

Religious Practice in West Georgian Highlands: Correlation of Traditional and Modern on the Case of Lagurka Monastery

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Abstract: *The paper discusses the correlation of the traditional mode of life and religious beliefs and analyses the social interactions in connection to the sacred sites and holy objects. The case of “Lagurka” displays the evidence of the importance of traditional value systems. “Lagurka” is the name of Kala St Kvirike Monastery, in Svaneti, Georgia. This sacred site is considered to have a power, which is admired till nowadays. This power is constructed through the narratives spread among the local population. The historical and ethnographic sources and data are displaying interesting facts and legends bound together and legitimizing the perceptions regarding “Shaliani”.*

Keywords: *Georgia, Svaneti, Religion, Traditions, sacred objects.*

Kala St. Kvirike Monastery is one of the most important religious centers of the mountainous region of Georgia – Svaneti. In the article there is a discussion of the traditional social aspects of this religious center and the festival of Kvirikoba. The theoretical frames of the historical ethnological research are used for analyses of the data of historical sources and the field ethnographic data.

The St. Kvirike Monastery (Lagurka/Lagvirka) in the Kala community, in upper Bali Svaneti (Mestia municipality), on the left riverbank of Enguri, is located high in the mountains. Traditionally, this mountain is also believed to be sacred and is well preserved since it is the property of

the church. The mountain is covered with thick coniferous forest followed by one road – a path to the monastery. The wood also belongs to the monastery and it is also taken care of.

“Lagurka” is a church of the Middle Ages, of a monumental type. It was built in the X-XI centuries. The exact date of the monastery fresco painting is known from the inscription of the painter of King Tevdore in 1111, by the order of the Kala feudals¹. There is a bell tower towards the West of the cathedral, which was built by the locals in the 60s of the XX century on the base of the old and ruined tower². There is a so-called Ladbash – an auxiliary building near to the bell tower, with three places for rituals. Here stand

copper pots of special size in which Zvaraki (sacrificed animals) are cooked³. A fence surrounds the monastery. The fence has been restored. The old Senaki (living room of a clergyman) and canteen are preserved.

Kala's Lagurka was a well-known religious center; it is considered that it was a nunnery until the end of the XVII century. Not only local religious figures were involved in the worship ceremonies at the monastery but also those from other regions of Georgia and even the representatives of the royal dynasty. For example, Tekla, the daughter of King Bagrat of Imereti previously called Tinatin, became a nun in 1704⁴.

The monastery owned the property: the lands not only in the Kala community but also in Kvemo Svaneti, in Choluri. The wood around the monastery was also in ownership of the monastery. Many treasures are still kept at the monastery; among them is the crucifixion relic icon Shaliani, which is believed to have a special sacral power. This is a Byzantine icon, which is mentioned in various legends and stories and it possesses important social as well as religious meaning.

Historically, the time of cessation of monastery life is believed to be the end of the eighteenth century. There is a tragic story preserved regarding the invasion by Tatars, who devastated the monastery and killed the nuns. After the end of the monastery life, the local population started to look after Lagurka. The first written

source mentioning the monastery is the records of the Russian statesman and numismatist I. Bartolomei. I. Bartolomei traveled to Svaneti in 1854. According to his data, the locals preserved the church very well, the area was guarded by armed guards day and night and the church service was carried out by the deacons⁵. The word Deacon is not spread in Svaneti and seems to be borrowed by Bartolomei from the language of the eastern Georgian mountainous region and mechanically assigned to the ritual practice of Svaneti.

In 1860 Dimitri Bakradze visited the Kala community⁶, in 1875 the French traveler Bernovil visited Kala⁷. Stoianov could not manage to travel to see the monastery although he had a great wish to do so. However, he still left some information⁸. The researchers Ivaniukov and Kovalevski were not allowed to enter the monastery by the population of Kala, since, according to the observations of the locals, if a foreigner cast his eye on Shaliani, it could bring quite a lot of bad luck for the village⁹. The deacon Besarion Nizharadze also took great care of the monastery. In 1903 the priest Polievktos Karbelashvili visited the monastery and he published quite notable material in Iveria¹⁰. The countess Praskovia Uvarova recorded a part of the collection of the books of the monastery and its epigraphical material as a result of the expedition in 1895¹¹. In 1910 Ekvtime Takaishvili described the treasures of the monas-

tery and its epigraphical material¹². The results of these expeditions are important for the research of the Georgian culture in Svaneti till today. Later on, Pavle Ingorokva, Svimon Kaukhchishvili and Giorgi Chubinashvili carried out substantial researches¹³. In 1972 a complex scientific expedition of the State Museum of Georgia recorded about 120 icons and crosses, 196 inscriptions and 56 various types of utensils¹⁴.

After the fall of the monastery life, its parish, the Kala community decided to take care of the monastery. The monastery was well guarded by the Kala community who made it difficult for strangers to enter the church, which can be confirmed by all the researchers and travellers. However, there took place several attempts to rob the monastery as well as one act of robbery. It necessitated guarding the monastery well.

The church disposed of the immobile property of the monastery to village. It was used to repair the monastery, distribute the church lands among the members of the community, assign the monastery guards (Mokil), control the monastery wood, etc. According to the ethnographic material, the population of Kala cultivated the church lands and they were carrying out the celebration on 28 July¹⁵.

As for the church wood, its dense nature and preservation amazed all the scientists and travelers who visited Kala. The Kala population explained to Bartolomei that the wood belongs to the church and if they cut

trees in the wood, it would be followed by the rage of the God¹⁶. It was possible to use the woods just for the monastery needs, for example, during the holidays when the wood was needed or for repairing the church. According to the priest Polievktos Karbelashvili, "the forest is guarded, no one can touch it, it is even not allowed to take dry wood home: Although trees may fall by the impact of wind and snow and they are rotting, but the Svans still take care of them. As they say, the trees belong to the church"¹⁷ The Kala population is still preserving this tradition and even nowadays the mountain slope of Lagurka is still covered by coniferous forest.

It seems that the social function of the St. Kvirike Monastery grew with the weakening of the Seti St. George monastery. It is known from the documents preserved in Svaneti that the social and religious center of Svaneti was Sveti Mtavarmotsame, with his help and mediation, the important "Writings", "Decrees" and "Deeds" were created. The name of Seti bishop and the social role of Setieli are closely connected to the monastery and after their weakening, probably at the end of the Middle Ages, the main religious and social center of the Svaneti region moved to St. Kvirike monastery¹⁸. It is a fact that by the end of the nineteenth century the St. Kvirike Monastery had great influence on the whole of Svaneti, including the Svaneti regions below Bali. The pages of the newspaper Iveria contain interesting infor-

mation: in 1901 the inspector of the revival of the Christian community Mamineishvili, whose energetic activity resulted in opening seven schools in Svaneti, called a general meeting at the house of the noble Tatarkan Dadeshkeliani. This meeting took the following decision: they established a brotherhood on behalf of St. Kvirike and Ivli in Svaneti, which aimed to assist poor school pupils and materially support the schools that require help¹⁹. It is clear that connecting this great deity to educational institutions would lead to the increase of the number of pupils as well as the number of persons who want to do charitable deeds. Of course, the reasons for the increase of the social status of Kala St. Kvirike monastery require additional research.

According to the ethnographic material, one of the deities kept at St. Kvirike monastery in Kala is Shaliani, an icon which brought to the monastery special importance. Shaliani ensured the first place for Lagurka monastery among other Svaneti churches. It turned Kala monastery into the religious and social center of Svaneti. As Ekvtime Takaishvili correctly observed, "Kala church has the same importance for Svaneti as the Delphos temple for Greece. It unites Svaneti divided into communities the way Delphos used to unite different Greek republics"²⁰. Vera Bardavelidze also believes that, as distinct from the worshipping places of local importance, Kala's "Shaliani", the flag "Lemi" and St

George icon were deities that united Svaneti²¹.

As it was mentioned above, Shaliani is a Byzantine creation, a relict icon. It was used for keeping Dzeli Cheshmariti – the part of the cross on which Christ was crucified²². The priest Polievktos Karbelashvili is mentioning: "the two guards of the monastery took Dzeli Cheshmariti from the chest, the icon was wrapped well in the old silk cloth and it was placed on the spread. "We are the guards of this" Svans told us politely. I do not doubt that Dzeli Cheshmariti used to be in the middle of the cross while the relicts were kept in the corners in small boxes"²³.

According to Praskovia Uvarova, the icon dates back to the IX-XI centuries and is a piece of Byzantine art²⁴. R. Kenia and N. Aladashvili consider "Shaliani" as the best piece among the pieces of foreign art preserved in Svaneti, they especially mention the ornaments of the icon, its embossing and precious stones²⁵.

Interesting legends and stories exist regarding the building of Kala St. Kvirike monastery and the Shaliani icon located in it, among them scientific and popular literature includes the version of the deacon Besarion Nizharadze. Ekvtime Takaishvili and Egnate Gabliani depict a similar legend with slightly different content. It should be noted that Aleksei Stoianov has mentioned the legend with different content. Let us follow it step by step.

According to the deacon Besarion

Nizharadze, Shaliani used to be an inhabitant of the Ifari community, village Zegani. Once the son of Shaliani found a stone in the field and threw it at the cow he was grazing. The stone pierced the cow like a bullet. Shaliani found this stone and made the blacksmith forge a scythe, using this stone instead of metal. "By that time there were Kings in Imereti. Svaneti was obliged to mow the Geguti field each year, near to Kutaisi (Imereti). Shaliani went there too and took the scythe with him. In Kutaisi Shaliani appeared before the King saying: "Your grace, if I can mow alone the whole fields of Geguti which has to be mown by Svans - will you give me anything I wish for a present?" "All right!" – said the King. Shaliani tied the scythe to the tail of his horse, mowed the Geguti field, the scythe was mowing on its own and by the evening the whole job was done... Shaliani asked the King to give him this crucifixion icon and brought it to Svaneti... The Kala society got to know that he was bringing the icon. Here one woman, encouraged by her husband, attracted Shaliani and made love to him; When her husband and community got to know this, they made Shaliani leave the icon there... and they placed the icon where it is now. The privilege given to Shaliani was that his successors who reside in Mulakhi nowadays, and are considered Sharvashidzes, get one cow, which is to be brought to them by any Svan who wants to pray to St Kvirike²⁶.

According to this version of the

legend, St Kvirike Monastery had already been built by the time the Shaliani icon arrived, while according to Ekvtime Takaishvili's data, the arrival of the icon was followed by the building the St. Kvirike church: according to Svans, Shaliani was a Svan, once the king of Imereti called a hundred Svans and ordered them to mow the Geguti field... Shaliani completed mowing before the time schedule. He asked for a Kala icon as payment. The king kept his promise... Shaliani went to Svaneti. The resident of Kala community killed Shaliani and got the icon but the community did not know where to take it so they harnessed two bulls; attached a pillar to the yoke, attached the icon to the pillar and let it go on its own... the bulls crossed Enguri, went up the hill and stopped at the top of the mountain where now St. Kvirike church is located. Svans built a monastery here and since then this is the place where Shaliani icon is kept²⁷.

According to Egnate Gabliani, the real name of Shaliani was "Sharshkhlani" and he was the ancestor of Shervashidzes. The resident of Kala who made Sharshkhlani leave the icon – was Ioseliani. Then Dadeshkelianis took the icon from Ioseliani but it was soon stolen from them... Goshteliani and Beriani returned it to Ioseliani and then it was placed in Kala St. Kvirike Monastery and they put armed guards there. When Svans are praying before this icon, they have to pay, but Shervashidzes do not pay. Neither do

Ioselianis because they obtained this icon and took it back from Dadeshkelianis²⁸.

Such legends are spread in the Svaneti region which is higher than Bali. They include the following interesting facts: a) They underline that the icon comes from the old royal town – Kutaisi. b) The name of the person who brought the icon to Svaneti is Shaliani and it is connected to Shervashidze kin; c) The offence committed by the residents of Kala obtaining the icon by force is justified by the following – the biggest deity, the relic icon remains in Kala community; d) a notable mythological passage – the place is found by the bulls that were let to go on their own; e) At some moment the “Shaliani” icon is kept in the region lower Bali by the Dadeshkelianis.

The residents of Svaneti region lower Bali (Becho, Tskhumari, Etseri, Chubekhevi, Lakhamula communities) believe that “Shaliani” icon used to be theirs and the residents of Kala stole it from there. The first author confirming this is Alexei Stoianov. He used to travel to Svaneti in the beginning of the 70s of the XIX century. He stayed for two months in Etseri, the residency of Tengiz Dadeshkeliani, from where he made trips to other villages of Svaneti, used to write down the folk narratives. According to A. Stoianov, the residents of Sabatono Svaneti (Principality of Svaneti) are sure that this precious icon used to be theirs and was kept in Pkhutrer. According to the legend, each spring a doe

would come to the church of Pkhutreti and leave her buck. Then this icon was stolen by the residents of Kala and was put in a chest and they wrapped it in chains. At first the icon used to stay by some resident of Kala then it was carried to the church. Three guards are guarding it there. Otherwise, the icon will return back to Pkhutrer. Stoianov also has another interpretation of the issue when describing the crosses and icons of Pkhutreti: “I got interested with the icon in a leather bag which has respect among people, it is called “Motchkvili”, it is an equal brother of the well-known “Sharlani” icon, which used to be stolen from Pkhotreri to Lagvirka”²⁹.

“Motchkvili” icon (Motchkvili means glazed, glassy) is mentioned by Countess Praskovia Uvarova too (P. Uvarova believes that this is a XI century icon) and by Ekvtime Takaishvili as well (He believes the icon belongs to the XI-XII centuries)³⁰.

According to Kiti Machabeli, several fragments of the icon have been preserved: “The sizes of the icon are 32X26. The surface of the icon was covered with marble plates among which were inscripted miniatures in the boxes covered with glass plates”³¹.

“Motchkvili” icon used to be the main relic of the lower Bali Svaneti region. It is well known that the Svanetian traditional life preserves the icons, which have to be mentioned, even during the shortest prayers, the Motchkvili icon is

among them. Motchkvili was a relic icon and to some extent resembles Shaliani³².

On the basis of the diverse comparative analysis, Kiti Matchabeli believes that “Motchkvili” belongs to the monumental art of North Italy and Germany that includes decorative ornamental miniatures. The researcher also thinks that Ianashi cross and the cross standing on the Ushguli Murkmeri St. Barbare church are the unique monuments³³. It should also be mentioned that according to the legend, the Murkmeri cross was also taken from the Svaneti lower Bali region, in particular, from the Doli St. Barbare church³⁴, which leads us to the thought that all of these crosses and icons have one and the same origin, they should belong to some famous Byzantian or Italian school.

Another long legend also tells us the story about the “Shaliani”, named “Kashletiani” Svaneti’s army – “Svimra” visited Kashletiani who was living in Etseri, Tasleri. He hosted the guests for two nights, but became absolutely impoverished by the third night. Kashletiani, who became poor, got angry and decided to take revenge on Etseri. By that time Etseri was enjoying the grace of God. The deer used to come to Pkhotreti church each spring on Tuesdays of the Easter Week. Kashletiani waited for the deer in an ambush and killed them. He poured their blood on the sacred Sabiashi place. Then he covered the main water source (Sgim) of Etseri residents with a waterwheel and stopped its flow. Then late at

night he stole the precious icon from the Pkhotreti church. Of course, Kashletiani could no longer stay in Etseri and he went to the upper valley. He stayed by one family there in Kala. The residents of Kala took the icon from Kashletiani and donated it to their church. Since the Etserians would inevitably try to take the icon back, they placed guards at the church. N. Pakeliani, who is 102 years old says that this was the “Shaliani” icon³⁵.

The archival material by Ali Davitiani is nearly of the same content. It is important to note that the scholars wrote that they apply an epithet to Shaliani icon – “Khosha tskhovet Khat”, which means “the Great Holy Icon”³⁶.

The lower Svan legend also tells us a story of the “Shaliani”. Lagurka’s church near Makashi represents one of the strongest sacred centers. According to the legend, Kala’s Lagurka icon was stolen from this church and it was tied with chains³⁷. As we can see, legends regarding the “Shaliani” exist in all parts of Svaneti.

Vakhushti Batonishvili is also mentioning that in Etseri, which is in the South of Lechkhumi, there is one church called Sueti. There are kept not just Sueti’s holy treasures and jewelry, brought by the King Vakhtang Gorgasali from India, made of red rubies, but also icons and crosses made of gold and silver and embellished with stones. They are precious, big and small, they are much respected, and a better icon is tied with a golden chain, and Svans

believe that if they untie the chains, it will destroy all the icons and crosses here... If anyone with the sins goes in, the icons will pardon him and set him free³⁸. Can we really connect Vakhushti Batonishvili's note to any of Etseri churches? In this respect, Egnate Gabliani mentions that there is geographic inaccuracy in Vakhushti Batonishvili's description since Etseri is mentioned to the south of Lechkhumi instead of the north-east³⁹. Besides, Seti church was located in Seti (part of Mestia), Setis Mtavarmotsame was Svaneti religious center and it also possessed some civil authority as well. Since Etseri is mentioned in the historical sources, including Kartlis Tskhovreba and it is referred to as one of the most important places, it is natural that Vakhushti Batonishvili also had information regarding Etseri. He tells us one fact: action is taking place exactly in Etseri. It is natural that Vakhushti Batonishvili also had information regarding Etseri. The historical sources and legends confirm that Etseri represented the residence of Vardanidzes, and later on the residence of Gelovanis. There were also residing the "varg"-s of lower Bali Svaneti (varg is a noble in Svaneti)⁴⁰ Ruchegianis and Dadeshkelianis. It is possible that one of the nobles took Svaneti's most sacred icon "Shaliani", and kept it near to his residence in Pkhutreti church, from where, as the legend tells, the icon was stolen by Kashletiani⁴¹.

Several mythological passages in connection with Shaliani should also

be mentioned, for example, it is described that before Shaiani was placed in Pkhutreti church, the place and the total village were enjoying Gods grace, which was evident since in spring deer would come to the church on the Easter Tuesday and they would leave their buck there. The topic of searching the place for keeping Shaliani should also be noted: the bulls find the sacred [place on their own]. I. Surguladze who studied the scarification in Georgian mythology and rituals, concluded: "the beliefs regarding animals intended for sacrifice, who go to the place on their own, are spread around the whole Caucasus. The stories regarding the choice of the place to build cathedrals tell us that the bull or a calf walking on their own will lead to the place, after which the equivalent – the animal is driven to the holy place by God's will. The animals are sacrificed there and in such a way a ritual is formed that repeats every time⁴². When the information in the written sources is lacking, the ethnographic data play a decisive role in restoring the real picture of a historical fact.

There is an opinion in Georgian historiography that Shaliani icon is connected with Abkhaz kings Shavlianis. The Georgian scientists share the idea that there are parallels between Shaiani and the kings of Abkhazia, Shavlianis. Geronti Gasviani, Teimuraz Mibchuani and others agree with this idea. Geronti Gasviani believes that in the second half of the IX century, the kings of

Abkhazia were the representatives of Svans, Shavliani⁴³. Teimuraz Mibchuani also connects the surname of Shavliani with the initiator of the upheaval that took place in the 60s of the IX century in the kingdom – Ioane Shavliani, who is considered to be the representative of the already existing Abkhazian dynasty. After Ioane Shavliani his son, Adarnase came to the throne. Shavliani were Svans by origin. These Svans used to live in the village Iviri in Upper Svaneti. According to the legend, the icon under the name of Shavliani (Shaliani) was brought by some Shavliani from Kutaisi, the royal city. The Svan Sharvashidzes had privileged rights to use Shaliani icon, which shows us their genetic relation to the latter Shavliani⁴⁴.

The icon is carefully kept, and it still has the biggest religious and social function till nowadays. Shaliani can be touched only two times a year: on Easter Saturday and on the 28th (15th) of July on Kvirikoba (ligurke) festival. Only the distinguished persons, so-called Mokiles can touch the icon. Mokiles are chosen by the whole Kala community and they take care of the monastery until the next Easter.

As we have mentioned, Lagurka had great influence on the social life of Svaneti. All the researchers, stories and narrators are stating that no important political decision could be made without making an oath on Shaliani icon. And as we know, the important decision was preceded by convening a meeting uniting the

whole Svaneti (Lukhori)⁴⁵.

The decisions made at the meetings were approved by the oath made at St. Kvirike monastery. One of the famous meetings took place in 1875, before the uprising in upper Svaneti. Lagurka and Shaliani icon played an important role in the customary law. The most important cases were decided at Lagurka. An oath was made at the monastery in a special occasion to “Shaliani” icon.

The folk holiday Kvirikoba – Ligurke, which stems from the church tradition, is still celebrated on a large scale in the Kala community, near the Church of St. Kvirike (former monastery). The holiday has many components and some innovations are also observed. The holiday has been firmly preserved in the folk religious calendar of Svaneti and still retains its significance, and this confirms a noteworthy fact – the number of those wishing to attend the holiday is increasing every year, as is the geographical map of worshipers. In recent decades, a canonical service is also been held here, after which a folk holiday is carried out.

The festival of Kvirikoba (“Ligurke”) plays an important role in the traditional life of Svaneti. They prepare for the whole year for this day. The festival is held according to the Christian calendar and according to the old-style calendar, it is held on the 15th (28th) of July. The festival is held to remember the martyrs – mother Ivli and her son Kvirike. Together with the believers the tourists also attend the festival. Those

who pray at St. Kvirike monastery are hoping to have a peaceful and happy year. It is believed in Svaneti that each believer should visit the monastery at least thrice.

It should be noted that after the creation of the eparchy of Mestia and upper Svaneti and after conferring orders to father Ilarion (Kitiashvili) canonical prayers are carried out during Kvirikoba.

The main hosts in charge of Kvirikoba are still women. Early in the morning, several respectful men chosen from Kala community bring out the "Shaliani" icon from the monastery, they dip it in the water, then the same men go around the church with candles lit in their hands and the bowls full of the holy "zedashe". Svan chants are heard, including "kiria" – the Svan folk variation of the ecclesiastic Kirieleison. Bells are heard from the bell tower. The men gathered inside the fence are kneed and without their hats. The women are gathered near "Ladbash". The believers from the other villages stand nearby and wait for the completion of the main "Limzir" (prayer). After walking around the church, "Shaliani" will be brought back to the monastery, where it will be kept untouched and protected until the Saturday of the Easter week of the next year. Before that the older member "Memzir" (believer) will bless the whole of Georgia, Svaneti and the believers gathered at "Lagurka". After this ritual the believers have an opportunity to go near to the church door, bring their

sacrifice and pray. First the Kala community will sacrifice a bull. The older men from Kala will bless each praying person, and the people around shout – "Amen". When the flow of the believers decreases, the men who are praying ("Memzir") will have an opportunity to listen to the people who have certain problems, for whom the festival of Kvirikoba turns into a relief. It is the place where a concerned Svan can go, who has a wish to prove that he is right, it is the place where people who are worried because of the defamation, and in the most serious case, a felon's fate is passed over to the icon.

The water in which Shaliani is dipped is also used for healing. According to the believers, it has miraculous power and can heal any illness. The water is brought to the peoples' homes that have a severe disease, and those who can walk, go to the monastery themselves, where a ritual of blessing will be carried out. The caregiver of the ill person will put the promised heart and liver of the sacrificed animal, the prayer bread ("Lemzir") and a jug with vodka on a small platter (tabla), light a candle and ask the distinguished people - the people who pray, to bless the ill person. The pray ("Limzir") is completed with the shout of Amen by the people around. Several types of blessings are used in practice.

Thus, it is clear that the traditional Svan way of life is based on religious belief. In this case, this belief is symbolically focused on the "Shaliani"

icon and it is the driving force of the social life that manages it, the icon depicting crucification. the so-called “Shaliani” which is intended for keeping a part of the greatest Christian relic “Dzeli Cheshmariti” is the most important part of the traditional life of Svaneti. Along with the religious value, the icon also has a social value. Lagurka, where the Shaliani icon is kept, is the main religious

center of Svaneti. The oath made in front of this icon plays a decisive role in the application of customary law. Today the faith in “Shaliani” is still active. The various rituals connected to it clearly reflect the mode of traditional life of Svaneti and bring us an opportunity to restore the common Georgian traditional religious and social structures.

Notes

- ¹ Shalva Amiranashvili, *History of Georgian monumental painting*, vol. 1, Tbilisi, 1957, (in Russian) p. 134.
- ² Mikheil Chartolani, *The Results of the Georgian State Museum 1972 Svaneti scientific complex expedition*, Georgian State Museum, Moambe, XXXI-Б, Tbilisi, 1975, pp. 165-181 (in Georgian).
- ³ Idem, *From the Material culture of the Georgian people*, Tbilisi, 1961, p. 6 (in Georgian).
- ⁴ Polievktos Karbelashvili, „Two weeks in Svaneti”, *Iveria*, 31 October, (# 232) 1903 (in Georgian).
- ⁵ Ivan Bartolomei, *Trip to free Svaneti*, ЗКОИРГО, vol. III, Tiflis, 1855, pp. 161-162 (in Russian)
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- ⁸ Alksei Stoitianov, *Trip to Svaneti*, ЗКОИРГО, vol. X, part. 2, Tiflis, 1876, p. 267 (in Russian).
- ⁹ Ivan Ivaniukov, Maxim Kovalevski, *In Svaneti*, 1866 (in Russian).
- ¹⁰ Polievktos Karbelashvili, *op.cit.*
- ¹¹ Praskovia Uvarova, *Trip to Pshavi, Khevsureti and Svaneti*, MAK, X, Moscow, 1904 (in Russian).
- ¹² Ekvtime Takaishvili, *Archaeological Expedition to Lechkhumi-Svaneri*, vol. II, 1910, Tbilisi, 1991 (in Georgian).
- ¹³ Report on Performance of museums in 1931-1932, Museum Moambe, vol. VII, pp. 344-350 (in Georgian).
- ¹⁴ Mikheil Chartolani, *The Results of the Georgian State Museum 1972 Svaneti scientific complex expedition*, *op.cit.*
- ¹⁵ Giorgi Jalabadze, *Arable Farming in Western Gworgia*, Tbilisi, 1990, p. 12 (in Georgian).
- ¹⁶ Ivan Bartolomei, *op.cit.*, pp.162 (in Russian).
- ¹⁷ Polievktos Karbelashvili, *op.cit.*
- ¹⁸ Pavle Ingorokva, *Svaneti historical Monuments*, vol. 2, Tbilisi, 1941 (in Georgian).
- ¹⁹ Antonidze, „Zemo Svaneti”, *Iveria*, 5 October, #215, 1901 (in Georgian).
- ²⁰ Ekvtime Takaishvili, *op.cit.*, p.179 (in Georgian).
- ²¹ Vera Bardavelidze, *From the History of the Ancient Beliefs in Georgia, Flag Lem, Wolf-Dog, Materials for Georgian Ethnography*, XII-XIII, Tbilisi, 1963, p. 144 (in Georgian).

- ²² Ekvtime Takaishvili, *op.cit.*, p. 186 (in Georgian)
- ²³ Polievktos Karbelashvili, *op.cit.*
- ²⁴ Praskovia Uvarova, *op.cit.*, pp. 94-100 (in Russian).
- ²⁵ Rusudan Kenia, Natela Aladashvili, *Guide of Georgia*, II, Upper Svaneti, Tbilisi, 2000, p. 49 (in Georgian)
- ²⁶ Besarion Nijaradze, „From Svaneti”, *Droeba*, 11 January (1-8), 1880 (in Georgian).
- ²⁷ Ekvtime Takaishvili, *op.cit.*, p.180 (in Georgian).
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