

*History*

## Retrospective Cartography of the Border between the Kingdoms of Kartli and Imereti in the 15-19th Centuries (Upper Side Part)

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**ABSTRACT.** The systematic research of historical geography of the historical local "countries" and their borders is very important as it clears up and explains many obscure facts in history. The restoration of the retrospective image serves as practical usage. For example, mapping the historical roads on the border of Kartli and Imereti Kingdoms can be the source of rehabilitation of new passes and roads. On the one hand, it will promote the population to new economical capabilities and, on the other hand will be important for shortening the distance that will directly impact on savings. We can consider the historic route Khvani-Chalvani-Tsmeni-Dedaberas pass-Suram passing through the border between the Kartli and Imereti Kingdoms (upper section). In case of its restoration, the passenger can cross the Tcharatkhevi valley, Gomi and Khashuri in the shortest possible time from the territory of Sachkhere to Surami and then west to different directions. It will reduce the route to Kharagauli municipality and so on. On the Kartli-Imereti border the Upper Imereti section, the following historic roads passed: 1. Sachkhere-Chikha-Tscona-Kekhvi-Tamarasheni-Tskhinvali; 2. Sachkhere-Chikhha-Chala-Darka-mountain Peranga-Kornisi-Tsorbisi-Erknati-Arnevi-Dvani-Breti; 3. Khvani-Chalovani-Lichi-Nadaburi 4. Khvani-Didimindvreb - Vashlari-Ulumbo. The following issues examined by us provided great assistance for exact demarcation of the borders: Historical toponymy, microprocession, determination of the base of the fortifications on the map, the alignment of the surveillance towers, as well as the demarcation of borders between earls in different centuries.  
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**Key words:** Imereti, Kartli, Retrospective, Cartography

The determination of the border between Georgian kingdoms and their cartographic depictions is one of the problematic issues of late feudal researches of Georgian historical geography. Cartographic images will facilitate visual perception and theoretical understanding of the theme. The paper shows changes in the upper part of the border of Kartli and Imereti kingdoms in the 15-19th centuries.

We aimed to list the works and cartographic materials that are more or less related to the border of Kartli and Imereti. Vakhushti Bagrationi [1], Davit Berdzenishvili, Tamaz Beradze [2], Giorgi Tskitishvili [3], Davit Tsitaishvili (2004), Koba Kharadze (2016) were working on the problem of establishing the border of Kartli and Imereti Kingdoms. Various types of information is also

scattered in Olga Soselia's works as well as in works of European diplomats and travellers (for example Güldenstedt). We have got great assistance from the following cartographic works: maps of Vakhushti Bagrationi (the 18<sup>th</sup> century) and Timothy Gabashvili (1737) [4], as well as Russian versions of maps and so on.

After acquainting with and processing the above theoretical information, during a month's field work the scientific expedition of the Institute of Geography of TSU studied and obtained materials found on Sachkhere part of the border. The expedition of 2016-2017 further enriched and brought some important news to the issues. This work is based on the above materials and scientific field works. After reviewing and analyzing the materials, we have tried to create the retrospective cartography of the Border between Kartli and Imereti Kingdoms of different periods. It is a scientific innovation and will greatly help the researchers interested in historical geography of Zemo Imereti.

We aimed to set the exact demarcation of the border on the basis of complex historical geographical examinations of the research area and its neighboring areas. In all the sections we were greatly supported with our researches as follows: historical toponymy, microtoponymy, fortification of fortresses, deployment of surveillance towers, churches and their ruins, historical roads and ranges, borders between the lands of noble families in different centuries etc. Restored historical toponymy and study of historical crossings helped us map exact bordering lines. Roads and low ranges often determined the simplicity of the boundary variability.

From the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when Georgia was divided into kingdom-principalities, the orthographic barrier – Likhi Range located between West and East Georgia automatically became the dividing line between Kartli and Imereti Kingdoms and accordingly the boundary between the kingdoms was on the Likhi Range.

In the 80s of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, Imereti Kingdom was embraced with internal wars. Thus taking

advantage of this, the king of Kartli- Simon seized the part of Upper Imereti. According to a legend a woman from the village of Korbouli begs the king Simon to take accompany her son to the war, with proves that Korbouli is the part of the Kartli Kingdom. The king of Kartli defeated the rival at Gopanto and temporarily joined the part of the Imereti Kingdom. Upper imeretians appear to be King Simon's alliance in Beri Egnatashvili's records as well.

In the second decade of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Imereti regains the territories captured by the Kingdom of Kartli, and the Likhi Range becomes the border again. In the second half of the same century, in 1660 the King of Kartli Vakhtang V occupied the territories of Imereti. Vakhtang's charter reads: "I am commanding you all from Khreti to Likhi. We granted Zaal Tsereteli command you and when he calls you all must be in his service" [2].

On our map we also showed the border of Kartli-Imereti according to the map of Vakhushti Bagrationi of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. We made a little correction on the basis of our research and lined the exact border. Historical sources about this or that territorial property and also toponyms inhabited in Tsereteli and Abashidze's estates helped us in this project. At the same time we studied the lists of homesteads of Sachkhere landscapes of different periods. In addition, the greatest help were the restored historical toponym that clearly show the names of villages, fossils, places which are scattered in various sources, some of them are transparent toponyms, for example, in accordance with Vakhushti's cartography map, some part of Abashidze's forest is located on the territory of the Kingdom of Kartli. But we mapped this part in Imereti Kingdom based on most sources and geographical views of the place.

That border was also changed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Erekle II gave the villages of Khepinikhevi the Abashidze and then King Solomon II invaded that village and established a royal domain, which was later transmitted to Tsereteli's feudal house.

Khelinikhiev and the rest of places belonged to Kartli because of their frequent road connections with villages of Kartli. There were four passages, while in Sachkhere region, the mentioned area was connected to Tsereteli and Abashidze's estates only through Dzirula valley.

On the main highway to Imereti through Tcheratkhevi valley, the border line was blocked by the border fortress (on the territory of today's village of Nigvzara Santela Castle). We clearly noticed that the old road pavement was washed out by rains.

There is another visible tendency that indicates that this side belongs to Kartli. These are migrations of residents of these villages more often to Surami, rather than to Sachkhere. Example is the Tabatadzes living in Gorijvari and others. It should be noted that the population still remembers that their ancestors were trading not in Sachkhere, but in Surami, which was conditioned by the existence of many passages.

The north-eastern part of the Imereti and Kartli border on the east of Mount Perang was the part of historical Kartli kingdom. In the description of this side, Vakhushti Bagrationi notes that it is completely uninhabited and became the reason for Ossetians to move to these places in the 18-19 centuries and establish their villages. Later this part became the property of South Ossetian administrative district and not Sachkhere, while the area is really the part of modern Sachkhere municipality. The disintegration of this administrative division was rectified during the restoration of independence of Georgia in the 90s' of the last century, but nowadays it is considered as the occupied territory again.

The border of Kartli often crossed the Likhi Range and the political border ignored geographical borders. According to Vakhushti the Kartli-Imereti border goes above Likhi at korbouli village, follows up the Dzirula river along its left bank within its borders ... [1].

According to the records of Beri Egnatashvili, Sachkhere section of the Kartli-Imereti border looks

like this: "Down the mountain of Tsedisi and Kudaro. And outer side of Chali mountain, and another side of Ertso, Mshvildiauri and Perangas side, the Goradziri-ahati, Lychee, Ghodora, Kepsikhevi and the Chkheri fortress" [5].

As we saw above, Vakhushti and Beri's statements coincide with each other. These two researchers are of the same period.

According to Timothe Gabashvili's Imereti map of 1737, the Kartli-Imereti border follows Likhi Range district and villages of Dzirula valley, Sachkhere section, Korbouli, Lichi, Ghodora and etc remain on Imereti territory.

According to the description of Guildenstedt, this side is in Imereti in the 70s of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The owners of these villages, according to Guildenstedt [6], belong to the Abashidzes family ruled by Kartli Kingdom, but the region itself is Imeretian and is inhabited by Imeretians. In view of the above, Gürdenstedt considers the "upper part" to belong to Imereti. Lichi, Goudora, and Jalaurla and Modzvi belong to Imereti.

Gülendenstedt also points out that the most of the villages of the Upper region belong to Tsereteli himself, the rest to the King and the sons of the King George and Archil" [6]. There is no doubt that in royal estates he considered that Qoreti and Sachkhere and other parts belonged to princes' property. Retrospection of these borders are restored and marked on the map.

According to Güldenstedt [6] the Upper Country, the Kvirila upstream, the same north-east of Sachkhere looks like this: "It is the largest part of Imereti side-hill stretched from the Alps (Caucasian Range) to south. The eastern side, along Kartli and the part of the mountain range, is called Saabasho.

According to one of the historical documents, in 1611, the Satsertloto Khreiti (Chiatura municipality) belonged to Shahnavazi, the king of Kartli: "I the King of Kings Shahnavaaz remind and order you all from Buja to Khreiti and Likhi, follow the command of Zaal Tsereteli" [6]. It is clear that

at that time, the Tseretelis were ruled by the king of Kartli. Probably the territory always belonged to the Kartlian king Simon and Giorgi Saakadze pretended this part of Imereti. At the same time, Lichi and Ghodora were domains of the territories owned by the Georgian feudal by the name of Phalavandishvili.

In 1680 this part again appears in possession of the King of Imereti, when the commander of this side Qaikhosro Tsereteli from the Tsereteli family is appointed by king Giorgi. According to the Russian map of 1766, Kartli-Imereti border crosses the Dumala and Dzirula watershed, which coincides with the Kartli-Imereti border on the map.

The Kartli-Imereti border as it is evident from the above facts often depends on which noble or noble king ruled Kartli or Imereti. The fact of

boundary changes never was the subject of confrontation between the two Kingdoms of Kartli and Imereti. It is confirmed by the existence of the only fortress (Samtela). There are no checkpoints across the border, except the Khvani fortress, which might be the border of Kartli Kingdom from the Dzhirula valley to Sachkhere, but this road was originally descended from the Dzhirula Gorge to the Kingdom of Kartli and only to the mountain of Goradziri in Imereti. It can be assumed that on this road Satela fortress was on the Imereti border and Khvani belonged to Kartli.

Based on the foregoing, we did our best to perform systematic research of historical geography of the survey area and showed the results of the survey on the map ([www.geography.tsu.ge](http://www.geography.tsu.ge)).

## ისტორია

# ქართლისა და იმერეთის სამეფოების საზღვრის რეტროსპექტული კარტოგრაფირება მე-15–19 საუკუნეებში (ზემო მხარის მონაკვეთი)

## 3. კვლევა

*ივანე ჯავახიშვილის სახელობის თბილისის სახელმწიფო უნივერსიტეტი, ვახუშტი ბაგრატიონის სახელობის გეოგრაფიის ინსტიტუტი, ფიზიკური გეოგრაფიის განყოფილება, თბილისი, საქართველო*

(წარმოდგენილია აკადემიის წევრის რ. მეტრეველის მიერ)

ისტორიული ლოკალური „ქვეყნების“ და მათი საზღვრების ისტორიული გეოგრაფიის სისტემური კვლევა მეტად მნიშვნელოვანია. იგი ნათელს ჰფენს და ხსნის მრავალ ბუნდოვან ფაქტს ისტორიაში. რეტროსპექტული სურათის აღდგენა პრაქტიკულ ხასიათს ატარებს. მაგალითად, რუკაზე წარმოდგენილი ქართლისა და იმერეთის სამეფოების საზღვარზე გადამავალი ისტორიული გზების გამოვლენით ჩვენ შეიძლება საფუძველი დავუდოთ ახალი უღელტეხილებისა და გზების რეაბილიტაციას, რომელმაც შეიძლება ხელსაყრელი ვითარება შეუქმნას მოსახლეობას, როგორც ეკონომიკური ახალი შესაძლებლობების გახსნის მხრივ,

აგრეთვე, საგზაო მანძილის შემოკლების თვალსაზრისით, რაც დროსა და თანხების დაზოგვაზე პირდაპირ აისახება.

ნაშრომი თანდართულ რუკასთან ერთად დიდ დახმარებას გაუწევს იმერეთის ისტორიულ საკითხებზე მომუშავე მკვლევარებს. რუკაზე დაკვირვებით შესაძლებელი იქნება ვრცელი პირველადი ინფორმაციის მოპოვება რიგი თემების შესახებ, რაც საკითხის ადვილად შესწავლას შეუწყობს ხელს.

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