographical view, Svaneti is divided into two parts: Tkhenistskali Gorge Svaneti and Enguri Gorge Svaneti. In other words, the former is called Lower Svaneti and includes Lentekhi region administratively. The latter is called Upper Svaneti and is included in Mestia region administratively. After the breakdown of the Georgian Kingdom (XV century) Svaneti had not been one administrative unit any more. Feudal lords of different kins reigned in both gorges. Enguri Gorge and Tskheniskali Gorge are divided into two parts by the Svaneti Range the length of which is 80 km and it is situated at the height of 3.000-3.500 metres above the sea level. This range made contacts and movement between two gorges difficult. The whole area of Svaneti comprises 6.9%. The river Enguri of Upper Svaneti takes its flow from Skhara Mkinvari (2.800m above the sea level). The village Ushguli, which is at the head of the Enguri Gorge, is situated at the height of 2 000 metres from the sea level. The lowest place from the sea level at the Enguri Gorge is the village Khaishi (550m). It is comparatively a new settlement together with

Lakhamula. As far as Tkheniskhali Gorge (Lower Svaneti) is concerned, it takes its head from several Lapuri Mkinvari (2.707m above the sea level). Tkheniskhali Gorge actually includes several rivers, the main of which is Lapuri as well as: Tsanaskali, Chorokhi and others. If Svans want to get to the lowland now they have to follow the highway and come to Samegrelo. This road was built in the XX century. Before that they used the shorter ways to get to the different parts of Georgia (Imereti, Kartli). From the head of Enguri Gorge (Ushguli) they moved to Tskheniskali Gorge where there are two villages now (Tsana and Zeskho) and several former villages. From here there was a short passage to Rioni Gorge i.e. historical-ethnographical part of Racha. From Racha they went straight to Kartli through Liakhvi Gorge.

Svaneti border ends up at the Muri Rock in Tkheniskhali Gorge where the administrative centre of Lechkhumi – Tsageri is situated. It seems surprising but it is a fact that the settlements of Lechkhumi and Lower Svaneti are two kilometres away from each other but for centuries the people of two neighbouring villages have been speaking two different languages – Georgian (Lechkhumi inhabitants) and Svanuri.

Kodori Gorge Svaneti or as Svans call it “Dali’s Svaneti” is separated. Administratively it belongs to the Gulripshi region of Abkhazia. According to the ethnographic data, Svans were settled in Kodori (Dali) Gorge in the XIX century. Their settlement was not a single act. Their migration continued even in the beginning of the XX century. According to a narrator (Gulbaat Merlan), “people of our kin live in Dali’s Svaneti, too. Three families moved there. They left 70-80 years ago.” In Dali Gorge Svaneti the Guledanis (Enguri Gorge,



Lenjeri community) live, too. According to the narrator's words, "the families of father and uncle were not separated and for three years each of the brothers stayed in Dali Gorge and replaced each other. We lived in such a way because there were better conditions there." In Dali (Kodori) Gorge Svaneti there are the representatives of almost every kin from Enguri Gorge. But as the historical documents and ethnographic data show, Kodori Gorge and its neighbouring areas had been populated by Svans before. As it seems, they were settled even in the important part of the current Abkhazian territory which is proved by the analyses of toponymies. Besides the old Georgian name of the capital of current Abkhazia **Sukhumi** ("Tskhumi") which can be deciphered with the help of the Svan language and means hornbeam, linguists name such other toponymies that are explained by Svan language (e.g. Gagra>Gakra which means **walnut** in Svanuri. T. Gvantseladze).

The fact that Kodori Gorge had been the living place of Svans before is clear from other sources, too. Ancient authors mentioned about the people who they called "Misimianelians". As Academicians S. Kaukchishvili and G. Melikishvili stated, (S. Kaukchishvili, *The Tribe of Misimianelians – TSU Works, I*, Tbilisi, 1936; G. Melikishvili, *For the Issues of Ancient Population in Georgia, Caucasus and Nearest East*, Tbilisi, 1965), the name of Svans itself "Mu-shuan" was changed into "Misimian" in Greek language. Moreover, Besarion Nizharadze fixed the important ethnographic materials and narrations according to which the border between Abkhazians and Svans was running on the bridge over the river Nenkra: "not only once the bloodshed between Abkhazians and Svans took place in this area. When Svans grabbed the cattle from Abkhazians, the latter chased after them. If Svans managed to cross the mentioned bridge

Abkhazians returned back but if they overtook them then the fierce struggle started” (B. Nizharadze. Historical-ethnographic Letters, II, Tbilisi, 1964, p.159). These mountains belonged to Svaneti nobilities named the Dadeshkelianis and Svans took away the pastures from Abkhazians. In case of not paying for the pastures, Svans used to grab the cattle from Abkhazians. In 1863-1864 when Mamatsashvili was an executive of Svaneti, “mountains of Murzakani were in this Executive’s possession. He allowed grabbing the cattle if Abkhazians would not pay for the pastures” (see the same place, p. 160). B. Nizharadze also wrote that “this Chuberi is the low branch of the river Nenkra. People had lived here long before. I saw the tower and ruined houses. According to Vichi (B. Nizharadze’s guide), somewhere here in the hidden place there is a small church full of wealth but a sinful person cannot find it because such is the God’s will. Vichi told me the long story in an answer to my question where people went and why they left such a rich gorge. I will try to tell it short: The people living here left for Upper Svaneti” (B. Nizharadze. II, 160). B. Nizharadze writes: “In Chubakhevi community, in the village of Tsaleri there is a family named Gvarmiani. The Gvarmianis repeatedly state even today that their ancestors originally came from Dali’s Gorge” (B. Nizharadze. II, 51). When did Kodori (Dali) George Svans possibly move to Enguri Gorge Svaneti and particularly which villages did they settle? Several kins state to be originally from Kvemo (Below) Bali Svaneti and settled in Zemo (Upper) Bali Svaneti according to the narratives. This migration might have occurred in the XV-XVI centuries when the central unified Georgian state broke up into many kingdom-principalities and weakening of the central control minimized the feudal relations in Kvemo (Below) Bali Svaneti (or the upper part of Enguri

Gorge) which caused in its turn the revival of territorial tribal relations in social attitudes.

It should be underlined that among the ruins of Kodori Gorge the author of the XIX century fixes towers, which together with other circumstances obviously indicates that Svans had lived in this area once. It is known that Abkhazians (and generally Abkhazian-Adighian tribes) did not know about the culture of tower (it was completely unknown for them). The most principle is that Svans took pastures from Abkhazian cattlemen in Dali's George which indicates directly to the circumstance that Dali Gorge (generally Kodori Gorge) was once inhabited by Svans - the people of which were called Misimianelians by ancient authors.

The fact that settling Svans was more extensive is obvious from the toponymies of the bordering northern part of Samegrelo Lechkhumi and partly Racha (nothing to say about the Abkhazian toponymies two examples of which – “Tskhumi” and “Gagra>Gakra” have been mentioned above). When the replacement of the Svan population by Megrels happened in the northern part of Samegrelo (currently Tsalenjikha region) is definitely difficult. Obviously it happened quite early. Georgian language elements also substituted Svanuri elements early in Lechkhumi. It is true that almost half of the family names in Lechkhumi are of Svanuri origin but most of them are related to the migration of people from Svaneti to Lechkhumi and it took place later in the XIII-XVII centuries. Toponymies of Lechkhumi origin being explained only by means of the Svan language are quite old. Besides, the ancient name of Racha and

Lechkhumi was Takveri. If in the earlier periods of middle ages the people had been Svan language-speaking in Lechkhumi, it probably would not have been called "Takveri" and it normally would have been included in the general name of Svaneti. At any case, Georgianization of Svan language-speaking Takveri (further Lechkhumi) had happened by the VI-VII centuries. As for one more separate part of Svaneti which became the territory of Racha later and was called as "Mountainous Racha" (villages Ghebi, Glola, Chiora) had been in the possession of Svaneti until the XV century. Vakhushti Bagrationi describes the mentioned villages of Mountainous Racha as the settlements "with towers and hedges". "Mountainous Racha" directly shares its borders with Tskheniskali Gorge Svaneti. At the head of this gorge there is the passage to "Mountainous Racha" or Rioni Gorge. In its turn, "Mountainous Racha" has a border with the other historical-ethnographic part of Georgia Dvaleti (to the east). According to the documents of 1503, today's part of "Mountainous Racha" or Rioni Gorge was called "Svaneti's Mtiuleti" (Svanetian Written Monuments, I, Tbilisi. 1986, pp. 112-116). By that time Svaneti had lost this part of its territory. It was handed to the nobilities of Racha the Japaridzes. At the beginning of the XVI century there were 10 villages in "Svaneti's Mtiuleti" (Mountains) out of which only three (Ghebi, Glola, Chiora) were retained. By 1503 400 households had lived in this part of Svaneti which is approximately 2800-3000 heads. In the same XVI century the replacement of Svan language by Georgian might have occurred in "Svaneti's Mtiuleti" ("Mountains") (at the beginning of Rioni Gorge). Obviously it was resulted from moving the Japaridze serfs (Svans) by the mentioned feudal lords to the lower parts of Rioni Gorge where there were better natural geographical conditions for farming purposes. It is not exceptional that the process of language replacement in "Svaneti's Mtiuleti" had

begun earlier though. The reason to think so is that the gentry's surnames mainly end in suffixes –dze and –shvili (Sosagidze, Arishidze, Gigashvili). This opinion is supported by the fact that according to the documents of above mentioned 1503, the people of the village Tsena (situated at the head of Tkheniskali Gorge from where there is a passage to the Enguri Gorge village Ushguli and Rioni Gorge or “Svaneti’s Mtiuleti”) had spoken Georgian. Besarion Nizharadze wrote in 1886: “According to the legend, both Tsena and Zeskhva were inhabited by Svans who spoke Tsena Georgian and Zeskhva Svanuri.” The Doghvanis and Jankhotelis who lived in the Lashketi community of Tskheniskali Gorge Svaneti had been moved from Zeskho (“today’s Jankhoteli was former Chikhladze”) (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 30).

Even B. Nizharadze wrote that Rioni Gorge was once inhabited by Svanuri-speaking people: “154 households live in the village of Ghebi. Both internally and externally Ghebi will remind you of the Svan village at the very first sight; there are the same two and rarely three-storey stone houses close to one another, some towers as it is generally acceptable in Svaneti; So that all these and a lot of others, I repeat, give Ghebi a colour of the Svan village” (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 45-50). The same author writes that “the ancestors of present Ghebi people were Svans and spoke Svan language. Ghebi is not the only example of the villages with Svanuri family names in the Racha and Lechkhumi regions” (p. 50). Besides the toponymy of “Ghebi”, B. Nizharadze also considers “Chiora” and “Glola” to be Svanuri toponymies.

As we can see, historically Svans were settled on the larger territory and then their settling area was reduced gradually as a result of their assimilation with

the other Georgian-speaking groups (Georgians, Megreles). The borders of contemporary Svaneti actually had already been formed by the early period of the middle ages. The present day Svaneti is surrounded by the main ridge of Caucasus to the north. In the northern Caucasus the neighbouring borderers of Svans are Karachaelians and Balkarians who are called by Svans "Saviarians" etnonymically. As it is clear in the Georgian as well as in non-Georgian historic and ethnological materials, Svans were settled in the north Caucasus, particularly at the beginning of the rivers Tergi and Kuban where the Svan toponymies also have been confirmed (see L. Lavrov. Settling of Svans in the Northern Caucasus before XIX century // Issues of Ethnography of Caucasus, Tbilisi, 1952, p. 78-89). Mentioned above a XIX-century author B. Nizharadze wrote: "We know that the northern slopes of this range, the nearby places of which are occupied by Chegemi, Baksani (Urusbyev) and Karacha communities, had been in the possession of Svaneti until the present time and was assessed by Svans. For example, Chegemi community paid 12 sheep every year in favour of Mulari community. Bakhsani and Karacha paid dues or gave pastures to principality Svans or their princes. Remnants of Christianity found by the travelers in Chegemi, Bakhsani and Karacha areas prove that before the present inhabitants the people of Christian confession had lived here. We think that they must have been Svans who moved to Svaneti only then when the Islamic ancestors of present inhabitants had forced them to leave or they had escaped themselves from Islamic confession" (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 51-52).

On the verge of old and new eras a Greek Geographer Strabon mentioned the settling of Svans on the tops of Caucasus, above Dioskuria (Sukhumi - present main city of Abkhazia). Memandre, a historian in the second half of the VI

century, also mentioned that “Svans were one of the tribes who lives around Caucasus”; “They (Svans – R.T.) live on the top of Caucasus” (Georgica, III, Tbilisi, 1936, p.221). This information makes it clear that Svans lived even in the northern Caucasus by the VI century. Nothing else can be meant by the words of a historian about their stay around Caucasus. When the ancestors of Svans settled in the northern Caucasus is too difficult to clarify. According to the Russian sources, “In 1562 the owner of Kabardo Temur-Kva (“Temryuk”) occupied “ “the living places (a hundred and sixty-four houses) of Mshanis and Sonis ...” (ИСБЛ, Volume XIII, second half, СПб, 1969, p. 371). It is obvious that in the Russian sources by mentioning Mshanis and Sonis, Svans are meant. Mshani is read as the name of Svans itself “Mshan”. Kabardians called Svans “Sone”. Besides, in the bordering countries of the northern Caucasus, as researchers point, there are still some toponymies which can be explained by means of the Svan language; also Svan towers, family names of Svan origin, ruins of Christian churches and others. Mentioned Russian ethnographer L. Lavrov supposed Svans stay in the northern Caucasus (at the head of the rivers Kubani and Baksan) since the XIV century. He wrote that “the living place of Svans at the head of the rivers Kubani and Baksani have left their trace in toponymy” and listed so called similar toponymies: “Uchkulani” and “Ushguli”, “Khumara”(Skhumari) and “Tskumari”, “Lashkuta” and “Lashkheti”. He confirmed the ruins of the castle of the middle centuries near the village Khumara were called “Shoana”, “Shuana” and “Shona”. L. Lavrov’s decision is as follows: “given data allow us to suppose that in a certain historical age the part of the northern Caucasus, in the first place the upper reaches of the river Kubani and Baksani were populated by Svans.” In other materials he wrote that “Svans took possession of Baksani Gorge ... between 1743 and 1773. The reign

of Svans at the upper courses of Kubani must have been related to far earlier times, particularly until the settling of Turks here from Baksani i.e. roughly speaking, on the verge of XVII-XVIII centuries” (p.344). The Russian scientist concludes in the end that “Settling Svans in the northern Caucasus until XIX century cannot be beyond any doubt” (p. 344).

A clerk of the Russian General Staff I. F. Flaramberg, who was in the northern Caucasus in the 30s of the XIX century, wrote that a village of Khulami is situated to the west bank of Cherekh-sakho where the Svan families live who wear Imeruli clothes up to now and are called “Sonis” (Adighians, Balkarians and Karachaelians in the Information of Authors the XIII-XIX centuries. Nalchik, 1974, pp 256-257).

In the appeal of Digorkhan Gardapkhadze-Dadishgeliani (Tsioq Dadishgeliani’s wife) referred to the Governor of Caucasus Rozen we can read the following: “The manor of Svaneti which has been in our possession up to now and is ours, their estate shares its border with the village Tegeni to Cherkez side and there is a border with Karachaelians where the lowland Klavi ends up which is called Labgviari and this Labgviari is ours and beyond it – Karachaelians’ ” (State Central Historical Archive of Georgia, Fund 2, Description 1, Act # 4465, p. 245). “Tegeni” which is mentioned in the letter is the present village Tegenkta of Kabardo and “Labgviari” (Svanuri toponymy) is the present Ulu-kami Gorge. Digorkhani also wrote that “on the side of Cherkeziens who moved from Cherkezia and settled in the village Bakhsani, is our own. Because of the fact that people who live there today had lived in the Cherkezian village of Bingisi and half of them moved to their estate in the village of Nakmuki and not long ago Tatarkhani’s father Tsioq moved them from Nakmuki to our own village



Bakhsani on the request of their chief Ismail Virispilov whose son Mirzaqula is now alive and lives in our village Bakhsani and where our peasants live in Bakshani. They died of plague and the rest of them were resettled by Tsioq to the village Leshteri (Pari community village Gheshdorni) and Lashkhari (Pari community village Lashkhari), who served us by the serfage rule”. It is clear from the same letter that “When Karachaelians used our land called Labgviari or in another words as pastures to feed their cattle, they gave us their dues for pasture without any hesitation”.

According to ethnographic materials, some kins living in Svaneti moved from the northern Caucasus. For example, the Vezdenis who live in Becho think that they moved from Balkaria. Their separated relatives bear the surname of the Vezdenovs there; they are relatives. Svans have not stopped agricultural-economical links with them until the recent period. They go to Balkaria (Svans call Balkarians “Saviarians”) to scythe and they give cattle, horses, saddles ... in return. According to a Svan narrator, those who often went there could speak their language. “We know our boundaries and coal is buried at the border. Coal can be kept for centuries in the ground”. According to the ethnographic data, the Goshtelianis come from the country of Saviarians. In Kabardo there is the family of Shakhmurzaevs who are originally the Gujejianis. As reported, they moved there two-three centuries ago from Svaneti. The Kurdanovs who live in the northern Caucasus are the successors of the Kurdianis who had moved there from Upper Svaneti Mulakhi Community.

Evidently, the Tsindelians were settled from the northern Caucasus who collected dues from Karachaelians living in the village Khurdzuki. One man

from Khurdzuki declared to the commission, which arrived to determine the border, that the border between them and Svans was the Great Range of Caucasus. It stayed in their memory like this and what had been before only Allah knew about that. An old man Vichi Tsindeliani reacted to that from the Svan side and referred to the gathering excitedly: The border between us is not the Great Range but the stone bridge (this bridge was near the village) (Bachabog). I have collected dues from you three times in my life for those places which you occupy now; We have grabbed your cattle twice when you refused to pay for the pasture. It happened during the times of Murzaqan's father T. Tsioq. Amazhi li! Amazhi li! (Exactly! Exactly!) shouted Svans in chorus" (B. Nizharadze. II, p. 152).

By the way, toponymy "Bakhsani" once the Svan settlement can be explained by the Svan language which, as they say, means divided, split place (similar toponymy - the name of the village can be found in the east Georgian mountainous part Gudamaqari, too: "Bakhani"). "Labgviari" is a Svanuri toponymy, too which means the place to build a bridge across it. There are more than one Svanuri toponymies in the Svaneti bordering northern Caucasus (oiconymies). Among them are: "Uchkulan", "Kojurdi", "Javliq". "Ushgul" means a crooked place. There is a Svanuri word "Koj" (rock) in "Kojurd". By the way, an ethnographer M. Gegeshidze explained the meaning of the toponymy "Kojori" using Svan language (near Tbilisi).

The border with Samegrelo in Enguri Gorge seems to have been drawn at the village Jvari until the XIX century. It followed directly "Tskhvimzagari" but according to archive sources, - "Tskhvimzagela" ridge. Inhabitants of the village

Jvari keep narratives about that. Besides, we can read in one of the archive documents the following: “When settlers of Tskvirmzagala from the side of Samegrelo come out then we take pastures for cattle and some jobs from them. Beyond the borders there is a village Jvari which belongs to the prince Katsia Dadiani and Vameq and Niko and their relatives” (Georgian Central Archive, F.2, or Act # 4465, p. 246). B. Nizharadze mentioned the following about the border between Svaneti and Samegrelo: “I find it necessary to list the places where Svans lived near Enguri Gorge between Svaneti and Samegrelo in old times. These are the followings: 1) Khuberi, 2) Idliani, 3) Naqolvar-Khaishdi, 4) Vedi, 5) Ipari, 6) Katsledi, 7) Chuberian-Mashrichala, 8) Dusi, 9) Khidari and 10) Chabani. There are four ruined churches among the mentioned places, two - Saint George’s, one Archangel’s and one Christ’s Church. But today, i.e. 1878 six Svans live in these places. There are ruins of many houses in every place. Besides, in Ipari brick water-pipes were found” (B. Nizharadze, II, 168).

As has been mentioned, Svaneti mainly is divided into two parts both geographically and ethnographically: Lower Svaneti or Tskheniskali Gorge Svaneti and Upper Svaneti or Enguri Gorge Svaneti. In its turn, Svaneti is divided into two parts by Bali Range: Above Bali Svaneti and Below Bali Svaneti. In scientific materials Below Bali Svaneti is known as principality or the Dadeshgelianis’ Svaneti, but Above Bali Svaneti – as free Svaneti, without any princes. Lower Svaneti together with Lechkhumi was in the possession of Samegrelo princes - the Dadianis in late middle ages.

We do not have any statistical data about how many people lived in Svaneti in the middle ages. Different authors determine differently the number of heads in

the households in the XIX century – 5 to 12-15 heads. We find A. Gelovani's opinion more acceptable that the average Svan family consisted of about nine heads considering the fact that in that period there still were so called big family. A XIX-century demographic situation of Svaneti was also affected by frequent epidemics, migration of people to the lowland. Svaneti sustained migration in the view of the fact that it was traditionally characteristic for them to travel to look for the job outside Svaneti. In the 70s of the XVIII century a German scientist and traveler Giuldenshtedt determined the population of Svaneti by 5 thousand households. We have mentioned above that Svan household supposedly consisted of 9 members. As a result of multiplication of these two data, 45 thousand people lived in Svaneti in the second half of the XVIII century. In 1820-1823 S. Bronevski defined the population of Svaneti by 3000 people based on the different data. If we still count 9 members in the household, it means that by the mentioned time the population of Svaneti comprised 27 thousand heads. The reduction of the population to such extent seems justly to A. Gelovani due to the existing severe epidemic in 1811-1812. By that time Black Death almost banished the people of the west Georgia. According to the archive data of 1832, A. Gelovani fixed that by that period more than 25 thousand people lived in Svaneti. In 1834 Staff-captain Shakhovski determines the population of Svaneti by 29 000 heads. According to O. Evetski's data, 30 thousand people lived in Svaneti in 1835.

In the 40s of the XIX century the population of Svaneti reduced again which was the result of epidemic (cholera) this time, too. In the 60s of the XIX century the whole population of Svaneti comprised 15 676 people. By that time, from the middle of the XIX century the resettling of Svans started in Dali

(Kodori Gorge) Svaneti. G. Gasviani points that “in the middle of the XIX century about one hundred households moved to Abkhazian Svaneti” (G. Gasviani. *Studies on the History of Middle Ages Svaneti*, Tbilisi, 1991, p.19). Other data say that 184 households moved from Chubekhevi to Dali. (E. Kalveit. *Studies on the Agriculture of Upper Svaneti – ZOIRGO Book XXVI. Issues 9*, Tif., 1911, pp. 63-64). By A. Gelovani’s calculation, the number of Svans settled in Svaneti was 200-250 households (A. Gelovani, *Svaneti in the XIX Century*, Dissertation, 2002, p. 41). The people repressed by the Dadeshkelianis from the separate villages of Chubekhevi, especially from Lakhamula, moved to the area of Khudon-Lakhamula on both sides of the river Enguri in the middle of the XIX century. The people of Lakhamula had started to settle there since the end of the XVIII century but the process became intensive in the XIX century. Such was the origin of the following villages as Ipari, Dizi, Jorkvali, Chekhi, Laani, Tobakhi, Lukhvi, Gaghma Khaishi (on one side of the river), Gamoghma Khaishi (on the other side of the river), Vedi, Skormeti, Naki, Tsitskhvari, Idliani, Shgedi, Nalkolvari, Totani, Barjashi, Khudoni.

According to the household records of 1886, in 91 villages of Svaneti (Enguri Gorge) there lived 1175 households and 9527 heads, but in Lower Svaneti (Tskheniskali Gorge) – 2048 heads. Altogether there lived 11 570 people in Svaneti by that time.

Before we survey the household record data made in 1886 according to single villages, let us touch on the issue of Svaneti communities. Both Enguri and Tskheniskali Gorges were united in the territorial communities. The above

mentioned Gorges were connected to each other by the Lathari Zekari (Pass). Tskheniskali Svaneti contained three communities in all: Lentekhi community, Choluri community and Lashkheti community.

Lentekhi community included Lentekhi itself, the village Paqi and the village Leksura. Lentekhi is built on the place where the rivers Khvedura and Laskadura join the river Tskheniskali. Here on the top of the Lara mountain the castle Larashi was built between the Khvedura and Laskadura.

There were three stone churches in the village Paqi which bore the name of the Virgin (E. Takaishvili. Archeological Expedition in Lechkhum-Svaneti in 1910, Paris, 1937. p.86). 22 households lived in the village Paqi at the beginning of the XX century. According to the ethnographical data, Paqi church was the biggest and strongest one. It gathered pilgrims not only from Lower Svaneti but from other neighbouring parts (e.g. from Lechkhumi). The church of the Saginadzes (who come from Upper Svaneti; originally the Saghlianis) "Shturo Archangel" and "The Paqi Virgin" ("Paqi diptych") were of the same power. Ethnographic materials: "The angels were three brothers. They flew up. One landed in Paqi, the second - in Shturo and the third one in Chkumi (Lechkhumi) and churches were founded". In the Lentekhi community village of Leksura E. Takaishvili fixed the "Virgin's" wooden church and in a small village Gulidi – the church named after Christ.

According to the household records of 1886, there were only 12 villages in the Lentekhi territorial community. Besides the mentioned villages Lentekhi, Paqi, Leksura and Gulidi, we can name: Kakhura, Qvedreshi, Melura, Rtskhmeluri,

Khapuri, Kheleda, Tsanashi, Tsiplakaki, Chaluri. There were only 232 households with 2 043 heads in the community (1058 males, 985 females). There were 8.8 members in a family on average. The biggest village was Paqi (42 households, 391 people). According to the number of households then comes: Lekura (39 households, 391 heads), Gulida (30 households, 240 heads), Melura (26 households, 241 heads), Rtskhmeluri (19 households, 154 heads), Kheleda (17 households, 130 heads), Kakhura (13 households, 97 heads), Tsanashi (12 households, 127 heads), Kvedreshi (12 households, 141 heads), Tsiplakeki (10 households, 101 heads), Khapuri (8 households, 71 heads), Chaluri (4 households, 33 heads).

According to archive data of 1904, (Kutaisi State Archive, Fund 8, Description 1, Act # 819) the biggest family name in Lentekhi community was Liparteliani. 81 families by this name lived there. As for other family names, they were represented in the following number: the Chakselianis (Charkselianis) – 17 households, the Tvildianis – 24 families, the Kuraspedianis – 24 households, the Bendelianis – 7 households, (the Bendelianis were migrated in a large number to Lechkhumi in the villages Chkumi, Latsoria and Kulbaki); the Kardavas – 7 families, the Gazdelianis – 9 families, the Gvichianis – 7 families, the Muselianis – 6 families, the Gugavas – 6 families. The Gugavas who moved from Tskheniskali Svaneti Gorge live in the villages of Lechkhumi, Chkhuteli and Usakhelo. The Gugavas were resettled from Lower Svaneti Lentekhi community village of Laskadura. In Lower Svaneti they also lived in the village Gvimrali. It is worth noting that this family name was mentioned in the folk tales several times by the inhabitants of the village Usakhelo in the form of “Gugavani”. The Gugavas moved from Svaneti to Lechkhumi quite long ago. In

the document of the XVI century “Tsageri Church Document” in Lechkhumi two families of the Gugavas are mentioned but in the form of “Gugava”: “Susula Gugava owes...”, “Okropir Gugava owes...”. According to a narrator A. Ch. Gugava, “We are originally from Upper Svaneti. There were three brothers there. Then these brothers broke their word and they were repressed. They escaped. They were afraid of vendetta. One brother stayed in Lower Svaneti, the other stayed here in Lechkhumi. They came from Upper Svaneti with the family name of Gugava. In the document of second half of the XIII century “Chronicle of Svaneti Gathering” we can find the name “Gogani” (P. Ingorokva, p. 137,153). Gugavas might be the descendents of these particular Goganis.

As for the Bendelianis mentioned above, they were migrated largely as well to Lechkhumi village of Kulbaki (Jonouli Gorge). According to narrators, the Bendelianis had been settled in Kulbaki earlier than others. Their predecessors moved there from Tskheniskali Gorge Svaneti village of Kheleda. According to the census of 1904 more than 50 households of the Bendelianis lived in Lechkhumi. Their ancestors did something wrong and resettled.” The Gasvianis and Lipartelianis moved to the same village. Part of the Gasvianis was also socially advanced. They were nobleman. As for the Lipartelianis, they kept going to Choluri community to pray.

Among the family names of the Lentekhi territorial communities we can name: the Meshvelianis (9 households), the Pularianis (2 households), the Apakidzes (2 households), the Gvidianis (1 household), the Asrosianis (1 household), and the Daduanis (1 household).



According to data of the mentioned census in 1904, there were more than one expanded families in Lentekhi community where 18, 22, 23, 24, 26, 32, 33 members often live together. Like in the whole community the number of men dominated over the number of women in every expanded family.

In ethnographic and linguistic view, the first names of men popular in Lentekhi community in 1904 is of not less interest: Abram, Bieto, Beko, Besi, Bashula, Bota, Basho, Bezho, Gegi, Giorgi, Gabo, Gio, Goginiela, Gevo, Gogi, Kvatsi, Kvati, Mochila, Mike, Moge, Sosi, Tasila, Chito, Chichola, Chita, Khora, Khvachi, Khakhu, Khasi, Jakhi, Jati, Jakva...

According to the census of 1904, in Choluri territorial community of Lower Svaneti the following villages were included: Buleshi (9 households, 69 heads), - it must be Shuleshi mentioned by Ekvtime Takaishvili; Mutsdi (Mutsti) – 26 households, 183 heads; Saqdari (13 households, 90 heads); Tvibi (18 households, 142 heads), Tekal-Leuseri (11 households, 53 heads). Tekali and Levsheri are mentioned separately by E. Takaishvili; Chvelieri (37 households, 257 heads), (E. Takaishvili stated that there were two Chvelieris – Kvemo (Lower) Chvelieri and Zemo (Upper) Chvelieri); Zemo (Upper) Chouli (35 households, 280 heads), Shtveli (11 households, 79 heads). By 1904 there were 161 households in Choluri community with 1153 heads (7.16 heads per household on average). Besides populated villages, E Takaishvili mentions the following villages in Choluri community: Lower Choluri, Upper Choluri, Mami, Ukuleshi, Zagoloti. The number of households is 185 according to him.

According to the census of 1904, Choluri community belonged to the princes Gardapkhadzes, who comprised eight households. Bes. Nizharadze writes the following about the princes Gardapkhadzes: “Princes Gardapkhadzes live in Dadiani’s Svaneti, in Choluri community. They consider themselves to be from Ossetia. From the very beginning the princes Gardapkhadzes occupied Choluri community which shares its borders with Free Svaneti to the south” (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 89). In Choluri territorial community there were several large family names: the Jamburidzes (17 families)”. The Jamburidzes moved from here to Lechkhumi village of Lasuria and they live in Makhashi, too. According to ethnographic data, they moved to Lechkhumi in the second half of the XIX century from the village Mami, Lower Svaneti. Generally, the ancestors of the Jamburidzes settled in Kvemo (Lower) or Dadiani’s Svaneti from Samegrelo. Their former family name was Jamburia. They changed the formant of the family name **-ia** into **-dze**. Generally the family of the Jamburias moved to Samegrelo from Svaneti and their original surname was Jamburiani. We can definitely meet this family name several times in the document of XIII century about Enguri Gorge Svaneti (P. Ingorokva, p. 142-144).

The Zurabianis lived in Upper Svaneti territorial community of Choluri. According to archive data of 1904, 25 families of the Zurabianis lived there. In the mentioned period 10 families of the Lipartelianis lived in Choluri community. The Mukbanianis comprised 35 households. The Mukbanianis also lived in Lechkhumi vilage of Orbeli. According to the ethnographic data, they moved there from Dadiani’s Svaneti village of Chvelieri. According to a narrator, “even their grandfathers do not remember about their moving”. In 1904 in Choluri community there were 12 families of the Bendelianis. There

was the same number of the Khabulianis. The Babluanis (8 families) and the Kvastianis (10 families) lived there, too. One family was registered as Bablua.

At the beginning of the XX century E. Takaishvili gave a detailed description of each village of Choluri community and things preserved there. It is notable that all these churches and praying places bore the names of Christian Saints. For example, the church of Choluri community bears the name of Saint George. It used to be quite a big, high, square stone church. We think that the name of this village “Saqdari” was related to this church. In the inscription of one of the crosses of this church E. Takaishvili read the following: “Khevi noblemen”, also “Saint George of Lechi, bless the builders of yours Khevi Choluri and all those who worship you”. Does it mean that the original name of the church was “Lechi”? It is also clear from the inscription that in old times the Georgian term “Khevi” indicated the territorial community in Georgia. This is confirmed by historians in different sources not once. The church of the village Zemo (Upper) Chvelieri bore the name of Archangel, the church of Mami – Saint George, the church of the village Tekali – the Saviour. E. Takaishvili deciphered the inscription on the icon (silver) of the Saviour of this village as follows: “The Saviour of Lashari (written: “of Lashrso”), bless your builders who decorated this saint icon during the supremacy of the Dean Gela by name”. “The Saviour of Lashari (written: “of L~shrsa”), bless Ioane the Dean”. E. Takaishvili makes the following comments on this inscription: “we do not know exactly how to read the group “of Lashrsa”, as of Lasheri or Lashari. we do not know Lasheri, Lashari (Lashari Cross) is in Khevsureti (E. Takaishvili is wrong. “Lashari Cross” is not in Khevsureti. It is common praying place for Pshavi people – R. T.). Mentioned icon might have been brought from there”

(p. 104). We think it is a very remarkable inscription. First of all, it should be clarified whether “Lasheri” (or similar toponymy) occurred somewhere else in Svaneti. The supposition might be right that the icon of the Saviour had been brought from Pshavi to Upper Svaneti, although we consider it less reliable. There is one more probability: Lashari Cross (icon) (praying place) appeared independently in Svaneti which can give us the possibility to make further conclusions. We can learn from the inscription that one and the same person could hold civic and cleric positions (supreme and the dean) which would not have been a rare occasion in mountainous Georgia.

The third and the biggest community was Lashkheti community of Dadiani’s Svaneti or Thkheniskali Gorge Svaneti. “Lashkheti”, as a unit of the geographical toponymy, was mentioned first in the documents of 1503. According to the census of 1904, Lashkheti territorial community involved 13 villages with 346 households and 2 456 heads (7.12 heads per household on average). If we summarize the demographic-statistical data of these three communities of Dadiani’s Svaneti, we will see that by that time, there were 739 households and 5 561 people in Thkheniskali Gorge Svaneti. We can name the following villages of Lashkheti community: Ghobi (8 households with 59 heads lived in 1886), Jakhunderi (47 households, 145 heads), Lekosandi (16 households, 123 heads), Lemzagori - Kheria (23 households, 145 heads), (E. Takaishvili names these villages separately); Margvishi (5 households, 22 heads), Makhashi (15 households, 154 heads), Mebetsi (20 households, 123 heads), Mele (16 households, 133 heads), Natsuli (14 households, 144 heads), Sasashi-luji (53 households, 355 heads), Chikhareshi (54 households, 341 heads), Chukuli (41 households, 303 heads), Shgedi (Shvedi) (34 households,

277 heads). E. Takaishvili adds the name of the village Tsana (or Tsena) and two former villages near the pass (Zekari): Zeskhva and Lapuri. Today Tsana and Zeskho are populated by Svans who moved from Enguri Gorge to the most remote head of Tskheniskali Gorge. The village of Lashkheti community included 26.4 households on average and there were average number of 189 people in each village. In whole Lower Svaneti (Dadiani's Svaneti) one household comprised 7.5 heads on average. The average number of the village household was determined by 25.9. In one village of Lower Svaneti 174 heads was registered on average. On the whole, there were 32 villages in Lower Svaneti by 1886.

According to data of 1904, in Lashkheti lived and had serf-peasants princes Gelovanis (22 families), princes Gardapkhadzes (4 families) and noblemen Devdarianis (5 families). The biggest family name was of the Onianis (119 households). The following family names were: the Jankhotelis (26 households. The Jankhotelis also lived in other villages of Lechkhumi – Gagulechi, Lailashi), the Chelidzes (16 households), the Pertsulianis (4 households); the Lobzhanidzes (16 households. generally, the Lobzhanidzes are the inhabitants of mountainous Racha or historical Svaneti “Mtiuleti” (Highland). As it seems, they moved to Lower Svaneti from here); the Bakuradzes (10 households. The Bakuradzes live in Lechkhumi, too), the Tedoradzes (5 households); the Kochabianis (3 households); the Gabianis (9 households); the Jincharadzes (8 households); the Avalianis (7 households. The Avalianis generally live in Upper Svaneti. They live in Racha, too); the Gvelebianis (4 households); the Pochianis (in the census of 1904 Pochiani has also another surname – Oniani. at the same time the Pochianis lived in the village Khoji, too (4 households). This surname

is registered in the record of 1643-1661 about “Tsageri chapel peasants’ dues”); the Gulbianis (2 households); the Zurabianis (8 households. More Zurabianis lived in Choluri community); the Jamburidzes (3 households. Large number of them lived in Choluri community); the Gagnidzes (6 households); the Kipianis (2 households. Families with the same surname lived in Upper Svaneti and Racha, too. Here they belonged to the social title of gentries. The Kipianis even lived in Inner Kartli and Samtskhe. One of the Kipiani villages in Samtskhe was Mohammedan. Another surname – Erkanidze is ascribed to one family of Kipiani in Lashkheti); the Buchusanis (4 households); the Tataisanis or Thathaisanis (2 households. Another surname “Chelidze” is ascribed to one family and “Jankhoteli” to the other. Shall it be similar to Tutusani who also live in the Lechkhumi village of Tsiperchi? (26 households according to the census of 1904). This surname does not exist in Lower Svaneti today); the Nemsadzes (7 households).

According to data of 1904, in Lashkheti community also lived the following family names: the Janeldzes, the Doghvanis (now Dorghvanis). According to B. Nizharadze, “one family of “Doghvanis” and some households from the Jankhotelis, who live in the villages Lashkhari and Chikhareshi of Lashkheti community in Dadiani Svaneti now think themselves to be from Zeskhvi. Doghvani and Jankhoteli had met the then Makhvshi (chief) of Lashkheti Kansav Kipiani to give living quarters to them somewhere”); the Nakisianis (Nakanis?); the Chabukianis; the Dashnianis (one household of a nobleman Dashniani lived in the Lechkhumi village of Chkhoteli, too according to data of 1904); the Kochbianis; the Pirvelidzes (now the Pirvelis); the Archianis...

In Lashkheti territorial community there were more than one Christian monuments. Churches were built of both stone and wood. For example, E. Takaishvili pointed about the existence of a wooden church in the village Sasashi which bore the name of the Virgin. He wrote about the Saint George's church in the village Jakhunderi that "it must be considered as one of the best in Lower Svaneti". "According to the inscription, the name of the village was "Jakhundeli". In the same place on the icon of the Virgin of the XV century the scientist read the following: "Saint Virgin, bless the noblemen, have your mercy on the village". This inscription is an important source about the social status of the province.

It was mentioned above that the Janburidzes live in Lower Svaneti now. On the catafalque of the church in the village Chukuli there was the following inscription: "Saint George, give your blessing to Janbur and this village and Giorgi". In this inscription it is not a certain Janbur who might be blessed but the whole family name of the Janburidzes. On the inscription of the XVI-XVII centuries' icon of the Virgin we can read the following: "Saint Virgin, have your mercy on this place, all the noblemen".

According to the Michael Archangel inscription of the XVI century, we can clarify that the family name of the Lorianis also lived in Tskheniskali Gorge Svaneti: "Saint Michael Archangel, have your mercy on Ivane Loriani. Saint Archangel, be helpful and protect Ivane Loriani and Ivane Doghvani".

There were some churches named after the Virgin in Lower Svaneti. For example, in the church of the Virgin's Assumption which was comparatively

newly built in the village Chikhareshi there was the following inscription on the old preserved icon: “Saint Virgin, have your mercy on Kheva and its noblemen” (p. 121). It is obvious from the inscriptions of Svan churches that, together with the socially privileged person (nobleman) they entreated mercy and wellbeing of the village and Khevi (territorial community). It is characteristic for them. It is obvious that in feudal relations of mountains the territorial communities still played an important role.

On the wall of a small church in the Lower Svaneti village of Dabishi “Kvel Jabilani” and his wife “Tetrua” - a daughter of Lashkhishvili were painted. On the same wall were depicted “Nanba Ladghibiani” and “Merab Ghibiani” and also “Taibukh Ghibiani” and “Kutia - a daughter of Iashvili” and their son “Batsia”. “Jalibani”, “Ladghibiani”, “Ghibiani” painted on the wall of the church are undoubtedly noblemen Kipianis of further periods. It seems that the family name of Kipiani was reproduced by the phonetically changed form – “Ghibiani”. In later periods in the inscriptions on the Saviour’s icons of XVII-XVIII centuries we can meet “Kipiani”: “Satuti – a daughter of Kipiani”.

In Lower Svaneti, as well as in Upper Svaneti and Lechkhumi, there also lived the Devdarianis who were noblemen (Vargi in the Svan language) in Upper Svaneti). On one of the inscriptions of the icon in the village Mele E. Takhaishvili read the following: “a daughter of Devdariani Qazmi” (p. 124).

On the inscription of the icon preserved in the XVI century Archangel church in the village Natsuli “Vedrani Ivane” is mentioned. There are no more such family names in Svaneti (by the way, surname Vedrauli with the same root also



existed in Pshavi). It seems that other families as well lived in Tskheniskali Gorge Svaneti, for example, Shvublianis. Currently families bearing this surname live in Lechkhumi, Kvemo (lower) Tsageri where they moved from the village Nanari. Representatives of this family name used to go to Nanari from Lechkhumi to pray there until the last time. According to the document of 1656, the Shkublianis were the inhabitants of Lechkhumi which proves that the migration of Svans in the direction of lowland is old. The Nanukashvilis and Gogrichianis who live in Racha moved there from the village Khiduri, at the head of Tskheniskali. The owners of Lower Svaneti Lashkheti territorial community (noblemen) used to be the Lashkis according to ethnographical data (Lashkhishvilis, Laskhishvilis). The name of the community was called after their family name (Lashkhi - Lashkheti). No one by these family names live in Racha at all at present. As a 108-old man Simon Gabiani told B. Nizharadze, “the first owner of Lashkheti was Laskhishvili. Their family name was overthrown by the Japaridzes (as E. Takhaishvili read on the inscription of the icon of the Saviour in the village Shgedi “Lord, help and protect Nasqida Japaridze and his wife Satut Kipiani”), then the Japaridzes were overthrown by the Kipianis. None of the families was as big as Kipianis” (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 79). The fact is that by 1503 Laskhishvilis did not live in Tskheniskali Gorge Svaneti and they were the noblemen of Racha by that time. In the late middle centuries neither Japaridzes nor Kipianis were princes in Lower Svaneti. Princes Gelovanis, Gardapkhadzes and noblemen Devdarianis were owners of Lashkheti by then.

We have mentioned the family of Partsvelanis among those who lived in Zemo (Upper) Tskheniskali Gorge (Dadiani) Svaneti. Pertsulianis are Partsvelanis as

mentioned by B. Nizharadze: “In Lashkheti there were two friends (Latslamgva - in the Svan Language), Docha Gabiani and Partsvelan Partsvelani. Partsvelani had an ugly sister. Docha intended to get married to Partsvelani’s ugly sister. Partsvelani was against it; He said to Docha that he could not live with his sister long, he would get rid of her, it would upset him and they would become enemies; he suggested his friend to keep away from his sister. Docha did not listen to his friend’s advice and got married to Partsvelani’s ugly sister. They lived together for a year and then got rid of her. It made Partsvelani angry. He took a small pumpkin; put the soil of his garden and fields into it; went to Ushguli and hung it on the doors of the Virgin church. In old times it was a sign of pleading to the society and it was always completed by them. The whole Ushguli assembled. Partsvelani referred to the gathering to punish Dochi Gabiani severely. The gathering respected Partsvelani’s appeal and went to punish Dochi Gabiani led by the then chief (Makhvshi -in the Svan Language) of Ushguli Begash Ratiani. They could not find Dochi in the village. Ushguli fell on Dochi’s village Shgedi and two neighbouring villages – Natsuli and Ghvebi. Ushguli took away all the animals the three villages possessed. People of Shgedi went to the then prince (Makhvshi -in the Svan Language) of Lashkheti Bezhana Kipiani and asked him to help them to make Ushguli leave the animals taken away by them. Bezhana gathered the whole Lashkheti immediately and ran after the Ushguli attackers who were leading their way to Thkhenistkali Gorge” (B. Nizharadze, II, pp. 79-80). Lashkheti people and their feudal lord Kipiani were defeated in the battle against Ushguli. There is a lot of truth in this old narrative. It is obvious that it was not favourable for the sufferer Partsvelani to punish his former friend and later enemy by the feudal law and he referred to Ushguli people to help him. There were no feudal

relations there and any kind of offence was judged by the habitual law, according to the decision made by the people. One thing is also clear that, although there were feudal relations in the mountains but a lot of families and among them the Partsvelanis maintained the mentality characteristic for the tribal relation. He looks for the truth (made by the people) and does not revenge individually on Gabiani for his offence. After this case the family of Partsvelan Partsvelanis could not stay in Svaneti. If they had survived the battle they would probably have moved to the lowland. It is possible that the family name of the Partsvanias who live in Samegrelo at present are the descendants of those Partsvelanis.

According to the narratives mentioned above, at the head of the Tskheniskali Gorge in the village of Tsena from where there is a passage to the head of the Enguri Gorge, in the village Ushguli lived the Todruanis (B. Nizharadze, p. 80). The Todruanis do not live in Svaneti any more. It is possible that the Todrias or Tordias who live in Samegrelo were the descendants of these particular Todruanis.

The owners of Choluri community were princes Gardapkhadzes (in Svanuri: “Gadpkhanar”). The noblmen Kurdianis and Zhorzholianis belonged to the Gardapkhadzes. They possessed the best lands there. The palaces of the Gardapkhadzes in the village Tekali (as well as the Gelovanis’ palace in Lashkheti village of Shgedi) were significantly different from the household complex of peasants. The passage from Free Svaneti (from Above Bali Svaneti Enguri Gorge) crossed their village: “the location of the Gardapkhadzes is remarkable with the fact that a passer-by from Free Svaneti had to pass through

their village and stay overnight there. Because of this the Gardapkhadzes had many acquaintances in Svaneti” (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 89).

Lashkheti community, as mentioned, was owned by the Gelovanis. Out of 12 villages except one (Sasashi), belonged to the Gelovanis. The Gelovanis used to be the princes of the whole Svaneti in one’s time. They bore a great influence on the communities of Kali and Ushguli in Above Bali Svaneti. They also owned lands in Racha. The noblemen Devdarianis and Nemsadzes who lived in Lashkheti belonged to the Gelovanis. In historical documents the Gelovanis first were mentioned in the XIII-XIV centuries. Obviously they moved from Lower Svaneti, although their main original settlement was Zemo (Upper) – Enguri Gorge Svaneti. In historical documents the surname Gelovani can be found in various phonetic forms: “Geloani”, “Gelovani”, “Geluvani”, “Geliani”. “Geliani Daturar” and “Geliani Tvalai” were mentioned in the document of the Zemo Svaneti on the verge of XIV-XV centuries (Personal Annotated Dictionary, I, p. 662). Svan prince “Gelvani” (Gelovani) Abesalom” was mentioned in the so called document on good will of 1455-1478. Village Supervisor “Gelovani Adai” can be found in the letter of the XIV century. “Gelovani Datvai” was mentioned in the so called non-separation document of the XIV century. The earliest document in which the Gelovanis are mentioned belongs to the XIII-XIV centuries. They are Ivane and Khuergo Gelovanis. The document of 1600-1637 seems interesting where the following names are mentioned: Patsa, Sula, Giorgi, Baku, Besia, Islam and Khuna Gelovanis.

Regarding Upper Svaneti, both from geographical and social point of view (at least in the late middle centuries), it (Enguri Gorge Svaneti) was divided into

two parts: Above Bali Svaneti and Below Bali Svaneti, i.e. these two units were separated by the Bali range. In other words, Above Bali Svaneti is known as Free Svaneti and Below Bali Svaneti as principality (Dadeshkeliani's) Svaneti. There is an opinion in historiography that the feudal relation was abolished in Above Bali Svaneti in the XVII-XVIII centuries, although this opinion is less acceptable for us because the abolishment of Svan princes must have happened earlier after the demolition of unified kingdom when the centre could not manage to control the provinces and especially the mountainous regions. In Balszemo (Above Bali) part of Upper Svaneti the feudal relations was supposedly demolished by the XV century. It should be noted that in this geographical situation feudal relations obviously could not have been deep, it was superficial and mountainous communities would not have found it difficult to destroy it. Nevertheless, some noble families continued existing "Vargi" (in Svan Language) by name but it was only formal.

In Dadeshkeliani's Below Bali Svaneti only one feudal name (family name) – the Dadeskelianis dominated. Obviously, other family names were socially privileged as well until the XVIII century, though. The Dadeshkelianis won the battle over the Richgvianis and the former destroyed the representatives of the Richgviani family.

If we start from the head of Enguri Gorge, first was the Ushguli community. Then came Kala community, Ipari community, Muzhali community, Mulakhi community, Mestia community, Lenjeri community, Latali community. (In some scientific researches Adishi community, Tsvirma community and Ieli community are separated – see Al. Charkviani, Svaneti, 1967, p. 237. We think

this opinion is worth sharing. Historically there were more communities. If we observe the historical documents it seems to be true. They mentioned such communities as (by the then terms “Khevebi”), which did not exist in the era of new history or they were joined to other communities. Enlargement of territorial communities was a natural event. In such a way they linked Muzhalo community to Mulakhi, Adishi, Ieli and Tsvirma communities to (Khevebi) – to Ipari and so on).

The villages of the Ushguli (Ushkuli) community are located on the head of the Enguri Gorge. In scientific materials four villages of Ushguli community are usually mentioned. They are: Zhibiani, Chvibiani (Chubiani), Chazhashi and Muqmeri (Merqmer). The latter is called differently by B. Nizharadze “in old times Zemo (Upper) and Kvemo (Lower) Ushguli”. A. Charkviani also includes two villages of the Tskheniskali Gorge: Zeskho and Tsana (A. Charkviani, p. 236) which is not acceptable for us. These two villages together with other former villages certainly formed another community (Khevi) in one’s time. Migration of population from there and destroying them caused the demolition of so called “Zeskho-Tsana” community. According to the family register of 1886 as well, above mentioned four villages were included in the village community of Ushguli. Totally 75 households and 528 heads (285 males and 243 females) lived there. The largest of all was Muqmeri comprising 33 households (220 heads). There were 26 households and 211 heads in Chazhashi, 10 households and 63 heads in Zhibiani, and 6 households and 34 heads in Chubiani respectively. All these villages are linked with one another and as E. Takaishvili mentioned, it “looked like a town with its high towers” (E. Takaishvili, p.135). Also according to data of 1940, 33 families lived in

Murqmeli, 10 households in Chazhashi, 11 households in Chvibiani and 24 households in Zhibiani. The original family names of Ushguli inhabitants were: Nizharadze (26 households in 1940), Charkseliani (13 households in 1940), Charkviani (5 households in 1940), Ratiani (5 households), Khachvani (5 households), Chelidze (7 households), Asatiani (2 households), Davituliani (2 households), Kakriashvili (8 households) and Ghvachliani (5 households). The latter name among the Svaneti inhabitants was also mentioned in the document of the XIV century. In the chronicles (of the confessors) of the XIII-XIV centuries the Ratianis are mentioned, too (see P. Ingorokva, II, 142, 143). A priest Romanoz Charksiani is mentioned in the XVII-XVIII century inscription of the Saviour's church in the Ushguli village Murqmeri. In other places Romanoz is mentioned as "Charikasdze". Certainly this particular Romanoz Charksiani (Charikasdze) is the same Charkseliani – the ancestor of the Charkselianis. The Charkvianis have been mentioned in the documents created in the middle centuries many a time. A witness "Igdar Asatiani" was included in the documents about Seti community dated back to the XIV-XV centuries.

Besides the river Enguri, another river (Kvishnari) flows in Ushguli. B. Nizharadze mentioned that "compared to each other, Ushguli could have six times more areas for pastures than for ploughing and cultivating and four times more than the forests. The area for ploughing is not enough for people; there are some people who do not have the land for ploughing enough for more than 4 days. Besides the lack of the area the ground was not fertile either; It is necessary to improve the fields every third year, otherwise the harvest will be poor and sometimes it will yield none" (B. Nizharadze, II, 64). We brought this

extended extract to show you the unfavourable natural geographical conditions the Ushguli people lived in.

B.Nizharadze compared Ushguli with its sixty-one households to the town. By his time (in the 70s of the XIX century) there were 100 houses made of stone and lime there out of which “39 stay without anybody living in them” (p.66). Ushguli was distinguished by the number of towers (“There are 59 nice, high, narrow, plastered and whitewashed towers there”). At the same time there used to be 7 churches in Ushguli. Ushguli which is located on the very head of the Enguri Gorge is closer to Racha and Lower Svaneti than to some villages of the Enguri Gorge Svaneti. Ushguli was so rich with its pastures that “people sent their cattle there to fatten up from the remote villages of Free Svaneti as well; shepherds of Ushguli took care of them until autumn and afterwards they were taken away to be slaughtered” (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 10). It was the source of extra earning for Ushguli inhabitants.

There is a small hill at the Virgin church in Ushguli which people call “Saviare-Lashtkhval”. It means the burial place for Saviarians. According to the narrative, once Saviarians came to rob the Virgin church. It made the Virgin insulted and decided to deprive non-believer Saviarians of their eyesight. The following day the people of Ushguli saw the blind robbers. When they learnt about their intention they killed the robbers and buried them there (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 11). People did not have mercy on the local criminals either. At the same place by the decision of the village gathering, two brothers Ratianis were killed by thrusting a spear because they had stolen an icon from the Virgin church.



In Usguli community Sumaisha Charkviani moved from Tsena-Ghveshgmari whose name had been Chubrukiani before (Sumaisha is the part of the name “Samkhubi” –in the Svan language). “Tamarsha – Ivchiani by name“ also moved to the village of Leshuki in Latali community from Tsena-Ghveshgmari, Gabisha Chartolani – to Mestia community, “Qulani” – to Free Svaneti and “Mamisha Jankhoteli” – to Lashkheti community (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 22).

To indicate “family name” the word “community” was used in Svaneti. B. Nizharadze wrote:

“The community was included families with the same name, descendants of the common ancestor. Members of one family name in every place, everywhere and every time despite the number of the generations, kept tight links with one another. For example: in Daiani’s Svaneti in the eight villages of Lashkheti community about 60 households of one family “Oniani” live far from one another. They pretend to be very close relatives, although they had been departed long before. The community of the Onianis is together in need. Chelidze from Lashkhoti can visit someone in Ushguli (Free Svaneti) with the same family name as if their ancestors had belonged to the same family tree not long ago. When Mushkudiani from Ushguli visits Lakhamula (the last community of Dadeshkeliani’s Svaneti), he certainly asks if there is anyone with the same family name and after seeing such a person, although they have met for the first time, Mushkudiani from Lakhamula treats him as his close relative. Jachvliani from Mulakhi (in Free Svaneti) is welcome to the place of a person with the same family name in the village of Tskhomari (Dadeshkeliani’s Svaneti). “Close relationships, respect between the people with the same family

names, to be with each other in need is traditional for the whole Georgian people but it was more remarkable in the mountainous Georgia.

Regarding the Svan word for “temi” (community) indicating the family name, was originated from Greek language long ago, probably by the time when one family had definitely been one community (temi). It is known that nor the Georgian word for “gvvari” (family name) is local. Nevertheless, there is an opinion of connecting this word with “gora” (hill), it is still obvious that it was originated from the Iranian language as stated by the linguists (M. Andronikashvili). The original Georgian word for family name “sakhli” (house) changed its content in the course of time.

Ushguli is notable in many ways. For example, there is a toponymy “Tushre Namzigv” which indicates about the people of Tusheti living here. The legend is interesting but it should be clarified when Tushi people could settle here. There is an opinion that “the location of Ushkuli to the northern border of Georgia where the several crossings gathered makes the opinion completely natural that both “Tamari’s Tsikhe (Fortress) and non-typical Svan towers were built by the central government of Georgia who possibly thought it necessary to put the Tushuri garison in this fortress (R. Kharadze, Al. Robakidze, Villages of Svaneti in Old Times. Tbilisi. 1964, p. 35).

There is also an opinion in scientific materials that “Ushguli gives us the most completed and typical form of the castle-house of Svaneti” (in the same place, p. 40). Besides, two different types of towers are fixed there. One of them which has the main characteristics of Svanuri Murqvami (tower) and another type of

the tower different from the previous one is closer to the towers popular in the eastern Georgian mountains (Tusheti, Khevsureti) (in the same place, p. 41).

All the old houses of Ushguli (except castles), as a rule, had their towers and at the same time, Ushguli also had the common protective building. None of other communities (Khevi) did have such buildings in Above Bali Svaneti.

It was mentioned above that Ushguli is distinguished with a number of churches. There are three churches in the village Zhibiani. The biggest of all is the church named after the Virgin. In this village in the inscription on the icon of Michael Archangel the village Tsena is mentioned, which is situated on the pass on the side of Tskheniskali. Six families lived in Tsena during the period of E. Takaishvili at the beginning of the XX century. The inscription on the icon of the Saviour seems interesting: "Saint Lord, have mercy upon Marushian and his son". In E.Takaishvili's opinion, it must be Marushian the son of Vardan to whom the Queen Tamar gave a position of "Chukhcharakhi" (p. 135). At present it is not important for us. The main thing is that the family name of Marushiani who were popular in the period of Georgian unification seems to be from Svaneti by origin. According to inscriptions, other Georgian feudal family names made a sacrifice to Ushguli church of the Virgin. For example, a bowl was donated by the prince Shoshita who definitely must be Shoshita the prince of Racha; a silver bowl was donated by the prince of Imereti Rostom Ghoghoberidze, a silver jug – by the prince of Racha Merab Tsulukidze (XVIII century), a silver cross – by Bezhan Lortkipanidze. Donation of the valuable church thing to church must not have been accidental by the Lortkipanidzes. Generally the family name of the Lortkipanidzes is mentioned in the XIV-XV

centuries Svan writings: “This letter was written by us Giorgi and Demetre Lortkipanidze and we from Khalde when we brought the icon from Tsveremi and if something happens between the Lortkipanidzes and the inhabitants of Khalde, we will not bring the icon or plead for mercy either” (Written Monuments of Svaneti, I, p.219). In this document the family name is given in the form of “Lortkipanidze”. In our opinion, the document points to the Svan origin of the Lortkipanidzes. According to Georgian traditions, they move their ancestors’ icon to their new place of their residence. The family name consists of two suffixes (-an + -dze). They bore the name “Lotkipani” (Lortkipani). After moving to the lowland and social rise the suffix “- dze” was added to their family name.

Among the donators of the silver bowl to the Ushguli Virgin church “Sekhnia Meipariani” is mentioned as well. In the late period neither Meiparianis lived in Ushguli community nor in the whole Svaneti. The Meiparianis lived in the Lechkhumi village of Orbeli. According to the narrative, They moved from Svaneti. The family of Meiparianis seems to have moved from Svaneti to Lechkhumi quite long ago. In the document of the XVI century we read: “Meipariani owes...”. The family name of Meiparianis, only in the form of Muipariani (“Vakhakhi Muipariani”) is mentioned in the XIII century chronicle of Svaneti in the village Gtseri (P. Ingorokva, p. 140).

In the village Chvibiani in Ushguli there was a small stone church. As for Chazhash, there were two churches and one Saint George’s church in the castle named after the Queen Tamar (E. Takaishvili, p. 151), the other was the church after the Saviour. In the XII-XIII centuries’ inscription of the Saviour’s icon we

read the following: “Tsakhanelidze Vakhtang and his wife Khvashaqi”. Such a family name in Svaneti has not been approved. The icon must have been brought from the lowland. The family name is formed by two suffixes (-el + -dze) and is related to the toponymy of Tsakhan. The toponymy like this (the name of the village) – Tsakhani was in Samtskhe-Javakheti. The family name, as mentioned, is related to the village. There is an inscription on the cross of the same church: “Nasreti Virgin, have mercy on Ioane and his wife Taba and their sons” (p.158).

In the village Murqmeri there are two churches: “the Saviour” and “Saint Barbare”. In the inscription of the XII-XIII centuries’ icon of crussifiction we can read the following: “Christ the Saviour, remember me, in your heaven, me - Qveli Lominadze and my wife Rusudan and my children Vakhtang and their brothers” (E. Takaishvili, p. 174). It is obvious that this icon was brought to Svaneti from the west Georgia, too.

There are more than one narratives about the history of Svans and their life style. It is known that narratives written in Georgian mountainous parts depict historical realities in most cases. For example, a lot of princes tried to subdue the people of Ushguli but in vain. On the contrary, Usghuli people made it a rule “not to let any mounted prince or nobleman pass through their village. There are still some witnesses of this fact in Ushguli today. If any of the princes wanted to come to Ushguli they had to leave their horses at a distance of three kilometres from the village and had to walk to the village” (B. Nizharadze, p. 74). The fact that the princes of Ushguli Dadeshkelianis could not manage to conquer Above Bali Svaneti was considered by them as their merit. It is true

that the Latali community, which bordered to Daeshkeliani's Svaneti, were on the alert not to let the latter in Free Svaneti but as it seems, it took place several times anyway. "Puta Dadeshkeliani who was the ancestor of the present Dadeshkelianis found his way in the whole Svaneti and finally reached Ushguli and intended to subdue them. This intention cost him dearly; Ushguli people killed this daring man. They also killed Kvarkvare from the same family name. The narrative tells us so and there is a popular song about this matter in Ushguli up today (B. Nizharadze, II, pp. 74-75). When they killed Puta Dadeshkeliani there were six guests from Dvaleti in Ushguli. They had a gun without triggers with them. Guns were not used in Svaneti by then and everybody was examining it and asking them to explain how to use it. People from Dvaleti loaded it and said: "if you wanted to kill Puta, you could do it by this gun" (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 76). Together with the social struggle given in this narrative, particularly interesting for us is also the fact that Svans remembered about the other parts of Georgia Dvaleti and its Inhabitants and that their relationship was frequent. It is remarkable that for Svans (Ushguli inhabitants) the "Dvalian" knife was also known.

The next community of Above Bali Svaneti was Kala community, which also included the unity of several villages: Vinchashi, Khe, Lalkhori (Laikhori), Davberi, Iprari (Ipraili) and Khalde (E. Takaishvili, p.178). Al. Charkviani mentioned about two villages in Kala community: Muqvadari and Agrai. According to the family records of 1886, there were totally 64 households and 425 heads. There were 6.65 heads per household on average in Kala community. 16 households (120 heads) lived in the village Vinchashi, 23 families (136 heads) – in Iprari, 15 families (89 heads) – in Davberi, 8 families

(55 heads) – in Lalkhori, 2 households (25 heads) – in Khe. As for Khalde, it was destroyed by the Russian troops in 1876 and it was left without any inhabitants since then.

According to the archive data of 1940, 23 households of Khardziani lived in the village Vichnashi of Kala community. The Khardzianis lived in the village Khe-Amrai, too (10 families). Kvardziani is one of the oldest Svanuri family names. It was mentioned more than once in the XIV-XV centuries Svan documents. In 1940 9 families of Gulbanis lived in the village Khe-Amrai. One household of Gulbani lived in Lalkhori as well (the Gulbanis and Gulbianis lived in Lower Svaneti, too. In the chronicles (of confessors) of the XIII century “Adashel Gulubiani” is mentioned (P. Ingorokva, p. 151). This particular Gulubiani must be the ancestor of the Gulbanis (the Gulbianis). One family of the Panganis and Chegemianis lived in the village Khe-Amrai. The Chegemianis were in Khalde (4 households) and Iprali (1 household). In 1940 there were nine households of Gasvianis and three households of Jokhadzes in Khalde. Also the Kochkianis and Choplianis lived in Khalde. In the historical documents of Svaneti the ancestors of Jokhadzes are registered as the Jokhianis. For example, “Purtukh Jokhiani and his brother Sargis are mentioned in the village of Tskhmareti” (P. Ingorokva, II, p. 143); also: G~. Jokhiani”, “Bendani Jokhiani”, “Gamrekeli Jokhiani” (p. 144); “K~ke Jokhiani”, “Mr~m Jokhiani” (p. 147). 11 households of Margvelanis lived in the Kala community village Lalkhori. The Margvelanis also lived in Davberi (Duberi) – 6 households and in Iprali (9 households). The Margvelanis are first mentioned in the documents at the beginning of the XIV century. It is reported that the ancestor of Margvelanis moved to Kala from the northern Caucasus, present Karachai territory. The Margvelanis had lived in

Mestia since the first half of the XIV century (in the writings of that period a witness “Margvelani Partsman” is mentioned – “Historical Documents of Svaneti, I, p. 172). By the XIV century the Turkish- speaking people had not been settled yet in the territories of present Karachai and Balkaria. 6 households of Dadvanis lived in the village Lalkhori. four (4) households of this family lived in the village Iprali. The Dadvanis are mentioned in the documents of the XVII-XVIII centuries. In 1940 in the Kala community village of Iprili 7 families of the Pirvelis were registered. Also the inhabitants of Lalkhori were three families of Gamkrelidzes who certainly moved from Racha.

As it seems the rotation of population took place in Kala. For example, in “The Chronicles of Svaneti Gathering” in Kalashi (i.e. Kala) the Mejvarianis, Mushkudianis, Khazalianis, Kvirkvelianis, Ghurmutianis, Ubilianis, Apakianis, Akhshianis, Adaianis and Karchianis are mentioned. Out of the families mentioned above only the Mushkudianis live in Svaneti at present. Some of the family names (Mejvariani, Akhshiani) evidently disappeared completely. Regarding the Khazalianis, Apakianis, Kvirkvelianis, Adaianis, Karchianis, they moved to Samegrelo. The Khazalias, Apakidzes (Apakias), Kvirkvelias, Adanaias, Karchavas who live in Samegrelo today are the ancestors of above mentioned families. The same can be said about the Ubilianis who are bearing the surname of Ubilava, the part of which stayed in Svaneti though and their surname was changed phonetically (Ubiliani - Vibliani).

The distinguished village in Kala community was Khalde where Russians committed a tragedy in 1876. Before destroying the village there were 19 households there (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 193). “Each inhabitant used to have 1-2



two-storey houses made of stone and lime and the same number of towers respectively. Dwellers of Khalde were proud, flexible and hard-working people. They had a remarkable appearance and had no match in feasting, competing with others, singing, round dancing in whole Svaneti. There were four family names in the whole village: Gasviani, Jokhadze, Kochkiani and Chopliani (B. Nizharadze, p. 193). The Kochkianis live in Mulaqi at present. By that period a lot of dwellers from Khalde had moved to Lechkhumi.

A little below the village Davberi, Kvirike and Ivliita's church was built on the hill. Svans call it Lagurka. According to E. Takaishvili, Kala church was the most principal praying place in the whole Svaneti. It means the same for Svaneti as the Delphian fane for the whole Greece. It unites Svans divided into communities as the Delphian fane united different republics of Greece" (p. 178). Although every community in Svaneti had its own main prying place but they regarded Kala "Lagurka" or "Saint Kvirike and Ivliita's" church as the most powerful. They used to preserve an extraordinary icon of Byzantine art which they called "Shalian". That was the reason why the most severe criminals were forced to swear an oath before this icon. There were no examples in the past when Svan did not admit his guilt while making an oath" (E. Takaishvili, p. 179). "In Svans' opinion, Shaliani was Svan. Once the king of Imereti called one hundred Svans to him and ordered them to scythe the fields of Geguti. Shaliani offered the king that he would do that alone in the same period of time which he allocated to one hundred Svans but in return the King had to give to him the thing he would ask for. The king agreed. Shaliani started his work and finished it in due time. The King kept his promise and Shaliani got the Kala icon in return. He wrept the icon in the sheep's skin and set off Svaneti. The dwellers

of Kala community learnt that Shaliani was carrying the valuable thing with him and decided to rob him. They attacked him on the way, killed him and gained the icon. But they did not know what to do with the icon, where to place it. Therefore, they yoked two bulls, put a log on the yoke, fastened the icon on it and let the bulls go in such a way without any direction. The bulls crossed the river Enguri, went up the hill and stopped at the top of the very particular place where there is the Kvirike Church now. The Svans built a monastery on that place and the icon of Shaliani has been kept there since then” (E. Takaishvili, p. 180). It is notable that the Svans had more than one song and church song and some of the anthems and songs were dedicated only to this church. They were not performed in other churches. It was exactly in Lagurka at the church of Saint Kvirike and Ivrita where 2 000 Svans swore an oath before the tragedy of Khalde. At that moment Giorgi Pangan brought out from the church the adorable icon of Shaliani for the whole Svaneti. Everybody made an oath before the icon that they would not betray the common cause. As a token of this two men took hold of the ends of one stick and went under the icon erected above the stick.

Then next community was the community of Ipari. There are the following villages in Ipari community: Nakipari (not shown on the family records of 1886), Zegani, Bogreshi, Ipari, Tsvirmi, Adishi, Ieli. According to E. takaishvili “Tsvirmi and Adishi comprised the independent communities in the past”. Al. Charkviani mentions the communities of Adishi and Tsvirmi separately, too. Adishi was a one-village community, whereas Tsvirmi community included 6 villages (Tviberi, Zagari, Lamoldi, Chibani, Svipi and Nesgaubani). Al. Charkviani separates Ieli community (villages: Nesgubani, Askardi, Atsi). Under

the family lists of 1886, 133 households in Ipari village community (1023 heads), which equals to average 7.7 heads per household. Tsvirmi was the biggest village where 38 households live there (265 heads), in Ipari – 32 households (242 heads), in Zegani – 24 households (169 heads), in Adishi – 13 households (134 heads), in Ieli – 14 households (142 heads), in Bogresha – 12 households (77 heads).

According to data of 1940, 25 families of the Pirvelis lived in the Ipari community village of Zegani; twenty households of Pirveli lived in the village Nakipari. The Gulbanis were notable by the number of their family names (26 households in Zegani, 20 households in Nakipari). As was mentioned above, their ancestors in the XIII century were mentioned as Gulubianis. The Khvistanis lived in that village, too (20 households in Zegani). In 1940 seven households of the Kordzaias lived in Zegani as well. The Kordzaias also lived in Bogreshi (6 households) and Tsvirmi (9 households). In the documents of the first half of the XIV century the Kordzaias are mentioned as the Kordzianis. The Khorguanis are the dwellers of Bogreshi (5 households). In the XIII-XIV centuries the ancestors of Khorguanis lived in the Becho village of Doli. By that time “Tvalmindi Khorguani”, “Gvangva Khverguani”, “Nana Khverguani”, “Ataraji Khverguani”, “G~ Khverguani” had been registered there (P. Ingorokva, II, pp. 149,151). The ancestors of the Gulbanis moved to Ipari from this village, too. As it seems, it was not a rare case for the individual families to move from Below Bali Svaneti to Above Bali Svaneti and it must have been related to the migration (flow) of population from principality (Dadeshkeliani’s Svaneti to Free (without princes) Svaneti.

The Avalianis are dwellers of the Village Bogreshi in Ipari community (24 households in 1940). The family name of Avalianis is also the oldest in Svaneti. The oldest family name is Kaldani, too. They lived in the Ipari community village of Bogreshi (10 households). They also live in the village Tskhumari (12 households). There is a narrative about the common origin of Svan Kaldanis and the Kardavas from Samegrelo. The forefathers of the Kaldanis are mentioned repeatedly in the XIII-XIV centuries “Cronicles of Svaneti Gathering”. “G~ Kaldiani, “Nene Kaldiani”, “Shalva Kaldiani”, “Mariam Kaldiani” are mentioned in the village Lalveri (P. Ingorokva, pp. 118-119). In the villages of Bogreshi and Tsvirmi lived 19 households of the Panganis (1940). The following families can also be mentioned in Tsvirmi: the Pitskhelianis (13 households), Kipianis (6 households), Giglebianis (6 households), Bedianis (2 households), Tamlianis (8 households), Kveblianis (4 households), Mukvanis (3 households), Khviblianis (12 households. In Bogreshi – 7 households), Samsianis (13 households). According to the ethnographical data, the Samsianis from the village Ieli and the Ansianis from the village Nakra have the same origin. “When they are in trouble or have merriment they go to each other. Nobody can remember their marriage to each other”. The ansianis must be the Asianis mentioned in the “Cronicles (of confessors) of Svaneti” (P. Ingorokva, p. 155).

There were churches after the Saviour in the villages Tsvirmi and Adishi; in the villages Nakipari, Adishi, Ieli – Saint George’s churches. There was the following inscription on the icon of Michael Archangel: “Saint George of Zghuderi, have mercy on your decorator Jonarsi Asatiani”, which apparently points to the Svan origin of the Asatianis from the beginning.

In the opinion of E. Takaishvili and Al. Charkviani, Muzhali and Mulakhi are separate communities. Other ethnographical materials say that they belong to one and the same community (Mulakh-Muzhali). Muzhali community involved three villages: Chvabiani, Zhabeshi and Chaldashi (Tsaldashi). We can name the following villages from Mulakhi (Mulaqi) community: Machvdiari, Cholashi, Zhamushi, Artskheli, Lakhiri, Murshkeli, Ghvebra, Zardlashi. Zardlashi was integrated into the village Ghvebra. According to the family records of 1886, in the community of Mulakhi (Mulakh-Muzhali) there lived 151 households (1296 heads) which meant average 8.6 heads per households. Chola was the biggest village (30 households, 232 heads). Next were Chvabiani (21 households, 171 heads), Lakhirii (21 households, 194 heads), Artskheli (18 households, 134 heads), Mushkeri (16 households, 105 heads), Zhabeshi (14 households, 123 heads), Zhamushi (10 households, 109 heads), Zardla (9 households, 115 heads), Ghvebra (7 households, 67 heads), Tsaldashi (5 households, 46 heads).

Some extended families lived in the villages of Mulakhi community by 1940: the Giganis (34 households, village Chabiani); Gujejiani (33 households, in Chola, Zhabe, Chabiani); the Margianis (54 households, Artskheli, Chabiani, Kvemo (Lower) Mulakhi); Kaldani (village Zhamu. 13 households); Kochkiani (10 families, in the village Chola); Shervashidze (13 households. in the village Chola); Devdariani (10 households. in Chola); Zhorzholiani (31 households. Artskheli); Jachvliani (14 households, in Chola); Dadvani (17 households, Kvemo (Lower) Mulakhi); Ioseliani (30 households, Lakhiri); Naveriani (36 households, Zhamu and Zhabe); Kurdiani (24 households, Murshkeli); Beriani

(10 households, Kvemo (Lower) Mulakhi); Gabliani (9 households, Kvemo (Lower) Mulakhi); Tsipiani (5 households, Kvemo (Lower) Mulakhi); Mibchuan (3 households, in Zardla); Mchedliani (4 households); Zurebiani 6 households. Lalkhori and Tsaldashi); Mitiani (2 households. Lakhiri); Gulbani (8 households); Cekhiani (8 households. Chabiani); Gvidani (6 households. Lakhiri).

According to ethnographical data, the forefathers of the Naverianis moved from Kutaisi to Svaneti. “They had their church Lamaria and even now they bake one special small bread to sacrifice to the name of Lamaria”. Some of the names mentioned above are stated in the old documents of Svaneti. For example, in the cronicles of the XIII-XIV centuries the following names are mentioned: “T̄oane Kurdiani”, “Guangva Kurdiani”, “Botso Kurdiani” (but in mentioned centuries they are registered in the village Lha of Pari community)’ “Basila Jachvineliani” (Jachvliani) – in the village og Tskhmari; “Ḡi Gabliani” (p. 144). The Margianis are mentioned in the documents of the first half of the XIV century and XV century by the name Maregiani, the Ioselianis – in the first half of the XIV century. In the same “Cronicle” the name of Giganis is mentioned too-Duda Gigiani but only in the community of Etseri. Zhorzholianis are also mentioned in the XIV century (Historical Documents of Svaneti, I, p. 192). In the document of the second half of the XV century a witness Dadvani by name is mentioned. In the writing of the XV century there are the following family names from Mulakhi: the Ioselianis, the Chedelianis and the Margianis.

Mestia community comprised the unity of four communities. They are: Seti, Lekhtagi, Lanchvali and Laghami. In the family records of 1886 there are only two villages in Mestia community (Laghami and Mestia). Totally in Mestia

community there were 101 households (860 heads) (8.6 heads on average per household). Today the following families live in Mestia: the Barlianis (17 households); the Gvarlianis (26 households); the Palianis (5 households – in Laghami, 14 – in Lanchvali); the Khojelanis; the Nigurianis; the Ratianis (41 households); the Khergianis (70 households); the Khvistanis; the Goshtelianis (15 households); the Japaridzes, the Mushkudianis, the Chartolanis (35 households in Lekhtagi); the Nakanis, the Mchedlanis (12 households).

The Gvarlianis from Mestia and the Gvarmianis from Nakra are of the same origin. Members of these two families never got married to each other. Svan Gvarmianis and Gvarlianis regarded Abkhazian Gvaramias as their relatives. Some years ago the Gvarmianis convened an gathering and invited the Gvarlianis and Abkhzian Gvaramias as well to the gathering.

There were five families who prayed for Mestian “Jgragi” (Saint George): the Mitvlianis, the Ratianis, the Mchedlianis, the Palianis and the Nigurianis. The Mitvlianis do not exist any more. They disappeared completely. In the documents of the XIV-XV centuries the people by this name are mentioned more than once (Written Monuments of Svaneti, I, pp. 165, 166, 172, 173). “They were individual “communities”, but worshipped one and the same cross”. The banner of the whole Svaneti “Lemi” had to be brought out by these four families. Other families did not have a right to do it. Only the following day the Japaridzes had a right to hold it. “When Lemi became shabby, it was sewed again by the woman from the Kurdiani family name who was the wife of Japaridze. Therefore, they gained a right to carry “Lemi” the following day.

According to the documents from the first half of the XIV century, “Goshkoteliani Azag” and “Goshgoteliani Tsitsman” are mentioned (Written Monuments of Svaneti, I, pp. 109, 111). The surname of Goshketeliani (Goshgoteliani) changed its form phonetically. They bear the name of Goshteliani at present. By narratives, the Goshtelians are Saviarians. The Japaridzes are thought to be from Racha. There is an epitaph on the tombstone of some Palianis in Mestia “Setieli”. The graveyard of destroyed Miltvlians was occupied by the Chartolanis. Only the part of the Palianis is Setieli by the root. Setiels nursed their baby with the Palianis. They fell on them to kill the baby of Setielis. But the wife of Paliani gave her child to them; they recognized the baby and returned him to her. Setielis adopted a name of Palianis. According to the ethnographical data, the Japaridzes experienced failure. Once they expanded, were powerful. The community warned them several times. Then they were destroyed. Only one survived; Naveriani saved him from burning. Bringing the Japaridzes to Mestia is assigned to the Chartolanis. The Japaridzes as the dwellers of Svaneti are first mentioned in the XV century in the form of the Japarianis. The Khergianis are also mentioned in the XV century. The Chartolanis are stated in the documents of the XVII-XVIII centuries. From the documents of the XIV-XV centuries: “In the inscriptions of one of the series of Mestian Otkhtavi (Gospel) the Japaridzes, particularly some the representatives of this family are mentioned: Mamisa Japaridze (or Mjapariani), Piranteli, Ivane; Japaridze Kakhaberi and his sons Aslan and Taibula; Pirantel Japaridze and his children Dodel, Ivane and Aslan. It is clear that this family was prioritized in comparison with others” (M. Berdzenishvili. Documents of Svaneti As a Source for the Social History of Svaneti – “Georgian Source Study”, II, 1968, p. 108). In Lanchvali (at present north-eastern district of Mestia) there



is a church which is named after the Virgin and according to the narrative, its builder was Papi-Chartulari. In the opinion of arts critics, this church belongs to the XIII-XIV centuries and was reconstructed and decorated fundamentally in the XV century” (p.109). The author cites from the inscription of the Mestian Otkhtavi (Gospel) the following: “Japaridze and Ioseliani belong to those names whose blood was very valuable” (p.119).

“Saint George’s church (Jgragi) in Ughlavi was built by brothers Anton and Michael Umpriani (XIV century). The Umprianis live in this village even today. Both the church and the curchyard belong only to them. The church of the Saviour in the village Laghami (Mestia region) was built and painted by Shalva Kirkishliani (XIV century); The Mukhuri church after Archangel in Lenjeri was built and painted by Iveldiani (XV-XVI centuries). Churchmen (lakhmi mare) are the Ildanis even now” (M. Chartolani. Monuments of History and Culture in Svaneti. – Issues: “Svaneti II”, Tbilisi, 1979, p. 108).

“According to the available data, Svaneti represents the picture of the flong past process of family mixture. It is quite clear even from the example of Mestia. Out of 52 households in Seti 21 belong to the Japaridzes., 4 – to the Chedlianis, 9 – to the Nakanis, 6 – to the Mushkudianis, 8 to the Nigurianis, each – to Bardiani, Paliani, Nizharadze and Parjiani. Lanchvali depicts the same picture of family mixture, too where out of 54 households 17 are Khergianis, 10 Palianis, 10 Ratianis, 5 Margianis, 4 Goshtelianis, 3 Nigurianis, 2 Kakhberidzes, 1 Chartolani and 2 Nakanis. Out of 18 households in Lekhtagi there are 8 Chartolanis, 8 Khergianis and 2 Japaridzes” (R. Kharadze, Al. Robakidze. Villages in Svaneti in the Past, Tbilisi, 1964, p. 30).

According to one of the narratives, the Khergianis came from the heads of the rivers Teberdi and Kubani (the area of present-day Karachai). Four brothers sheltered themselves in Svaneti: Khergiani, Chkhvimiani and Margveliani (the name of the fourth brother is forgotten). The brothers arrived in Chubekhevi and settled there. Chkhvimiani declared himself to be the prince of his brother, as a result of which they escaped from him. Chkhvimiani stayed in the village Chubekhevi, Khergiani went to Mestia and Margveliani settled in Kala (R. Kharadze, Al. Robakidze, pp. 30-31). These three brothers comprised the kin units – Chkhvimlianis-Margvelanis-Khergianis. The realization of the common origin determines the goodwill between them which is revealed by welcoming and helping each other, although this relationship does not consider the sphere of marriage or revenge ” (see the same place, p 31).

There is one more interesting detail about the family names in Mestia: in the inscription on the icon of the Saviour “Giorgi Chartulari” is mentioned. It means that the Chartolanis were registered (were called) as Chartularis as well (E. Takaishvili, p. 299).

The next village of Above Bali Svaneti is Lenjeri community which like the other communities comprised the unity of several villages. They are the following: Nesguni, Lemsia, Kashveti, Lashtkhveri, Kaeri, Soli, Kheshkili. According to data of 1886, 70 households (668 heads) lived in Lenjeri village community. 17 households lived in Lemsia and 17 – in Nesguni (139 heads and 183 heads accordingly). There were 14 households (154 heads) in Kashveti, 12 households (119 heads) in Lashtkhveri, 7 households (54 heads) in Soli, 3

households (54 heads) – in Kaeri. E. Takaishvili points one more village – Mukheli (it seems to be one of the districts of Lashtkhveri). There used to be the church of Michael Archangel. It is interesting that the king of Kakheti Davit donated the bell to the Lashtkhveri Archangel: “We, the king and patron of Kakheti David sacrificed the church bell to you – the Saint Archangel of Lashtakhuri to bless our days and perform our reign”. Above mentioned indicates the close ties between the different parts of Georgia and in this case, between the parts which are absolutely far away from each other.

The biggest family in Lenjeri was Guledani. According to data of 1940, 86 households of Guledanis lived there. The Pilpanis were 60 households, the Khaptanis – 25 households, the Udesianis – 19 households, the Jachvanis 19 households, the Merlanis – 28 households, the Shukvanis – 69 households, the Maghedanis – 3 households, the Meshvelianis – 2 households, the Ildanis – 5 households, the Naverianis – 10 households, the Gigdelianis – 4 households. There also lived the Tsipianis, the Japaridzes and the Khorguanis.

As the narrative says, Svan Guledanis and Megreli Gulordavas originally had one brother. “Wherever we meet each other we are as one family”. It is remarkable that according to Svan Guledanis, they come from Samegrelo, but the Gulordavas think that they are from Svaneti. There are four Samkhubis (fraternities or family branches) in the family of Guledanis: “Gulesha”, “Bekurzasha”, “Titisha” and “Kausha”. The dwellers of Nesguni mainly pray for “Jgrag”. Besides, there is “Matskhovari” (the Saviour), “Iel”, “Pust”. The Guledanis moved from Etseri to Lenjeri. Indeed in “The Cronicle of Svaneti Gathering” (XIII-XIV centuries) “Ivane Gulediani”, “G~i Gulediani” are

mentioned in Etseri (P. Ingorokva, pp. 133, 137). No narrative is kept in the family about the reasons of moving from Lenjeri to Etseri. When they settled in Lenjeri the Maghedanis had lived there. According to the narrator, “the Maghedanis have the same links with the Marghantias as we have with the Gulordavas. The Maghedanis go to the Saviour and Ieli church”. In the XV century the phonetical option of the Maghedianis was “Magheldiani” (Written Monuments of Svaneti, I, p.186).

The village Soli was mainly inhabited by the Khaptanis, Khorguanis and Gigdelianis. In “The Chronicles of Svaneti Gathering” of the XIII-XIV centuries the Khaptanis are registered as Khaptani: “Shalva Khaptiani” (P. Ingorokva, p. 153). The main family name in Lemsia is Shukvani (Shukuani). The main inhabitants of Kashueti are the Pilpanis. Tsipiani moved here from Mulakhi.

The Vibianis had lived in Nesguni before but they disappeared. They even had an individual tower. They did not let their cattle go in the morning or evening without milking them. Every family in Lenjeri had brought one cart of logs each and put around the tower. “They made a fire and burned down it. They were a big family and did not think anyone could match them”.

The Ildans from Lenjeri were registered as Elediani in the chronicles of the XIII-XIV centuries, and as Mildanis in the XVIII century (Written Monuments of Svaneti, I, p. 293).

In the village of Lemsia, according to the ethnographical data, the Merlanis settled from the beginning, then the Shukvanis who migrated from Becho.

Their church “Guls Gabriel” was in the village Guli. When they moved from Becho the Shukvanis took their icons with them and sacrificed it to this icon. “The Shukvanis had not lived in Becho from the beginning and they had a fighting there against the princes Charkvianis; they were princes themselves, too. When they lost this war they moved to Becho on the very top of the hill. Apparently, they could not stay there long and moved to this place. The Shukvanis used to be the Ghoghelianis before and then they changed their family name”. The family of the Ghoghelianis does not live in Svaneti any more. They are inhabitants of Lechkhumi. According to the chronicles of the XIII-XIV centuries, the Ghoghelianis were widely settled in Svaneti. For example, “Veshag Ghogheliani” lived in Gheshderi, “G~i Ghogheliani”, “Mich~l Ghogheliani”, “G~i Ghogheliani”, “Inai Ghogheliani”, “Thathe Ghogheliani”, “I~e Ghogheliani”, “Mariam Ghogheliani”, “Varedan Ghogheliani”, “Kakubai Ghogheliani” lived in the Pari community village of Mai... (P. Ingorokva, pp. 122-124). The Naverianis moved to Lenjeri from Mulakhi. Here they have their family churches and churchyards “Matskhovari” (the Saviour). Regarding the holiday Kashvetoba, besides the inhabitants of Lenjeri, dwellers of Latali participated, too. It is remarkable that it was necessary to bring the bull’s hip from Ilori chuch Abkhazia, precisely from Samurzakano. In Lenjeri community first the Ildanis settled (in Lashdghveri). In other villages they adopted the surname Mildani.

We mentioned some examples above about the common origin of Megruli and Svanuri family names. The Khapavas were originated from the Khaptanis. According to the narrator from Lenjeri, “We Jajvanis (Jachvanis) live here, in Lashtkhveri. The relatives from my mother’s side are in the village Otobaya

now and when they learnt that I was a successor of Jajvanis (Jachvanis) they were very happy and welcomed me cordially: he said that Jachvanis and Jojuas were the same. Pilpanis say that they are Pipias They were three brothers and escaped from there. They brought a bull with them”.

The ancestors of the Babluanis moved to Kvemo (Low) Svaneti from Kheshveli village of Lenjeri region. It turned out, that families bearing the different Swedish family names used to live in Kheshveli. Together with the Babluanis there also lived the Ketganis. To this very day the Babluanis visit Lenjeri in order to pray there. Kheshveli population had been depopulated. “There is a place in Kheshveli - named Gagani; We do not know, whether it is a family name or a first name. The place is also called “Gagani’s Jump” (in the Svan language: “Gagana Niskin”). Gagani was on the other side of the river. Some men fell on his cattle and took it away. The dog ran to its master to drop a hint at him. Gagani had to jump over the river and therefore the place was called “Gagana Niskin”. Gagani survived, ran after the attackers and got i his cattle back. The kidnappers appeared to be from Mulakhi.

The Barvanis were resided in Kheshvili. Gagvani is also a family name. They fought because of a woman. All of them were abolished and there movables and immovables were divided between the Kurdianis from Mulakhi; Latali and Lenjeri took possession of their land. Kashveti and Lashgverdi population migrated to Kheshveli. The first migrants were the Ildanis. They are from Ilori. The newcomers were insulted and evicted, but one of them came back and settled there and the present Ildanis are his descendants.

Big family names of Lenjeri are divided into fraternities (“Samkhubi”, “Lamkhubi”-in Svan language), but as for the Maghedanis and Tsipianis, which are smaller family names, are not divided into fraternities as they stopped to give the generation. According to a legend, the Ildanis are cursed by “Davi” – “forest man.”

In the XIII – XIV centuries the Tsipianis: “Akunela Tsipiani”, “Thathe Tsipiani”, “G~ Tsipiani” resided in Etseri (P. Ingorokva, p.137, 147). Earlier, in Soli village lived the Tvirianis. Only there tower survived intact. The Khaptanis live on their dwelling now. “These Tvirianis are today’s Torias from Samegrelo”.

According to the legend, the Nakanis, who live in Mestia nowadays, are the migrants from Kurashi village, Etseri. They live in Seti, Mestia. The Nakanis have there ancestral church – “Khosha Jrag” in Kurashi village, Etseri. According to the narrator Pilippe Nakani, “We seldom go to Kurashi church lately in comparison with our ancestors.” Today the Khorguanis live on the former living quarters of the Nakanis. The Nakanis had sold their patrimony to the Khorguanis. The reason of the Nakanis migration was “the murder of one of the Dadeshkelianis committed by our ancestors, whereupon there was no chance for us to stay there.” In the XIII – XIV centuries the “Chronicle of Svaneti Gathering”, the present Nakanis ancestors are registered as the Nakianis: “M~rm Nakiani”, “Khalina Nakiani”, “Abesalom Nakiani”, “Gvangva Nakiani”, “Tamtar Nakiani” “Natai Nakiani”; “Lela Nakiani, “Amadai Nakiani” (P. Ingorokva, p.133, 134, 135, 136, 140).

According to ethnographical data, Nakani never marries Chkhvimiani or Goshuani. They are of the same origin. “We must not marry each other”. As it turns out, the Chkhvimiani family name is divided in two branches. One of them is related to the Chartolanis and another - to the Nakanis. The Nakanis are related to “Kansavshas” – Chkhvimianis, residents of Gheshteri. Another Chkhvimianis’ name (“Samkhubi”) is “Padlar” and they belong (related to) to the Chartolanis. The Nakanis consist of three “Samkhubis”, they are offsprings of three brothers: “Giunusha”, “Kubaisha”, “Gelusha”. The Chkhvimianis and the Goshuanis, both are the Kansavshas”. The Nakanis had five Murqvams (towers) in Mestia.

The last community of BalsUpper Svaneti is Latali community. Its villages are: Enashi, Matskhvarishi, Shqaleri, Kvanchianari, Laheli, Sgobuli, Lakhushti, Sidianari, Ipki, Leshuki, Namkvan-Nagrals, Lebagi. E. Takaishvili wrote:” Latali is one of the best communities of Free Svaneti; It is the strongest and richest, because Enguri Gorge is the widest there. The Latali people have many common ploughing areas and forests. The Latalians are considered as the bravest people. They were the last who accepted the Russian citizenship (E. Takaishvili, p. 337).

According to 1886 household lists, there were 121 households (995 heads) in Latali society by that time. Enashi was the most densely populated village (35 households, 253 heads). 20 households (188 heads) – in Matskhvarishi, 14 households (138 heads) – in Kvanchianari, 10 households (96 heads) – in Ipki, 10 households (85 heads) – in Lechukvi, 9 households (39 heads) - in Lakhushti,



7 households (heads) – in Shqaleri, 6 households (39 heads) - in Sidianari, 4 households (26 heads) - in Lahili, 4 households (33 heads) – in Lami.

According to 1940 data, Latali society was consisted of the following family names: Asumbani (4 households in Lakhushti); Pirtskhelani (4 households in Lakhushti); Kvanchiani (3 households in Lakhushti, 15 households Ipkhi, 14 households in Latali, 19 households in Kvanchianari); In Ienashi lived: The Parjians (10 households); The Tseredianis (11 families); The Charkvianis (2 families); The Girgvlianis (10 households); 10 households of the Girgvlianis' belonged to Ipkhi as well. There were 14 households of the Girgvlianis (Gurgvliani) in Matskhvarishi. The other family names of Latali society could also be mentioned here. These are: the Abdelanis (11 households), the Nansqanis (9 households), the Subelianis and the Gvichianis (23 households), the Ivechianis (15 households), the Sidianis (3 households), the Paikelanis and the Tamlianis (6 households), Stepliani, Chamgeliani, Khvibliani. From these family names, in the XIII – XIV centuries the “Chronicle (of Confessors) of Svaneti” are recorded: the Tseredianis (“Tserediani from Vani” – p. 124), the Ivechianis (“Djulaba Ivechiani”, “Dzadzu Ivachiani” – p. 155), the Abdelanis (“G~i Abdalani – p.147), the Charkvianis (“Mik~l Shargviani” – p. 148).

In the documents of XVI – XVII centuries are mentioned: “The Kvanchianis, the Paikelanis; We meet family name of the Parjians in the document of the XIV century. According to R. Kharadze, the family name of the Pardjians consists of two branches: Nuasher and Datuar. The Nuasheris make comparatively powerful group than Datuars, therefore they consider themselves as descendants of those ancient Pardjians. Whereas they count

Datuars progeny of the Datuliani family who bought the name of Parjiani from them later on. The Datuars strongly object to this concept and from their part, are blaming the Nuasheris in buying the name. The given example is just one out of a hundred as, in almost all big family names, which were divided into “Samkhubis” a long time ago and their common ancestor is practically lost by now, the Samkhubis in most cases, consider each other as representatives of other weak families. As for buying and changing names in Svaneti, it is a notorious fact; It was resulted, either from the tradition of taking revenge, or because of weakening the family name. The responsibilities concerning blood relations and related regulations in cases of marriages are not characteristic for the Svan families (R. Kharadze, p. 17).

R. Kharadze’s concept regarding the Svan family names is undoubtedly very interesting, but we can’t agree that branches of the family name (“Samkhubis”) are mostly of different origin. Of course it is without question, that there are a lot of cases of mixing two family names in Svaneti, when a weak family joins a strong one, but it does not represent the fact that, it was a general phenomenon. But it is true, that sometimes the “Samkhubis” had different ancestors. As for buying names, we do not consider that as a real fact, since there has not been a single real case of buying a name. No one knows to whom, or what, or how much was paid. (Should they have to pay to every family representative, or only to the head of the family (“Makhvshi” – in the Svan language). Or they might have brought it to the family chapel?). In this case we have to deal with the similar event as in the mountainous regions of the east Georgia – mixing, joining or artificial relationship of weak and small family names with strong family names, which was revealed by carrying out only a similar ritual in the

praying place. This event also meant strengthening of powerful and big families, as well as finding protectors for weak social units (weak family names). In one's time, this event served as one of the stimulus for destroying tribal relations and transmitting to the territorial community relations. Of course it is true, that the representatives of one of the family names, i.e. descendants of the same ancestors could not marry each other, only in case if the representatives of family name branches ("Samkhubis") were of different origin. Thus, in conjugal questions, families had both, blood relation responsibilities and related regulations. In this sphere, the rules in Svaneti were the same as all over Georgia.

In Latali community (temi) the Girgvliani family name has only one Samkhubi.

In Latali the family name of Charkvianis and their former dwellings were very remarkable. The difference becomes more vivid by the example of the dwellings of the Charkvianis from Latali. It is easy to notice, that they differ from other houses in Latali not only by their size, but also by their location. (R. Kharadze, Al. Robakidze p. 25). "There are five former dwellings of the Charkviani family in Latali. These are: Gigbash, Zagrar, Gilian, Chirdilashi and Lakhushd. All of them are situated separately from the settlement and distinguish territorially from the rest of the settlement" (p. 26). The tendency of the separate settlement should have been caused by the fact that they were socially promoted by then.

It occurred that the kings of Kakheti had contributed the bell to Latali as well. "We, the king Alexander, son of the king Leon, present this bell for praying

service in your sacred church of prophet Iona from Latali, 1600” (E. Takaishvili, p. 337). According to E. Takaishvili, Matskhvarishi village was distinguished in Latali community. We can find wooden houses here, which are very rare in Svaneti. The village church is built in honor of Matskhovari (the Saviour). The name of the village Matskhovrishi is derived from this word. There was a Silver chain fastened to Matskhovari (the Saviour) icon with the following inscription on a separate plate. The inscription made in Mkhedruli reads as follows: “ I, Kaikhosro Chikovani, am making this small contribution to Our Matskhovari (the Saviour) Latali church for saving my sinful soul “. “This Kaikhosro Chikovani should have been the same Kaikhosro Chikovani that was represented, together with his wife whose maiden name was Laskhishvili, on the frescos of Nakuraleshi Church, in the XVII century (E. Takaishvili, p. 356). It is not surprising so far as the Chikovanis are originally from Svaneti and in spite of the fact that they do not live there recently, they try not to consign to oblivion the old chapels of their ancestors. There are more than one Chikovani mentioned in the XIII-XIV centuries “Chronicle (of confessors) of Svaneti”: “M̃rm” Chikovani”, “G̃i”Chikovani” ... (p. 134, 137) When they moved from Svaneti to Lechkhumi, is unknown, evidently a long time ago. Where did they become socially promoted, on their old or new dwelling place?

In Saint George’s Church of Lahili village, in Latali, icon of Archangel Gabriel bears the following inscription: “Oh, Saint Archangel of Mukheri, glorify the kings Bagrationi, and Dadiani, and the noblemen and the whole Georgia, and the whole Latali with its Sani and Khevi, and bless Laili village that did build you and all souls who seeks your protection” (E. Takaishvili, p. 364). E.

Takaishvili claims that the age date of this inscription, which has a great importance not only for Svaneti history study, but for Georgian history as a whole, is the XIII – XIV centuries. Through this document, the Svans accentuate that Svaneti is an integral part of the united Georgia and they ask Saint Archangel to reflect glory on the kings of the united Georgia.

Let us proceed to the study of Billow-bali Svaneti, or as it is called otherwise Sabatono - principality (Dadeshkeliani's) Svaneti. The first such community is Becho here. Becho community is also represents the unity of several villages: Tebishi, Mazeri, Bagvdanari, Guli, Tetnashi, Nashthkoli, Chorkhudi, Ushkhvanari, Chkidanari, Doli, Kartvani. According to 1886 household lists, there were 88 households (699 heads) in Becho society by then. Almost all the villages were too small. Only in Mazeri lived 27 families (191 heads) and in Ushkhvanari were 19 households (142 heads). In the rest of the villages there was the following situation: Dili (9 households, 96 heads), Kartvani (9 households, 83 heads), Tebishi (7 households, 41 heads), Chkidanari (5 households, 63 heads), in Guli (3 households, 21 heads), Nashthkali (3 households, 14 heads), Bagvdanari (2 families, 15 heads), Tetnashi (2 families, 12 heads), Chokhuli (2 families, 21 heads).

We can list the following family names living in Becho. These are: the Gabuldanis (according to 1940 data, 16 households), the Kvitsianis ( 76 households), the Khorguanis ( 15 households), the Kvanchianis (7 households), the Viblianis ( 5 households), the Ushkhvanis ( 9 households), the Shamprianis (6 households), the Vezenis (10 households), the Jamdeliani (6 households), the Dadeshkelianis ( 3 households), the Goshuanis (9 households), the Kaldanis

( 4 households), the Aprasidzes ( 3 households), the Tsalanis (3 households), the Argvlianis ( 3 households), Berchliani (1household), Khardziani (1 household).

According to the “Chronicle of Svaneti Gathering, “ Gabuldani is one of the oldest family names in Svaneti, and its phonetic version – Gabeldani (“Amuna Gabeldani”, “Ruchag Gabeldani,” “Dzadzu Gabeldiani”, “Neke Gabeldiani”, “G~i Gabeldiani”) is registered in historical documents in Doli village in Becho (P. Ingorokva, 149, 151).

In the XIII century, in Doli village of Becho also lived the ancestors of the Ushkhvanis. This family name has also been modified phonetically and registered as Ushkhviani: “Jaura Ushkhviani”, “I~ne Ushukhvani”, “Dudai Ushukhiani”, Adai Ushukhiani”, “I~ne Ushukhiani” (P. Ingorokva, 151, 152); “Chorman Ushukhiani,” “G~i Ushukhviani”, “Martskhi Ushukhiani” (p. 153, 154, 155, 156).

The Kvitsiani family name first could be found in the XIV century. More than once are also mentioned the Khorguanis in the “Chronicle of Svaneti Gathering.” e.g. “Tvalmindi Khverguani”, “Gvangva Khverguani”, “Nana Khverguani”, “Tarji Khverguani”, “G~i Khverguani” (P. Ingorokva, 149, 151).

The Gujejianis from Becho keep the following legend: “Once there lived Eta Gujejiani in Etseri. He had three sons. One of them was a healer. One day their master Dadeshkeliani came, who intended to take one of Gujejiani’s sons and give him to the Kabardolians. Gujejiani invited his master to dinner. The nobleman was in a hurry. Let’s get up and go, he said. In those days the bullets

were made with the help of a hammer, quadrangular bullets were made for feud, and round bullets – for hunting. Eta ordered to bring wine for his guest and seizing an opportunity he shoot him with quadrangular bullet. Eta and his three sons left wounded Dadeshkeliani and escaped. Eta got to Mulakhi together with one of his sons. The two young men stayed in Becho. In Mulakhi they were welcomed by the Devdarianis, who offered Eta to choose any land he liked in Mulakhi. He chose a place in upper village, in Chola. From two brothers who stayed in Becho, one was a healer. Dadeshkeliani asked the healer to cure him and promised to give in his possession the whole place above Etseri, called “Cheliri”. Eventually, Dadeshkeliani recovered and kept his promise. But the second brother had to leave Becho and move to Kabardo. His descendents took the name of Shakhmurziev.”

The following community in Below Bali Svaneti is Tskhumari. The villages of Tskhumari were: Labsqaldi, Magardeli, Lezgara, Tviberi, Svipi, Ghvebaldi. In 1886 villages of Tskhumari Khevi ( community) belonged to Etseri society. There were 9 households (62 heads) in Labsqaldi, 28 households (208 heads) in Ghvebaldi, 7 households (39 heads) in Magardeli, 6 households (45 heads) in Lezgari, 7 households (44 heads) in Tviberi. In 1940 the following family names were registered in Tskhumari: the Argvlianis (30 families), Djachvliani (7 families), the Gerlianis (12 families), the Goshuanis (2 families), the Kaldanis (12 families), the Subelianis (2 families), the Gurchianis (1 family), the Saghlilianis (14families), the Mildianis (6 families), the Gugusianis (8 families). According to the “Chronicle (of confessors) of Svaneti” the old surnames are the Djachvlianis – recorded as the Djachvinelianis, and the Saglianis, the ancestors of which were written as Saghireliani. In the XIII–XIV centuries in Tskhumari

were registered: “Basil Jachvineliani,” “ Guchu Saghireliani (P. Ingorokva, p. 148). Ivane Gurechiani is the ancestor of the Gurchianis (p. 14). If we compare the data of XIII–XIV centuries and later years, we will see that the most families inhabiting in Tskhumari, do not live there any more. This is characteristic not only for Tskhumari, but for other communities as well. intra-regional migration processes, as well as abroad migration processes are noticeable. Apparently, the migration processes from mountainous Svaneti to lowland always took place.

Etseri community consolidated the villages: Kurashi, Cheliri, Svipi, Barshi, Iskari, Pkhutreri, Ughvali, Tsalanari, Lanteli, Ladreri, Lashkhreri, Zhabe-kalashi, Chvabe-kalashi, Gvalderi, Ebuthi, Usgviri. In 1886, in Etseri community (where also were consolidated the villages of Tskhumari community) resided 176 households (1366 heads). The biggest village was Barshi (28 families, 208 heads). in Svipi were 23 households (191 heads), in Iskari – 18 households ( 149 heads), in Cheliri – 19 households (149 heads), in Gvalderi - 4 households (43 heads), in Ladreri - 13 households (86 heads), in Lanteli -6 households (61 heads), in Lashkhreri - 4 households (38 heads), in Pkhutreri - 2 households (12heads), in Ughvali – 8 households (44 heads), in Tsalanari – 2 households (26 heads), in Ebuthi - 11 households (85 heads).

Inhabitants of Etseri community mainly were the following family names: Khorguani, Gujejiani, Pakeliani, Aprasidze, Gurchiani, Gerliani, Umpriani, Kantsliani, Charkviani, Gazdeliani, Tsalani, Kashtani, Stpfliani, Murghvliani, Chkhetiani, Subeliani, Pardjvliani. Pakeliani surname is mentioned in the XII century document. The family name of Khorguani has already been discussed.



We will only add to above said that the Gulbanis, who live in Ipari community, consider the Khorguanis as one of their kin branches and relatives. In the XIII century document the Gurchianis ancestors from Etseri are recorded as Gurechiani, the Kantslianis – as Kantskhliani. (P. Ingorokva, p. 131).

Pari community comprised the unity of the following villages: Svipi, Katskhi, Pari, Zagari, Lamkheri, Zhabe-liha, Chvabe-liha, Laqvri, Gheshderi, Paledi, Khosrari, Qvana. According to 1886 household lists, there were 80 households (664 heads) in Pari society. Pari was the biggest among the community villages (28 households, 231 heads). In Gheshderi 11 households (973 heads), in other villages there were 9,8,6,4 households. According to 1940 data, the following surnames are registered in Pari villages. These are: Chkhvimiani (31 households), Jachvliani (13 households), Rezesidze (29 households), Aprasidze (11 households), Tsalani (21 households), Tsulukiani (16 households), Dadeshkeliani (5 households), Khaphthani (2 households), Devdariani (9 households), Narsavidze (23 households), Gadrani (17 households), Chkhetiani (18 households), Vibliani (9 households). From these family names Chkhvimiani is recorded in the XIII–XIV centuries “Chronicle (of Confessors) of Svaneti”. In Lakhamula lived - “Miq̃l Tskhvmiani”, “Javakhi Tskhvmiani,” “G̃i Tskhuimiani”, “Shaman Tskhvimiani”, “Indoi Tskhvmiani.” “Sargis Tskhvimiani”, “Inai Tskhvimiani”, “Jiji Tskhvimiani” (P. Ingorokva, p. 180). In Pari Khevi Mai village are registered the following: “Javakhi Tskhvmiani” (p. 125). In Etseri - “M̃lm Tskhumiani”, “Thuma Chkhumifkhe,” “Giorgi Tskhumiani,” “Khalina Tskhumiani,” “Gvantsai Tskhumiani” (pp. 132, 133, 134, 136). According to ethnographic data the Tsulukianis from Pari are the descendants of those the Tsulukidzes who had moved from Racha. In the

archival documents of 1871, one of the Aprasidzes is registered as “Aprasuki”. Another ancient name is Gadrani. They are mentioned more than once in the XIII century documents. In the documents of the same period, the ancestors of the Viblianis are mentioned as the Ublianis.

Al. Charkviani particularly points out Lakhamula, Thavrari, Chuberi and Lenkheri communities. Lakhamula united four villages: (Zhabe-Lakhamul, Chvabe-Lakhamul, Dizi and Shdikhiri). According to data of 1940, in Lakhamula lived the following: the Chkaduas (47 families), the Davitianis (5 households), the Kvanchiani (3 households). As for the Tavrari community, Al. Charkviani lists its villages: Tavrari, Lashkhari, Tsaleri, Kichkhuldashi, Chubari, Djukhviani, Kherkhvashi. By 1886 household lists these villages are united in Chubakhevi community. (It probably should be the present village board of Nakra). There once lived: The Ansianis, the Tsindelians, the Viblianis, the Chkhvimiansi, the Subelians, the Kaldanis, the Gvarmianis (12 households). According to the XIX-century ethnographic materials used by B. Nizharadze, “in the Chubakhevi society, in Tsaleri village, there is a family bearing a family name of Gvarmiani. They believe that their ancestors had migrated from Dali Gorge” (B. Nizharadze, II, p. 51). The Gvarmianis are mentioned several times in the “Chronicle (of Confessors) of Svaneti”. e.g. “Nonai Guaramiani” (p.144). In 1886 there were 116 households (997 heads) in Chubakhevi society (or Thavrari community).

If we go again over old documents, we will see that many family names once living in Svaneti migrated to the lowland (Samegrelo, Imereti, Lechkhumi, Racha). Many families inhabited in the west Georgia are of Svan origin. The

following family names could be enlisted here: the Kelbackianis, the Panjikianis (now the Panjikidzes), the Ghoghelianis, the Chickovanis, the Nakvekhelianis, the Sanigianis (now the Sanikianis, Sanikidzes), the Chabukianis, the Shamanianis (now the Shamanidzes), the Zhorzholianis, the Kakhianis and many others. The migration of Svans to Samegrelo must have been too intensive, which usually resulted in changing the format of the family name. e.g. the Gobechianis became Gobechias, the Apakianis – Apakias, or Apakidzes, the Kuaratskhelianis – Kvaratskhelias, the Ubelianis – Ubilavas, the Khazalianis – Khazalias, the Kvirkvelianis – Kvirkvelias, the Karchianis – Karchavas, the Jamburianis – Jamburias, the Tsavanis – Tsava, the Gabunianis – Gabunias, the Kacharanis – Kacharavas, the Goshuanis – Goshuas, the Babluanis – Babiluas, the Stepanianis – Stepanias, the Tsipurianis – Tsipurias, the Bokerianis – Bokerias. There are also: the Chkhetianis and Chkhetias, the Ratianis and Ratias... The Sotkilavas living in Samegrelo are also of Svan origin, their previous family name was Charkviani. The Arzianis from Samegrelo formerly were Khardziani. Their ancestors were the migrants from Kala community.

Regarding the family names, it should also be mentioned here, that it is possible that Georgians distinguished male and female last names by suffixes. As far back as the 30s of the XX century, it was noticeable that in Zanuri and other Georgian speeches, such function was performed by the suffix – pkhe (khe). (See I. Megrelidze, The Endings of the Female Surnames in Southern Caucasian Japhetic Languages and Folklore – articles, “To memory of academician N. Marri, L. 1839 p.152 – 159”) Today the Svan language makes no difference in male and female last names but as it turns out, the suffix – pkhe was characteristic to the Svan language as well. In the XIII–XIV centuries

“Chronicle of Svaneti Family Names” the women, their last names were registered with suffix –pkhe: “Khalina Gursapkhe” (male: “Gursiani”), “Sukvai Beutmanipkhe” (male: Beutmaniani), “Mamkan Ataripkhe” (male: Atariani), “M̃rm Gogorelipkhe” (male: Gogoreliani), “Tovlai Mikelipkhe” (male: “Mikelini”, “Mikelani”); “Mariam Rumbipkhe” (the same: “Rumbiani”), “Sukvai Uchinaripkhe” (the same: “Uchinariani”), “Tuma Chkhumipkhe” (male: “Mk̃l Chkhumiani”, “G̃i Chkhumiani”) (P. Ingorokva, II, p. 117, 121, 122, 129, 131, 133 ...). By the same suffix –pkhe are formed the women’s last names in later periods (the XV – XVII centuries) patrimonial commemoration: Gurchipkhe (Gurchiani), Dachkelapke (Dadichkeliani), Djaparipkhe (Japaridze), Oripkhe (Oriani), Ruchegipkhe (Ruchegiani), Gadrapkhe (Gadrani), Tsalapke (Tsalani)

As it turns out, the above mentioned suffix – pkhe was added not only to the surnames of females but to their first names as well. Complex - pkh in female names was characteristic to later ethnographic life. There are stated two female names in the ancestral chronicle of the XIII century. These are: “Kostapkhe” and “Adrapkhe” (P. Ingorokva, II, p. 135, 137). It is evident that this suffix was added to the male name and in that way they were changing into female names. Two examples given above – “Kosta - pkhe” and “Adra - pkhe” are the best illustrations of that. The female names with the suffix – pkhe are also stated in one of the archival documents of 1865 (Kutaisi State Archives, fund 21, Case #10254, FF 1-20). “Khazipkh”- was the name of Udesiani from Lendjeri, who was born in 1806. The bearers of the name “Dachkelapkh” were three people: “Dachkelapkh Japaridze,” (born in 1852), the daughter –in-law of the Japaridzes – “Dachkelapkh” (born in 1823), and: “Dadishkelapkh” (common people pronounced as “Dachkelapkh”) Chartolani (born in 1843). Under the

above mentioned archive materials, the bearers of the name “Berdupkh” were two people: “Berdupkh Japaridze,” (born in 1862) – the aunt of Tsioq Japaridze, who was born in the XVIII century. “Eldapkh” was Bekan Khergiani’s wife born in 1835, and “Eldapkh” was also Tatav Daduani’s a two-year old daughter’s name. Another six-year old daughter’s name of the same Tatav Daduani was “Girgulapkh”. A female name “Berdupkh” is also stated in 1871 document in Enguri Gorge, Ushguli village. Gegi Chelidze’s wife bore the name of “Berdupkh”. She was twenty-four. (Kutaisi State Archives, fund 21, Case #10254, FF 1-20). If we take away this suffix, we will receive male names which were once widespread in Svaneti: “Dachkela,” “Berda,” “Ilda,” Girgula,” Khazi”. Female names formation by the suffix – pkh, was not characteristic to other historical-ethnographic territories of West Georgia. The reason of that might have been the fact that, in Georgian historical documents female proper names are not so frequently mentioned.

In the XII – XIII centuries Svaneti was the organic part of Georgian Christendom. This is clearly visible from anthroponymies fixed in the “Chronicle of Svaneti Gathering”. Both, men and women mostly were the bearers of Georgian and Christian canonized names. Apparently pure (transparent) Georgian names must have penetrated here earlier, than canonized Christian names. From Georgian lowland entered the eastern (mainly Persian-Iranian) names. In the XII - XIII centuries in Svaneti were widely spread the following canonized Christian names: Giorgi, Ilarioni, Mikel, Mariam, Martha, Nino, Ivane, Noe, Arsen, Marine, Egnati, Gabriel, Nikoloz, Demetre, Atanase, Makar, Davit, Zei, Iakob, Anania, Grigol, Basil. From transparent Georgian – Georgian related names could be listed: Mukhlukhai,

Nateli (female), Nagvelai, Gamrekel, Gvantsa (female), Khalina (female), Ertgulai (female), Sinatle, Rkina, Djavakhi, Okropiri, Tvalshavi, Toulai (female), Zviad, Qursiki, Nakvetai, Tvalmindi (female), Mtsare, Shvidai, Bichsai, Ledachi, Tsotne, Malkhina, Shuenuri, Chabukvela, Djokhai, Datuai, Nizhara, Shavai, Kalkmai (female), Lomai, Prangi, Tbeli, Mtvare (female), Tsetskhilai, Tvare, Dudai (female), Chkhagu, Gudjedji, Veshag, Berezhi, Zazi, Chargas, Tutai, Kurtskha and many others.

From Georgian lowland the following names of eastern origin also entered Svaneti: Tinatini, Angurag, Arghun, Tariel, Sargis, Rusudan, Gurandukht, Rati, Vakhtang, Khvashagi, Beshken, Djahvar, Abesalom, Siagush, Partsman, Shahanshah, Taibula, Burlukhan, Chakatan, Atardji, Shekhasan, Bezhan ...

In the above mentioned period, in Svaneti Northern Caucasian anthroponymies could rarely be observed that became widespread there since the XVIII century.

Besides several exceptions, Georgian surnames spread in Svaneti are ending in the suffix – an (ian). Such exceptions are ending in – dze, - Shvili, - ia suffixes. e.g. Djokhadze, Aprasidze, Rezesidze, Djaparidze, Chelidze, Nizharadze, Kakriashvili, Lukhutashvili, Kordzaia. We will only briefly admit that suffix – an (ian), by which Svan family names are formed, was characteristic to whole Georgia but gradually it was changed by other suffixes. But Svaneti has maintained it almost intact and unaltered.

While talking about Svan family names, it is impossible not to touch upon a question of their branches. Branches of family names were common all over Georgia, and they were in fact the second inherited names. These branches were counted in Svaneti as closely related groups, and defined with the term “Samkhubii” (“Lamkhubii”) which is translated as “brotherhood”. “Samkhubis” are based on blood relations, the members of which are called brothers, and the union itself is called “fraternity”. The latter is divided into close and distant relatives (brothers). After Samkhubis gradual increase they would again have divided in new branches.

In most cases, the names of separate branches were derived from the names of forefathers and in only single instances - from the names of their settlements. The Samkhubis often called general Gatherings. All the resolutions were made on such Gatherings and these resolutions were called “Samkhubiish Linzorali”. The Samkhubii Gatherings were always connected with different moments of Samkhubii life. e.g. the Gathering was called in case of blood feud, because each person was a member of not only his family, but of a whole Samkhubi. Samkhubii Gatherings were also called because of the subjects connected with marriage, divorce, etc. By Samkhubis were reviewed such issues as making trade deals, or cases of thefts. Moving from one place to another was the common cause of the whole Samkhubii. The patriarch and celebrated person was named “Samkhuibish Makhvshi.” He was not a ruler, he only acted as a chairman of the gathering. A family could not solve the above mentioned matters without Samkhubii, because the result, good or bad, was the business of the whole Samkhubii. The Samkhubii members had significant responsibilities during weddings or funerals. To the Svan families and its divisions (units)

general property, manufacturing and consuming was not characteristic. They only shared hayfields and were scything them by joint efforts. In the XIX century every family had their own hayfields, but scything was performed with the help of the Samkhubii members.

Like some historical-ethnographical parts of Georgian highlands, death-feud was characteristic to Svaneti, too. A closest relative i.e. a family member (brother, son, father) of a murdered man had to seek revenge for his killed relative.

Over the XX century and until now, a guilty person was punished by the state organs, but after the penitentiary punishment, all matters were settled, and are still settled, by so called, habitual justice. Otherwise, in case of murder, reconciliation of confronted groupings was impossible. During the XX century habitual justice was not forgotten in highlands, as well as in lowland, where Svans lived because of various reasons.

By the above reviewed materials we saw that Svaneti was inhabited with various family names and their divisions (“Samkhubis”). In Svaneti each community structure was based on the territorial principle. The families did not have the same surnames. The territorial entities (community, village) were inhabited with various families. e.g. Mulakhi community, that united 8 villages, consisted 26 different family names. In one of the villages of Mulakhi – Chvabini, were resided the families bearing five different surnames. Alike Enguri Gorge Svaneti a multifamily phenomenon was also peculiar to Tskhenistkali Gorge Svaneti. In both Gorges, only the family divisions



(Samkhubis, Lamkhubis) had common territories. In the XX century family settlements on the same territorial entity began to disintegrate.

The village communities had their own popular gatherings named - Luzor, Lukhor. Such Gatherings were chaired by "Makhvshi" elected by people. The term of Makhvshi election was indefinite and he occupied this prestigious position to his old age, or his dying day. If a community had no confidence in Makhvshi any longer, he could be substituted. But such cases were practically rare. Makhvshi's recommendations were accepted, or turned down on general gatherings. "First, Makhvshi discussed all public cases with the experienced and trustworthy people, and then submitted their decision to the general gathering" (B. Nizharadze). In the past, when all Svans were armed, Makhvshi had a right to disarm all men during holiday celebrations after completing of which he returned them weapons.

The right of attending the community Gatherings and participating in them had not only all adult youths, but adult women as well. The community Gathering had big competence, it had a right to drive out and expel a dweller, burn his house to ashes, and even pass a death sentence upon him. One of the functions of community Gathering was solving issues of military campaign. The Gathering was regulating inter-community relationships. Community Gathering was merciless towards thieves. Protecting its members' morals - was a community Gathering's responsibility. According to Nizharadze's words: "If a woman turned out to be dishonored and had given birth to an illegitimate child, the Gathering would confiscate the part of cornfield, or hayfield of his parent and the land would have stayed as village duty for good. Such

dishonored woman and her illegitimate child were not allowed to enter church, participate in national or religious celebrations and be buried in sanctified land.” Owing to strict habitual justice of Svaneti traditional society, such kind of crimes, or mistakes that are alien to people’s collective thinking, practically never happened. Taking oath was, and still is, very important in Svan mentality. Oath was made on Christian church territory, on an icon of a saint brought out of this church. Makhvshi also was to take an oath and swear that he would be faithful to community and his people and always protect their traditions.

In the main, above-mentioned community relationships were characteristic to Above Bali Svaneti, that is to say, free Svaneti, where feudal relations stepped back in opposition with communal relations. That happened after the disintegration of the unified state of Georgia.

At first, the territorial community head of Svaneti must have been “Khevistavi”. According to ethnographic records made in the beginning of the XX century, in both, Tskhenistkali and Enguri Gorges of Svaneti, “Khevistavi’s” kheristau(v)//peristau(v)s responsibilities were reduced. While “Khevi”, under the medieval documents, was a term indicating territorial community of later period. By the ethnographically available period, kheristau//peristaus functions were mainly reduced to exposing thieves and arranging matters of supporting the aged and disabled who had no families and relatives.

The written documents also exist about Svans territorial community, the same “Khevi” (Kheu). Such documents are mainly survived about Enguri Gorge of

Svaneti, especially concerning its upper part (free) - Balszemo Svaneti. According to these documents the representatives of separate Khevi (territorial community) of Svaneti, made all-out efforts for uniting the community members. For example, in one of the documents of Seti Khevi is pointed directly that, "Kheu" should personify the united power against enemy. The Khevi traitor must be banished, or imposed financial penalty (100 tetris) on him. The content of this document is such: "We, the children of Saint Archangel church of Seti, wrote this letter under warranty and through the mediation of Saint Martyr and this is a confirmation of invariable, immutable, and indisputable statement, that for no reasons whatever - we are inseparable; The decision is final and eternal; Whenever it is necessary we are to unite the Fiends and the friends and make concerted efforts against our enemy; Let us be friends of each other's friends, and be enemies of each other's enemies; Do not leave each other in sorrow, or in merriment, or betray because of a man, or a bribe; If one of us has to pay the fine, let us share it; If one of us needs help, let all of us stand by; Let us perform our deeds by ourselves, with all-out efforts and rise as one man for the sake of each other with tenderness in our heart; If one of us earns too much, may him share a third to the others.

We prove this letter by oath and if someone breaks this oath he will be cursed in his lifetime and in the next world; His body here, and soul there; Henceforth and forevermore; In both lives;

He, who steps back, will pay a hundred Tetris and will be banished." (P. Ingorokva, II, p.45).

The above given example is important in many respects. It is obvious that the document was made up in the period of time over which the feudal relations stepped back with desperate efforts of the members of territorial community and this happened after the disintegration of unity of Georgian State system; Community members were uniting against common enemy – the feudal lords; They were not united so far; An important point also is that the oath on unity, inseparability and solidarity was made “under the warranty and through the mediation of Seti Saint Martyr” and if someone broke this oath he would be punished not only by people (in the name of god), but also be cursed by chapel. There is one significant aspect different from lowland. While in the Middle Ages lowland, only a church nobleman was called “Saqdrishvili” in highlands (Svaneti) all the parishioners, in other words, all the community members, were called this way. In the Middle Ages Svaneti no actual separation was made between civil and church cases. The leader and mediator of all civilian cases was Khevi (community) chapel. e.g. In medieval Kala Community, mountain pastures were common. If someone would break the rules concerning the pasture, the main Khevi chapel and the habitants of territorial community (“wholesome Khevi”) would punish him jointly.

In all the Svanuri and historical documents, which are, at the same time, legal documents, a territorial community is mentioned as Khevi (kheu). In the XX century these Khevis, or territorial communities, were named “societies” by the Russian government. They maintained unity even during the Soviet regime, because in those days, the historical traditions were taken into consideration in territorial administrative divisions. The Soviets could not help doing otherwise, because all these units were determined according to their geographical,

historical, and agrarian conditions, and inviolability of these units' borders were permanent. Svan people keep these bounds to this very day. Even today, these units (former communities) are united around their main chapels. It is evident that initially, the quantity of territorial communities was more significant. But gradually they increased, and consolidated under the protection of larger communities. e.g. Once there was separate Muzhali community and little by little, it became a part of Mulakhi community. In the historical documents, a part of present Latali – Ienashi, was mentioned separately. Separate territorial community of Doli, later became one of the villages of Beri territorial community.

Territorial communities (Khevi) of Svaneti were closely connected with each other. More than once is mentioned united Khevi of Svaneti. Thus, a term “Khevi” denoted not only the separate territorial units, but the whole Svaneti, which was situated on a big territorial unit, on two big Gorges. Territorial community of Mestia, i.e. “Mestia Kheu” was located in Mestia Chalai Gorge; “Mulakhi Kheu” (territorial community) – in Mulakhi Chalai Gorge; Hadishi community (“Kheu”) – in Hadish Chalai Gorge and etc. Each community (Kheu) was a consolidation of several villages.

Territorial communities had common interests, such as: Conducting joint campaigns against common enemies, self – defense, protecting common properties (pastures, churches and religious plate – crosses, icons), providing welfare of the community members and protecting their interests. The latter was managed by leaders (Perstau, or pertau, or Makhvshi) elected on community Gatherings.

Acting power of Svaneti community was -so called "Sumra". Its functions differed from those of acting army. In "Suimra" were recruited the best warriors from various communities. It had police functions. "Suimra" provided punishments of those families that had ignored decisions made by territorial community, or whole Svaneti (united Kheu of Svaneti).

As it turns out, there existed, so called "Suimra of Shuania" or "Kheuia Suimra" that united separate "Suimras" of different territorial communities. These so called police groupings do not exist currently, moreover – it did not exist in the XIX – XX centuries either. In case, any person, or family did not obey the decisions of common gatherings of Svaneti, Svimra (Suimra) would banish them from a community, or exile from Svaneti. . "Suimra" had steadily been executing community boarder decisions (about expulsion, burning houses down, or arresting people). People attributed great importance to "Suimra." The latter also represented the identification institute of Svaneti people. According to the ethnographic data of the first period of the XX century, in "Suimra" times (until seventieth of the XIX century) there was good order in Svaneti.

In relationships of Enguri Gorge inhabitants, taking oath was of a great importance. Relations within society were regulated through oath. Taking oath was performed in front of an icon, in a Christian church. Oath breakers practically never existed. The importance of oath in traditional life of Svaneti could be proved not only by ethnographic data, but also by the documents made up in the Middle Ages in Svaneti. The oath, practically, was some kind

of prophylactic measure for Svans, aiming prevention of any breaking of Svaneti traditions that were established during the centuries; The main purpose of such measure was to bar from any harm to the territorial community on the whole, or its members in particular. Svans sacramental obligations covered - fidelity, peaceful relations, no theft, no work on holidays. The only way to make a guilty person confess, was to make him swear in front of Christian saint's icon. Over years, ethnographic life of Svaneti lost some elements, but as for oath, it is still very important for Svan people.

In cases of crime the families were making payments called "Hibari". Relatively smaller payment was established for working on holidays. Sometimes the families worked purposely on holidays and in this way they were paying "Hibar" beforehand. Taking "Hibar" and making contributions to church were provided on fixed days and fixed times for everyone. Contribution was spent together by villagers (community members). Payment size depended on the seriousness of a crime. e.g. If someone used bad language towards a community member undeservedly, besides the fine fixed for such kind of insult, his family would have had to pay some payment in favour of community. "Hibar" was paid only by a single family and not by the whole kin or its divisions, the unity of relatives called "Samkhubi", ( "Lamkhubi") in Svaneti. Little by little, above mentioned payments are falling into oblivion. The big families, called in the Svan literature as "Family Communities" were also forgotten long ago. At the beginning of the XIX-XX centuries, the extended families consisted of two, three, or more married brothers, living together with their parents, could be found in all parts of Georgia with the exception of such historical-ethnographic territory of West Georgian highlands –Khevsureti. Not only brothers, but aunts

and cousins living together in such big families, is a proven fact. In the XIX century, the author - B. Nizharadze not once mentioned above wrote that Svan families were numerous. Families with fifty and more members were registered by him. But still, in the XIX century extended families were not universal in Svaneti. An ethnographer R. Kharadze proved the facts of small families reunion accompanied with corresponding rituals. In natural-geographic conditions of Svaneti, big families were the best way of housekeeping. They were managed by ("Kora Makhvshi") the elder. Makhvshi always occupied a special seat in the Svan house. It was "Kora Makhvshi," who divided farming functions between men in such families. It was peculiar to both, Enguri and Tskenistskali Gorges of Svaneti, the mixed form of farming, i.e. agriculture and stock farming. Timbering was a time-consuming work. For mountain - dwellers in Svaneti, as well as in other mountainous territories, it was customary to take extra jobs outside of their dwelling places. In agriculture and stock farming were participating both, men and women. Everybody's functions were strictly divided into big families. All kind of works performed by women managed ("Kora Makhvshi") the elder, "Kora Makhvshi's wife, as usual. From the twentieth-thirtieth of the XX century, extended families in Svaneti gave way to small, individual families.

To Svaneti were characteristic the similar conjugal relations as to other parts of Georgia. Marriage was, and still is, exogamic, i.e. the members of one and the same families could not be married, though in the XX century, in some places, this tradition was broken and there were cases, when the representatives of different branches (Samkhubis) of the same surname got married. But those were the cases when the relations were so distant, nobody remembered the



initial date of formation of those Samkhubis (which had, and still have, their own surnames), how many generations, or centuries had passed since. Owing to the ethnographic data was proved that, more frequent are such marriages when there is no relations between Samkhubis and one of these two Samkhubis has once been artificially related with the other for some reason. e.g, In several villages of Enguri Gorge of BalsUpper Svaneti are dwelling the Kvitianis, one of the divisions of which, or Samkhubi named as “Gorsosher”, represent the real Kvitsianis. Their ancestors had been moved from the North Caucasus, Balkaria and asked the protection to a powerful family – Kvitsiani. After performing the special rituals they artificially became related and took their family name, but with the only difference that they got another name of family division. That is to say, the marriages happen only between these two different branches of the mentioned family. The families within which ever had occurred marriages, are called “disreputable families” and the term bears a negative meaning. During the last 15-20 years, such “disreputable families” in both, Low and Upper Svaneti, took an oath in village or community chapels, that they would not put up with similar cases (within family marriages) any more. We had already discussed above how important is for Svan people taking an oath in Christian churches. According to ethnographic data, not a single case of marriage between the families of the same origination is revealed. e. g. After moving from Ipari to Becho community the Gulbanis took a new family name – Khorguani. Until today, the representatives of these two families do not marry each other. One might say the same about Nakani, Chkhvimiani and Goshuani families. Even today, Svans will never agree to a marriage, if their grandparents, or mother or father of their grandparents bear the mentioned family name. In such cases the prohibition refers to four generations.

Alike other historical-ethnographic territories, a period of mourning is very long in Svaneti. The members of Samkhubii and a big family name take great pains to support a family of a deceased. The mourning is expressed by wearing black clothes for a long time, especially if the deceased is young. Like other parts of Georgia, in Svaneti were family graveyards, or to be more precise, there were lots defined for all families in the cemetery situated around the village church. This tradition was broken in some places in the XX century, though. e.g. In Mestia, the “Saviour’s Church” of Laghami village belongs to the Khodjelani family. The members of the family keep the church key and only the Khojelanis’ graves are in the churchyard. About thirty years ago, the neighbours asked the Khodjelanis to let them bury there a deceased belonging to other family. The Khodhelanis expressed good will and agreed. In old times nobody would broke the tradition.

In Svaneti a special kind of mourning song - “Zari”, was accompanied the ceremonials connecting with deceased. The song was performed only by men. All the territorial communities of BalsUpper Svaneti had its own original mourning songs that were characteristic only to each of those communities, whilst Balskvemo (Low) Svaneti had only one version of “Zari”. There are not many performers of mourning songs currently. Svaneti is rich of musical folklore, especially for its well-known sun and dawn hymns, heroic, and dance, or comic songs.

Svaneti was a treasure keeper of Georgian churches and monasteries in the days of Muslims attacks in Georgia. Georgians were obliged to hide crosses,

icons and other church plate that were works of art as well: the precious manuscripts (Bible, Gospel) in the churches of Svaneti. They were safe and secure owing to the mountain conditions. Traditionally they were guarded by the key keepers of various churches that traditionally were the representatives of definite families. In 2005 we had a possibility to see the unique golden icon of Saint George with Georgian inscriptions on it. It is decorated with precious stones. This small icon made in the XI century, was destined for a warrior, but initially belonged to some nobleman. There are a lot of samples of goldsmithery, wall painting, wood engraving, made by hand of the masters living in Svaneti. In the XIII century the "Saviour's Church" of Lagami is painted by the native painter Kirkishliani.

Svaneti is the country of towers that generally had a defensive function. About 200 towers could be counted here. As many is destroyed. Several towers belonged to each family, in construction of which the whole village were taking part. It was impossible to build that towers without collective work. Although, according to legends, some families were more skilful in building towers. The Svans name Sister and brother Berianis, who are famous as the masters of tower building. The old two-story stone outhouses are not of lesser importance. In olden times, almost all towers and Svan houses were represented as a group of buildings, which in compliance with geographical environment, made the landscape exclusive.

In the 80s of the XIX century B. Nizharadze counted about 100 stone houses and 59 towers. A tower generally had the defensive function. In fact, it was an impregnable fortress. Though a tower had another function as well, it was

steady - against avalanche. The latter was verified by the last 20 years catastrophes. The people born in Svaneti are so accustomed to their towers that during the Soviet system, those who moved and settled down to lowland, in relatively big groups, had built towers even there.

Svans also had had living towers. On the first floor (“Machvib”) they kept domestic animals, the second one was destined for living, and the third floor had a defensive meaning.

About 100 churches have been survived, that wonderfully blends in natural-geographic environment of Svaneti. Small churches of Svaneti are hall type basilicas. The most of them are built in the X-XV centuries and there are Georgian inscriptions in all of them. But there are churches built even earlier. e.g. the first floor of the two-story Laghami church named - “Christ”, dates back to the VIII century.

Only in Svaneti could be found frescos on the outside walls of churches. Besides, some of them do not refer to the church subject. e.g. On frescos on the outside walls of Lashtkhveri and Chakashi churches are used several topics from “AmiranDaredjaniani” by Mosse Khoneli. The tradition of outside wall painting is rather rare in world history of art. It only could be found on later monuments of some countries in Balkan States. While in Svaneti, the X – XIII centuries church facades are decorated with outside wall paintings.

Owing to the variety of natural – geographic conditions, there existed several complexes of living and farming houses in Georgia, but Svaneti was an

exception. Dwelling system was also original here. There were only a few cases when a village was inhabited with families bearing the same surname. Usually, the representatives of two, three, or more family names lived in villages. But at the same time, it should also be admitted here, that each kin had its own separate dwelling areas in the Svan villages. For example, in upper zone of Lekhtagi village of Mestia, Khergiani family inhabited there, and in lower zone – The Chartolanis. There also were cases when families settled down in the zones belonging to other family names, especially when a son-in-law lived in the family of his wife. The latter mostly occurred, if a woman had no brothers and she brought her husband home. In such cases, she inherited fortune from her father what was absolutely out of the question in West Georgian highlands. We could not find confirmations of son-in-laws getting their wives' family names; whereas in other parts of Georgia, coming to a fortune was possible only on condition that son-in-law would change his family name into his wife's.

The XIII century documents prove up the fact that Svan villages, even in the Middle Ages, were not inhabited with one and the same family names. e.g. By that time in Doli village of Becho territorial community, lived over 25 different family names.

Svaneti was remarkable for its densely populated villages. There were small places of dwelling (villages) there. Ground area and relief never allowed formation of big settlements. In the end of the XIX century there were over 140 villages in Svaneti. Group of villages, as it was stated above, in Svaneti, as well as in other Georgian provinces, was defined with a Georgian term "Khevi" (Khev). The villages were situated along the gorge. According to the written

documents of the XIV-XV centuries referring to Svaneti, the mentioned term, in its social meaning is equal to territorial (and not family) community. Very often, the group of several gorges (also communities of these gorges and their Khevis) also was expressed with the term “Khevi”. Khevi, that is to say, territorial community, until recently represented well-defined and organized union and the villages were its subordinate part. The villages even had no autonomic functions towards Khevi (territorial community). All this was also strengthened by religion. Besides the village Christian churches, the communities had their main chapels where all the representatives of community (Khevi) prayed together.

Thus, in spite of early spreading of feudalism, the communal traditions were also survived in Svaneti. They did not impede each other. According to the Feudalism History experts’ observations, in all European countries existed the regions that were characterised with social -economic system peculiarities. (Gurevich. A Problem of Feudalism Genesis In West Europe, M., 1970 Enc., p. 8) Svaneti was one of such parts of Georgia. This is mostly due to its mountainous natural – geographic conditions. In one part of Svaneti, upper Enguri Gorge (Upper Svaneti), feudal relations stepped back after disintegration of the united Georgia. That is why, this part is called “free Svaneti”. Everything was regulated here by the territorial communal relations through habitual justice that in many cases was based on church and feudal justice as well. The role of Georgian Church was not lost in “free Svaneti” either. It is significant to note that in “free Svaneti” the “Vargis,” super layer of noblemen existed until the late period. They were nobles only by their surnames. As for their status, they were not distinguished from ordinary community members.

Territorial communities of Svaneti were closely connected with each other, and according to the documents was known as “Khevi of united Svaneti”, or “Happy Khevi”. The mentioned documents state that in the Middle Ages there was a system of common government, with its common Gathering and board practically kept in ethnographic life of Svaneti. The reason of this might have been the fact that Tskhenistskali Gorge, i. e. Lower Svaneti and Upper Svaneti of Enguri Gorge were in hands of different feudal lords, while feudalism in Upper Svaneti of Enguri Gorge had lost its positions. According to the documents it is not clear, whether Tskhenistskali Gorge of Svaneti was the part of “United Khevi”, or not. Some scientists suppose that Lower Svaneti was the part of “United Khevi of Svaneti”. This supposition is based on the fact that “Lagurka” of Kali was the central and strong chapel for people living both, in lower and Upper Svaneti. According to ethnographic data, some North Caucasian territories (e.g. “Bakhsan”) once inhabited with Svans, also were the part of “United Khevi of Svaneti”. In the later period of the Middle Ages, the name -“United Khevi of Svaneti”, was used only regarding upper part of Enguri Gorge, in other words, “Free Svaneti”, where feudalism stepped back.

As it turns out from the “Historical Monuments of Svaneti”, “United Khevi of Svaneti” had its own flag and the standard-bearer. The latter was considered as the honorable position. There was a lion on the flag called “Lemi”, while the flag carrier was named “Melome”. Melome was the keeper of “Lemi” and carrying the flag out was also one of his functions. When “Melome” walked in the village with Lemi in his hands that was a sign for every single Svan to join a campaign. Not joining was out of question. Otherwise, the missing village, or

community would have been punished by "All Svaneti Khevi". The position of "Melome" was hereditary. Lemi was kept in Seti (in Mestia). The bearers of five "Saint George's" family names (Mitvliani, Ratiani, Mchedliani, Paliani, Niguriani) were dwelling in Mestia and only they possessed the right of carrying out the flag of the whole Svaneti ("Lemi"). The right of Carrying out Lemi the next day, belonged to Japaridze family. They are said to receive this right since Japaridze's wife had sewed a new "Lemi" instead of the worn one. According to the historical documents, the men not belonging to above families also had the same rights. e.g. In the document of the middle of the XIV century is mentioned "Melome"- bearing a name of "Goshkoteliani Azag". (The Written Monuments of Svaneti, I, Tb. 1986, p. 171). The Goshtelianis were also dwelling in Mestia community, but in Lanchvali village. And nevertheless, according to the documents, Melome was elected by community, although it was done from the above mentioned families. It is not without interest that, common flag of Svaneti ("Lemi") had passed into the possession of Svans after winning a victory over Tatars. According to some legends, it expressed a wolf and not a lion. The flag ("Lemi") lost its function long ago and it is only the museum exhibit nowadays.

Historically, Svaneti communities often were in direct confrontation with each other. Powerful communities had weaker and smaller communities under their influence and subordination. Mulakhi community was remarkable with its strength, and was imposed special payments in favor of relatively weak communities (Tsvirmi, Ipari, Kala, Hadishi, Muzhali). The strength/weakness of communities often was resulting in formation of larger territorial communities. Integration of Mulazhi and Mulakhi communities exemplifies the above said.



Under the above mentioned payment, was understood to be hospitable to the men of strong communities once a year during Peter-Paul's fast.

As it was already mentioned, farming form of Svaneti was a symbiosis of stock farming and agriculture. In the XX century the main crop in Svaneti is potato. In the Middle Ages Svans generally were cultivating: barley, oats, millet, hemp. Svaneti was almost the only historical - ethnographic region in Georgia, where hayfields were irrigated and are irrigated to present day. That gave the locals possibility to haymake grass twice during summertime. According to ethnographic data, hay obtained from grass after the second hay-make was of higher quality. Svans were making hats and cloaks of wool. Svan hats, which are mostly favorable all over Georgia, were made of three colors: white, black and grey. Though, modern hats are rather modified in comparison with the hats made in the XIX century. Svan hat are laced so that the laces form cross, as a sign of Christian loyalty.

Svaneti differs from other historical-ethnographic parts of west Georgia in many ways. This difference is evident from both, the religious and social point of view. In the mountainous parts of West Georgia, such as: Pshavi, Khevsureti, Tusheti, spread of Christianity had rather superficial character. Late ethnographic life saved almost none of the Christian chapels (churches and monasteries). In Pshavi and on the adjoining territories, archeologists found only the church ruins. The mountaineers of West Georgia were praying in pre-Christian temples. Many of these temples had heathenish names. While Svaneti, from religious point of view, shows the different picture. Not a single chapel has a heathenish name here. All of them bear the names of Christian

saints. Each village has several original churches harmonizing the mountainous geographic environment. As it was already mentioned above, these churches, at the same time, were the treasuries of other Georgian churches.

It should be briefly admitted here the following: In spite of the fact that Svans adopted Christianity in the beginning of the Middle Ages, in their beliefs and imaginations survived some pre-Christian, heathenish rituals. Sometimes Christian and heathenish beliefs are presented in syncretic form. An ethnographer Bardavelidze revealed many examples of folk beliefs. He stated that the cult of Saint Barbara substituted the cult of sun. Winter holiday “Lipanali” is an example of pre-Christian period remnant. It is a day of seeing-off souls of deceased. During Lipanali, or rather, the last day of the holiday, the men from Mestia community divide in two groups and push each other, alike in rugby. The stronger group is declared to be the winner. The day for mentioning souls is “Lamproba”. Everybody brings a two-meter piece of cut birch to the cemetery and there, all Samkhubi, (family division) is lighting there pieces of birch together. They pray for saving souls of deceased. Women are crying aloud for lately dead relatives. The participants of the ceremonial are not leaving the territory of the cemetery until the lamps (birch pieces) burn down. It is remarkable that the same ritual is slightly different in Latali community. It also has a different name (“Shishlag”). People light two-meter pieces of birch at home and then carry to the cemetery. They are carrying so many flaming birches as are the males in each family. In the same Latali community also was the ritual of “Ligunashi” which meant attacking with flaming wood. The subject of attack had to flee, or get into a fight. In case he could not manage to

escape, he had to stand get dirty, or burned. “Ligunash” could be translated as “getting dirty with charcoal”. There still exist Svans loyal to “Lamproba”. The rituals and beliefs connecting with deceased are more conservative. The mentioned rituals are performed by Svan people dwelling in lowland densely populated with Svans. Professor Bardavelidze considers that the meaning of cults given in folk holiday celebrations are very complicated; It is the conglomerate of different steps of beliefs and religions. The one thing is clear, in Svaneti some heathen rituals intertwined with Christianity, give modern scientists the possibility of reconstituting some pictures of pre-Christian Georgian beliefs and imaginations.

The study of legends about the family names enables us to find out the number of various social questions. This was discussed above, and it could be added here that fuller picture of several directions of migration is beginning to emerge in Svaneti. There could be observed inner migration processes, as well as migrations from other parts of Georgia, let alone the Svans permanent migrations both, into West and East Georgia. Such processes were historically characteristic not only for Svaneti, but for all mountainous parts of Georgia. Surplus population were moving to the lowland; Because of the frequent wars, there always existed such possibilities. There are also many proved facts of migrations from North Caucasus to Svaneti.

As it was said above, the representatives of the same families always took care of churches. Serving icon (sacred image) was their responsibility. They also were taking charge of church plate. Maintenance and roofing of churches were also their responsibilities. The most honorable person, “Shokeli”, as Svans

called him, was in charge with key -keeping. To present day each family performs the above duties just as they did centuries ago.

While praying in their churches, Svans were mentioning not only their village, or province chapels. “First they mentioned their own chapels, then churches of the neighboring villages; After praying for chapels of Balskvemo (Low) Svaneti, they prayed for chapels of BalsUpper Svaneti and finished their prays by mentioning churches of Lechkhumi, Samegrelo and Apkhazeti”. (V. Bardavelidze, p.62). This ethnographic material is very remarkable in the sense that Svaneti was not isolated from other historical-ethnographic regions of Georgia. Quite the contrary, its relationships with these regions is evident even according to data on religion. According to common people’s belief, Saint George’s church of Ilori, Apkhazeti, used to send bulls to several churches of Saint George of Svaneti. In return, Ilori church got candles from churches of Svaneti yearly. The Svans believe that Saint George’s churches of Ilori and Apkhazeti and Saint George’s churches of Latali and Lendjeri were the brothers and Ilori was the eldest. They say that all the three brothers came from East Georgia – Kakheti and settled down in their region. One may assume that it reflects the facts of population migration. It is known that over a long period of time, the migrants were not forgetting their former chapels and were expressing them in legends about fraternization of the churches.

Regardless of the fact that Svaneti was a mountainous historical-ethnographic region, it had never been isolated from other parts of Georgia. Svans had close economical relations even with North Caucasian mountaineers using the paths made centuries ago.

Leaving their villages in search of jobs was characteristic for Svaneti. Part of the population – able-bodied men were going to various ethnographic regions of Georgia in the hope of finding a job. This event was not occurred in the later period; it had originated in the depths of history long ago and was also peculiar to other mountainous ethnographic regions. It comes as no surprise, because there was a lack of agricultural lands in highlands and Svans were trying to look for different ways for supporting their families. One of these ways was to go to lowland to seek employment there. The fact that Svans were systematically visiting different regions of Georgia in search of job is proved by the Georgian historical documents. In 1503 “In the letter of King Alexander on Svans adequate payment to the Japaridzes for blood feud” we read: “You came and your uncles Tvalia and Ivane began to fight with us. The sin with the help of evil prevailed over us. Then we, began to fight against you, Sargis Japaridze, and you did not let us to leave for Racha, or Lechkumi, to work as farm laborers or find any other kind of job there. It lasted seven years. No one could receive Eucharist (because of not having wine) all over Svaneti; we forgot the taste of salt. It was too much for us to stand. Finally we decided to get over Lechkumi, we gathered four hundred dray-horses, two man accompanied each hoarse, came to Lechkumi and sold everything we brought there for selling. Bought wine and returned.”... “You took away our four hundred horses and wine together with the packs.” Besides, you did other cruelties to us, and we could not find the ways to escape and find some job beyond Svaneti. Hundred of us stole away to the direction of west, trying to get to Kakheti to work as farm laborers“. “We saw so much suffering that one can not describe in words. We appeared isolated in Svaneti on the opposite side of Etseri and for twelve

years we could not find the way to flee to Kaheti, nor to Samtskhe, or Guria” (Written Documents of Svaneti, I, p. 113 - 114).

Thus, according to the extract of above deed is obvious that Svaneti and its population could not exist without economic relations with lowland of Georgia. In search of jobs, Svans were regularly visiting not only the neighboring Racha and Lechkhumi, but such distant historical-ethnographic parts, as Guria (The Black Sea region of West Georgia), Kakheti (extreme west of Georgia), Samtskhe (south-west province of Georgia). As the above statements indicate, Svans were generally buying wine and salt there. They are so concerned because of not having wine - “It lasted seven years. No one could receive Eucharist all over Svaneti...” . For Svans, as for Orthodox Christians, it was very difficult to manage without wine; Giving Eucharist without wine was unimaginable. At the same time, they took wine on their big religious holidays. Svans also brought other produces in Svaneti, such as pitchers, large quantities of which are found both, in Upper and Lower Svaneti. In Svan towers are buried pitchers brought from lowland. In dangerous war-times, the Svansis, closed in their towers, kept drinking water in those buried pitchers. According to the historical documents, Svans were taking a large amount of honey and candles for selling in lowland.

The information about Svans seeking jobs in Samegrelo, also possessed an Italian scientist Archangelo Lamberti (the XVII century). He wrote that, in order to support their families, “...in the beginning of every summer, the groups of Svans always come down to Samegrelo,” “...they work in Samegrelo until harvest time” then “they return home”, and “...when winter begins, Svans

come down to Odishi” and stay there “...until the end of winter” (A. Lamberti, Description of Samegrelo, Tb. 1938, p. 167). Thus, Svans were going down to work in groups, and not only in winter, but in summer as well, in other words, in such periods when they were not occupied in the mountains.

“In the 40-50s of the XIX century, when relations between the heads of Samegrelo and Svaneti (governed by principality) became strained, and all kinds of contacts between them were under a ban, the noblemen from free Svaneti, Besi and Sulatan Kurdianis, together with several peasants, had to ask the head of Samegrelo, Dadiani, a favor to conclude a “Trustworthy agreement” on “free entry” and “unhindered trade” (A. Gelovani, Mountainous Region of West Georgia (Svaneti) in the XIX Century. Thesis, p.160, 2002).

From the materials reviewed above, it is evident that, the regular economic contacts with regions of Georgian lowland, was vitally necessary for people dwelling in Svaneti. They were communicating not only with neighboring and adjoining regions, but were constantly establishing relations with back lands as well.

The Svans works outside of Svaneti was important because of one more reason, particularly, after several months working in lowland Svans were learning Georgian. Already in the ninetieth of the XIX century B. Nizharadze pointed about that: “The way, owing to which the Georgian language spreads in Svaneti, nothing else but Svans communications with Georgian speaking neighbors. Recently, one can meet the Svan workers, especially in winter, in: Racha – Lechkhumi, Imereti, Guria and Kartli. About three, or four months are

quite enough for them to learn everyday language, i.e. to learn it at the rate of using it independently, without somebody's help while traveling, working, or making deals. Poor nature of Svaneti forces Svans to go to work to densely populated regions. Therefore, increases the number of Svan workers, and thereby increases the number of Georgian speaking Svans. It should be also admitted here, that Svan is willing to learn Georgian. There are a lot of examples when a well-to-do Svan arrives to Svaneti together with his workers with the single purpose of learning Georgian. To this willingness we should add that the Svans are taking pride in knowing the Georgian language..."(B. Nizharadze, II, p.169-170). But we should admit here that B. Nizharadze, about Tskhenistkali Gorge of Svaneti, remarked that "All the children over 7-8 years and all the adult men speak Georgian". The fact that historically, the Georgian language was spoken in Svaneti, is proved by all the historical documents of the Middle Ages which are composed by Svans. Usually, all papers bear the signature of their author. As a rule they all were Svaneti dwellers. According to B. Nizharadze "...Svans are taking pride in knowing the Georgian language...", in other words, knowing Georgian was a matter of prestige and in the traditional society, prestige was important. Such prestigious men were Chenili, Makhvshi, Khevistavi, who were regarded with reverence by common community members.

The above materials indicate that the subsistence of Svaneti, as well as of other regions of Georgian highland, was impossible without contacts with lowland, contacts which included trading, together with outside employments ("Lakma"). "The most part of Svaneti population lacked agricultural lands. They had no possibility to grow crops sufficient for satisfying even the minimal



needs of their families. Besides, during long winters lasting 5-6 months, the majority of men were not occupied with farming. The works performed in winter, particularly, taking care of cattle (cattle here were feed through mangers all the year round), cleaning roofs from snow and such kind of works could easily be done by women, the old, and children. Therefore during winter, almost all able-bodied men had possibility to go to other regions for work. They were going mostly to Samegrelo, Imereti, Lechkhumi, Guria and Apkhzeti” (A.Charkviani. Svaneti, 1967, p. 159 - 160). Besides, until the middle of the XIX century there were many extended families where several married brothers lived together with their wives and children. Such form of family life was giving Svans the possibility to leave on duty one of their brothers in Svaneti, during winter if necessary. Going away in search of a living was an obstacle for intensive migration processes and therefore in Svaneti were more resident population than the region could provide with bare subsistence.

Svans who went for jobs were cutting wood, processing construction materials (saw), cultivating land in gardens and vineyards, digging trenches. Normally, the final date going away for looking for employment was the end of October and the date of returning in mountains - the beginning of April, i.e. the time of starting agricultural works in Svaneti.

Except Georgian lowland, Svans were trying to find work in North Caucasus, which generally took place in summer. Svans visits to North Caucasus in the course of the XIX century with the purpose of getting jobs there are proven fact. If Svans temporary migration to lowland took place during the whole Middle Ages, the date of starting to move to North Caucasus with the same

purpose is unknown. In North Caucasus Svans generally were mowing grass, gathering in the harvest (The Fact of Svans temporary migration to Georgian lowland is also proved by the medieval legends. So called "Shaliani" icon, preserved in the central church of Svaneti - Kvirike and Ivli's church of Kala, is considered as brought from Imereti by such Svan workers). According to A. Charkviani they also were building fences. Svans usually spent a month (mainly August) in North Caucasus. In exchange for a month's work they got cattle, and sometimes money. Generally, they were given a two-three year old bull-calf and often a sheep in addition, the cost of which in tsarist Russia was amounted to 20 rubles. According to A. Charkviani findings (p. 162) in 1899, after returning from Georgian lowland, the Svan workers brought home on average - 130-350 rubles; In 1998 their average earnings amounted to 140 -380 rubles. In the XIX century Svans used to go to North Caucasus in search of job even in winter. By the 1909 archival documents "only in Upper Svaneti, police officer of Svaneti issued, approximately 1646 passports. By that time, population of Upper Svaneti counted 11. 896 heads out of which the number of males came to 6. 000 (A. Charkviani p. 162).

The XIX century press also did not stay indifferent to the event of Svans searching jobs outside of Svaneti: "An able-bodied Svan, is a guest in his family. Three fourth of year he lacks in his hearth; In autumn and winter he works in west Georgia for a trifling sum." ("Kvali", # 41, 1900). In scientific literature is stated that "Normally, on outside works were gone only the males of 18 -50, able - bodied and adapted to hard traveling conditions. (A. Gelovani, p. 162).

Svans visits to Georgian lowland were important for one more reason. While being and working there, they were examining closely the places of their

possible future settlements and from time to time, many of them settled there for good. More than one family of Svan origination lived there in West Georgia, who after resettlement, changed their surnames into new names. For example, in Okriba, many families living there currently, were migrated from Svaneti (Khorkhomelidze, Shalikiani, Kherkhadze, Kipiani, Sandukhadze, Babukhadia, Meskhoradze, Gvetadze, Sopromadze, Gabriadze, Sirbiladze, Zhorzholadze...) (D. Shavianidze, Okribian family names, 2002).

Thus, such works, Svaneti was closely connected with lowland “it never was static and frozen at one point”. (N. Berdzenishvili). After returning from lowland, Svan workers were introducing new experience and knowledge in Svaneti. Trade – economic relations between mountainous regions and lowland of Georgia were established many centuries ago and had not changed until the XIX-XX centuries. Information about the fact that mountaineers and Svans among them, went away to lowland for trade as early, as at the crossroads of B.C. and A.C., also contains Strabon’s proceedings indicating that 70 kilometers away from Caucasian mountains in Dioskuria (present Sukhumi), The Black Sea coast, were concentrated the people speaking in different languages. According to A. Lamberti, Svans brought home-made goods, felt cloaks, wool, and goats and sheep for selling in Kutaisi.

Georgian historians described even the paths and roads Svans were using to get to lowland. “For getting to lowland from upper Svaneti, people used the following roads: through Latvari, Mushuri, Lasili, Lenkheri, Leshvindi and others. These were access roads to different regions of Georgia. As for North Caucasus, access roads from Svaneti were: Machkhopari, Tsaneri, Tviberi,

Bashili, Mestia, Becho, Chubuckevi, and other crossings” (A. Charkviani, p. 164).

Lack of agricultural lands was the main reason for Svans acting as trade mediators between North Caucasus and Georgian lowland. “From Karachian and Balkarian people Svans were getting cattle, horses, goats, as well as felt cloaks, Cherkezian horses, woolen goods and thick felt too cheaply and were reselling double price in “Dadiani’s principality. And Svans were supplying Karachians and Balkarians with chintz and red colored goods bought on the Lechkhumi and sadadiano markets. From their side, Svans from Sadadiano, were selling salt, lead and iron in Upper Svaneti “(Archival data quoted from A. Gelovani’s Thesis p. 165). Besides the above mentioned products, Svans brought dried pears and apples in Karachai-Balkaria (L. Bade),and beautiful frails in exchange for wool, felt cloaks, etc. (Etnographic letters on Svaneti, written by G. Avaliani and G. Zurabiani, Tb., 1973, p. 138).

Recently, in the Georgian press several times appeared information about the fact that western scientific circles show concern about disappearance of small languages, among which are Megruli, Svanuri and Tsova-Tushuri (Batsburi) in Georgia. The time might come when those languages will not be spoken. Therefore, some western funds offer creating alphabet and translating Gospel (“New Testament”) into above languages.

Georgia is one of the world countries that is multinational. Historically and to this very day, some small part of Georgians, together with State, literary and church languages, speak kindred Svanuri and Megruli languages (One of such

languages was Dvaluri including the XVIII century), as well as Tsovi-tushuri (Batsburi) belonging to Vainakhi group of Caucasian languages. In the course of centuries Megruli, Svanuri and Tsovi-tushuri were formed as only home spoken languages. From the socio-linguistic point of view, they equalize with different dialects of the Georgian language. The residents of historical-ethnographic regions of Samegrelo and Svaneti felt themselves Georgians. Thus, being bilingual was not an interfering factor in definition of their ethnic consciousness. From ethnic history of Georgia is evident that home spoken language is not a main ethnos determinant at all. As proof of this hypothesis, the scientists often give examples of bilingual and trilingual Germans, Chinese, Mordovians and others.

Is there any danger of disappearance of Svan language? Is it possible to give a scientifically well-grounded answer – positive, or negative? Until trying to answer this question, we should admit that, historically the geographic area, where Svanuri had been spoken, was large. Svans inhabited not only the territories of Upper Svaneti, but territories of present Apkhazeti as well. The fact of Svans living on definite territory of Apkhazeti, is first of all proved by toponymies. Historical (former) name of Sukhumi city – “Tskhumi” could be explained only through the Svan language and means – hornbeam. There is similar toponymy (“Tskhumari”) in Enguri Gorge of Svaneti. From ethnographic – linguistic data of historical sources we learn that Svans were inhabited in historical-ethnographic area of present Lechkhumi and Racha and in the mountainous part of adjoining Samegrelo.

The Svan language (as well as Megrelian and Abkhazian) “bit pieces from the edges” of the Georgian language and we think, stopped where it had to. Change

the Svan language into Georgian was first of all caused by the fact that State, literary and what was more significant, church languages was Georgian. At the same time, population migrations and assimilation processes were of no small importance in this respect. But, nevertheless, geographic environment was crucial. Georgian speaking groups stopped to move deeply, to mountains. In the closed traditional mountain society, spreading of the Georgian language (at the expense of replacing Svanuri) was not only slowed down, but stopped.

In traditional society of mountain, the conjugal relations played the most significant role. It is the well-known and proved fact that language overlapping was often caused by conjugal relations. In case the representative of one language unit marries the member of another one, overlapping of languages takes place. First it starts with vocabulary penetration from one language into another, and then a two-three generation bilingual period begins. The winner is that group which is more numerous. At the same time, it is very important which of these languages is state, literary and church. In the view of ethnic and language changes, the importance of social factor role is also proven in history (e.g. The settlement of Dagestan free Khundzs (Avars) and Naurs in East Kakheti at the XVI century with the support of Turks and Iranians, caused the assimilation of Georgian farmers with "Leki" (Dagestan). They preferred to escape from feudal exploitation and live in free communal relations of Dagestan, which resulted in their assimilation with Dagestans. The Social factor also appeared decisive for Germans from Lorraine and Alsace).

In spite of the fact that during centuries the Georgian language for Svans (in the scopes of present Svaneti) had been State, literary and church, it could not

cover and replace the Svan language in Svaneti. What was the reason of it? The reason, as it was stated above, was in conjugal relations. This does not mean that it was prohibited for Svans to speak Georgian. Such kind of marriages always occurred and is occurring now, but the main thing was the quantitative factor, the percentage. The percentage of Georgian speaking women getting married to Svan men, historically was, and still is, small. Traditionally, giving a woman, from lowland's natural - geographic environment, to marry a man from geographic environment mountain of mountain, was rather rare. Such kind of conjugal relations was characteristic not only to Svaneti, but to the whole perimeter of Georgian mountainous and adjoining lowland regions. It is a simple truth, that the lowlanders seldom marry the mountaineers. Invert processes are more frequent. Climate, natural, and economic conditions were better in lowland. The Georgian women tried to avoid worsening their living conditions. As for women from highlands, they were willing to marry lowlanders. That was the way of improving living conditions for them. Consequently, for Georgian mountain natives, marriage circle was limited to women living in mountains. In this respect, Svaneti was no exception. Svan men were finding partners for conjugal ties in Svaneti, in Svan spoken circles. Thus, the maintenance of the Svan language in Svaneti is caused by conjugal relations – Svan speakers marrying each other.

What is the situation in today's Svaneti? More favorable modern conditions, means of communications promote the contacts between Georgian and Svan speakers and therefore there is a more probability of marriages, or rather, Georgian women get married to Svan men.

We carried out a kind of specific sociological research. Before reviewing the results of this research, we should admit that Soviet ethnographic science showed great interest in the questions of bilingual marriages. The reason is very simple-in the course of Soviet period, the Russian officials were very interested in extension of language area. That is why the Russian Soviet ethnographic science paid great attention to mixed marriages throughout the whole Soviet Union. One of the priority directions of Moscow Institute of Ethnography was study of mixed, bi-ethnic marriages, or rather, marriages of Russians to representatives of other ethnic groups.

Soviet ethnographers (e.g. Academician Bromlei) through their researches found out that in cases of mixed marriages, one of the languages is maintained, if such marriages do not exceed 15%. If it is more than 15%, there is a risk possibility for one of the language groups (family).

Based on the above theory, we carried out the following socio-ethnological research on the territory of today's Svaneti, both in Tskhenistkali and Enguri Gorges. According to territorial communities and villages we selectively found out language characteristics of married couples; Who are the conjugal partners? Particularly, where are Svans wives from? With whom they enter into marriage?

Today Mestia settlement, the center of Enguri gorge of Svaneti (Mestia region), is the unity of several former villages and territorial units, out of which some are traditional settlements and others are- new. The old traditional settlements are: Lagami, Lanchvili, Seti, and Lekhtagi. We studied the identity of married



couples in each village. From 33 couples of Lagami, 32 Svan men's wives are Svans. Only one man's wife is from Samegrelo. In Lalveri, from 28 married couples 27 are Svans and here too only one woman is from lowland. In Lalaidi are registered 29 couples, from which 27 are locals. One family's daughter-in-law is Ukrainian and another one's -is Balkarian, from North Caucuses. In Legabi we recorded 17 married couples. 16 couples are Svans, only one family has a daughter -in- law from Tbilisi, who is ethnically Ossetin. There are 58 married couples in Airport settlement, 52 of them are locals and only 6 came from other regions: 3 - from Samegrelo, 1-from Tbilisi, 1 -from Kacheti, 1 is not Georgian ethnically, she is Ukrainian. From 45 married couples in Lanchvali, only two are not locals: One is Georgian from Batumi and the second is Russian. In Seti region from 145 couples 128 are locals, 17 – are mixed, among them 8 are from East Georgia, 7-from West Georgia, 1- from Russia, and 1- from Ukraine. According to current data, there are 20 married couples in Lekhtagi. Only one of them is from West Georgia (from historical-ethnographic part, Imereti);19 – are locals.

Thus, if we count the results of Mestia settlement, we will get the following: From 375 married couples, 344 are the natives (i.e. 344 Svan men are married to 344 Svan women). The quantity of women from other territories is only – 31. Their percentage in Mestia settlement slightly exceeds 8 %. Their home spoken language, according to research results, is mainly Svanuri. Not only ethnic Georgians, but non-ethnic Georgians as well (Russians, Ukrainians, Balkarians) have a perfect command of the Svan language.

In Lendjeri society (territorial community) we registered the results of two villages. There are 50 married couples in Nesguni village. 147 of them are natives and only 3 women are from other regions: from East Georgia, West Georgia and Apkhazeti (Gali region). In Lashtkhveri village there are 30 local married couples. Only one woman is from West Georgia (Samegrelo) and 1- from Ukraine. In total, from 82 couples recorded by us, only 5 women are natives, which amount to 1.3 %.

There are five small villages in Kala community nowadays. We registered only 20 married couples there. All of them are locals. Thus, not Svan wives quantity is equal to 0% here.

We managed to study nine villages in Latali community. From 154 married couples 145 are locals. Only nine women are from Samegrelo, Apkhazeti, Lechkhumi, Imereti. In Latali not Svan wives percentage is about 6%.

According to three villages (Tviberi, Lezgari, Labsqaldi) results in Tskhumari community, there are 58 married couples there. 50 couples are Svanuri speaking. 8 women come from outside of Svaneti. Among them are 4 Russians, who Svan men married when being in military service in Russia. The percentage of not Svan wives here equals to 14 %. But if we exclude the 4 wives of Russian nationality (as they are not Georgians), the percentage index will be only – 7.

In Becho village community of Upper Svaneti, By the results of three villages (Ushkhvanari, Tskhekvani, Kartvani) there are 72 married couples there. 71 couples are locals. Only 1 is from Imereti, what makes 1, 2%.

From 85 married couples of Nakai community, only 6 are not locals, but for all that, 5 are Russians. In total, not native wives in Svaneti equals to 7%. With the exception of wives of Russian nationality, percentage will be 1, 8.

From 90 married couples of Etseri community, only 6 women are from other historical-ethnographic regions of Georgia, i.e. 83 couples are natives. The percentage of non- native wives is 7, 5%.

The situation in three villages (Chvabe, Tsalda, and Zhabe) of Mulakhi community is such: From 50 married couples 44 are locals and 6 – are mixed. The quantity of not native wives is 3.3%.

In the village board of Kaishi are registered 60 married couples. With only one mixed couple, which means – 0.6%?

Totally, in Upper Svaneti, i.e. in Enguri Gorge (Administration region of Mestia), quantity of non-native wives slightly exceeds 5%. It means that the quantity of Georgian speaking wives and not Georgian speaking wives do not create danger to the Svan language. Visually, it is obvious that not local wives speak the Svan language fluently and home speaking language for them is Svanuri as well. Only for some of them it is difficult to pronounce some specific sounds peculiar to the Svan language.

With respect to this question, the situation in Tskenistskali Gorge (Lower Svaneti, i.e. Administration region of Lentekhi) is such; We possess data of the

following three villages: Zhakhunderi, Chukuli and Chikhareshi. From 50 married couples of Zhakhunderi – 6 women are from Imereti and Lechkhumi. Number of wives of non-Svan origin -is 12%.

Chukuli village have only 2 (one from Lechkhumi and another from Imereti) not local daughter-in-laws from the registered 45 married couples. Number of wives not speaking the Svan language in Chukuli is – 4.4%.

From 30 married couples registered in Chikhareshi village, 3 women came from other parts of Georgia, i.e. 10%.

Data of above mentioned Tskenishtskali Gorge (Lentekhi region) is as follows: 93% are Svan speaking locals. Only 7% - are Georgian speaking, according to ethnographic data, and this 7% speaks fluently the Svan language. Thus, the number of non-Svan origin wives does not create any danger to the Svan language. Nevertheless, significant amount of Georgian vocabulary units entered in one of the three communities of Tskenishtskali Gorge, Lentekhi. This is natural, because Lentekhi region of Tskenishtskali Gorge is very close to Lechkhumi (Tsageri region). At the same time, means of communications (especially electronic mail) have great influence on way of life today and in the Svan language, appearance of not only Georgian, but also foreign words, is not unexpected. Svaneti had never been closed and isolated, especially nowadays. Among other things, Svans try to maintain there home spoken language. In this regard is remarkable one innovation; During feast Svans (if there is no person who does not speak Svanuri), they are competing with each other not in

eloquent toasts, but in not mixing Georgian words while saying the toasts. They say that such people are quite a few.

The only thing that represents danger to the Svan language is - intensive migration. We pointed out above and would like to repeat here again, that this historical –ethnographic region had always been “nourishing” Georgian lowland. It is true that surplus population used to move to lowland, but about the same population number always remained in Svaneti; These processes were, more or less, stable. During last two decades began intensive resettlements in lowland of East and West Georgia, which was caused by ecological catastrophes (landslip, avalanche).

Different regions of Svaneti are densely inhabited with Svans and this provides maintaining the Svan language. But in the regions of resettlement there is no guarantee saving it. Most likely, this language will be forgotten there. The main factor of keeping the Svan language by now, is the strongly developed traditional ties of relationships. The most of the migrants left close relatives (brothers, cousins) in mountains of Svaneti, and they are keeping in touch with them. At the same time, Svaneti is a kind of summer resort for the most migrants. For the sake of not losing relationships with the migrants, Svans established a new holiday – family gatherings. Such holidays are held during old community and religious celebrations. It turns out that they are trying to kill two birds with one stone. We witnessed such celebration in Mutsdi village of Cholauri community located on Lentekhi region of Tskenistskali Gorge. Two families – Khabuliani and Kvastiani - are dwelling in this village. In June 28, 2003, there gathered the representatives of the families mentioned above and

celebrated religious holiday, together with the locals, and visited their ancestors graves. There gathered 350 people both, locals and migrants, at the holiday we attended in Mutsdi village. Usually, such gatherings end with feast.

In the Middle Ages and in the XIX century, Svans migration was not of group character. It was more individual. But in the XX century, during Soviet period, Svans (as well as other Georgian highlanders) planned resettlement was rather frequent in the regions of lowland. The first such migration took place in 1930, when the inhabitants of Ipari village were resettled in Kakheti (Kakhipari village). Resettlement of Svan people in 1948 in the regions of west Georgia is also remarkable (A. Katsadze, Modern Migrations of Georgian Highlanders, Tb. 1947, p.30). More than one family was migrated from Svaneti to Guria (Ozurgeti region) and Imereti (Khoni and Tskaltubo regions). In 1968-1970 about 100 families moved to the same regions. As it is calculated by statisticians, in the fifty-sixtieth of the XX century, in an organized manner, from Svaneti moved 478 families to the regions of west Georgia (A Katsadze, p.50).

In 1968-1969 from Enguri Gorge (Kala, Mulakhi, Latali, Ushguli, Ipari) many families were resettled in the suburban zone (Lilo and Krtsanisi villages) of Tbilisi. Svans created compact settlements in Zugdidi, Tsalendjikha, Chkhorotsku and Senaki regions.

1987 turned out to be tragic for Svaneti. In a month's time avalanche, landslide and flood destroyed approximately, 2.000 houses; Died 87 victims; The general reason of human losses and demolition was that people ignored ancestral rules of treating nature properly: woods were cut, lands were cultivated, and houses

were built where one must not do that. Left without a roof over their head, they were resettled in Kvemo Kartli regions, in East Georgia. That's how it appeared Svans settlements in the regions of Bolnisi (280 families), Dmanisi (800 families), Gardabani (350 families), Sagaredjo (55 families), Tetrtskaro (800 families). In the latter migrants from Lentekhi region prevailed. At the same time, to West Georgia (Ozurgeti, Khoni, Khobi) moved 140 families. Later, new migrants joined to upper region settlements dwellers.

Such organized Svan migrations to lowland regions turned out to be rather negative for Svaneti. The number of villages were either emptied, or left with minimal population. For example, as is registered, by 1994 instead of 120 families in Ushguli village stayed only 35 families, in Chazhashi – 5 families instead of 20, in Zhamushi – 10 instead of 90 families. If there lived 75 households in Adishi, after migration there stayed only 40 of them. 170 families were reduced to 40 in Kalashi. (see L Nizharadze, Svans Migrations and Areas of Their Resettlement on the Georgian Territory. "Encyclopedia of Georgia, I, p.2005, p. 139).

Because of flood and landslip, the risk of deserting Svaneti, especially increased in recent years. According to 1979 records, Lentekhi region was inhabited with 12.974 people, while in 2002 this figure reduced to 8.991. In 1979 number of residents of Mestia was 17.884 and 2002 – 14 248. During last three decades, Svan population decreased in number and became - 7 319. The government tries to help, but that is not enough. The most part of the population requires resettling them in lowland. Uncared and bad roads also create additional difficulties for staying in Svaneti. In order to maintain this unique historical –

ethnographic region of Georgia with its traditions, habits and ways, and what is the most important, with its language, it is necessary to stay to live there. There are a lot of unique Christian churches, crosses and icons in Svaneti. Only in Svaneti we have original towers characteristic only to this region. In case of deserting Svaneti nobody will take care of them. The only way for saving material culture, life way, language is development of tourism, creation of corresponding infrastructure, which need enormous investments. Unfortunately, Georgian government does not possess such possibilities by now.

### **The Tsova-Tushs ( the Batsbs)**

To the eastern side of the Black Sea, in the central and western parts of the southern Caucasus there is a country of Georgia (Sakartvelo), which was created by the Georgian people (under the leadership of the king Parnavaz) before the birth of Christ on the verge of the IV-III centuries. The country was sometimes unified, sometimes broke up into the separate feudal entities, it even lost the territories but has still maintained the statehood and sovereignty up to date.

Georgia, like a certain number of European countries, consists of historical-geographical parts. These parts are inhabited by the relevant ethnographical groups, who also speak the dialects of the Georgian language. However, historically, one thing was characteristic for Georgia: to certain extent, this ethnographical group spoke not the dialect of the Georgian language but its own language. These languages were spoken only in the families. So, from the socio-linguistic point of view they were equal to the dialects of the Georgian language (It is true even now!). These groups are: the Megrels (on the Black Sea Coast), the Svans (on the southern slopes of the Caucasian mountains, in the north-west part of the country). Both the Megrels and Svans speak the languages closer to Georgian language.

Historically, the same can be said about the Dvals who live in the mountains of central Caucasus. The Dvals used their own family-spoken language, too. They speak one of the Georgian languages which were between the Svan and Zan



languages but had more proximity to Zan. The part of the Dvals scattered in the mountains and lowland, part of them were assimilated with the Ossethians in the XV-XVI centuries. As for the fourth, most interesting group for us – the Tsova-Tushs or as they are known in the science, the Batsbs, they speak one of the Vainakh languages. They lived in Tusheti - the historical-ethnographical part of the mountainous Georgia. Today they live in Kakheti - the lowland of eastern Georgia. The Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) are the inseparable and linguistic part of the Georgian people.

Thus, the Georgian ethnos that was formed centuries ago, besides the Georgian language speaking historical-ethnographical groups, also united the groups which spoke other languages. As mentioned above, from the socio-linguistic point of view in the general ethnological literature their languages are equal to the various dialects of the Georgian language (Arutynov, 1989, p. 45; Jorbenadze, 1995, p. 20; Oniani, 1997; Putkaradze, Kikvidze, 1997; Kurdiani, 1997). Throughout the whole history of Georgia the Georgian language was the state, literary and church language for the Megrels, Svans, Dvals as well as for Tsova-Tushs. They were not passive in the Georgian ethnical structure and contributed respectively to the development of the Georgian language and culture. The fact that all the documents of the XIII-XIV centuries in Svaneti were created by the local inhabitants will serve us as an example. The linguists have several arguments to confirm it.

A Russian ethnographer S. A. Arutynov wrote the following about the Svans and Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs): “in the mountainous Georgia the Batsbs and Svans, according to all ethnographical measures, should be considered as special people by their peculiar manners, absolutely solitary languages, and it is required to recognize them as the Georgians” (Arutynov. 2002. p. 437). The author is right when he writes that both the Svans and Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) consider themselves as the Georgians. Regarding the fact that as if they required to be recognized as the Georgians, is not true. Whether the Svans and Tsova-Tushs were the Georgians or not has never been at issue. It was only in the interests of Russia to declare them as the different ethnos. In the XIX century both the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) and Svans certainly required to be considered as the Georgians. S Arutynov even mentioned that by the ethnographical sign, the Batsbs as well as the Svans, should be considered as special people. We would add that the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) and Svans cannot be thought as special people from this particular ethnographical point of view. Ethnographically, they are not different from other Georgian ethnographical

groups. If there is something that makes them different, it is caused by the natural-geographic circumstances. We will speak about the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) below and we will be able to see that from the ethnographical point of view (economical activities, material culture, social relations, spiritual culture), they almost were not distinguished from the same Georgian-speaking Tushs and the other ethnographical groups of Georgian eastern mountains.

At present the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) live in the historical-geographical part of the eastern Georgia, more precisely in one of its biggest village Zemo Alvani (Akhmeta Region). Historically their living place was Tusheti - one part in the same mountainous Kakheti. The whole Tusheti is located to the north of the main water-separating ridge of Caucasus (the same can be said about the other historical-ethnographic part which is called Khevi. Partly, to the north, on the other side of the main water separating ridge there is also Khevsureti, which is called "Pirikiti Khevsureti"). From the ethnographical point of view, Tusheti was distinguished with its originality and it was the language that made it different (now Tusheti is almost without inhabitants).

According to the written data and ethnographic documents, Tusheti included four communities or territorial entities (before that – 8 communities). They are: Tsova, Gometsari, Chaghma, Pirikiti. The Tushs who lived in the communities of Gometsari, Chaghma and Pirikiti (territorial entities) spoke and still speak the Tushuri dialect of the Georgian language. As for the Tushs living in Tsova community, they are bilingual. Their domestic-family language was Tsova (Tsova-Tush) or, as it is acceptable in the linguistic literature, the Batsb language. Outside they speak the language somewhat similar to the Kakhuri dialect of the Georgian language. These two groups of the Tushs are not different from each other in any ways. Ethnographically they are the same. It is natural that the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) thought themselves to be ethnical Georgians.

If we compare not very old statistical data of 1886 with each other, we can see that there were 49 villages in whole Tusheti. The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) were registered only in four villages: Indurta, Saghirta, Tsaro and Eteltha. As for the Georgian speaking Tushs (unlike the Tsova-Tushs, they were sometimes called the Chaghma-Tushs), they lived in 45 villages. The latter comprised 830 households and counted 4174 heads. Regarding the people who spoke the Batsb or Tsova-Tush language, their number was 1533. This number was distributed to 337 families. Average family of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) included 4.54 heads.

By 1886, the Georgian Tush dialect speaking people were about 2.7 times more than the Tushs who spoke the Tsova-Tush or Batsb language. According to data of 1873, the number of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) was slightly more (1571 heads). By 1831, 278 households of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) were registered and they comprised 1531 heads. Thus, in the XIX century for about 55 years the number of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) did not change practically; it varied within the limits of 1500. At present the number of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) is approximately 2000 (Shavkhelishvili, 2001, p. 10).

Besides the above mentioned four villages of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs), four more villages are mentioned in the scientific materials - Nazarta, Nadirta, Mozarta and Shavtsqala, which stopped the existence quite early. The inhabitants were halved by the black plague. According to ethnographic data, the reason of migration of the Tsova-Tushs to the lowland besides the struggling against the disaster was the black plague, too.

Among the population of Tusheti, the Tsovs were the first who moved to the lowland of Kakheti. In the scientific works several dates are mentioned about their migration but the 1830s is closer to reality. According to the population census of 1831, the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) were still registered in the mentioned four villages of Tsovati (Sagirta, Indurta, Eteltha, Tsaro). Only two families of the Nakvetauris are ascribed to the Kakheti lowland village of Bakhtrioni (Bakhtrioni is situated near Zemo Alvani - the present living place of the Tsova-Tushs). The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) did not leave the mountains and moved to their current settlement in Zemo (Upper) Alvani immediately. Before we touch the nature of their migration, we should mention that the reason of leaving the place of their ancestors is the natural disaster. In 1830 the village Sagirta was destroyed by the flood and landslide. It destroyed the big part of the population only in the village Sagirta, the population of other villages were destroyed by the black plague in the same period. According to ethnographic materials, the reason of migration to the lowland was the black plague together with the landslide.

We saw above that in 1831 the Tsova-Tushs were still registered as the inhabitants of Tsovati villages. The same fact is stated not only in 1831 but according to archive data of 1841, 1873 and 1886. Moreover, according to "Caucasus Calender" in 1910, the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) are not officially registered in the lowland, the village of Zemo Alvani (there is no Alvani in the

list of villages at all). They are still ascribed to four villages of Tsovati (Tsaro, Eteltha, Indurta, Sagirta). According to data of 1907-1908, their number was 1904 people. By ethnographical data, after the 30s of the XIX century the Tsova-Tushs used to go to the mountain only during the summer time (the census was provided by that period, too). They stayed temporarily at the place of Tbatana, which is situated at the head of the River Alazani Gorge. Gradually Tbatana became the place where the Tsova-Tushs could stay only in summer. For wintertime they started to build the temporal winter shelters near the winter pastures owned by the Tushs – areas of the present villages of Zemo (Upper) Alvani and Kvemo (Lower) Alvani on the foot of the mountain. Before settling in Zemo Alvani in winter the Tushs lived in some villages of Kakheti lowland: Bakhtrioni, Khorkheli, Kistauri and Pankisi Gorge.

So, as we can see, the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) led so called half nomadic life, which was caused by development the high level of shepherding even in the middle centuries. Surplus sheep needed the winter pastures (in the lowland) as well as the summer pastures (in the mountains). The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) did not migrate with their families. Only men were engaged in shepherding. That is why the mentioned form of shepherding is called half nomadic in the scientific works. Thus, together with the natural disaster the reason of migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) was the farming – half nomadic shepherding. There are also some other reasons of migration mentioned in the scientific materials. One of them is attacks by the neighbouring non-Georgian ethnical units – the Kists (Chachans) (Bochoridze, 1933, p. 14).

The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) started building of houses near the Alvani Valley on the verge of XIX-XX centuries and half of them spent the winter there by then. As for the Tushs speaking the Tush dialect of the Georgian language, they settled on the Alvani Valley comparatively late in 20-30s of the XX century. Unlike the Tsova-Tushs, they did not stop living in Tusheti from the beginning: they led ploughing both in the mountains and the lowland although sheep breeding had been an advantageous branch for them long time before. They never refused land farming. It is remarkable that the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) who migrated from the village Zemi Alvani settled according to their family names. They did not stop following the principle of living characteristic for the mountains and did the same in the lowland.

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Tusheti and the Tushs are mentioned in the very first Georgian historical sources. While telling the stories about the spread of Christianity in Georgia at the beginning of the IV century, the chronicler Leonti Mroveli mentions that one whole part of the Georgian mountaineers – the Pkhovs (who were bordering the Tushs from the east) did not accept Christianity. The king's official (eristavi) used the gun. Pagan Tushs moved to Tusheti (The Life of Kartli, 1955, p. 125). Similar toponymies in Tusheti and Khevsureti must be the response to this migration (Pkhovi used to be the old name of the present historical-ethnographical parts of Khevsureti and Pshavi): Khakhabo, Gudani and Gudanta, Biso and Baso and so on. Also the praying places of pre-Christian period with the similar names: "Lashari's Jvari" (Lashari Cross), "Karate's Jvari" (Karate's Cross), "Kopale" ... As the scientists suppose, the yearly pilgrimage from Khevsureti (historical Pkhovi) to the praying places of Tusheti to celebrate the religious holidays until the 50s of the XX century can prove the migration: "a large number of icons of Khevsuri origin must be the result of massive and simultaneous migration of the Khevsurs to Tusheti" (Ochiauri, 1967, p. 63). In case of migration, other facts of attitude to the ancestors' praying places are stated. The descendents of mountainous migrants kept going to their ancestors' praying places for a long time.

The Tushs are mentioned second times by a historian Juansher in the VIII century during the reign of Archil (The Life of Kartli, 1955, p. 243). Claudius Ptolemy (A.D. II century) had mentioned about the Tushs even earlier. He writes: "between the mountains of Caucasus and Kervani live the Tusks and Didurs". It is obvious that the Tushs are meant by the Tusks, the Didurs are the Didos (one of the Daghestanian tribes which bordered the Tushs from the north-east).

Tusheti and the Tushs are characterized in details by a historian and geographer of the first half of the XVIII century Vakhushti Bagrationi. He describes precisely the places of their settlement. He mentions the neighbouring non-Georgian ethnical units: the Chachens and Dedos (the Daghestanians), characterizes their economical activities, religion, language. Vakhushti underlines that the Tushs "are the Georgians by their religion and language" (Bagrationi 1973, p 544). First he names the Tsovs (Tsovata) and at the same time emphasizes that they could speak the language of the Tushes better who lived on the side of the Kists and Ghlighvs (i.e. the Chachens and Ingushs). But he wrote that the language of the Tushs of Parsma community (i.e. Pirikiti) was mixed (p.555). So that in the historical sources the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) are

separated first by the author of the first half of the XVIII century and it means that he speaks about their language peculiarities or bilingualism.

In the Georgian historical documents the Tsova-Tush is first mentioned in one of the law monument of 1754. It says that the governor (state official) of Tusheti Zurabi went to Gare (Outer) Kakheti to clarify the case of arresting of the Tsova-Tush Anta Auashvili by a local Elizbar (Monuments of The Georgian Law, 1972, p. 425). Besides Anta Auashvili and his brother Chuma, other Tsova-Tushs (Uti Shvelashvili, Sandaur Mushtrqalishvili, Uji Berukashvili, Saghir Ujishvili) are also mentioned in the same document as well as two other Georgian Tush dialect speaking tushs (Gota Gotadze from the village Dochvi and David Khelidze from the village Shenako).

The Tushs are mentioned more than once in the historical documents of the middle ages. As is known, the kingdom of unified Georgia broke up in the XV century and the Tushs belonged to one of such kingdoms – Kakheti. That period replaced the ruling system of the king Giorgi I (1472-1492) and instead of Eristavis appointed Governors (state officials in the parts and settlements). A historian Vakhushti Bagrationi speaks about the assignment of the governor in Tusheti. It was mainly the priority of the princes Choloqashvilis to be a governor in Tusheti (also in Pshavi and Khevsureti).

The Tushs are mentioned in the document issued by the king of Kakheti Levan II) 1520-1574 as well as in the document of 1757. We will come back to the content of these documents below accordingly. Now we are only going to mention that the foreign authors paid the attention to the Tushs, too. For example, in 1771 a German scientist and full member of the Russian Academy of Science Johannes Gueldenstaedtius (1745-1781) traveled in Georgia. The traveler touched Tusheti, too. He described the passage from Kakheti to Tusheti (mentioning that it is a day and a half walk to Tusheti from the main ridge). He mentioned the villages of Tusheti among them, first of all, the villages of the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs): Tsova (probably Tsaro – R.T.), Sagirta, Eteltha and Indurta. He mentioned that the Tushs could provide with 500 hundred armed men; they gave guards to the King to watch the palace. As for the linguistic observation of the German scientist, we are offering it in full: “In the first four villages (he speaks about the villages of the Tsova-Tushs: Tsaro, Sagirta, Eteltha and Indurta – R. T.) they speak the Georgian mixed Kist. It is possible that the inhabitants are the successors of the Kists than elsewhere”. “The Tushs are certainly the Georgians mixed with the Kists and the king Erekle sees them as

his obedient. It is proved by their language which is the Georgian dialect mixed with the Kist words". (Gueldenstaedtius, 1962, p. 263). By the way, as it is quite obvious, information is obtained by the German scientist from the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs). It is approved by the names of the villages: "Diklo-Arre", "Dochu-Arre". The Tsova-Tushs called the Diklos, the Shenakos like this, which means the inhabitants of Diklo and Shenako (the Diklos, the Shenakos).

The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) called themselves "the Tushs", "the Tsovas" or "the Tsova-Tushs". As we have seen, the Georgian sources did not distinguish two groups of the Tushs from each other. As far as the representatives of neighbouring non-Georgian ethnic units – the Daghestanians and Chachans are concerned, the former called them "Mosokh" and the latter – "Batsai". The name of "Mosokh" given to the Tushs by the Daghestanians is mentioned by Klaprot. Some scientists link this name with one of the divisions of the Georgians - "Meskhs" who lived in the south-east of Georgia. "The Meskhs" are also one of the historical-ethnographical groups of Georgia at present.

It is thought that the migration of "the Moskhs", "the Meskhs" to the mountainous Georgia occurred in the middle of the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium of the old era. This opinion is also supported by the fact that there is a toponymy "Samtskhe" ("Samtskhe" is the name of the historical-ethnographical part of the south-west Georgia inhabited by the Meskhs) and the praying place "Javakhe" by name (the Javakhs are one of the ethnographical groups of the Georgians in the south-west Georgia living next to the Meskhs). We would only add that if the Leks (Daghestanians) wanted to call the Tushs "Mosokhi" it was not necessary at all for the Meskhs to migrate from the south to the ultimate north-east part of Georgia. In the opinion of a Russian scientist P. Uslar, the usage of the name "Mosokh" regarding the Tushs must have been the remnant of the remote past when Mosokhi was the general name of the Georgians (Javakhishvili, 1950, p.51).

We have mentioned above about the migration of the Pkhovs to Tusheti in the IV century of the new era. Generally, it must not have been the only case of the migration to Tusheti. The narratives prove the individual migration of the population from other historical-ethnographical parts of the Georgian highland and lowland as well as the facts of moving neighbouring non-Georgian ethnical units (the Kists and Didos). Several family names definitely consider Chacneti and Daghestan as their original living places.

The main thing is that the Daghestanians call the mentioned name to all Tushs despite the difference in languages. It concerned both the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) and the Georgian-speaking Tushs. The same can be said regarding the name “Batsai”. In view of linguistics, the Vainakhs did not distinguish the Tushs and call “Batsai” to everyone. Therefore, a majority of scientists think that the name of “the Batsbs” is not proper to use regarding the Tsova-Tushs. A Chachan scientist I. Dusheriev circulated this first in the science by calling the Tsova or Tsova-Tush language “the Batsb language” (M., 1952). I. Dusheriev connects “Batsai” with the Chachan word “Buts” which means the grass. However, as is known, there are no examples that can prove the names of the people or groups of people originated from the grass or the plant generally. We think that the opinion of a linguist Bela Shavkhelishvili is more reasonable. She thinks that the name “Batsa” can be linked with “Bats” the root of which is given in the toponymy “Batsara” which is near Tusheti at the head of the Alazni Gorge. It seems interesting that “Batsari” means the thin rope in Georgian. A historian Abram Shavkhelishvili (who is Tsova-Tush himself) considers that although the Tsova-Tushs often call themselves “the Batsbs” today, but this term found its way among the people through books and “Batsb” itself is an artificially created term (Shavkhelishvili, 2001, p. 16).

We should finish talking about the name of the Tsova-Tushs which is established in nowadays’ science by mentioning the fact that the family name of the same root (“Batsioni”) used to be in the region of Kevsureti neighbouring Tusheti. They used to live in the Likoki Gorge of Khevsureti and were resettled from there by Zurab, Eristavi of Aragvi in the XVII century. It is also remarkable that one of the villages in Khevsureti is bearing the name of “Batsaligo”. One more linguistic fact: in the language of Darguels “Badz” (“Bats”) means the moon.

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There have been different opinions about the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) in the scientific materials for a long time. Who are they? Are they local inhabitants or migrated ones? Why is it so that one ethnographic group of one people is divided in different parts from the language point of view? Why are the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) bilingual? and so on. Some researchers in the first place underline the circumstance that The Tsova-Tushs who live in the mountains of Georgia (Tusheti) are mentioned only in later periods, from the beginning of the XVIII century in the historical sources and documents. This argument does not mean at all that they started living in Tusheti from the later and particular



period. If they are migrated from the Northern Caucasus (as some think from Ingushetia), then from which period? At the same time, a question arises: When did they become bilingual? It is the fact that before moving to the lowland of Georgia, even when they lived in the mountains (Tusheti), the Tsova-Tushs had been bilinguals. This is confirmed by the documents of Vakhushti Bagrationi and German Gueldenstaedtius. The Tsova-Tushs were surrounded by the Georgian-speaking Tushs in Tusheti. The main 2/3 part of the population in Tusheti, as mentioned above, spoke the Tush dialect of the Georgian language. The life of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) was impossible without the relationship with them. It is proved by the fact that the ethnographical being, traditions and manners of the Tsova-Tushs are similar to other Tushs. Historically both groups had intensive contacts and farming links with the lowland. Thus the bilingualism of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) has been a fact for several centuries.

The relationship of the Tsova-Tushs with the Georgian-speaking Tushs and then with the people of the lowland seems to have long tradition because the intrusion of 2/3 of the Georgian vocabulary into their language would have required several textbooks. The scientist Abram Shavkhelishvili writes: “The Georgian language has always been a native language for the Tsova-Tushs. It is proved one more time by the great spiritual literature which is preserved in the museum of Zemo Alvani. The people spoke similarly both the Georgian and Tsova-Tush languages” (Shavkhelishvili, p.155).

The ethnographer in the 30s of the XX century S. Makalatia mentioned that “the Tsova-Tushs spoke the Tsova language. Their language is originated from Ghligh (i.e. Ingush – R.T.) and related to Kist. But there are a lot of borrowings from Georgian in this language and it is spoken in the family and outside of it among them. Everybody knows the Tsova language in the family. It is shameful not to speak it. Children start speaking with this language and learn Georgian afterwards” (Makalatia, 1983, p. 109). Moreover, part of the male Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) could also speak the Azerian Turkish language. The practical needs of the knowledge of the mentioned language in the XIX-XX centuries, which was caused by the farming-economical links, forced both the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) and the Georgian-speaking Tushs to make the decision about sending their sons to the families of their Azerian Qonaghs (sworn brothers) for a year. Some Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) knew the Russian language, too. German Gustav Radde wrote: “12 Tush boys were introduced to me (from the Tsova

community) spending their holidays with their parents. They spoke Russian glibly” (Radde, 1881, p. 315).

The scientists think that together with the development of bilingualism the intrusion of the Georgian language also took place in the Batsb (Tsova-Tush) language. A large number of Georgian words from the fields of farming and economy entered their language: names of metal, clothes and habitation, fields and truck crops, fruit, measures of length, the technical terms of weight, time, social and political terminology. At the same time, the changes in the Batsb (Tsova-Tush) language was not limited only by the vocabulary. The grammatical and phonetic characteristics of the Georgian language were also originated. However, despite the mentioned above, the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) language managed to maintain the features characteristic to the languages of the Nakhuri group (Desheryev, 1952, pp. 9-13; Chrelashvili, 2002, pp. 312-322). The names of some certain objects and events co-exist in Georgian and Nakhur forms.

The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) have Georgian proper names. If we look through the documents of the population census in 1831, 1841, 1973 and 1886, we will see that mainly the Georgian names, more precisely Christian Orthodox canonized names and pre-Christianity names were popular among them – exactly the same names as among the Georgian-speaking Tushs and other ethnographical groups of the eastern Georgian mountains. In the census of 1873 only the male names are fixed.

In the village of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) Indurta we meet the following names which are canonized by the Orthodox Church: Abram, Andria, Aleksii, Aleksandre, Basil, Besarion, Gabriel, grigol, Giorgi, Davit, Dimitri, Egnate, Yakob, Isaac, Yob, Yase, Yoseb, Yordane, Ivane, Ilarion, Konstantine, Lazare, Mate, Mikheil, Maksime, Nikoloz, Parten, Pavle, Solomon, Svimon, Stepane, Timothe, Tevdore. Evidently, the Orthodox Church controlled the process of giving names among the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) because in the census of 1831 and 1841 we really meet the Christian names but not with a hundred percent as in the census of 1873. It is confirmed by the fathers’ names given in the census of 1873. For example: Babo, Epkho, Echi, Torghva, Imeda, Irema, Ina, Kakho, Lela, sultan, Saghir, Uji, Uti, Sharmazan, Tsiskara, Khirchla, Jamar, Jikho some of which are old Georgian names of pagan era (Jikho, Mgela, Tsiskara, Epkho, Irema, ... Imeda). Some of them are non-Georgian names of northern Caucasus origin (Uji, Uti, Echi, Khirchla).

The same can be said about the female names which are fixed in the census of 1831. Among the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) the most popular canonized Christian names were the following: Tamar, Maia, Martha, Mariam, Elisabeth, Anna, Nino, Barbare. Remarkable pre-Christianity names are: Mertskhala, Tuta, Dai, Tredi, Sabedi, Kmara, Kala, Mzekala and others. Not only among the Tushs but also in other parts of mountainous Georgia (Khevsureti, Pshavi, Khevi) the names spread from the ethnical units of the northern Caucasus were not rare. It was resulted from the ethno-cultural links which was maintained between the mountaineers of Georgia and northern Caucasus for centuries. Regarding the proper names mentioned event was characteristic for the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) in the XVIII century as well. Gueldenstaedtius paid attention to this fact, too in the XVIII century: “personal names are more mixed, mostly male names are Georgian” (Gueldenstaedtius, 1962, p. 269) (Die Namen sind mehr vermischt, doch mehr georgische Nansamen).

The same can be said about the names of the Tsova-Tushs. They have exactly the same model of names as in other parts of mountainous Georgia. There are only 86 names of the Tsova-Tushs. Absolute majority of them were originated from the male names of their ancestors and are formed by means of –shvili, -dze and –ur (-ul) suffixes.

We will come back to the names of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) later. We would only mention here that according to the available historical and ethnographical documents, they realized themselves as the Georgians. However, in the documents of the population census of the XIX century in the column of народность (nationality, people - in Russian) the Russians put the name of the ethnographical group for the Tsova-Tushs (as well as the Georgian-speaking Tushs) as the representatives of other Georgian ethnographical group. It was the result of the Russian imperial policy. In the census of 1926 all the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) registered themselves as Georgians. It is true at present, too. They feel offended if someone, by chance, is doubtful whether they are Georgians or not due to their bilingualism.

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Now we should go back to the issue of migration of the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) to the mountains of the eastern Georgia. Due to the fact that we do not have available written sources about this problem, the narratives and linguistic

data can serve us as the only source. It should be mentioned from the very beginning that while touching the issue of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs), the scientists are divided into two groups: one of them prove that their ancestors came from the northern Caucasus, Ingushetia to the mountains of the eastern Georgia. The others similarly prove that the ancestors of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) lived there from the very beginning and they did not migrate from anywhere else.

There is the third opinion which expands the second opinion. The author of this opinion concludes that the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) have lived in Tusheti for long and they are definitely those Tushs who are mentioned in the in old sources and the Georgian-speaking people moved comparatively later from the lowland. The Tsova-Tushs were assimilated into the Georgian-speaking people and became Georgians. The speech of native Tushs was maintained only in the community of Tush Tsovati. This opinion belongs to Qizilashvili whose educational background is neither history nor linguistic. We will never discuss this opinion again. We would only add as an assumption that if the people of Tusheti spoke the non-Georgian language on the verge of the new and old eras, that non-Georgian must have been one of the languages of the Daghestanian group and not Vainakh. This historical-ethnographical part of Georgia geographically is connected by the river (gorge) to Daghestan and not to Chachneti.

Data about the migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) from the northern Caucasus (Ingushya) to the mountains of eastern Georgia – Tusheti were published even in the press of the XIX century and expanded in the scientific materials of the XX century. The main argument was the similarity of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) language with the Vainakh languages. According to narratives one of the first who published this opinion in the press of the XIX century was Ivane Tsiskarishvili – Tsova-Tush (Batsb) by origin (Tsikarov, 1843). The follower of this opinion was the linguist Akaki Shanidze. He even supposed that “the forefathers” of the Georgian-speaking Tushs “spoke the Tsova-Tush language and then gradually began speaking Georgian” (Shanidze, 1978, p. 109). Thus this author considered the Georgian-speaking Tushs as Georgian-Vainakh origin mixed people. The following authors wrote about the Vainakh origin of the Tsova-Tushs: P. Uslar, I. Desheriev, A. Genko, S. Makalatia, G. Melikishvili, V. Elanidze, V. Lagazidze, T. Uturgaidze, J. Stefanidze...

The mentioned problem caused the interest of N. Volkova – a Russian ethnographer, expert of the Caucasus (Volkova, 1977, pp. 84-89; Volkova, 1973, p. 161; Volkova, 1974, pp. 153-156). On the basis of the existing scientific materials and the narratives obtained by her (both among the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) and the north Caucasian Igushs), she concludes unambiguously that the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) migrated to Tusheti - the geographical part of the eastern Georgian mountains from the northern Caucasus – Ingushya. According to the recording of narratives by Volkova, the reason of migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) was the religion. They were forced to convert Christianity into Muslim. In order not to start Mohammedans therefore they moved to the Georgian mountains. According to other narratives, in Ingushya where the ancestors of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) lived the land was not enough and it was very unproductive. Therefore, they decided to look for the new land to settle. The place where they came from was called Vabi (Vatsi).

The narratives about the migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) from the Northern Caucasus was recorded by N. Volkova herself with the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs): “we, the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) are Georgians but Kists by origin and our language also is Kist-related. At present, the Tsovas are part of the Tushs but we came from another part, from the west, the country of Ghalgha (Ghalghai). When Shah-Abbas wanted to convert all of us to Muslim belief, then Ghaghlians decided to move to the mountains of Georgia” (Volkova, 1972, p. 84). Similar narrative was recorded by her with the Kists living in the neighbourhood of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs). They live in Pankisi Gorge and migrated from Chechnia in middle of the XIX century: “Batsai (bothe the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) and the Georgian-speaking Tushs are meant – R.T.) are mountaineers and includes two people. The first ones “Chaghma-Tushs” are Georgians, the second are the Ghalghs. In the past only “Chaghma-Tushs”, the Georgian-speaking Tushs lived in the mountains of Georgia. The Batsbs escaped from the country of Ghalghs when Muslims entered Ghalgheti”.

N. Volkova Supports the narratives about the Ingush origin of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) by linguistic data and relies on the monograph of I. Desheriev in which the special similarity of the Ingush and the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) languages is stressed. He even points to the place called Vabi (Vapi) from where the ancestors of the Batsbs migrated. According to the Ingush narratives, the reason of migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) was the lack of land. At the same time, according to the ethnographic data fixed in Ingusheti, the ancestors of the Tsova-Tushs (the Batsbs) had been migrated to Ingusheti in one’s time from the

other historical-ethnographic province of the eastern Georgian mountains – Khevsureti. They were related to the Khevsurs (Volkova, 1973, p.169). In another research the same other points to the migration of the part of the Tsova-Tush family names from Khevsureti Arkhoti community. Among those family names, according to historical reports, she mentions the big family name of the Tsiskarishvilis in the first place (Volkova, 1974, p.152).

It is worth remembering here an above mentioned narrative that the people Batsionni by name lived in the Likoki Gorge in Khevsureti from where they moved to the uncertain direction. In this respect it is also important that one of the villages in Khevsureti bears the name of “Batsaligo”. The Russian ethnographer N. Volkova mentioned as well that the language and culture of the people of the Maist community in Chachneti were once very close to the Georgians and they confessed Christianity in the past. Moreover, in the village of Rosnichu N. Volkova recorded the following narrative that the Chechens who live in the Malkhist community of Chachneti are the successors of the Khevsurs - Georgian mountaineers. N. Volkova thinks that the people living in the village Shuana - Ingush Gorge of Metkhali are the descendants of the migrants from Georgia (Khevsureti) (Volkova, 1973, p.166,168). By the way, the Vainakhs (Chachans) called “Shou” to the Georgian ethnographical group the Pshavs – neighbours of the Georgians.

In the XIX century 11 villages above mentioned Malkhisti community in Chachneti, who neighbored with Khevsureti was included in Tianeti district of Tbilisi province (the same happened in the middle centuries. In the census of Karl-Kakheti made at the end of the XVIII century the author of which is Ioane Bagrationi (a son of the last king of Georgia Giorgi XII), these places or “one gorge of Kisteti with its villages” were under the control of the Georgian Kingdom (I. Bagrationi, 1986, p. 72).

According to the census in 1886, a majority of population bore the family names with the Georgian –ur suffixes: Albakauri, Ashigauri, Barchauli, Badurgauli, Bakashauri, Gadumuri, Dadiguri, Zantauri, Karsamauli, Mukhauri, Khaiauri and others. As reported, these Kist (Chachan) family names were originally eastern Georgian mountaineers (Khevsurs). Thus, as it seems, bilateral migration links (processes) between the people of the eastern Georgian mountains and northern Caucasus mountaineers of the Daghestanian origin was not rare.

Now we should go back again to the Ingush narrative given in the book by N. Volkova about the relation between the Tsova Tushs (Batsbs) migrated to the mountains of Georgia from Ingusheti and the Georgian mountaineers (Khevsurs). We recorded almost similar narrative in 2005 from Adam Aleksii Charkhoshveli who is competent in narratives (born in 1928) and who heard about it from old people in his childhood: six shepherds living in some villages of the Georgian lowland (five from Kiziqi region and one from the village Matani) stopped at the Gometsi Gorge of Pshavi for a long time while looking for good pastures. One man Sveluri by name joined them in Pshavi. The latter told the shepherds about the Jarieri Gorge in Ingusheti which was rich with excellent pastures. The Georgian shepherds of seven family names with their sheep and families definitely moved to Ingusheti. One local man joined them there. This was the origin of eight family names in one of the villages of Ingusheti. Later they entered into a marriage with the local people. The Ingush language became native for the successors of the shepherds of Georgian origin. After living in Ingusheti for a long time, the successors of Georgian migrants were under the stress of the local Ingushs because the conditions included long pasturing of sheep and not the permission of settlement. Pressed shepherds of Georgian origin and their families were forced to leave Ingusheti and now to move to Chachneti. They changed several places in Chachneti and finally, they settled in Tianeti. After certain time of staying in Tianeti, the ancestors of the Tsova-Tushs settled in three villages of Pirikiti community in Tusheti – Girevi, Chontio and Egho. After that they moved to Tsovati and eight family names settled separately in different villages. The first man who settled in Tsovati community was Tsoe - the representative of the Cheicheni family name. But neither his family nor others followed him. The decision about the final settlement of the Tsova-Tushs in Tsovati was made by the community assembly because the land was not enough even for the people of the three villages of the Pirikiti community (Girevi, Chontio and Egho). That is why the Tsova-Tushs buried the dead bodies in the village Chontio - Tusheti community of Pirikiti. The name Tsota (Tsovata) was given to the community after the name of the first settler “Tsoa”. They maintained Christianity but there are no narratives prove whether they preserved the Georgian language or not. The fact is that in the XVIII century the Tsova-Tushs were bilingual. Besides the Tsova-Tush language they could speak Georgian as well.

In this respect, the following materials of social character recorded by N. Volkova in her old age are of not less importance. According to them, the Ghalghs (Ingushs) considered themselves more privileged than the Vapiels

(from where the Tsova-Tushs migrated). They stated that for killing one Ghalgh (Ingush) they could kill two Vapels in return (Volkova, 1973, p. 169).

N. Volkova does not doubt about the Ingush origin of the Batsbs (Tsova-Tushs) but she finds the dating of their migration to Georgia comparatively difficult. According to one of the narratives, they moved from the living place of their forefathers because Shah Abbas I forced them to convert to Islam. The invasions of above mentioned Shah mainly took place in the first quarter of the XVII century. According to this narrative, the migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) must have taken place in the first quarter of the XVII century. But as it is known in the historiography, in the mentioned period Persian (Iranian) invasions did not take place in the northern Caucasus. Shah Abbas I invaded the east Georgia several times in the first quarter of the XVII century and completely destroyed everything. Persian (Iranian) invasions were responded by uprisings of Georgians. One of them broke out in 1659. The uprising at Bakhtrioni where there were winter pastures of the Tushs ended with the victory of the Georgians. The Georgian mountaineers – the Tushs, Pshavs, Khevsurs participated actively in it.

The migration of the ancestors of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) to the Georgian mountains during Shah Abbas I is obviously doubtful by N. Volkova, because, as mentioned above, in the first quarter of the XVII century Iranian invasions in the northern Caucasus did not take place. In her opinion, the plot of including Shah Abbas invasions and the forced convert to Islam took place by the time when the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) had already lived in Tusheti. In order to prove that the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) had already lived in the mountains of Georgia by the beginning of the XVII century, the Russian ethnographer brings another, different source. Russian Embassy dated 1589-1590 and led by the prince Zvenigorodsky were recommended to go to Georgia through the route where “the Batsb Ridge” (i.e. hills) is mentioned between one tribe and two mountains. It is also mentioned in the document that “this Batsb land is owned by their sovereign Aleksandr” (i.e. the king of Kakheti Aleksandre).

N. Volkova relies on the Russian scientist A. Genko that “Batsb ridge” and “Batsb land” are the mountains and area of the Batsbs. If we share this opinion – adds N. Volkova – we should conclude that in the last quarter of the XVI century the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) lived in the mountains. We think that mentioned opinion causes a doubt because the Vainakhs called “Batsi” not only the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) but also Georgian-speaking Tushs.



N. Volkova exemplifies the supposition of the linguists that their settlements might have been happened by the time when the common Vainakh language still existed because according to I. Desheriev, the Batsb language preserved some marks of the common Vainakh language which was characteristic for the original language before it was divided into the Chachen and Ingush languages. This opinion is not strengthened by historical facts either. The first Georgian historical source about the narratives of the III century B.C. distinguishes the Chachens and Ingushs by calling them the Durdzüks and Ghlighvs accordingly.

Bilingualism of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) is the proof for Volkova about their settlement in the mountains of east Georgia which is also confirmed by the German scientist Gueldenstaedtius in the 70s of the XVIII century. We would add that this argument is not stable either. Bilingualism can occur in a certain group of people only among its two or three generations. It depends on the real situation. The areal of the settlement was arranged in such a way that if their migration from the northern Caucasus had definitely taken place, during two-three generations they surely would have learnt the second - Georgian language. It was caused by the necessity of contacts with the neighbouring georgian-speaking Tushs as well as the nature (type) of their farming – half nomadic shepherding and during the winter time moving the sheep to KAKheti lowland (Alvani Valley) pastures.

According to the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) historical narratives, from the very beginning they settled in the village Chontio – Pirikiti community of Tusheti, which is probably proved by the fact that after settling in Tsovati or at the head of Tusheti Alazani, they kept links with Chontio for a long time. It meant burying the dead villagers in the village Chontio - Tusheti territorial community. The people in Chontio necessarily joined the funeral procession. Only after the snowslide of the big mountain the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) stopped burying of their dead in Chontio. This narrative makes it obvious that only the small part of the ancestors of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) must have been settled in the village Chontio – Pirikiti community of Tusheti. Chontio could not even hold the number of people which afterwards lived in four (or earlier eight) villages. Due to its geographical location, Chontio was able to hold and feed only 30-35 families. Those who left Chontio settled in the Tsovati village of Tsaro first.

If we rely on the narrative, there were two waves of migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) from Ingusheti. The first one was in the village Chontio – Pirikiti community of Tusheti from where they moved to the Tsova-Tush village of Tsaro and it was the second wave of migration; During their stay in Tsaro a new wave of migration from Ingusheti started. The fact that people in Tsaro buried their dead in the village Chontio – Pirikiti community of Tusheti indicates that they had been settled there long time before as they had their cemetery and according to the traditions of mountaineers, the people migrated to Tsovati buried their dead next to their previous deceased. It is absolutely possible that the increase of the villages in Tsovati Indurta, Sagirta, Etelta (and also small villages: Nadirta and Mozarta) was caused by the growing the number of people particularly in Tsaro.

We will not touch the opinions of other scientists about the moving of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) from Ingusheti to Georgia. However, we would like to offer the opinion of an author V. Elanidze. As he concludes, they migrated to Tusheti in the second half of the XVII century. (Elanidze, 1988, p.23).

We can name Abram Shavkhelishvili among those scientists who objected the opinion about the migration of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) from Ingusheti to the east Georgia (Tusheti). He himself is a representative of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) and knows their ethnography and folklore. A. Shavkhelishvili thinks that the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) are aged local people of Tusheti and have not moved from anywhere. Their bilingualism is caused by the infiltration of the people of Kist (Vainakh) origin. The scientist dedicated several books to the mentioned problem (Shavkhelishvili, 2001; Shavkhelishvili, 1987; Shavkhelishvili, 1977). He proves it by naming the authors with the same opinion that the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) are native locals. He cites the foreign authors (Gueldenstaedtius, Shifner, K. Kokh and O. Spenser). They wrote that “the Tushs are united in one fraternity”. They are Georgians by origin and believe Christianity (K. Kokh and O. Spenser, 1981, p.251,256).

To support his statement A. Shavkhelishvili largely uses ethnographical and folklore data as well. He draws an analogy between the toponymies “Tsobeni” and “Tsova” and “Tsanars” and “Tsova”. A. Shavkhelishvili’s view is not an exception though. Ivane Javakhishvili and Niko Mari had made an analogy between the mentioned toponymies earlier before. We would add that despite the same sounds, the scientists do not see the similarity between “Tsobeni” and “Tsova” at present. The same can be said about historical “Tsanari” and “Tsova”.

Territorially “Tsoben” is quite far from Tsova. Tsobeni was an inhabited locality near the Aragvi George in the east Georgia. As for the Tsanar tribe, it was located at the head of the river Tergi. In the IX century they settled in the lowland (Kakheti) and mixed with the locals. On the basis of analysis of various written documents, the opinion is acceptable nowadays in the science that the Tsanars were related to the Svans and they spoke the language close to the Svan language (Gvasalia, 1970, p. 753-756).

A. Shavkhelishvili asks questions to which naturally he gives answers himself. One of the questions sounds like this: can the language borrow two thirds of the vocabulary? The answer is as follows: There are no analogical facts of that in the world. Next question: Why did not the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) maintain anything from the old society or tradition responses of which can be found among the Vainakhs and why is their psychic and self-conscious (identity) so far from the Vainakhs? We would add that it beyond our competency to define the percentage of Georgian lexical units in the vocabulary of the Tsova-Tush (Batsbs) language. The second question that manners and traditions of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) are of local Georgians and they have nothing in common with the Vainakh traditions and manners should not arise any surprise or doubt. Groups of people after moving to the different ethnic circumstances often change their attitude, traditions and mentality due to the people and natural-geographical surroundings. Not to go too far, the Chachens and Ingushs who are related to each other and have one origin are quite different in the way they keep household.

At the same time, religion should also been taken into the consideration. The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) are Christians but the Vainakhs are Mohammedans. And religion contributed a lot to determine not only the manners, system of traditions and mentality but also an orientation of the values. Besides, the economical and farming links between the groups of people are of great importance. The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) together with the rest of the Georgian-speaking Tushs were tightly connected with the lowland of Georgia, Christian Orthodox religion, Georgian language. Thus self-consciousness (identity) is often determined not by the origin but by the spiritual values, consciousness. In this view, the language itself does not often have decisive importance. It is an axiom in the ethnical history of the world people.

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We have already mentioned above but we would like to repeat that the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) have Georgian family names. Their roots as well as the suffixes are Georgian. They end with the Georgian suffixes –dze, -shvili and –ur. Although when the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) speak the Tsova-Tush language they give their family names particular shape. As it is noted, “one group is formed by adding the element –ghar, another group adds –ur element. The family names of the second group also add the suffix –i to form plurals” (Chrelashvili, 2002, p. 292). For example, Apshinashvili is Apshina-ghar in the Tush language, Kavtarashvili – Kovtar-ghar, Chrelashvili – Chrela-ghar, Shvelashvili – Shvela-ghar, Charelshvili – Charlo-ghar, Longishvili – Luing-ghar, Veshaguridze – Veshkur-ghar, Torghoshvili – Torgha-ghar, Khachiuridze – Khachir-ghar and others. It is fairly noted that the –ghar element shows collectivity and possession (Chrelashvili, 2002, p.293). Family names of the second type in the Tsova-Tush language are formed by adding –ur//–r element (Chrelashvili, 2002, p.294). Examples: Meotishvili – Mevt-ur-i, Mchedlishvili – Chedl-ur-i, Shalapishvili – Shalp-ur-i, Kadagidze – Kadg-ur-i, Dingashvili- Ding-r-i, Tsotoidze – Tsot-r-i, Lagazidze – Lagz-ur-i and so on.

It should be noted that the family names formed by means of –ghar and –ur//–r suffixes express only plural in the Tsova-Tush language. “There is no family name in the Tush language which indicates only one person. It consists of the whole family name” (Chrelashvili, 2002, p.293). A Chrelashvili fairly supposed that the lack of the family names with the meaning of singular (lack of the family names in singular) might be caused by living in communities. Based on the collective nature of the mountainous territorial community, the realization of an individual did not take place. According to the mentality of mountaineers, the family name was a unified body and the individual behaviour was impossible. By representing the family names (names) only in plural form in the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) language the group (collective) mentality was expressed.

It is remarkable that both the –ghar and –ur//–r suffixes express the possession (towards an ancestor, founder of the family name) in the Tush language. –ur suffix is characteristic only for the Georgian language and it entered the Tsova-Tush language from the Georgian. However, Chrelashvili thinks that it is a substrate of the Georgian language in the Tsova-Tush language.

From the very beginning only the people with one family name lived in the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) village. According to the ethnographical data, they are the

following: Peshkrou, Shuirtlou (Shurtlobi), Cheicheni, Shveluri, Beikhuri, Tsarbi, Bghujrobi and Uildghara. The Peshvrobs and Bghujrobis settled in Etelta, the Chechenis – in Zemo (Upper) Sagirta, the Shveluris – Kvemo (Lower) Sagirta, Shurtlobi – in Indurta, Beikhuri – in Mozverta, Uidghara (Uidrobi) – in Nadirta who used to Nadira (Naeidghara) from the very beginning, then – Uidghara and finally - Kuizhghara. As for Tsaro, the Tsaros (“Tsarbi” in the Tsova-Tush language) lived there. Various family names separated from them afterwards i.e. creation of new family names took place. The process of getting new family names from main names occurred not only in the period of living mountains but also after the migration to the lowland. There are a lot of fraternized family names (or the family names artificially related to each other), the ancestors of which mostly were the hired shepherds from different parts of Georgia and the northern Caucasus. The basis of the family names was the first name of a distinguished male ancestor. These family names both old and new represented one kindred circle.

Ethnographical data (reports) and the documents of the XIX century census depict an interesting picture about the family names of the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) origin. For example, the family name of Sveluris settled in one part of the village Sagirta as mentioned above. The Dingashvilis and Tsiskarishvilis were derived from the Shveluris (the family name of the Tsiskarishvilis is based on the male name of the pre-Christianity era “Tsiskara”). Later several new family names were derived from the family name of Tsiskarishvili. Despite this, the Tsiskarishvilis are large in number at present. For example, according to the population census in 1831, 71 families lived in the village Sagirta out of which 19 families bore the name of the Tsiskarishvilis.

The mentioned census shows that the originating of new family names was newly started. The process became intensive in the first quarter of the XIX century. To discuss the reason of it will take us long. Similar process took place in neighbouring historical-geographical part of Pshavi in the mentioned period. The divisions of old Pshav family names (names of divisions) turned into new family names (names). However, the old family names still continued their existence both in Pshavi and Tusheti. In 1873 28 families of the Tsiskarishvilis were registered in Sagirta, 31 families – in 1886, There were nine families of the Dingashvilis in Sagirta. In the census of 1873 another family name Saghirashvili was ascribed to one of the DAngashvilis. There were 10 households the Kadagidzes in this village in the mentioned year.

The Cheichenis lived in the second half of the village Sagirta (it was called Tsoeta in the past). This family name includes about 12 family names: Shavkhelishvili, Babishvili, Edisheridze, Baselishvili, Mikeladze, Bachulashvili, Jimsherishvili, Itoshvili, Charelishvili, Pelishvili, Tsikhelishvili. The main part of the Cheichenis destroyed. Their direct descendants are the Sagishvilis. However, according to other data, they are the successors of the Berdiashvilis migrated from Khevsureti. Other family names are gathered, artificially related family names.

From the very beginning the family name of Peshkrou lived in the village Etelta. Officially, mentioned family name does not exist any more at present. The following family names are combined in this name: the Charkhoshvilis, the Mushtaraulis, the Bakhtarishvilis, the Baindurishvilis, the Badzoshvilis, the Jikhoshvilis, the Baidzes, the Papashvilis, the Bukuraulis, the Begumishvilis, the Khadishvilis, the Nakvetauris, the Chrelashvilis, the Ghalishvilis, the Shankishvilis, the Ozhelauris. The direct descendants of the Pashkrous are only Badzoshvilis. Other family names are fraternized (or the family names artificially related to each other). The Bukuraulis, the Papashvilis and the Begumishvilis are the successors of Mgelika Chincharauli migrated from the village Shatili. Despite the fact that 16 family names of the people in Etelta are not actually related by blood (are artificially related) they do not enter into the marriage with one another.

The root family name (main name) in Indurta used to be Shortiani (Shortiuli). They bear the family name Shortishvili. The rest of the family names are artificially related to one another. For example, the Lagazidzes came from Pshavi. The Usharaulis were distinguished by their number (according to the census of 1873 – 13 families).

The following family names lived in the village Tsaro: the Ujiraulis, the Sulkhanauris, the Datoidzes, the Khachirishvilis, and the Zhodurishvilis. Their original family name was Tsaroeli (“Tsarbi” in the Tsova-Tush language). But actually none of the mentioned family names are the direct descendants of the Tsaroelis. The original inhabitants of the village Tsaro were destroyed by the black plague. According to the tradition in the mountains, the first one who settled in the place of the Tsaroelis was Sulkhan Akhauri and as he was declared as an heir he got the family name of Tsaroeli. It is true that at present the official family name (as the narrator says “name to be written”) of the

successors of Sulkhan Akhauri is Sulkhanauri but the people call them the Tsaroelis (“Tsarbi” in the Tsova language) even today.

Besides the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs), the migrants from Pshavi, Khevsureti and Kisteti (Chechneti) lived in the villages of the Tsova-Tushs. Migrated family names were under the protection of the local names. As the locals used to say “they were fraternized”. It was traditional in the mountains of eastern Georgia to accept and familiarize aliens. It was the artificial way of making a new comer (migrant) as a relative. The latter and their successors were never distinguished from relatives by blood. The alien became the rightful member of the territorial community. And as it is observed, it strengthened the social union. For mountaineers integrity was one of the most important values (Kandelaki, 2001). Such an event is typical for all traditional societies and the dichotomy is called “alien-relative” in the western ethnology.

There were rules and traditions of accepting and familiarizing of an alien. It was crowned by conducting the ritual in the praying place. Such aliens were not rare in Tusheti and among the Tsova-Tushs either.

In the village of Etelta one of the main and previous family names was the Mushtaraulis. But according to ethnographical materials, the Mushtaraulis were not from Ingusheti but from Khevsureti. The same can be said about the Kavtarashvilis who live there. They were welcome by the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) family name - the Turkoshvils. The Kavtarashvilis joined the Turkoshvilis – they “fraternized”. The Udzgharaulis in Indurta come from Khevsureti, too. They were accepted by the Baikhodzes. In the census of 1873 one household of the Uzgharaulis lived in the village Indurta: the Khevsuri origin of this household is confirmed by the census of 1831: “Mgelia Uzgharauli from Khevsureti”. As seems, this particular Mgelia Uzgharauli was a newcomer and had not completed the ritual of the alien acceptance yet. That is why he was not a rightful member of the society and for this reason he was registered as Khevsuri.

In the documents of the cameral census of the XIX century several alien families were fixed. Among similar migrants are named: “Khevsuri Ocho Sasanidze” in the same village Indurta, “Khachir Sindidze” from Khevsureti in Tsaro (the aliens from Tusheti were not few in number in Pshavi and Khevsureti. For example, the Kutsashvilis in Pshavi are descendants of the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) Sulkhanauris). According to the census in Sagirta 3 Kist families were registered. As it seems the Kists were baptized as Christians

because they bore the local Christian names (e.g. Ivane). In the cameral census of 1873 there were 17 alien families from Chacneti in all. In the census of 1886 Arabuli who had come from Khevsureti in 1880 was registered in Tsaro.

The aliens in Tsova-Tusheti were those who frequently escaped from their residential places because of blood revenging. They very accepted in the mountain territorial community on certain conditions for some years and after the observation the village collectively decided on the issue of their artificial relation. In other historical-geographical parts of Georgia similar migrants – artificially related people – changed their family names and were registered by the local family names. It was not necessary in case of the Tushs although “the alien relatives” did not bear their original family names there. They formed the new family names mainly based on the first names of their fathers, grandfathers or any other forefathers. For example, we mentioned above that the Mushtaraulis and Udzgharulis are in Tsovati are from Khevsureti. There were no similar family names in Khevsureti at all. The migrants formed the new family names but they did not get the local fraternized family name.

The events of becoming artificially related with a stranger had been formed by means of the certain ritual in Tsova. The latter should be performed in Sacred Trinity’s Church, during Whitsunday holidays in which all the village population was taking part. The stranger was sacrificing a bull to a church; Beer was boiling in the church pots. Then followed the general feast. Only after that, a newcomer was considered as a member of some Tsova-Tush (Batsbi) kin, a blood brother. A stranger was under the protection of the local family admitting him as a brother. The artificially related person was no longer differed from other blood relatives. It is known from the scientific literature, that among the Baikholdzes living in Indurta village of Tsova-Tusheti, there were several family names became related with the help of above bull ritual, that is to say, they were fraternized families (Bardavelidze, p.115, 1985). There were cases when the village objected to fraternize a person. Hence no appropriate rituals were held in such cases. Such person had to leave the village. The main event of the ritual was a sacrificing a white bull. In the beginning of the XX century, among Tsova-Tuhs migrated to lowland, there was a herdsman bearing a family name of Baramidze who intended to become artificially related with the Mikeladzes. The corresponding ritual was held. But later, on the skin of a sacrificed bull a red stain was discovered. After this event, the bull ritual during the fraternization, had been eliminated.



One of the Tsova-Tushs' churches ("Trinity") was mentioned above, where were held the ritual for admitting a stranger to a family, a village, a community. There are many churches named for Trinity in Georgia. We have also mentioned above, that according to a certain legend, one of the reasons of the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) migration from Ingusheti was the forcible propagation of Islam in their initial dwelling place. They considered themselves as Christians and by means of migration they managed to remain faithful to Christianity. Except "Trinities", Tsova-tushs have other churches as well, such as: "Kopala", "Tsorula", "John the Baptist", "Maria , Mother of God", " Saint George". The first two churches ("Kopala", "Tsorula") have nothing in common with the Christian Saints. The pre-Christian period churches named "Kopala, were in other mountainous regions (in Khevsureti, Pshavi) of East Georgia as well. It is true that "John the Baptist", "Maria , Mother of God", "Saint George" are Christian Saints and they are associated with Christianity, but these were not Christian churches. Those were pre-Christian praying places bearing the names of Christian Saints. Such small pre-Christian buildings, having Takhcha (Shukumi) for lighting candles, are not few in other mountainous regions of East Georgia either. The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs), as well as other Georgian-speaking Tushs, Considered themselves as Christians (they were even belonging to Kharchasho episcopacy, eparchy), but in fact we have to deal with the syncretism of beliefs, paganism and Christianity. The religious holiday celebrated at the main church "Trinity", was called "Dalaloba", which usually ended with horse-race.

In the ethnographically available period, Orthodox Church service in Tusheti is not confirmed (The same could be said about Pshavi and Khevsureti). Who was managing the local religious holidays? The local people, often the aged, who were distinguished by there correct life style, wisdom, rationality. They should be well aware of habits and traditions inherited from their ancestors. They were responsible for bringing the flag out of the praying place and then bless it. Such a person was called "Master" by Tush people, "Khevisberi" – by Pshavs, and "Dean" – by Khevsurs.

In the XIX century records of population census, Khevsurs, in Tsova-Tusheti villages, are registered separately. But as it turns out, Khevisberi had no religious function among the Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs). According to G. Bochoridze's definition, who recorded ethnographical materials in the 30s of

the XX century, Khevisberi was an administration position in old times (Bochoridze, p.326, 19993). Actually, Khevisberis were the village leaders. According to the materials (the middle of the XIX century) of Ivane Tsiskaridze, in Tsova – the Tushs (Batsbs), as well as in Georgian-speaking Tushs, Khevisbers were considering the cases of: blood-feud, women's rights, theft, patrimony and cattle damages, relations with neighboring tribes, within family relationships, and others. He was responsible for land distributions, as well. Khevisberi was a member of the Patriarchs Council. In the 1831 recordings, Khevisberis are registered in Tsova-Tushs' three villages (Sagorta, Indurta and Tsaro). e.g. Sagorta's Khevisberi was Edisher Edisherashvili, Tsaro's – Mika Serilishvili, and in Indurta, there were two of them – Dopinaur Khitiridze and Ivane Turkoshvili. Kvevisberis are no longer registered in the records of 1843. Instead, the Natsvalis (vicegerents) are recorded separately. Natsvali (vicegerents) were appointed representatives of the Russian Government, occupying administrative posts locally. A certain Mikho Jikhoidze occupied the above position in Etelta, Punchia Bachelishvili – in Sagorta, and Shaa Akhuruli – in Tsaro. The Tsova-Tushs (Tushs generally), as well as Khevsurs and Pshavs, never had a feudal lord. They officially were declared as serfs of the State, the King. Their obligation as the borderers was to guard boundaries. At the same time, they were the King's personal bodyguards. Taxes were paying only those who shepherded there sheep on the lowland pastures (Alvani valley) in winter. We will review this subject later. Now we'll only admit that, in order to govern this region, the State (King) appointed officials, called Mouravs (Governors) in Tusheti. The Mouravi of Tusheti, who traditionally came from feudal family of Choloqashvili, was usually occupying the prince's residence and was fulfilling his official duties there. He was leaving for the mountains, only if it was necessary. The factual mountainous region manager was Khevisberi, who, as it was already mentioned above, was acting not according to the feudal law, but according to the traditional (habitual) justice. Tsarist Russia gradually substituted Khevisbers with Natsvals (vicegerents), because elected Khevisbers enjoyed the people's confidence and as for, Natsvals (vicegerents), they were appointed by State for performing the administrative duties.

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As it was mentioned above, the number of legislative cases was solved through traditional (habitual) justice. In consideration of claims together with

Khevisbers were often participating the members of the Patriarchs Council. The Patriarchs Council took an active part in social matters, as well. In Tsovata community, the board had its definite place of gathering. The meetings of the distinguished and aged people usually were held near the praying place. In cold winter days, the board was meeting in one of the houses on the outskirts of the village. The solving problematic issues through the Patriarchs Council was also peculiar to other mountaineers of East Georgia. Tsova-Tushs called the board's gathering places "Sabcheo", or "Saanjmo". The both of these terms are more than once mentioned in ancient written monuments of Georgia. But Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) were participating not only in solving questions regarding Tsovata community, they were permanently involved in the work of General Tushs Gathering. "If the problematic issue referred only to the interests of a separate gorge, or community, then it was considered by the community, or gorge Patriarchs Council. But if the issue regarded with the interests (e.g. armed attacks on Tusheti, gather supportive army for Kacketi, regulate inter-community conflicts, etc.) of the whole Tusheti, than there should be called the whole-Tusheti gathering with the representation of elected people from all the four communities. The place for gathering – "Mirgval Veli" ("Round Velley") was preliminary selected. Mirgval Veli had a very convenient location. It was situated between the four gorges, i.e. societies. The called Gathering of Tushs represented the superior body of Tusheti. The Gathering decisions applied to all population of the four societies" (Shavkhelishvili, p. 34, 1987).

As it turns out, the members of the Patriarchs Council were the same members of the gatherings that had a right to consider any issue of the day. In addition, it appeared that all families had their leaders to whom the members were applying for consultation. A kind of court consisted of 10-12 "counsilors", in other words, "Chenilebi" (selected) people. Each community representatives had their leaders in Gathering. Such authoritative person in Tsovata community in the XIX century, turned out to be a resident of Sagirta - Devdari's Anta (Anta is a proper name, and Devdari is a patronymic. In Tusheti, a person was often called this way - by his first and patronymic name. In such cases, the patronymic was usually in possessive case).

Thus, among Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) and other Georgian-speaking Tushs, before Georgia and Russia joined together and even for a long time afterwards, justice was administered through traditional (habitual) justice, instead of State (feudal) legislation, that was caused by a number of various reasons. Tusheti (as well as other mountainous regions of West Georgia) during about 7-8 months was

isolated from the center. Besides, it should be taken into consideration, that since the XV century, unified State (kingdom) of Georgia had divided into several kingdoms and principalities, and the kings of Kakheti had no longer possibility to pay proper attention to Tushs belonging to Kakheti kingdom. Enemies' frequent attacks caused difficulties in this respect. On the contrary, lowland often stayed in the hope of mountaineers (including Tushs) protection. In return, Kakheti kings granted the mountaineers absolute autonomy in solving their inner affairs. But nevertheless, Tushs were dependent on lowland. They used winter pastures of lowland which the kings granted them in possession.

Until describing the forms of farming, we should say a couple of words about Tushs' family forms. In the scientific literature is indicated that, in Tsovata community there were both, individual (small) and big families. The latter was often called "family communities". Abraham Shavkhelishvili speaks about Tsova-Tushs' big families in his monograph. But an ethnographer Rusudan Kharadze, who dedicated two volumes to the problem of big families in Georgia, does not give a single example of Tsova-Tushs (Batsbi) big families. According to Shavkehlshvili's materials, "the existence of inseparable families proves the fact that the families of Bukurauli, Abashidze, Usharauli, Bartishvili lived undividedly almost until the Soviet period" (Shavkehlshvili, p. 36. 1987). From data of the XIX century cameral description, we could not define as many examples of existing big (inseparable) families in Tsova-Tushs, as in other Georgian ethnic groups. It was pointed above, that in 1886 a Tsova-tush family, on average, consisted of 4.54 heads. This number obviously excludes the possibility that big families were common among Tushs. An ethnographer V. Itonishvili (p. 444, 1975) also accentuates that, "among Tsovas dominated forms of living in individual families. As for big, inseparable families, in comparison of general family number, they were considerably lesser." From the XIX century archival documents could also be seen that, there were a small number of big (inseparable) families among Tsova-Tushs. In 1886, in Etelta village is registered only one big family, the head of which was Durmishkhan Jikhoidze. He lived together with his married brother Iob's family. In Sagirta, 14 heads lived in Timote Mikel Mikelishvili's family. He was 70 years old and together with him lived his three married sons with their children. His sons were 39, 38, and 28 years old, respectively. In the same Sagirta, Gabriel Ioseb Tsiskaridze had a big inseparable family. There, together with him, lived his married brother, Ioseb. Only three inseparable families are registered in Indurta village: Solomon Efime Kavtaradze's, Nikoloz Zakaria Burkidze's and Simon Grigol

Ushurauli's. If we compare big families (inseparable) quantities in Tsova-tushs' and other Georgian historical-ethnographic regions, we'll see that it is considerably less in Tsova-Tusheti, and the number of heads living in families are also less (In other regions were families with 25 – 30 – 40 -50 heads).

As it turns out from ethnographic scientific literature, big (inseparable) families had more sheep than individuals. There are mentioned the big families of Bukurauli and Ozhilauri from Etelta, Zhimirashvili family from Indurta, the families of Shalipishvili, Adirauli and Akhurauli from Sagirta. But some small (individual) families with its economical possibilities were equal to those big families (Itonishvili, p. 450-451, 1976).

We will speak briefly about conjugal relations. Until Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) migration to lowland, their conjugal relations were relatively limited. Closed traditional mountain society and geographic environment, did not give Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) the possibility of seeking partners in other historical-ethnographic regions. Getting married to not Georgian neighboring ethnic units (Kists, or Chechens, Daghestans) was out of question because of the religious difference (Christians and Muslims did not marry each other). Therefore, the circle of marriage partners was limited with Tsova-Tushs and Georgian-speaking Tushs. From this point of view, they still have the intensive relationships.

For Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) was forbidden to enter into a marriage with descendants of one and the same ancestor. Artificial relations also were posing an obstacle in this respect; Related through, so called, "bull-pot" ritual, the members of fraternized families could not marry each other.

Alike other Western Georgian mountain dwellers, Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) had a "silence" habit (It was a common event in Caucasus). e.g. A daughter – in – law was not allowed to talk with her father-in –law for, about, two-three years, or with her mother-in-law – for a month. A daughter – in – law had no right to speak with her brothers-in-law for a definite time. At the end of a "silence" term, mother-in-law was making a present to her. Only after that, the daughter – in – law was allowed to speak and enter into contact with her mother-in-law. From his part, a father-in-law, at the expiration of the 2-3- year period, was also making a present to his daughter – in – law: a knife, a ring, or money. But the present was not given to her directly from his hands. A mother-in-law was presenting it in the presence of her husband's sister, or brother. At the end of 2-

3 years term, a daughter – in – law was bringing wine to the father – in – law. The latter would bless her and say: “I bought you and you must start speaking”. There were cases of presenting a cow, or a sheep to a daughter –in-law from father-in-law’s part. In old times, a wife will never speak with her husband, or pronounce his name, in the presence of other people.

A daughter – in – law was always polite to her family members. She called “Dad” (father) her father – in – law, “Nan” (mother) – her mother – in – law. The next day after wedding, a bride was brought to the village spring. She had to take water to her new home together with the mistress of the house (mother-in-law).

The aged people were held in respect in Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) families. The younger family members would never have contradicted to its elder members. Conjugal unit was considered sacred. Unfaithfulness was extremely shameful, disgraceful. It never happened in fact. Traditional (habitual) justice was administering a severe punishment to marital rape, or profligacy. A violator would be condemned to death and a husband could cut his unfaithful wife’s hair, nose, or arm; Public indignation was also guaranteed for such a woman. According to Tsova-Tush tradition, the elder brother had to marry first. The principle of seniority was also kept by sisters. As in other parts of Georgia, in Tsova-Tusheti, a woman was given a marriage portion. No other property was inherited by a woman, even if she had no brother. All movables and immovable property were inherited a brother, or brother’s sons. (There was not such tradition in Svaneti. If a woman had no brothers, she inherited the parents’ property). The ethnographers had stated the facts of bigamy in Tsova-tusheti. In case of wife’s sterility, after passing several years, she herself tried to look another woman for her husband for providing him with a heir.

Not only in the Middle Ages, but even in the XX century Tsova-Tushs’ (Batsbis) social life was mostly regulated through traditional (habitual) justice. Blood – feud is no longer characteristic to their way of life. But until the 20s of the XX century ransom for committed murder was common in Tusheti. Ransom was paid by way of copper pots and salt. If someone could not, or did not pay the fixed ransom, he could not stay in the village any longer; He, together with his family, had to leave the village, because he would be in danger until reaching the age of 60. The justice of Tsova-Tusheti (Batsbi) imposed different measures of punishment for criminal crimes. For cutting an arm and damaging an eye, a convict was sentenced to pay 120 bulls; 3 cows - for breaking a tooth. A woman

kidnapper could be sentenced of death. Exiling a guilty person from the community (village) or not admitting him at the religious holidays was the extreme penalty according to the traditional (habitual) justice.

The Tsova-Tushs' (Batsbis) rules for going into military campaign, are described in the scientific literature. Before going in war, each warrior was leaving a small white stone on a special square. After returning they were taking there stones. The rest of stones were equal to the quantity of dead warriors.

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As is well known, the Georgian mountaineers (Tsova-Tushs among them) and the ethnic groups of North Caucasus (Vainakhs, Daghestans) often were at enmity with each other. The facts of attacking each other for taking away the cattle were frequent. In the XIX century, Chechens and Daghestans made there attacks more intensive, since Georgia had become the Russian colony and North Caucasians were continuing fights with Russian empire. e.g. It is known that in 1837, Chechens and Daghestan Didos destroyed the two Tush villages (Diklo and Shenako). The reason of this, according to the historians, was that the Russian authority disabled North Caucasian mountaineers to buy wheat in Georgia through Tusheti. So, this was one of the reasons because of which starving Daghestans attacked Tusheti. From their part, Tsova-Tushs (and Tushs, generally) were using the mountains of Daghestan, the facts of tending sheep on summer pastures, were not too rare. By the way, Tushs were taking sheep on Daghestan pastures even when Daghestan and Chechnia were struggling for liberty against Russia. At the same time, Tushs had the developed trade relations with North Caucasians. Vainakhs and Daghestans could be seen in every community performing all kinds of works there, especially in the XIX century, when sheep breeding reshaped in a new capitalist way, and Tushs had no time for husbandry and housekeeping. The neighbors, Leks and Didos were plowing and razing cattle in Tusheti. North Caucasians were establishing contacts with Georgian lowland through Tusheti. They never broke off these relations during the course of the whole Georgian history. One of the reasons of close economic and cultural relations was the tradition of fraternizing existed in Caucasian mountains. Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) and Tushs generally, were often fraternizing not only with other Georgian mountaineers, but also with Kists (Chechens) and Didos (Daghestans). The appropriate rituals were always followed this tradition. The future blood brothers were dropping silver coin scrapes into a bowl full of milk, than they drank the milk and after that they were considered as, so called - "oath and silver eaten". Another form of

fraternizing was, when in the same wooden bowl the two men were dripping blood from their cut fingers. There was the other form fraternizing as well. If the candidates' mothers were alive, they were going to them together and touching mothers' (each other's) breasts with their teeth. This ritual was held in the presence of the whole family and the neighbors. The sense of collectivity was characteristic to the mentality of the mountain dwellers. The blood brothers often changed their horses and armament. It was not obligatory, though.

As the legend says, Tushs, North Caucasian Vainakhs and Daghestans had other kinds of relationships as well. Particularly, constructing of some houses and towers are attributed to the latter. All able-bodied men had to participate in building the houses and towers in Tsova -Tusheti. Some scientists consider the ethnographic materials on inviting the North Caucasians as builders in Tusheti, improbable (S. Makalatia, A. Shavkhelishvili). They state that during such frequent conflicts, it was impossible to entrust construction of defensive complexes to representatives of neighboring, not Georgian units. Besides, A. Shavkhelishvili accentuates that, the construction methods, architecture and style of Tusheti and Chechnia, are different. But in our opinion, it doesn't worth eliminating the possibility of Chechens and Leks participation in houses and towers constructions. It is well known how skilful their North Caucasian neighbors were in stone masonry. According to the ethnographic data, "The Tushs did not know how to build houses. Leks were constructing houses in Tusheti, woodworking was performing the Rachvel (western Georgian ethnic group)" craftsmen. (Makalatia, p.p. 137- 138, 1983).

Thus, we favor the idea of North Caucasians participation in houses and towers constructions in Tusheti. The Georgian mountaineers and Chechens and Daghestans were not only at odds with each other. There were long periods of friendly, cultural and economic relations between them. Besides, it should also be taken into consideration that, historically sheep breeding was the most developed field in Tusheti. It had large scopes from the very outset. In this respect, were distinguished Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) and Georgian-speaking Tushs from Piriqiti community. In sheep breeding were occupied the big part of able-bodied females. It is evident that they could not combine another professional work with sheep breeding.

Two types of fortresses were widespread in Tusheti. The front doors of one of them were from the ground floor and of another – from the first floor.



Certainly, in the second type of the fortress (towers) there was a wooden ladder to get to the first floor, which could be removed after getting on it. These fortresses had defensive functions. In fortresses with the front doors on the first floor, war prisoners were kept on the first floor, and the house dwellers were staying upstairs. The sixth floor was used for combating; Rolling down stones, shooting attackers from there. The average height of Tush fortresses were 12-13 meters. They are mostly built in impassable mountains. However, one could often meet the fortresses (towers) next to the dwelling houses.

One of the five-storied towers of Indurta village in Tsova-Tusheti was distinguished from the others with its 125 meter underground tunnel, through which the tower was connected to mill situated on the river-bank. They say that the tunnel height was 1.5 meters ( Shavkhelishvili, p. 116, 2001).

There also were many observation towers in Tusheti, from which were keeping a look-out of paths, roads, pastures and passes. Owing to these observation towers, the information about enemy invasion was spread rapidly among the four communities of Tusheti. As soon as getting note, the villagers were hiding in their fortresses, and the men were preparing to go to fight against enemy.

Concerning the construction date of Tush fortresses (towers), there are different opinions in scientific literature. Some of the scientists consider them as built in the Middle Ages, others think that they are of later period – the XVII - XVIII centuries. In our opinion, constructing such defensive buildings was possible in any period of time, as the mountaineers were guarding the boundaries in the name of the State.

Tsova-Tusheti differed from the other three Georgian-speaking Tush communities (Chagma, Gometsari, Pirikita) with one thing – the existence of tombs, graves above ground level, in Tsaro village of Tsovata. In all other respects, the traditions, habits, social relations, spiritual or material culture, economical life of Tsova - Tushs (Batsbis) and other Georgian-speaking Tushs, were factually the same. Thus, the only difference between them was in toms (above ground level graves buildings) in Tsovata, the existence of which are not proved in the rest of Tusheti. Five tomb units' existence in Tsaro village of Tsovata community, are also confirmed by Vera Bardavelidze ( p. 119-121, 1985). Quite many ruins of such tombs, on the whole, are in Tsovata “where remained 11 ruined and half ruined defensive towers, quite a lot tomb ruins and houses” (Shavkhelishvili, p. 118, 2001).

According to photos and tables given in Bardavelidze's book, these tombs (underground level graves) are similar to tombs characteristic for Chechnia, Ingushia and Osetia. It is well known that the natives of the mentioned countries – Chechens, Ingushs and Osetins (as well as Karachians and Balkars) – in the Middle Ages used underground buildings for burying the diseased. The tombs are small arched rooms with pyramid shaped roofs. The tombs had one, or two small windows for carrying in corpse. There were wooden and stone shelves for diseased. Cold wind of mountains and draught were causing mummification of corpse. In the North Caucasus underground tombs were mostly, ancestral. The fact of missing tombs in Chechnia and Ingushia, shows the lack of patrimonial relations among them. (Topchishvili, p. 179-189, 2005). Ingushs were considered as skilful builders of tombs in Caucasus. The tomb constructions in Ossetia are mostly attributed to Ingushs. We are confident that Tsova-Tush (Batsbi) tombs do not belong to classic tomb style and they must be of later period than tombs built in North Caucasus. According to ethnographic data, the tombs of Tsovata community were built because of the expected cholera epidemic. The infected people were getting into tombs themselves.

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As it is known, the ethnic group of Tushs changed there dwelling place. In the XIX-XX centuries, the mountaineers became lowland dwellers. This migration to lowland and their settling there did not occur at one stroke. Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) were first Tushs migrated to lowland. It is true that Tsova-Tushs left Tsovata in the 30s of the XIX century, but they were maintaining contacts with the dwelling place of their ancestors, as they were spending summer in Tsovata. Before settling in Alvani, Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) lived in mountain-lowland transitional zone – in Tbatana. After moving to Alvani valley, in lowland, Tbatana became their summer resort. It was mentioned above that, initially Tbatana and 3-4 adjoining villages were the temporary dwelling places for them. Living there temporarily at first and later staying there forever, was caused by the nature of farming – the half – nomadic form of sheep breeding.

Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) paved the way of lowland to other Georgian-speaking Tushs. It is true, that the reason of leaving Tsovata by Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis), was natural disaster. But if it were not the specificity of their farming and

historical possession of Alvani valley, most likely the migrations in groups would never happened and they would have to settle in different villages. It follows from this that, living in different villages; they would not have possibility to preserve their original language.

In documents of the XIX centuries population census (provided by the Russian imperial authority), are always defined the type of farming in which the population of each village had been engaged. For example, in 1886 family lists, next to the names of Tsovata inhabitants were written: "Cattlemen "; As for Georgian-speaking Tushs, they were defined either as "cattlemen", or – "farmers". Almost all registered "cattlemen" were from Piriqita community. It turns out that both types of farming were characteristic to neighboring ethnic group of Pshavs. They were both, "cattlemen and farmers". Khevsurs were "farmers". Certainly it does not mean that Khevsurs were farming only. Actually, they were cattlemen as well. In Khevsureti there was a symbiosis of farming - the stock farming and agriculture had been mixed there. Probably, as far as the half-nomadic sheep breeding was not characteristic to Khevsurs, the registrars considered that they were farmers. And Pshavs were considered both, "cattlemen and farmers", because they were half – nomadic sheep breeders and at the same time, they had the developed agriculture in Pshavi, i.e. unlike Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis), they did not leave their ancestral dwelling places, that's why, the recorders counted them both, the cattlemen and the farmers. We are interested in Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) at the moment. It is evident that from the 30s of the XIX century, since leaving Tsovata, they were not cultivating lands there. The only farming field was sheep breeding for them.

Since when the Georgian mountaineers – Tushs (Tova-tushs among them) are busy with sheep breeding? Or, to be more specific – busy with half-nomadic type of sheep breeding?

First of well, we should find out in what kind of relations were there between the Georgian mountain dwellers, in our case Tushs, and the Georgian Government. The historian of the first part of the XVIII century, the representative of Georgian Royal family name Vakhushti Bagrationi, wrote that Tushs had a lot of sheep, as they had many summer pastures in mountains and shepherded sheep herds in Kakheti valleys. Tushs were feeding (supported themselves) with the help of Kakheti region (Vakhushti Bagrationi, p. 554, 1973). The above mentioned author also informs us, that the country (region) of Tushs' neighbors, Pshavi, is mountainous, with thick wood and rugged rocks

and that is why they behave quiet, i.e. they are submissive to those who possesses Tianeti (the transitional place between mountains and lowland), so far they were always supporting themselves owing to Kakheti (p.533). The same could be said about Tushs. Economical relations were leading and important in relationships of highland and lowland, i.e. of mountain and lowland dwellers, or to say in other words, territorial communities and State (kingdom). And in these economical relations, in the first place was the sheep breeding and the winter pastures granted in permanent possession. Such form of relationship is well seen from the above statements of Vakhushti Bagrationi: In the king Levan II's time (1520-1574), Tushs and Pshav-khevsurs were not in king's obedience any longer. King Levan tried to achieve their obedience not by using force, but by promising to guarantee the safe pasturing on Kakheti lowland. After that, the mountaineers (certainly, Tushs among them) were sending their troops to Court of Kakheti and they were paying taxes (a sheep per gun shield) as well.

Georgian kings had to issue such documents for Tushs rather often, or to be more precise, kings were renewing the documents on lowland pastures possession. The 1757, 1782 and 1797 deeds (documents) could serve as the examples. It is accentuated in the document that Tushs had always been faithful servants of Bagrationi Royal family, therefore the royal family granted the state lands to "all Tushs" (Tushs of each community) for tending and shepherding sheep. It is also stated in the document, that like their predecessors the royal family presented Tushs those lands in Kakheti lowland (see details in Shavkhelishvili, p.43, 1977). In the deed of the King Teimuraz II of the same 1757 date, is stated that since olden days Tushs had to pay taxes for using pastures, and for grass cutting they had to pay extra payment to the State. The king gives the following promise that, as there were no villages built on Alvani valley there would never be such and there children (i.e. the future kings) would never allow that happen. (The original of this document, as is stated in the scientific literature, were kept in Tati, Ivane and Potskhver Potskhverashvili's home.- Makalatia, p.36, 1983).

There is the document of later period of 1782 about the Tushs usage of Kakheti lowland as winter pastures. This document is issued by the King Erekle II. In this document are specified the places other than Alvani valley, such as: the gorges of Lopoti and Pankisi. The document states that these three places are for Tushs and forbids to Pshavs to argue with Tushs concerning the above stated. As it turns out from this document, Tushs had a lot of sheep then. The King's document states that if these three places (Alavani valley, Lopoti and

Pankisi gorges) were not enough for Tushs' sheep, each Tush shepherd was allowed to place two herds in outskirts of every village of Kakheti.

From the XVIII century documents issued by the kings is clear, that Tushs were not in possession of the pastures of Kakheti lowland. Those were the State lands given in usage to hem. Therefore the new king was updating the old document. Thus, the State has the mechanism of having the mountaineers (Tushs in this case) in obedience. He could give, or not give the pastures in usage. In the first case the document was renewed. As far as, we do not have the sources about the pasture possession earlier than of the XVI century period, the question is – since when Tushs were in possession of those pastures? From the XVI century document issued by the king Levan II, we find out that Tushs had possessed the lowland pastures since olden days. There is an assumption made in Georgian historiography that, the relations of mountain and lowland, in this respect, were established very early, at least from the V century. Otherwise, it was impossible to join the integrated state system. The both sides were interested in that. D. Muskhelishvili points out: “It is absolutely clear that, the lack and infertility of land on the one hand, and the surplus of stock, specifically sheep, together with the absence of winter pastures, on the other, was the main economic factor, upon which were based the mountain-lowland relations”. (Muskhelishvili, p. 218, 1977). Arranging these contacts which were based on economic relations envisaging the provision of the mountaineers with winter pastures (the usage and not possession) began in the V<sup>th</sup> century, in the King Vakhtag Gorgasali' s time. Thus, the mountain regions of West Georgia (first of all, Tusheti) were economically depended on the lowland and in this relationship the sheep breeding was the most essential.

Tushs (Tsova-Tushs among them) were using as winter pastures not only the populated area (Alvani valley, Lopoti and Pankisi gorges), but the western part of Kakheti – Shiraki valley as well. The fact that Shiraki valley belonged to Georgian mountaineers is evident from the XVII century inscription made on stone. The king Archil (1664 - 1674) assigns the territories between the rivers Alazani and Iori, together with the territory between Iori and Mtkvari (to the south). The latter, which was called “lower valley of Karaia”, also bore another name of “Jeiran Tushuri valley”. As the documents state, Tushs had built the Eldari fortress in Shiraki, in order to defend themselves against the attacks of Daghestan tribes migrated from mountains to West Kakheti (Saingilo). For usage winter pastures in Shiraqi, Tushs had to pay a sheep per gun shield.

Later, little by little, the usage of Shiraki valley as winter pastures by the Georgian mountaineers, became less intensive, because since the XVI century, the Georgian population in West Kakheti (Saingilo) was substituted with Daghestan population (Avars, Tsakhurs). In the first quarter of the XVI century, during the destroying invasions of the Shah of Iran Abas I, the part of the native Georgian population was annihilated, and another part was deported to Iran. Daghestans migrated from North Caucasus to West Kakheti, represented the danger to Tushs sheep on Shiraqi valley. The state which became weaker could not protect the shepherds from Daghestans attacks. In the XIX century, after Russia annexed Georgia recovered the tradition of using Shiraki winter pastures by the Georgian mountaineers (Tushs). Consequently, the development of sheep breeding in Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) and other Georgian-speaking Tushs, became more intensive. In the XIX century, other Georgian mountaineers (Pshavs, Mtiuls) besides Tushs, also used Shiraki valley as the winter pastures for their sheep.

According to ethnographic data and folklore, Tushs attacks on Daghestan tribes living in Saingilo (in West Kakheti), were not rare. This is also vivid from the writings of the XVIII century historians. Moreover, according to the notes of historian Papuna Orbeliani, disturbed with Leks (Daghestans) attacks, Tushs, together with opposite side Kakhetians, attacked Daghestan villages in 1776. "They took sheep and horses away Lecks, and killed all chasers, and brought trophy to Kakheti" (Orbeliani, p. 243, 1981). Such campaigns took place against Lecks from Chari in the XVIII century in the King David's III time (1703 - 1722).

Historically, West Kakhetian winter pastures were using one of the Daghestan tribes – Didos, who were directly adjoining to Tushs. By the way, Tushs from their side were also using the summer pastures of Didos.

Thus, in spite of hard and complicated political situation, in the XVIII century Tushs were nevertheless managing to pasture their sheep on Shiraqi valley in winter. They were protecting their herds with their own armed groups. Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) migrated to Alvani, were getting military training. After ending the Daghestans attacks (since the XIX century), Tushs maintained the rule of military training in the demonstration form. We learn from the XIX century writer Rapiel Eristavi, that the show was called "Piracy". The day before show, Tushs' "Chief" was warning the young people to get prepared for chasing the "enemy". The next day about fifteen young men under the direction of the

“Chief” who knew all the paths and staying places of Leks, began the “raid” into forest. Stepping carefully, they were examining all the traces, trees, the marks on them (Leks were making marks on the trees in order to show the way for the rest). After these operations, the “Chief” and his troop were easily finding the enemy, attacking them and their fate was decided (Eristavi, p.144, 1855). Chasing Leks that was the everyday occurrence in the XVII – XVIII centuries, later shaped in ritual.

Historically, the several villages in Shida (Inner) Kakheti belonged to Tushs. In the end of the XVIII century, Ioane Bagrationi describing the villages Marilisi, Kachalauri, Matani, Kordi, and Saint Marina, writes “in old days they were called - Tush villages” (I. Bagrationi, p.69, 1986).

The reason of the Georgian mountaineers – Tushs, Pshavs, Khevsurs - participation in 1659 Kakheti rebellion, known as Bakhtrioni rebellion, was the fear of losing the winter pastures. Tushs’ role was crucial in the rebellion against the Iran invaders organized by the Georgian feudal lords. This rebellion, in fact, saved the Georgian ethnoses from dying-out in Kakheti. About Tushs’ active participation relates the Tush folklore, that mentions many heroes the selflessness of which decided the fate of the battle. The XVIII century historian monk Egnatashvili, from the mountaineers mentions only Tushs as the participants of the 1659 rebellion. (Egnatashvili, p.209, 1940). According to folk poetry recorded in the XIX century, the heroes of Bakhtrioni rebellion were Zezva Gaprindauli and Meti Sagirishvili. The latter was the representative of Tsovata community of Tusheti (Shavkhelishvili, p. 157, 1977). In 1831 population census the descendants of this Meti Sagirishvili were recorded as the Metishvilis in Indurta village. As it turns out, now they bear the family name of Abashidze.

Being the members of the army of the Georgian Royal family, Tushs were permanently participating in wars against outer enemies, such as Muslim Iranians and Turks. In 1770 Aspindza battle a Tsova-Tush (Batsbi) Kadagadze distinguished himself. In the same battle, were killed 10 members from the Tsova-tush family of Bobghiashvili. This tradition (participation in wars) was not eliminated even in the XIX century. 156 Tushs were taking part in the war against Turks near Choloki in 1854.

The relations between the mountaineers and lowlanders extended further. During Muslims invasions, the Georgian lowlanders often escaped to the mountains, and apparently to Tusheti.

The migration processes of the Georgian mountaineers to lowland were connected with farming types as well. Historically, the Georgian mountaineers (Pshavs, Khevsurs, Mtiuls, Gudamaqars, Mokheves) were permanently migrating to lowland. These migrations mostly were of individual character. In the XIX century these processes became more intensive and sometimes grouped. The facts of Tushs' migrations in the Middle Ages are hardly observed in the direction of Georgian lowland. The population census of lowland and foothills of the first quarter of the XVIII century reveals more than one fact of migration from different historical-ethnographic regions of West Georgia. Only the three facts of population migration are given from Tushseti. The 1801 population census of Kakheti shows the same picture. It is evident that the existing farming type in Tushseti - half-nomadic sheep breeding was not promoting their migration to lowland and foothills. The sheep breeding provided Tushs with income enough for supporting their families. As for the mountaineers, who were busy with cultivating land and limited stock farming often moved to the lowland as the mountain could feed only the definite quantity of population. The surplus population always had to move to the lowland. Such migrations were not characteristic for Tushs. The developed sheep breeding did not connive at migration.

Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) migrations to lowland began at the 30s of the XX century. First of all, it was caused by natural disasters. They did not move directly to lowland, at first. It took them 80-90 years for the final settlement in lowland, on Alvani valley. First, Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) settled in transition zone between mountain and lowland, called Tbatana. In winter, they arranged the temporary dwellings in the territory, once the Georgian kings gave them in permanent possession, the foot of the mountain on the Alvani valley. The additional reason of this simultaneous, grouped Migration of Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis), was in enlarging the sheep breeding scopes. After the 1830 natural disaster, Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) places of activity were the following three points: The beginning of gorge of the river Alazani - Tbatana, Alvani valley, where shepherds were temporarily stayed on the way to winter pastures (in Shiraki) in preliminary arranged temporary stock buildings and Shiraki valley. Here sheep was pastured. In 1897, Tsova-Tush (Batsbi) Ivane Bukrauli wrote: Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) stay in Tbatana in summer. In the second half of June they move to Tbatana and stay there until August Then they again return to



Alvani in winter. Tsovas live in felt huts in Tbatana. Recently, they began constructing the wooden and stone houses... Only women and children together with disabled men and the old people stay in Tbatana. The rest of men and the sheep are in mountains. Some of them are in Trialeti, some – in Leketi and others are in Tusheti mountains. They meet their family from time to time, and in the end of summer, as we mentioned above, move again their families to Alvani” (Bukurauli, p. 35, 1897). As it is, Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) did not leave there dwelling place straight away. They spent summers in Tsovata. That’s why they were registered as the residents of the four villages of Tsovata since the 20s of the XX century. By ethnographic data and the works of the German scientists A. Ziserman and G. Ridde, in winter months Tsova-tushs (Batsbis) were leaving two-three families on duty in Tsovata. They were responsible for maintenance of the ancestral graves. Thus Tsovas were maintaining contacts with their native region (A. Ziserman, p. 237, 1873. G. Ridde, p. 314, 1891).

The migrated Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis), began to live in houses made of planks. They settled in Alvani valley according to the relation and territorial principle. The members of the same family name settled in the same districts. The residents of Etelta village settled down in Tsitsalqure district, Sagirtelians – in Pkhakalqure and Baichalqure, the residents of Indurta - in Otkhtvali, Tsaroans –in Alvani. After migration, each district built their own churches: The Mother of God’s - in Tsitsalqure, Saint George’s - in Pkhakalqure and Trinity’s - in Alvani. Iakhsari church is also mentioned in literature.

After migration to lowland, the Tsova-Tushs’ (Batsbis) way of life and farming type began to change gradually. Here, they became familiar to lowland agriculture style. All these, little by little caused changing the social relations, customs and habits, and spiritual culture. In fact, there is no difference between Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) and lowlanders today. The only difference between them is that Tsovas are bilingual and still love their traditional occupation - sheep breeding.

It is true, that in the XIX century population census Tsova-tushs (Batsbis) are registered as the cattlemen, but while leaving in mountains they never ceased cultivating their lands. It is acknowledged that “there was typical mountain agriculture in Tsovata” (Itonishvili, p.449, 1976). Naturally, alike other mountaineers, Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis), because of lacking fruitful lands, were receiving insufficient harvest and were bringing in bread from lowland.

The development of stock-breeding was also limited in Tsovata. In spite of numerous pastures, during seven months in winter stock was fed in mangers. Thus, Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis), under mountain conditions, had the developed agriculture and stock-breeding. Bulls, in mountains, were mostly the draught animals. Tushs were plowing with the help of bulls and they were set in sledge as well. (Due to the mountain conditions there were not wheel transports there). As it was more than once mentioned above, sheep breeding was the main field of farming. Certainly, its scopes significantly increased in the XIX century. In the beginning of the XIX century, there were 72.420 sheep in Tusheti in total. By one of the 1845 documents, the quantity of sheep was 150.000 out of which 80% belonged to Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs). In the second half of the XIX century, some Tsova-tushs (Batsis) got permission to use the territories in present Turkey, near Qarsi as the summer pastures. The Bukuraulis possessed enormous quantity of sheep, more precisely – 12.000 sheep.

Over the centuries, the Tushs raised a rare breed of sheep. This sheep named “Tush sheep” was well known throughout Caucasus. It had delicious meat and high-quality wool. And what is more important, this sheep withstands the long journey, from summer pastures to winter pastures and vice versa. The principal direction of Tush sheep breeding was meat industry. At the same time, there was a great demand on Tush wool, which was generally used in handicraft industry. Of wool were made the carpets, curtains, socks, chitz (many-colored shoes knitted from thick thread of sheep wool), felt cloaks, felt hats - known in Kakheti as “Tush hat” (and in Kartli, as “Kakh hat”). As the scientists had stated, these hats were worn under the helmets. Tushs were the perfect knitters of saddle-bags (Bags with double sections thrown over a shoulder, the horses, or mules). The saddle -bags were used for putting in the products and different implements, and even the little babies. There were two types of such bags and were very convenient for nomadic way of life.

Sheep cheese made by Tushs, had an original, exclusive taste, which was called “Guda cheese”. Its fattiness makes 35.88%. In the XIX-XX centuries “Guda cheese” was well-known not only in Georgia, but throughout Caucasus. In the XIX century it was sold in many towns of Russia. Its fattiness and original taste was achieved with the folk technology that had been refining over the centuries. The cheese received the name “Guda cheese”, as Tushs placed the ready cheese in “Guda” (in a sack made of uncut skin of a sheep). According to

ethnographic data, storing the cheese in such sacks was possible during the whole year.

Meat preserving was the most important part of Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) sheep breeding. It was cut, stewed meat, called “Kaurma”. Tushs kept it in Guda, (skin sack) and took home. “Kaurma” could be stored for two months.

Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) also knew how to make perfect beer. Beer was generally made in the villages, in common boilers. The religious holidays of Tushs were unimaginable without beer.

Tushs migrated to lowland, as we had already mentioned, arranged their life according to local style. They were gardening and making wine. These fields of farming were not familiar to them while living in mountains. The necessary element of Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) life was “Marani” (i.e. so called, wine house, located in a cellar, or special building for long storing of wine in special pitchers dug in the ground). The architecture of Current Tsova-Tush (Batsb) houses does not differ from the one of the local houses.

Arranging horse-races on the anniversary of a deceased were peculiar to Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) and Tushs generally. Tushs were especially proud in case of winning in such races. The necessary attribute of Tushs’ traditional life was the songs generally and funeral songs, specifically. The researchers had proved that the Tush melodies, according to themes, are divided into heroic, funeral, lyrical and traveling melodies. In 1847 A Tush historian Iob Tsiskarishvili wrote to French historian Mari Brosse that Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) do not perform their songs in their language, but now they sing them in Georgian”. The part and parcel of a shepherd was a wind instrument “salamuri” (a pipe).

The Tsova-Tushs (Batsbs) were willing to get education. In the XIX century many Tsova-tushs studied in the Russian Institutes. In the XIX century were especially distinguished Ivane Bukurauli and Ivane Tsiskarishvili, who published several articles on the life and traditions of the Tushs in periodicals of those times

Such is the brief historical and ethnographic data about Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis), whom N. Mari called comically small (in number) population, and who managed to preserve their originality, language, culture and traditions to this

very day. Their ethnographic life is similar to Georgian-speaking Tushs' life and they consider themselves as organic part of the Georgian nation.

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More than once we mentioned above, that Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) are bilingual. But it could be said with certainty that not all Tsova-Tushs are bilingual today. It is also mentioned in the scientific literature that “the Tsova-tush language is disappearing in front of the civilized society” (Chrelashvili, p. 36, 2002). The mentioned author, in private talk, speaks about the natural dying of the Tsova-Tush (Batsbi) language. 25-30 years ago all Tsova-tushs knew the Tsova language and they all were bilingual. But, as it was mentioned, today it does not refer to all of them. According to locally provided inquiry, in the village Zemo (Upper) Alvani which is densely populated with Tushs, quite a lot of families do not speak the Tsova-Tush language at all. In this respect, there is a worse situation among children, the secondary school pupils. According to visual observation, even during breaks, almost not a single word was said in Tsova-Tush. The pupil of the 10<sup>th</sup> form of the secondary school Tatia Bartishvili told us: “I can understand the speech in Tsova-Tush, but not everything. I can not speak Tsova-Tush. I have never heard my friends speaking the Tsova-Tush during breaks. The pupil of the same 10<sup>th</sup> form Ketevan Bartishvili said: “My grandmother often speaks in Tsova-Tush to me, but I always answer in Georgian. I don't know all the words and I can't speak Tsova-Tush. Not a single girl in my class knows the Tsova-Tush language”.

Demolishing of bilingualism among the Tsova-Tushs began a quarter of the century ago. In spite of compact residing in the same village, this process is going even faster now. According to historical data, the Tushs were bilingual over the last three centuries and this characteristic feature of the Tushs is disappearing rapidly and it is caused by a set of reasons. In this respect, the most important is the role of information medium, especially television. The fact that the Tsova-Tushs get education in Georgian is not of less importance (since the XIX century). The Georgian language is also native for them and there are no conditions under which they could be educated in Tsova-Tush. But still, among different factors, the conjugal factor is the most important.

In the scientific literature, especially in the Soviet Russian ethnographic science great attention was paid to the marriage facts of people of different languages. Russians were greatly interested in russification of the people living in the

Russian empire to make them speak Russian. In the Soviet Russian ethnographic literature (I. Bromlei and others) it is emphasized that the problems rise in the languages of small groups when the percentage of their daughter-in-laws of different languages exceeds 15-20%. In this case, the language gradually faces the danger. In such families the children do not speak their fathers' languages (especially when there do not live grandmother and grandfather in the family). The children start speaking their mothers' language from the very beginning and speak it afterwards.

In this view, we got interested in the situation of the Tsova-Tushs at their compact dwelling place in the village Zemo (Upper) Alvani. In the local village board 398 married couples are officially registered. As it turned out, in the last 10-12 years, the considerable part of the married couples, because of different reasons (financial-economic conditions, moving registration center from village to the region center), are not registered officially. It appeared that, from the 398 couples only 226 are Tsova-Tushs. i.e. 226 Tush men's wives are also Tsova-Tushs. That makes 56-57%. The rest men's wives are aliens. The most of the latter are the women speaking Tush dialect of Georgian. There are also many women from the different villages of Kakheti region. Several Russian, Kist, Ossethian and Armenian women were also recorded. Thus, the percentage of those women in the Tsova families not speaking the Tsova-Tush language is 43, 22%.

According to ethnographic data was proved that until the 60-70s of the XX century, the most of the Tsova-Tush (Batsbis) men entered into marriage with Tsova-Tush women. Though, even then were not rare the facts of marrying women speaking Tush dialect of the Georgian language. (Many of them were also studying the Tsova-Tush language. By the way, the Tsova-Tush women married to Georgian-speaking men, often taught their language to their children) But it does not exceed the considerable limit. The above mentioned conjugal relations lasted until the time when the marriage matter was a competence of the parents. Since the parents do not interfere in marriage matters of their children and the young people decide their fate independently, the most Tsova-Tush men often find their partners in other villages. All this reasoned in the dying-out of the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) language. Only 25-30 years ago existing bilingual situation is disappearing and the most part of the population uses Georgian as the usual language. The fact is that, the most Tsova-Tushs (Batsbis) consider this event as quite normal and only some of them are very sorry for that, especially the old people.

It is also a remarkable fact that in disappearance of the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) language, the role of human factor should be eliminated. The indifference towards the above matter could be explained by their Georgian consciousness. They are the organic part of the Georgian nation and do not differ from other Georgians with their traditions, customs and habits and mentality.

The loss and disappearance of any language is always bad. We cannot give any recommendations either to the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) or the Georgian government. In our opinion, in primary classes it is possible to teach this language and to save it thus. But in this case, the problem of teachers, textbooks, literary texts will arise. The linguists' duty is to make the study of the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) language more intensive. They must record as many samples of speech as possible by means of audio-video technique. This could be done by spending not only several days in Zemo Alvani, but working there for a whole year, or at least working there during a month in every season.

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<sup>[1]</sup>In "History of Alban Countries" by Movses Kalandtuatsi, is described that the Caucasian mountaineers were using Southern Caucasian pastures from olden days. It was raining heavily in 830s in Caucasus and Albanian region of Metsinaretsi. The flood caused the great damage to Caucasian shepherds, it had destroyed their 800 tents (Kalandtuatsi p. 162, 1805)

### **The Udis (Historical – ethnological Study)**

The Caucasus, as is well known, is remarkable for its ethnical varieties. More than one ethnos lived and live here both in the past and at the present moment. Due to the ethnical processes in the Caucasus which were caused by different factors (frequent outside attacks, religious-confession opposition, peaceful

penetration of ethnic groups into each other etc.), a lot of ethnic groups passed away and a lot of new ones arose. Like the northern Caucasus, the eastern part of the southern Caucasus was distinguished for its ethnical multiplicity which is known as Caucasian Albania in the history. The state of Albania was mainly situated on the territory of the present state of Azerbaijan and used to be an important political entity next to Egris-Kartli (Lazika-Iberia) and Armenia in the South Caucasus.

Like other well-known states in the ancient history, Albania was not identical ethnically. More than twenty related or non-related ethnic unions lived there on the territory of that state out of which four tribal units predominated over others (the Utis, Gardmanis, Gargasis, Tsavdis). In the XIX-XX centuries there were some opinions among the scientists that the only descendants of the Albanians who survived were the Udis (Utis): the monuments of old Albanian alphabet found by Zaza Aleksidze on the Mount Sinai and deciphered by means of the Udi language finally confirmed this hypothesis and in this respect, destroyed all the possible assumptions of the opinions against it, expressed by not a few skeptical scientists. Thus, the history of Albania belongs to the minor ethnos of the Udis (Utis) and while speaking about them it is probably necessary to talk about the history created by the ancestors of these people.

Where did other Albanians go (both related and non-related various people) who formed the Albanian (Alvanian) state and culture? The important part of them disappeared due to the constant attacks of enemies. Quite a big part continued their life among other people (ethnos) (Armenians, Azerbaijanis and partly Georgians). Such are merciless laws of the ethnical history. Fortunately, a small part of the Albanians, who created high culture, avoided these processes characteristic of the ethnical history and continues its life among the minority of the Udis that gives us, particularly the scientists, the chance to have a clear idea about ethnicity, culture, language and alphabet of the old Caucasian Albanian state.

It can be predetermined that the Udis (Utis) are one of those, but not the only ones, who created the Albanian state and culture. A lot of scientists have been interested in this problem. Before starting to talk about the ethnos of the Udis we would like to tell you briefly about the history of Albanian state.

The state of Albania (Alvania, Aghuanki, Arrani) was mainly located between the gorges of Mtkvari and Araksi (on the lower stream of these rivers).

Researchers think that the state of Albania covered the southern part of neighbouring Daghestan besides the present area of Azerbaijan (including Qarabagh occupied by Armenia). Its southern border was drawn on the river Araksi (the Iranian province of "Atropatena" was situated to the south of Araksi). Albania was bordered by the Caspian Sea to the east and the kingdom of Kartli (Iberia) to the west. Like other countries, Caucasian Albania was not within the permanently fixed borders either. Its territory was either reduced or increased which was principally caused by the foreign factor or the relationship with the neighbouring countries. For example, part of the researchers (A. Bakikhanov, A. Yanovski, A. Krimski and others) do not often include in Albania the extremely old Albanian area located to the south of the Mtkvari which comprised the provinces of Artsakhi, Paitakarani and Uti. It is a fact though, that the southern part mainly inhabited by the Utis were often included in the state of Armenia. The west part of Albania ("Hereti" according to Georgian sources), comprised the part of Kartli (Iberia) since the IV-V centuries.

The Georganization (resp. Kartizatsia) of the people of the west Hereti, as it was mentioned by Acad. N. Berdzenishvili based on the Georgian sources, started very early and was finished by the IV century A.D., (in the V century during the reign of the king Vakhtang Gorgasali, Hereti was one of the principalities of the Kingdom; in the VIII century the Georgian king Archil started building the acropolises in Shaki). Thus, Heretians mentioned in the Georgian sources are already the Georgian tribes and together with the neighbouring Georgian tribes – Kakhetians participate actively in the formation of Georgian state and culture. For this reason the terms Heret-Kakheti and Heretians and Kakhs (Kakhetians) are inseparable in the sources until the XV century: "Heret-Kakheti", "Her-Kakhli". The scientists date the diffusion of Armenians in Artsakhi (mountainous Qarabagh) and southern part of Utiki (lowland Qarabagh) back to the IV-V-VI centuries (Aleksidze, 2003, pp.27-28).

Georgian sources frequently mention about the countries situated in the territory of Albania throughout the early middle centuries: "Ransa" (i.e. Arransa) and "Movakans" which were also included in the state of Kartli (Iberia) or were frequently under its influence. It is known that the Arabic name of Albania is Arran. The Georgian historian of the later XVIII century emphasizes that the previous name of the Khanates of his time – Qazakh and Shamshadilu was Rani (Egnatashvili, 1959, p. 365). According to the sources of the IX-X and later centuries, Rani (Arrani) covered the area of the midstream



valley of the rivers Mtkvari and Araksi (presently the Mili Valley) where three very important cities Partavi (Bardavi), Ganja and Beilakani (Paitakarani) were located. Movakani in Georgian sources was situated in the north of the Mtkvari and the east of Hereti to the Caspian Sea (Papuashvili, 1970, p.55).

The Armenized Albanian (Uti) historian in his “History of the Country of the Alvans” mentions about four basic provinces of Albania where four Albanian-related people the Utis (Udis), Gardmanis, Gargaris, Tsavdis lived accordingly. Researchers find it comparatively difficult to indicate the exact settling area of the Tsavdis. The settling area of the Udis (Utis) covered the right and left banks of the Mtkvari below the estuary of the rivers Alazani and Mtkvari. From its part, Uti (further lowland Qarabagh) consisted of seven districts and Artsakhi (further mountainous Qarabagh) – twelve districts. The towns Gishi (Gisi) and Khalkhali were on the territory of Udi. Qazakh region of the present Azerbaijan is supposed to be the living place of the Gardmanis (“Gardabanians” in Georgian sources). The Gargaris used to live in one part of the lowland Qarabagh where, according to Armenian sources, there is the valley of Gargari (Gargaratsi).

The Lbins (Country of the Lbins) included in the state of Albania, are also mentioned in historical sources. Some researchers think that the name of the country and ethnonymy Albania must have been originated from the country of the Lbins and ethnonymy Lbins. To some extent, this opinion might be logical and there might be similarities between the ethnonymies “Albanian” and “Lbin” from the linguistic point of view. However, this opinion is not supported by the historical sources. According to Movses Kalankatuatsi, “the country of the Lbins” used to be somewhere on the southern slopes of Caucasus. Besides, the Armenian historian Elishe mentions the Albanians and Lbins separately while telling the stories about the V century (Papuashvili, 1970, p. 135).

Albania first was mentioned in Greek sources of the IV century B.C. As the scientists suppose, the city centres on the territory of Albania were formed in the middle of the first millennium B.C. These city centres or various Albanian provinces were united into one state under one king in the II millennium B.C. Traver thinks that the previous part of this period, more exactly the IV-II centuries B.C., belongs to the first stage of the Albanian cultural development (he dates the second stage of this cultural development from the I century B.C., including the III century. He determines the third stage by the IV-VII centuries

A.D.,). The Albanians are first mentioned in 331 B.C., in the battle of Gacgamela where the troops of Alexadre Macedonian and Akemenedian Iran fought against each other. Albanians were in the troops of Akemenedian Iran. According to the reasonable assumption of historians, by the mentioned date, on the territory of Albania the tribal differentiation had been completed between the Albanian and non-Albanian origin people previously known by the common name – “Caspiana”. The same period is the beginning of the unification of Albanian and non-Albanian tribes under the common name – “Albanians”.

In the last centuries B.C., disruption of the primitive society and formation of the class relations took place in Albania. I would advance the events and mention that by the IV century A.D., when Christianity was proclaimed the state religion in Albania, the researchers already observe the feudal relations, almost the same social relations as in neighbouring Armenia and Kartli (Iberia). The city of Qabala (Kabala, Kabalaki) was the capital of Albania in the I-V centuries. There was the residency of Albanian Arshakid kings. During the invasions of Khazars in the VI century, the capital moved from Qabala to the city of Partavi (Bardavi) - the right side of the Mtkvari. The location of Partavi (Bardavi) is known to the researchers. As for Qabala, there are different versions of its location. However, it was stated finally that it was located near the village Chukhur-Kabala, Kutkasheni region in present Azerbaijan where the ruins of the big fortress are preserved (K. Trever, 1959, p. 142).

In 69-67 and 66-65 B.C. the king of Albania Orisi together with the king of Iberia Vakhtang and the king of Armenia Tigran II resisted the attacks of Roman Lukutsis and Pompeus. On the verge of the old and new eras the western part of Albania was under the political and cultural influence of Kartli (Iberia). The districts of the right side of the Mtkvari and among them the province of Utiki (Udis) were conquered by the state of Armenia. Even earlier the district of Utiki had been conquered by the Armenian king Artashe I (189-160). Despite this, Albania as an independent state continued its existence. In 387 A.D., after dividing Armenia between Rome and Iran, Albanian provinces Utiki, Artsakhi (M. Kalankatuatsi calls Alvania the native, original kingdom of the Artskhians) and part of Paitakarani were again included in Albania which formed the special Persian *Samarzpano* (resp. Viceregal). At that time Albania was ruled by the king Vachagan who carried out a number of measures after the unification. The main thing is that he forced the Artsakhanians to put an

end to paganism. Since then, as confirmed by all historians, Caucasus Albania covered the big part of the present day Azerbaijan.

At the beginning of the IV century Albania proclaimed Christianity the state religion. As the Armenized Albanian (Uti) historian Movses Kalankatuatsi states, the Albanians adopted Christianity prior to the Georgians (Iberians) under the reign of the king Urnairi (i.e. before 326). A certain number of populations had adopted Christianity even earlier, though. At the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> century A.D., in Albania on the left bank of the Mtkvari Christianity was professed and the first Christian Church was built by Elisse (Elishe) - the follower of Apostole Tadeoz. The church of Alvania was autonomous and led by the Cathalicos.

After 510 A.D., the royal government of Albania ruled by the local branch of the Parthian Arshakid dynasty was abolished. The following kings of the mentioned dynasty are known in the history of Albania: Vachagan I, Vache, Urnairi, Yavchagan, Merkhaven, Sato, Asati, Esvaleni, Vache II, Vachagan III and others. The Sassanids turned Albania into one of the provinces of Iran. Albania was ruled by the Persian *Marzpan*s (Viceroys) and later by the feudal family name of Mihranids – the owners of the Albanian Gardman province. The latter recognized the supremacy of Iran. On the verge of VI-VII centuries the Mihranids restored the independence of Albania. In the history of the revived state of Albania the period of ruling of Juansher is particularly remarkable (636-671). “In the History of the Alvanian State” by Movses Kalankatuatsi, Juanshir is mentioned as a “Sparapet and Prince”, “Owner of Gardman and Ishkhan of Alvania”. In the reunification and national-liberating movement of the country Juanshir was supported by the Georgians, too. In this respect, the chroniclers especially underline the contribution of the Kartlian *Erismtavari* (literally: chief of the nation) (“Ishkhani” in Armenian sources) Adarnerse. In words of Movses Kalankatuatsi, Adarnerse “earned triple respect from the Roman Kingdom. He came to him (i.e. to Juanshir – R.T.) and he himself bandaged his wounds as he was happy about the victory gained by his great courage. They formed the indissoluble union of peace with each other at that period. [Juanshir] took with him Georgian troops to provide help, went immediately to Utis and wherever he saw the Persian troops he destroyed them completely with his sword” (Kalankatuatsi, 1985, p.92).

According to the same historian, Juanshir “ruled the country autocratically from the Georgian borders to the gate of the Hons and the river Eraskhi” (i.e.

Araksi). In Juanshir's time Albania experienced political, economical and cultural growth. Juanshir built castles and churches. In his native Gardman Juanshir built a splendid domed church which was decorated with wonderful frescos. He opposed properly the Khazarian invaders in Albania and destroyed them severely. Juanshir was also gifted by the diplomatic talent and settled the matters against the enemies both from the south and north in favour of his country without struggles.

In the second half of the VII century in the period of Juanshir's heirs, Albania was conquered by the Arabs. Arab expansions continued for a long time. In 705 they occupied the capital city Partavi (Bardavi). In the 30s of the VIII century Albania was completely and finally conquered by the Arabs. In 866 the Albanian prince Hamam restored the Kingdom Albania for a short period. Exactly from that time the process of deethnization takes the start which was almost completely finished in the XI century. Disethnization of the part of the population in the Albanian Kingdom had taken place even earlier. As we mentioned above, Artskhi (Qarabagh) was Armenized in the IV-V centuries. Utiki was also significantly Armenized in the VI-VII centuries. As for Turkization, it was in progress and was basically caused by the massive migration of the Turk-Oghuzs on the territory of Albania.

At the end of the VIII century and at the beginning of the IX century the weakening of the Arab Caliphate caused the formation of the early independent feudal entities – principalities. Aran-Shahs Principality (on the right bank of the Mtkvari) and Shirvani (on the left bank of the Mtkvari) are worth mentioning. There was the principality of Daruband on the coastal side of the Caspian Sea.

What was the ethnical composition of Caucasian Albania like? According to Strabon, the people speaking in 26 languages lived in Albania. As mentioned above, the basic part of these tribes were supposed to be related to each other who gradually assimilated. It is a fact that the unified state (kingdom) of Albania was formed as a result of the unification of four big territorial units. They were: the Utis, Gardmans, Tsavdis and Gargaris. According to Armenian anonymous geography of the VII century, the province (part) of the Utis was situated on the right (south) part of the Mtkvari and included eight regions. The most remarkable is that Gardmani, which is indicated by Movses Kalankatuatsi among four big provinces of Albania, is the part of Utiki by the mentioned geography. It makes us think that the Gardmanis were mixed with

the Utis (Udis) over a period of time. According to the same geography, Albania itself was located on the north (left) side of the Mtkvari the centre of which was Qabala. It is a fact that the kingdom of Albania was formed as a result of the unification of several feudal entities. The formation of Albanian Kingdom was certainly followed by the integration of various Albanian tribes. However, in parallel to this, the process of disintegration took place in outer parts. By the V century, when the Albanian alphabet was created, the Gargarian speech was taken for the standard of the unified Daghestanian language. The former was spoken by the population who lived on the territory of the royal residency (Paitakaran-Bailakan). But from the second half of the V century the royal centre moved to Utiki in the city of Partava. The language of this province was Uti (modern Udi). “Arab historians called this language Arranian or Albanian. Such were the contrasts between the literal language and the spoken language of the central region of the country due to which it was soon out of practice and remained as the church language for a short period” (Aleksidze, 2003, p.28). We suppose that there was not a big difference between the Gargarian and Udi languages (speech). We can consider them as two dialects of one language. The same can be said about the speeches of the Gardmanis and Tsavdis. The fact is that the population of four inhabited districts of Albania was understood by the foreign authors not only as one country but also as one people which must undoubtedly show the true reality. Christian religion played an important role in the integration of the people of different Albanian provinces. It is also the fact that the inhabitants of Albania were mentioned by one ethnonymy “Albanians”. These people had the sense of integrity and common Albanian identity. This is the reason that the “new point of view” appearing among the Armenian scientists is not reasonably shared. According to the mentioned opinion, the name of the country never got the meaning of the ethnonymy of Albania and it only had the political implication (Aleksidze, 2003, p.29).

The process of integration among the different parts (districts) of Albania had obviously started long before which is proved by the fact that very soon after accepting Christianity they created the Albanian alphabet, translated the church books which were only in one dialect and understandable for every Albanian. It is also the fact that the inhabitants of Albania were understood by the foreign authors as one people (ethos) and they had common ethnonymy “Albanian”. However, we consider that the ethnonymy “Albanian” was egzoethnonymy, outer ethnonymy for them (like “Iberians” for Georgians). What the Albanians called themselves is the matter of further research and

study. It might be possible that they used such a common name to call the people of some districts (Gargarians or Utis).

It is clear from Strabon's works that before accepting Christianity the Albanians worshiped the luminaries – the Moon and the Sun. Among them fire-worship was also spread. The Albanians name three main Gods: Aramazda, Mithra and Anahit. There were church lands in Albania, too. In the VIII century Islam started to spread in Albania little by little. It gained its full victory in the XI century. However, people still followed pre-Christian local belief which concerned the revival of the natural forces and against which the Christian church like in other countries fought properly.

As mentioned above, the Albanians accepted Christian religious very early. Including the V century, in the countries of the south Caucasus (Iberia, Albania, and Armenia) there was the religious-dogmatic union. "From the beginning of the VI century Georgian and Albanian churches were first for the position of so called Zenon (Byzantine Caesar 474-475, 476-491) "Henoticon" (482) the aim of which was to effect reconciliation between the Monophysites and Diophysites. But in the fifties of the V century they refused the attempt of the Persian Empire to form one union of Monophysite camp on the territory of Transcaucasus against Byzantine. But this opposition was alert and moderate.

"At the beginning of the VII century the religious conflict in the Caucasus became strained again and ended up with the split between churches. Kartli and Albania appeared on one side with their Orthodox belief and pro-Byzantine orientation and Armenians – on the other side with their monophysite belief and Iranian support" (Aleksidze, 2003, p.56). As far as the south-western part of Albania (Artsakhi, Utiki) was often under the influence of Armenia, the latter tried to subjugate the Albanian church under the Armenian church. They frequently achieved this goal. It is obvious from historical sources that in Albania the struggle between two directions of Christianity – monophysites and diophysites – was not rare. Armenian monophysite church in the struggle against Chalcedonists achieved a certain success in its big part. However, on the bordering territory of the western Albania with Iberia (Kartli) which is known as Hereti in Georgian sources (Georgian sources in the IX-X centuries called the whole Albania Hereti), Diophysites won a victory especially in the principality of Shkeri (resp. Hereti) where two villages of the old Albanians (Udis) have been preserved today.

In Albania on the right (north) bank of the Mtkvari merciless battle took place in against Calkedonites and Atilcalkedinites (Monophysites) in the VII-X centuries (Papuashvili, 1970, p. 92). It is true that Movses Kalankatuatsi speaks only about the temporal victory of the Diophysites in Albania soon after choosing Gardmanis Episcopo Bakur (Nerses) as a Catalicos of Albania, but it is obvious that from 943, when Hereti in Georgian sources was ruled by Ishkhanik and whose wife was Dinar the Queen, diophysites won a victory here (Papuashvili, 1970, pp. 204-205). By Armenian sources (Anania Mokeli) the Calkedonites ruled in Albania in the 70s of the IX century. In scientific materials it is mentioned that “in the 40s of the X century the victory of the Calkedonizm in Hereti was the natural result of the historical development of this part. This fact meant that the political orientation of Hereti was directed to Kartli and not to Armenia” (Papuashvili, 1970, p.82).

By the way, in different districts of Albania the recognition of Monophysites or Diophysites contributed much to the future ethnical development of this country. Armenization of the big part of Albania (Artsakhi, further Qarabagh) was definitely resulted from the influence of the Armenian Church there. The population of Utiki also became Armenians. In the scientific materials it is mentioned that in the VII century Armenian Cataalicos Eghia (Elia) managed to subdue the Christian Church of Albania with the help of Muslim Caliphate troops. Since then the Christian Church of Albania got the Armenian-Gregorian colouration and Christians of this country (the Udis, Thaths and others) were called Armenians by the local Muslims. Similarly the Christian antiquities of Azerbaijan were called Armenian (Yampolski, 1961, p. 42). Similarly in Georgia, the Georgians with Monophysite belief were called Armenians. We think in the survival of the minor part of the present Udis the decisive role was played by the fact that they were not the followeres of the Armenian Monophysite church. Otherwise their Armenization would have been essential. Regarding the population in the village Niji (they are the confessors of Armenian-Gregorian belief), they might have accepted this trend of Christianity later.

The possession of the original alphabet and alphabet since the V century indicates the high level of the Albanian culture. Addoption of Christianity in Albania points to the cultural as well as social advantages of the people. In the V-VIII centuries there was original literature of Church character and the tradition of teaching in local language. The necessity of speaking about the Albanian alphabet was caused by the fact that after the destroying the state of

Albania, it basically became the victim of the religious-confession struggle. The Albanian alphabet existed for about four centuries and due to the ethnical processes in the VIII century it stopped its existence. Z. Aleksidze (2003, p. 55) made a conclusion on the basis of the Albanian texts found by him that the monument of the Albanian alphabet from the formal point of view, was performed on the same high level as the similar texts in the Armenian and Georgian languages. According to the same author, the age of the intensive development of the Albanian Christian writings is definitely the VI-VII centuries. From the 20s of the VIII century the big part of Albania was strongly affected by the Monophysite church which was resulted in the destruction of the Diophysite Albanian literature by the Armenian church. Monophysite Albania gradually moved to the Armenia language and alphabet (P.57). Albanians had the full translation of the Bible right after the adoption of Christianity (in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the V century) because, as mentioned by Z. Aleksidze, "Lectionary" (which was found by him on the Mount of Sinai) could be belong to the people who possesses the full text of the Bible in its own language" (p.115). Z. Aleksidze concludes unambiguously that "the Albanian language is definitely the old Udi language or vice versa – the Udi language is new Albanian" (p.126). "The Albanian language, both lexically and morphologically is very close to the Udi language" (p. 153). "The Albanian literal language was completely formed in early middle centuries and lasted quite long. We might revise the above mentioned date of its disappearance" (p.156). We think that this opinion is worth sharing because the Diophysites, especially on the left side of the Mtkvari did not suffer an utter defeat in the struggle against the Monophysites. The Diophysites met the total defeat later in the struggle against Islam.

So that, the only direct descendants of the old Albanians are the Udis, who has preserved the Albanian (Udi) language up to date. The various Albanian tribes like the Gargarians, Gardmanis, Tsavdis, Artsakhians, also according to Georgian sources, Movakanians, Rans, Hers.... did not reach to us. It is true that the big part of them has not disappeared but in the course of time they have become the part of other ethnos (Armenian, Azerbaijanian, Turkish and Georgian). That the Udis are successors of the Albanians is pointed in the Armenian source of the XVII century: "the Albanian tribe which is called the Udis today" (Zakaria Kanakerti; quoted from the book by Z. Aleksidze, p. 127). They had the report or historical memory in the XVIII century about the fact that the Utis (Udis) were the direct descendants of the Albanians. In 1724 the Udis submitted the letter to the Russian Emperor Peter I. They mention the



following directly in the letter: “We Aghvanis (i.e. Albanians, Albanians – R.T) the Utis by nationality” (Papuashvili, 1970, p. 10).

Before we start characterizing the culture of the Udis - direct descendants of the Albanians, it is noteworthy that Albania used to be the country of developed economy. Although Strabon writes that “the Albanians are likely shepherds and quite close to nomadic life but they are not savages...”. It does not mean though that they do not follow land-farming. Strabon also confirms the growing of all kinds of crops and speaks about the harvesting twice or three times a year. The greek geographer also mentions that the Albanians cultivated the land by the wooden plough. He also underlines the irrigating farming and vine-growing. They knew how to trim the vine once in a five year. They used to have the specific kind of big cattle (Strabon, 1957, pp. 130-132).

There still are the remnants of old irrigation canals in Azerbaijan which indicates the high level of the Albanian intensive farming. Movses Kalankatuatsi emphasizes the existence of the nice, fertile vines in the Albanian district of the Utis (Kalankatuatsi, p. 67), which at the same time, points to the high development of the vine-growing and gardening. Cattle-breeding was also developed in Albania which is confirmed by the above mentioned words of Strabon. Besides, in the early middle centuries the vast pastures were used by the northern Caucasus mountaineers. In the 30s of the XIX century Movses Kalankatuatsi mentioned the same fact.

The arts used to be highly developed as well. The chronicler mentions that the prince Juanshir (636-671) was accompanied by “the well trained singers” in the mountainous summer residence (Kalankatuatsi, p. 104).

According to same Strabon, the ancestors of the Udis – Albanians were distinguished for their appearance and body-build. “They are ordinary and not philistines (by nature)”. The Udis are remarkable for their appearance even today. Anthropologically they are Europeans and good-looking. They mostly have round faces, fair or brown hair and they are medium-height.

The Udis who preserved the language of the old Albanians live in two states of the South Caucasus – in Azerbaijan and Georgia. They are: villages Niji and Vartasheni (now Oghuzn) in Azerbaijan and Zinobiani in Georgia (formerly Oktomberi during the Soviet power). The Udis moved to the village Zinobiani in the Georgian region of Kvareli in 1920-1922 from Vartasheni. The reason of

migration was the opposition between the Azerbaijanis and Armenians. Innocent Udis frequently were the victims of bloody opposition. Therefore, the head of the village Zinobi Selikashvili found the safe shelter in Georgia and settled his villagers in the bordering region Kvareli in Georgia. In respect of natural environment, there was no big difference between the new living place and the previous one. The Udis cut the oak forest and established a new village there. The name Zinobiani was given after the initiator of the migration Zinobi (Mghebrishvili, 2005, p. 183).

Besides this, the Udis also live in Rostov District and Krasnodar Krai of the Russian federation (north-western Caucasus). The migration of the Udis here mainly occurred in the 1980s and as is mentioned in scientific materials, this migration continues even today. The Udis migrated from Georgia live in the Russian Federation, as well.

According to different data, the number of the Udis today varies from 7 thousand to 8 thousand. Approximately 80% of the Udis live in the village Niji. Their total number in Azerbaijan is within the frames of 6.1 thousand (5.400 people in Niji and 700 in Vartasheni). The number of the Udis is about 300 in the village Zinobiani. 1.1 thousand Udis were registered in the Russian Federation in 1989.

According to the family records in 1886, in Azerbaijan (Nukhi district of Elisavetopole province) the Udis composed 7.201 heads. Their number in the village Niji was 4.553 heads. 198 Udis lived in the village Meghkli of the Niji community. 2.362 Udis were registered in Vartasheni. Besides this, as it is clear from above mentioned census, the Udis also lived in the village Qirzeni, Kazakhi district of Elisavetopole province (160 heads). The Udis from Qirzeni were Armenized later. Z. Yampolski, too pointed about the Udi origin of the Armenians living in Qirzeni.

Evidently, the people from Qirzeni can remember that their predecessors were the Udis and spoke the Udi language (The Udis, 1999, p. 8). Other data say that the people of Qirzeni had been bilingual (Udi-Armanian) for a long time before their Armenization. As we mentioned above, the people of Qirzeni were registered as the Udis in 1886. "Kavkazki Kalendar" (The Caucasus Calendar) in 1910 fixes them as Armenians.

As T. Miskalishvili (Sharabidze) found out, 45 households of the Udis also lives in the village Mirzabule (Nukhi district, presently Sheki region). In 1886 the Udis from Mirzabule were registered as Armenians. During the intrusion of the Russian army into the Caucasus, the Udis also lived in the villages Bumi and Sultnukha of Sheki region. By the census of 1886, the population of both villages was Turkish. According to the article by M. Bezhanov written in the 90s of the XIX century in different villages of Azerbaijan not long ago, there were some old people who could speak the Udis language (p.213). Generally, the scientists see the substratal layer of the old Albanians (Udis) among the population of three north-western Azerbaijani districts (Sheki, Oghuzi, and Kabalani).

It is interesting to know what the demographical situation was like in the state of Azerbaijan. Z. Yampolski tried to give the approximate picture based on indirect data. According to his calculation, in the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C., the number of population reached 800 thousand people on the territory of Albania. In the IX century it comprised one million. He also calculated the number of the alien ethnos infiltrated in Albania (Khazarians, Arabs, Turkish-Oghuzs, Mongolians). The number of Khazarians was 12 thousand men in the VII-VIII centuries. 40 thousand families of the Oghuz tribes settled in Azerbaijan in 1025. During the invasion of the Seljuk Turk Sultan Alparslan in 1070, his troops consisted of 15 thousand men (Papuashvili, 1970, p. 80). Thus, according to the conclusion of Z. Yampolski, the physical descendants of the old Albanians are more in number among the present Azerbaijanis than of Turkish origin. We consider this opinion worth sharing. There was the similar demographic situation in South-west Georgia (Meskheti), where the Muslim Georgians were in absolute majority.

The Udis are Christians. Udis, residing in Vartasheni village and Georgian village Zinobiani are Orthodox Christians, but the residents of Niji village, are Monophysites. As we had already mentioned above, everything points to the fact that the latter also were the Orthodox Christians formerly and that they adopted the Armenian Gregorian confession later on, which caused the maintenance of their identity. It is remarkable that according to their beliefs, the ancestors of Nijians were Orthodox Christians by confession. According to Shiphner, in Udis of the XIX century was preserved the legend about the activities of the XV century Georgian preacher Ioane. The adoption of Monophysite confession, probably happened after the XVI century, when the number of the Orthodox Georgian population significantly decreased in East

Kakheti (the province of present Azerbaijan - Saingilo, i.e. the regions of Zakatala, Belakani and Kakhi) and the Muslims took the place of Orthodox Christians.

The fact is accentuated in the scientific literature that in the period of Russian occupation of South Caucasus, the Udis were nominal Christians with somewhat vague ideas about Christianity (The Udis, p.99, 1999). This was the natural event for the congregation left without church service. The crisis of Christianity began after the VIII century in Albania. Propagation of Islam had begun. The Arabic sources point out about the existence of mosques in Partavi and Kabala in the X and XI centuries. The population of the Sheki (Shaki) principality (Niji and Vartasheni are on that territory) were also subjected to Islamization, although the majority of the population of the mentioned province remained Christians in the X-XI centuries. One of the Orthodox churches was built in 1822 in Vartasheni, which bears the name of Saint Elise (Saint Elise propagated Christianity in the II century in Albania). The church was built by an Orthodox Udi Petre Silikov, the descendants of which adopted Armenian-Gregorian (Monophysite) confession. That became the subject of the endless controversy between Orthodox Christians and Monophysites. In the 30s of the XX century, the Soviet regime closed the Christian churches on the territories inhabited by the Udis. This negative fact had one positive meaning, the religious confrontation between Nijians and Vartashenian Udis was eliminated and the establishment of the marital relations was again possible between them.

It is true that the Udis are Christians, but the traditional beliefs were alive among them until recently. The next day after Easter, they have a tradition of going to the cemetery and taking pilaw, the sweets and fruit there. That day both, the Christian and Monophysite priests were blessing all the graves. The third day after Easter, there was the church holiday of Saint Elise. Saint Elise's church stands on a hill covered with tall trees. These trees are considered sacred. This place was visited not only by the Vartasheni population but by the Armenian people from the nearest villages. The prayers not only worshipped icons and lighted candles, but also sacrificed the sheep to the church. It turns out that there is a sacred place near Vartasheni which the Udis associate with the name of Saint George. Here, Christians and Gregorians (Monophysites) prayed together. In "Saint George's" house of worship people prayed every Sunday. Transfiguration was the most crowded holiday. That day the young girls of Vartasheni village, were painting their hands with henna, gathering

fruit and plaiting (making) the crosses from the wildflowers. At dawn, the girls were taking fruit, with the flower crosses on it, to their friends and relatives. There appeared to be the half-ruined church “Kitske Gerets” (small church) and “Kala Kitske” (flower church) in Vartasheni. The Udis worshipped the ancestors and the hearth. According to M. Bezhanov, there is a big sycamore in upper Vartasheni, which is considered sacred; People were lighting candles and sacrificing animals under that tree. The circularity of the sacred tree was 23 meters. The Udis preserved the following legend about the sacred tree: Constrained by Muslims, the Udis performed the Christian rituals secretly. In expectation of Muslims attack, the Udis dug the Gospel into the ground. In order not to lose the place (where they dug the sacred book), they planted a sycamore that became the tree of worship afterwards. The Udis would never break either dry branches or fronds off sycamore. They only gathered the dry branches and used them during the sacrificing rituals.

According to M. Bezhanov and other scientists, the existence of the former church buildings in the villages of today’s Azerbaijan manifests the fact that on the Nukhi (Sheki) territory inhabited with the Udis, Christianity was once widespread (M. Bezhanov, 1892).

It was mentioned above that the different sectors of national economy were developed in Albania. The traditional activity of the Udi descendants is the irrigative farming. The Udis sowed wheat, barley, millet. Rice farming and wine-making were developed there (the Udis were making wine of high-quality). Silk raising was also developed. Cattle breeding never had the big scopes there, although all the families had cows, pigs, hens and turkeys. The Udis migrated to Georgia had developed the traditional fields of economy, specifically, silk raising and wine making. In the first years of their migration, the Udis were engaged in the traditional rice farming but little by little, under the new conditions it lost its importance in the economy activities.

The Udis living in Azerbaijan were skilled at tile manufacture. In the Georgian village, Zinobiani, over a certain period of time, this traditional craft disappeared. From the trade spheres, among the descendants of the ancient Albanians, pottery was also developed.

Seeking employment outside was not characteristic to the Udis from Vartasheni, on the contrary, from the first decade of dwelling in both, Vartasheni and Zinobiani, these were the Leks from South Dagestan and the

Kakhi region of Azerbaijan, who were performing seasonal works in the above villages. They were mainly working as mowers there.

The Udi villages are mostly situated in the foothill zone in Azerbaijan. The planning of villages is free and dissipated, to be more precise, the settlement was formed without any kind of planning. The Udis dwellings consisted not only of living quarters but utility rooms and orchards as well. The dwellings were usually fenced with wicker or stone fences. There were much walnuts, nuts, chestnuts in their orchards. The Udis were partly occupied with trading. They were selling silk, cocoon, (poor) tobacco, walnuts, nuts, rice, chestnuts, dried cherries, etc.

The Udi houses were made of stone or brick. The houses were constructed on high foundations, with gable roofs. The houses were usually roofed with tile, but in old times they were thatch-roofed. In the XIX century, the Udi houses were windowless. The light was penetrating only through “Erdos” (the small openings, holes made in roofs). In the center of the residential house, there was arranged the hearth for making a fire. The fire was never extinguished in the hearth. The dinner was cooked there. There were built-in closets in the houses for keeping beds, plates and dishes, and pots with pickles. The Udis were using boxes made of clay, for keeping flour, which were usually placed in the corner of the room.

In the end of the XIX century, the Udis began constructing houses with windows of European type. Generally, they were building two-three room residential houses for themselves. Consequently, they began constructing fireplaces instead of hearths. Later, in the XX century, even the fireplaces were out of use and the only heating facility was the tin oven. The most important element of Udi house was very big and large attic where fruit was dried and preserved. In the XX century, one-story residential houses were replaced with two-story balconied dwellings. The floors were mostly made of walnut trees. The Udis migrated to Georgia, initially were making wooden houses, so far as the place of their new settlement (Zinobiani village) was the wooded country. Besides, the Udis were skilled at woodworking.

In the end of the XIX century the traditional clothing of Udis disappeared from their life. As it is evident from 1890s photos, their clothing was identical to the Qarabaghian Armenians' garments. The Udi men wore “Chokha” (Georgian national coat), and short, buttoned “Akhalukhi” (a dress worn under “Chokha”).

They wore belts with silver buckles. The traditional attribute of that clothing was a dagger. A sheath with dagger in it, was fastened to a belt. On feet they wore half-hoses and shoes (“Charikhi”) made of flexible leather. The slippers and boots were made of more soft leather. The hats were cone-shaped “Papakhas” made of sheepskin. The women usually wore loose and long dresses. They were dressed in skirts and long, gathered “Akhalukhis” up to their knees. The women’s outer clothing with long and cut sleeves was belted; The belts were large and hooked up with big silver buckles. Under “Akhalukhis” they wore the apron type dress buttoned under their arms. During holidays, the well-to-do Udis wore the short, velvet coats. The women’s head-dresses consisted of several shawls. They decorated foreheads with silver chains, with silver coins on them. Fabric strips with the similar silver coins were attached to their temples. The married women covered the lower part of their face with ordinary shawls (“Iashmag”). It was mentioned above that the Udi and Qarabaghian Armenians clothing was identical. The similarity of the mentioned culture element of these two people could be explained not only by their neighborhood, but by their same origination as well (The Armenians from Qarabagh are the ancient Albanians by origin).

During the first three decades of the XX century, the traditional clothing of Udis changed gradually. It lost its several elements rapidly. The senior people could not give up their “Chokhas” and “Papakhas” for a long time, and the women continued to cover their faces. Today not a single element of the traditional costume is survived. They usually wear clothes of European style.

The traditional food of the Udis was the plant products: beans, rice, walnuts, vegetables, fruit, and berry. The changes did not refer to foodstuff. Bread was still baked from wheat flour in “Thone” (vertical bakery). The main meal was different kinds of pilaw made of rice, beans, dried fruits, persimmons, chestnuts, walnuts. They traditionally used to eat pilaw together with “Matsoni” (resp. fermented milk). Fried and boiled chestnuts were popular, which the Udis were selling to second-hand dealers from Tbilisi and Baku. They squeezed oil out of walnuts. They were making many kinds of meals of vegetables, e.g. of pumpkins, cabbages, egg-plants, tomatoes. They were using wild vegetables, fruit and berry, especially nettle and sorrel.

In the XIX century all Udi families had at least a hundred hens. The chickens fattened up with boiled millet, were stuffed with rice and roasted in the fireplace. They used to cook pilaw with turkey and chicken meat as well. One

of their main dishes still remains “Chikhirtma” (chicken broth with a pinch of flour eggs and vinegar in it).

The milk products (fermented milk “Matsoni”, sour cream, butter, melted butter) were the important part of Udis food. The dishes prepared with meat (chicken broth “Chikhirtma”, stuffed cabbage-roll “Tolma”) were necessary components of holiday feasts, or during receiving guests. The meals made of fish were also popular. The river Mtkvari was rich in fish. The Udis were roasting spitted lampreys. They were using cod-liver oil in lamps and lighting their houses. The main courses from the sweets were honey and halva (mix of nuts, sugar and oil). They were making vodka from different kinds of fruit (grapes, peas, apples, mulberries, Cornelian cherries). They were skilled at making marinades (of cucumbers, capers, cabbage, tomatoes, celeries). The Udis inhabiting in Georgia began to prepare Georgian food such as, small, corn flour bread (“Mchadi”). They baked local Kakhetian bread “Lavashi” in vertical bakeries (“Thone”). Alike Georgians, they arranged such kinds of bakeries in the corner of the yard, or in special stalls.

Some changes took place in this sphere of life of the migrants. The consumption of fish became rare; They almost do not use chestnuts in their food; The walnut usage is not so frequent in their food, as they have relatively less walnut in Zinobiani than they used to have in Vartasheni. The Udis began to prepare Georgian meals from which could be listed the following: “Satsivi” (the food made of turkey broth, walnuts and species) and “Khachapuri” (cheese pie).

For the Udis, as well as for other Caucasians, guest receiving is very special and honorable occasion. Udis remain very hospitable to present day. They are traditionally treating the senior, aged people with respect. Young people often stand up while seeing the aged people coming in the streets, or squares, as a sign of respect towards them. About this habit of ancient Albanians spoke the Greek geographer Strabon: “The Albanians treat the old people with great respect. They respect not only their own parents, but parents of others as well.” (Strabon’s Geography, XI, p.p.4,8, 1957). The senior and master in the Udi house was a man. All family members had to stand up when he was entering the house. The son did not sit at the table when there was a guest in the house. He was nearby, ready to serve the guest. Women never dined together with men. A woman had to receive her husband’s permission for going out of the house. Women were mostly busy with housekeeping; The silk raising and dried fruits preparing were their responsibilities.



In the XIX century, the Udis generally lived in small (individual) families. The big (inseparable) families were only in Niji village. There are no notes found about the existence of big families in Vartasheni.

The blood relationships were very important among the Udis. Except blood relations, the cases of artificial relating were also common among them. A family name represented the one circle of relatives. That was exogamic. The marriage within the seven generations was strictly forbidden. The above prohibition displays the fact that this sphere of social relations was conditioned by the Orthodox church laws. The Armenian (Monophysite) church demanded the marriage prohibition up to the fourth generation. Generally, as it turns out according to Movses Kalankatuatsi's history, there never existed the marriage prohibitions between the relatives in ancient Albanians. Initially the relatives (blood relatives and artificially related) married each other, against which the Christian church fought stubbornly. It is fact, that in Albania the Christian church subjected the marital relations to the Christian church law. The prohibition of marital relations within seven generations among the Udis, serves as the evidence of the above said. This also proves the fact that initially, the Udis were Orthodox Christians and adopted Monophysite confession afterwards.

There were rare cases of marriages between representatives of one and the same family names, but there relationships must have been too distant. The main condition remained the same - seven generations should part them from their common ancestor (Miskalishvili, p.22, 1990). As it is noted in ethnographic scientific literature, the permission for establishing marital relations after the seven generations within the same family name had the sole reason – not to marry the Muslims. Consequently, the fact of not entering into marriage with the people of different confession contributed to the maintenance of the Udis ethnic originality.

In the Soviet period, there were some cases of marriages between the Udis and the aliens. From the national point of view, the mixed marriages mostly occurred between the Nijian Udis and Armenians. The last two-three decades revealed the cases of mixed marriages, i.e. Udis married Russians, Ukrainians, and Georgians.

There was a strict prohibition concerning the establishment of marital relations with the maternal relatives. There appeared to be the only fact of marriage between cousins (the sisters' children). The Udis did not allow this couple to live in their ethnic environment. They made them to leave the village (Miskalishvili, p.22, 1990). This kind of punishment towards the tradition breakers was common throughout the Caucasus.

The Udi family names in Azerbaijan are formed by adding two suffixes. The family names of Nijians are formed by Armenian suffixes (-ian), and Vartashenians' names are formed by Russian suffixes (-iv). As for Udis living in Georgian village Zinobiani in Qvareli region, their family names are generally formed by adding the Georgian suffix –shvili. The family names of Udis are registered in official legal documents with the above suffixes. When the Udis speak their native language, they do not add Armenian, Russian, or Georgian suffixes while mentioning the Udi family names. Usually, each Udi family name has the Udi form.

According to scientific literature, the Udis are settled on the basis of their family names, i.e. one family (circle of relatives) makes one district. The Udi form of Nijian family name of Dalakian is Dalakh, Kocharian – Kochaarkho, Khamaian – Khamarkhoi, Nasibian – Nasbaarukh, Damarchian – Damchaarukh, Shirshirian – Shishraarukh, Gukasian – Qulasaarkho, Jeiranian – Jeirankhoi, Vazirian – Vazirkhoi, Palchian – Palchaarkho, Martirosian – Manjaarkho, Gasparian – Kaspaarkho, Danakian – Danakaarukh, Zakian – Zakiarogho, Matilian – Matinailukh (Mathtaarkho), Damirchian – Danaakargho, Davidov – Davandegogho, Dinchian – Dinchharkho, Aitandrian – Ainarkho, Nasebian – Nastokho, Navazian – Navastagho, Tatevosian – Tateskhoi, Tumbulian – Tumbughalughkho, Sarkharian – Sarkhankhoi, Gozalian – Gozlarkhoi, Kochian – Qochialukh, Shaqulov – Shaqalarkhoi, Avetiasian – Aitkhoi, Idanian – Idangho, Kushman – Kushnaarkho, Dinglian – Dinglishkhoi, Undelian – Undalgho, Muradian – Muradarkho, Demerchian – Demechaarkho, Shirian – Shirianlukh, Kuranian – Kurankhoi, Jotanian – Jotaarkho, Chalabian – Chalabarkhoi, Manjian – Manjaarkho, Panchian – Palchaarkho.

On the basis of family names are settled the village Vartasheni as well. The family names of Vartashenians are the following: Kanarchi (the official form is - Kananchov), Ivani (Ivanov), Qazari (Qazarov), Uruzi (Uruzov), Tgri (Tigirov), Tistin (Tostiev), Hajin (Ajiev), Aghasi (Agasov), Pajiki (Pajikov), Kumsa (Kumsiev), Huptani (Huptanov), Tatani (Tatanov), Titskovi (Titskonov), Puladi

(Puladov), Siliki (Silikov), Jinkori (Jinkorov), Qotin (Qotiev), Khosrovi (Khosrov), Sildiri (Sildirov), Miskhali (Miskalov), Pirin (Piriev), Nemushi (Nemushev), Khachiki (Khachikov), Khoshmati (Khoshmatov), Gumburi (Gumburov), Velikhani (Velikhanov), Gogoli (Gogolov), Papakhchin (Papakhchinov), Atakhchin (Atakshin, Atakhchov), Jiran (Jeiranov), Kitsbaba (Kitsbabaev), Buloni (Bulunov).

Until 1919 there was a separate village Kishlaghi, two-three kilometers away from Vartasheni, inhabited with Udis. Because of Azerbaijanis attacks, the Udis moved from Kishlaghi to Vartasheni in the same 1919 (Miskalishvili, p. 46, 1990). The family names of Udis from Kishlaghi are the following: Khachiki, Abramaghari, Mevataghari, Khaniki, Qopinghari, Haivazi, Nevataghari, Qarabaghari, Toloraghari, Pavakhchi, Jughraghari, Misqali (Sharabi), Ivanaghari, Ialaghari, Qazaraghari (Jughraghari), Mathtarun, Alibaba. All these family names had their official endings. They are formed by Russian suffixes. According to T. Miskalishvili's ethnographic data, there also were three more family names in Kishlaghi: Gapilijok, Kaprelkoj, Tighraghari that do not exist any more.

The Udis living in Georgian village Zinobiani are not settled on the basis of their family names. During 1920-1922 migrations, they settled down in the places they were given. The migrants from Vartasheni had maintained their family names but are officially formed by the Georgian suffix –Shvili: Haivazi – Aivazishvili, Pachiki – Pachikishvili, Nemushi – Nemushishvili, etc. (Miskalishvili, 1990). According to our data, except the above mentioned family names there also lived the Jeiranashvilis, the Kurdghelashvilis, the Barkhudarashvilis, the Tostiashvilis, the Gogolashvilis, the Kumsiashvilis, the Kakulashvilis, the Atakishvilis, the Bezhanishvilis, the Poladishvilis, the Kulatamishvilis, the Totskonovs, the Baidoshvilis, the Chikvaidzes, the Dalakishvilis, the Tevdorashvilis, the Tizlarishvilis, the Sharabidzes (Miskalishvilis), the Kurakhchishvilis, the Kitsbazashvilis (Bazashvilis), the Kotiashvilis, the Piriashvilis, the Chinkorashvilis, the Uruzashvilis, the Mamulashvilis, the Ajiashvilis, the Kazarashvilis, the Bibelashvilis, the Agasashvilis. Officially, also the Udis from Zinobiani mostly add the suffix –ghar to the family names formed by means of the suffix –shvili: Bezhanishvili – Bezhanigharia (in plural – Bezhanighar-mukh), Kumsiashvili – Ghumsighar, Sharabidze – Sharabighar, Tizlarishvili – Tizlarighar. Zinobiani Udis use other suffixes (ailukh - means a child, son, man) to form their family names. For

example, the family name of the Dalakishvilis is pronounced as “Darakhqachar ailukh” in the Udi language.

The above data about the family names we borrowed from the ethnographer T. Miskalishvili (Sharabidze). It is evident that the Nijian and Vartashenian family names together with their derivational suffixes differ from each other. The suffixes of Nijian family names are the following: -arkho (- akho, - arkhoi//khoi), - arukh (-arugho, -lukh, -okho, -ghukh, -lughkho). As for the Vartashenian family names, in the Udi language they are used without suffixes, only by their root forms. The main derivational suffix of the family names of migrants from Vartasheni to Kishlaghi, is -ghar. “ghar” in Udi means “son, a boy” (E.Jeiranashvili). It is remarkable that -ghar suffix also forms the Tsova-Tush (Batsb) family names, but in the latter case, as it is supposed, expresses the collectivity. (Chrelashvili,2002, p.293). But in our opinion, together with collectivity it also denotes possessiveness to someone.

The several family names made one district in Niji village. All family names had their own houses of worship (“Jilisa”). The Niji dwellers had no common Nijian worship houses. Such place for them was “Ieghish Arakela” in Vartasheni; The same situation was in Jelti village inhabited with Armenians and which makes us think that Armenians from Jelti are Armenized Udis. Alike Nijians, each Udi family name of Vartasheni had its own house of worship. This ethnographic data enables us to conclude that the ancestral name (family name) is the early event in Udis; That was established long ago and differed from their neighboring Armenians and Azerbaijanis even from this point of view. While migrating to Georgia (Zinobiani), Udis took along so called, worship house “nishi” (“Evel”) from the house of worship of Vartasheni “Tsimeri”, which consisted of stone, land and cross. Carrying “nishi” from old dwelling place to new one, was the common tradition in the whole Caucasus including Georgia.

Like other Caucasian people, the artificial relations were also characteristic to Udis. With the purpose of maintaining their children in good health, the Udis also had the habit of “buying-selling” children. They attached great importance to godfather (“Khashbaba”). According to T. Miskalishvili (Sharabidze), there were two ways of fraternizing among the Udis (p.31): the first of them were formed by the ritual of cutting fingers and “mixing” blood and the other was performed with scraping silver in the bowl of vodka and drinking it. The exogamic marriage prohibition within seven generations equally referred to both - blood relatives and those who became related artificially.

Becoming godfather (“Khashbaba”) was hereditary among the Udis. Therefore, the marriage was forbidden not only between the representatives of the families of godfather and his godchild, but between the descendants of these two families as well. (Miskalishvili, p.34, 1990). In our opinion, the real reason of ancestral character of godfather institute was in the difficulty of counting seven generations in the families who became related by means of the above mentioned way. Therefore, it took the traditional character.

The godfather (“Khashbaba”) was the most honorable guest. He played the special role during the wedding ceremony. “Khash” in the Udi language means the moon, the light. Consequently, “Khashbaba” means godfather, moon father. We share T. Miskelishvili’s idea that “Khashbaba” in its meaning initially was connected with the moon cult (p.34). The moon was the main idol for ancient Albanians. The Strabon’s notes and the present terms for indicating godfather, his responsibilities, his participation in the ritual, is the most significant argument for making the final conclusion about the fact that the Udis are direct descendants of the old Albanians.

Niji village, as it is indicated in scientific literature, consisted of 14 districts, or as the Udis say, from “aiz mahlas”(aiz-yard, mahla - country). Living in the same district, or “aiz mahla”, was not an obstacle for marriage.

It is impossible not to mention about one fact. The term “qom” indicates relations (maternal, or paternal), while “neighbor” is expressed with the term “qomshi”, no difference, whether this neighbor is a relative or not. Thus, for expressing the notion of a neighbor, the Udi language used the root form indicating a relative. The mentioned term must have been formed when all neighbors were relatives (Miskalishvili, p.47, 1990).

In marital relations, the religion was as important for Udis, as for the rest of Caucasians. According to ethnographic data, since adopting Armenian-Gregorian religion, marrying Vartashenian Udis was prohibited for Nijians. The Udi men from Vartasheni refused to allow their women to marry Nijians. From this point of view, they gave preference to Ingilos of the similar religion (the Georgian ethnographic group in Azerbaijan. But there also were Muslims among them). Nijians gave Ingilos in marriage only that women, who were above 20 years old (The women at the age of 20 were considered to be spinsters) without marriage portion and wedding, though. The orthodox Udis from Vartasheni

seldom marry the Armenian women, or the Nijians of Armenian-Gregorian confession. It is natural, that the marriage prohibition on the basis of religious difference resulted in the suspension of the integration process, and even on the contrary, it caused the disintegration processes.

According to T. Miskalishvili's ethnographic data, the establishment of marital relations with Azerbaijanis was strictly forbidden, the reason of which was the difference in their religions and traditions. The only Udi woman who dared to break this prohibition was excelled from the circle of relatives, she was no more considered as their relative (Miskalishvili, 1990, p.50). It is true that the marriage with the representatives of other ethnic groups was not welcomed as well, but still, punishment in such cases were not so severe as in cases of marrying the Azerbaijanis. Probably, The Udis living in the Azerbaijani ethnic environment were trying to avoid the risk of assimilation with them and that's why they were categorically against establishing marital relations with them. Since the Soviet regime, when the marriages were not performed in the churches officially and ritually, The Nijian and Vartashenian Udis again began to establish the marital relations with each other.

Formerly, the lowest age limit for marriage was: 13 - in women, and 16 -in men. Today it ranges from 18-25 in women, and 18-30 in men.

Among all aspects of the ethnographic life of the Udis, their marital relations are studied most thoroughly (Miskalishvili). In the works dedicated to this problem are noted that the Udis were often selecting women, future wives, during the religious holidays. This custom belongs to the common Caucasian customs. In choosing the future daughter-in law, the great attention was paid not only to her personal features, but to her mother's and uncle's (mother's brother) as well, on the assumption that the mother's and her family's role in their daughter's upbringing was significant. The uncle's (mother's brother) priority and his special role in marital relations was characteristic for other Caucasians as well. The uncles often acted as matchmakers. It turns out that, the Udis had the tradition of arranging engagement offhand, or until the child's birth, or in the cradle. This tradition was also common for all Caucasian people. The above listed traditions concerning marriage are not survived by this time. The marriages by means of matchmaking are also rare today. Generally, the young people decide their fate independently. By Miskalishvili's observations, the old marriage and wedding traditions are more preserved in Udis living in Georgia, then in their historical native places (Niji and Vartasheni).

The so called “silence” tradition was also peculiar to the Udis. This tradition is forgotten today.

They say that the Udis were performing polyphonic songs in weddings. But there is no possibility for recording the melodies and the texts of them. Nowadays the Nijian and Vartashenian Udis sing Azerbaijanian songs and Zinobians sing Georgian songs. Until the 50s of the XX century, The Udis were performing the dance “Iali” in weddings. It was the men’s dance; Crossing their hands the dancers were making a circle, on their shoulders the little boys were making another circle and they all were dancing under the music of “Zurna” (wind instrument). This dance is also preserved only in narrators’ memories.

The Udis were arranging wedding in autumn, after bringing in a harvest. The wedding was lasting three-four days. The bride was led into the house under the crossed swords. The bride’s parents were not attending the wedding. Many elements of the wedding traditions of the Udis are not survived at present, such as to wash male family representatives’ feet by the bride in the evening. In the 20s of the XX century the above habit was preserved in some places.

The Udis from their pregnant women required only some light housework to do. They were happy only when the son was born.

Many things changed in the mourning traditions as well. Straight away after death, the deceased was washed clean and wrapped in cerement. Then the priest was invited for providing the burial service. The deceased placed on the mattress was brought out of the house and put on the ladder made specially for that purpose. Then it was carried to the church and left there for a night. The next day, after liturgy and mourning, the deceased was buried. Among the Udis moved from Vartasheni to Georgia, the mourning period was enhanced up to three-four days under the Georgian influence. There were only men attending the funeral repast which consisted of cheese, bread, boiled meat, “Qaurma”, “Shelakhua”.<sup>[1]</sup>

The main determinant of Udi identity is the Udi language. As it was already mentioned, the Udi language is the new Albanian language. The Albania State documents were written in old Albanian; The sacred books were interpreted in Albanian, and the church service was also provided in this language. The Udi language belongs to the Nakhi-Daghestan group of the Caucasian languages. It

is natural that the Udi language has been modified and it differs from the language in which the V-VIII century written monuments were created. On the scientists' assumption the Udi language became very different from ancient Albanian (Aleksidze, p.48, 2003). The several languages (the Turkish of Azerbaijan, Armenian and Russian) influenced the the Udi language. This influence most of all reflected on the latter's vocabulary. The Georgian language had its influence on the language of the Udis living in Zinobiani - in the Georgian language/ethnic environment. The Albanian language was not disused immediately. The process began earlier in Albania situated on the right bank of the river Mtkvari. The Armenization here had concern with the Armenians political and religous expansion. It was mentioned above that de-ethnicity in Artsakhi (mountainous Qarabagh) took place in the IV-V centuries; In lowland of Qarabagh (in Utiki) – in the VI century. The Armenization of Abanians inhabiting the right bank of the river Mtkvari lasted throughout the Middle Ages. In the west part of Albania took place the Georgianization of the Hers – the kindred tribes of The Udis. However, these processes here were not as universal and wide-ranging, as the substitution of the local languages and dialects with the Armenian language. The most part of the population which managed to avoid the Armenization and partial Georgianization, since the VIII century were Islamized after the Arab invasion. But the Arab invasion and Islamization had not resulted in the loss of the Albanian language and their ethnicity. The transition of the Albania-speaking people to the Turkish language happened in the XI century. Thus in The Middle Ages, on the territory of present Azerbaijan ended the process of gradual disappearing of the local Albanian language that is the loss of the language which reached us in the form of the Udi language spoken only in two-three villages. As we had already mentioned above, on the territory of the present Azerbaijan, the substitution of Udi with Azerbijani and Armenian continued in the XIX century. In Z. Aleksidze's opinion, "Albanian tragedy lay in the fact that they could not find their own credo and ideological platform different from Georgians' and Armenians'. This ended at the cost of their existence." (p.57)

Because of the fact that in Azerbaijan and Georgia (also in Russia), the Udi language function was limited to its usage within the village and family as only the everyday language, it is natural that the Udis are bilingual and even trilingual. Historically the Udis had contacts with Azerbaijan and Armenian-speaking population. Contacts with the Armenian church and language, as well as the existence of the Armenian villages around the Niji village, determined the Nijians confession. Today the Udis from Niji have no contacts with



Armenians, because after the Qarabagh conflicts practically there are no Armenians left there. The Udis residing in Georgia speak Georgian fluently. The majority of the Udis migrated to Georgia, initially spoke Azerbaijani language as well. The present Zinobiani generation do not speak Azerbaijani. The Udis knew also the Russian language. The Vartashenian Udis knew this language even until the October Revolution, as there existed the elementary Russian school there. In the first two decades of the XIX and XX centuries, the Udis mainly went to schools in Tbilisi, in Georgian town – Gori (church school) and in Russia – in Moscow and Kozlov.

It was already mentioned that during the last two decades, over thousand of Udis migrated to the Russian federation. Because of natural and climate conditions of Russia, many signs of ethnic culture had disappeared from their life. The traditional mentality of the Udis, the norms of behavior in family and society are stronger here. For The Udis living in Russia, the marriage exogamy, the respect towards the elders and the hospitality are still very important.

The increasing of national self-consciousness is characteristic to the modern the Udis. They studied in Russian schools in Azerbaijan, but today these schools became Azerbaijani. Since 1994 the primary classes are given the Udi lessons (a lesson per day). Both in Vartasheni and Niji, until the 1930s, all transactions were performed first in Armenian and then, in Azerbaijani. According to 1989 population census, the 70.6% of Udis residing in the Russian Federation considered that their native language was Udi, 24.8% - Russian, 4.6% - other languages. These are alarming coefficients, to our mind. As time goes by, this percentage in Russia will be changed to the detriment of the Udi language. One of the main conditions of saving the Udi language is suspending their migration from Azerbaijan and Georgia to Russia. According to ethnographic data, the migration processes to Russia particularly takes place from Vartasheni. As the narrator from Zinobiani (reporter) states, there are only 45 of the Udi families left in Vartasheni at present.

It is known that, the marital relations play an important role in preserving and passing the mother language from generation to generation. In this respect, only the data about the Udis from Zinobiani are available for us. Until the 1950s the Zinobian men married only the Udi women. Because of the kinship (strong prohibition of the marriage among seven generations within the family name), they married the women from the Azerbaijani villages Vartasheni and Niji if they could not find heir partners in their village. The Udis men from Zinobiani started marrying the Georgian women (and representatives of other ethnic groups) after the 1950s. The reason of this became the getting of the compulsory ssecondary education. There

was only the eight-year school in Zinobiani (it still exists there). The Udis got the secondary education in the neighbouring Georgian village. Going to Georgian secondary schools gave a chance to the young people from Zinobiani to get acquainted and maintain contacts with the Georgians. However, the marriage of the Udi men to the Georgian women was not frequent from the mentioned period. This relation has become intensive for the last 15 years. It is directly connected with the breakdown of the united Soviet Russian empire and gaining of the statehood by Azerbaijan and Georgia. During the Soviet times the Udis in Azerbaijan and Georgia did not find it difficult to visit each other and have contacts. But today the border between two countries made such contacts difficult in some ways. The conflict in Qarabagh played not less negative role in it.

Since the 1990s the marriage of the Zinobian Udi men to the Georgian women has become more frequent. Accordingly there are the families in Zinobiani that do not speak the Udi language. It is natural that the Georgian daughters-in-law spoke the Georgian language to their children. Officially, 139 Udi families are registered in Zinobiani. Actually, only 122 families live there - respectively 122 family couples. 17 families are migrated (10 households in Tbilisi and other cities of Georgia, 7 households in Russia). Out of 122 couples 70 daughters-in-law are the Udis (49 local Zinobians, 10 from Vartasheni and 11 from Niji). The number of Georgian daughters-in-law is 47, Ossethian – 2, Armenian – 2, Russian -1. The percentage of the Udi daughters-in-law is 58, non-Udis (mostly Georgians) – 42%. According to these indicators, in fact, a large number of the Udis can not have spoken the Udi language any more. But comparatively small number can not speak the Udi language. Only the children of eight families do not speak this language. A large number of the children of the non-Udi daughters-in-law can speak the Udi language which is caused by the fact that the considerable number of the children are being brought up under the supervision of their grandparents. The children learn this language from them.

In view of preserving the Udi language, it is important that the American scientist Hans Fon Saxen Altenburg financed the teaching the Udi language for the students of the II-III forms in the school year of 2001-2002. A local teacher taught the Udi language to 25 children who could not speak it. It is desirable to continue this kind initiative which will be one of the ways of preserving the language of old Albanians or the Udi language. In addition, it is desirable to slacken speed of the current migration from the villages they live in both in Azerbaijan and Georgia in order to preserve the Udi language.

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<sup>[1]</sup> Rice porridge cooked in sheep broth.