



HISTORICAL-GEOGRAPHICAL OVERVIEW OF THE TERRITORIES OCCUPIED AFTER 2008 RUSSO-GEORGIAN WAR

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Abstract: In the current paper, we try to showcase the historical - geographical overview of the Russian occupied territories in Shida Kartli. Apart from this, we also try to showcase the ancient Georgian toponyms, hydronyms and oikonyms of Didi Liakhvi gorge, and how the transformation of which into Ossetian onomastic units started from the time the Soviet government came to power in the country. In the first half of the XV century, the Machabels feudal kingdom was established in Didi Liakhvi Gorge. The influence of Machabeli's also extended to Dvaleti and Zhele Gorges. "Samachablo" was bordered by Ksani Saeristavo (Dukedom) estates from the east. The nobility of Pavlenishvili, Amilakhvari and Kherkheulidze were bordered on the south and south-west and on the north-west Racha Saeristavo. According to one relatively late (1886) document and map attached to it, which give us an idea of the estates owned by the descendants of Abesalom Machabeli (David's son). To the west, it was separated from the Tsereteli estates in Racha Mazra. The northern border followed river Terg and main ridge of the Caucasus. According to the above mentioned map, Machabeli estates were bordered on the north by Tergi district and Vladikavkazi district. In the North Caucasus Machabeli owned an integral part of Georgia from ancient times - Dvaleti, where Ossetians settled later. The Dvals occupy an area of about 500 km² from the left bank of the river Tergi - to the head of the Ardon, in Nar - Mamisoni Cave and six Gorges (Zakha, Nara, Zramaga, Zrogo, Zhele and Kasri). Dvaleti was included in the flock of Nikozi Bishop. Most of the toponyms, anthroponyms, ethnonyms common in Dvaleti are of Georgian origin. In 1843 at the initiative of Russian government, "Ossetian District" was created, which administratively entered in Tbilisi province. However, in the territory of historical Dvaleti, the so-called "Nari district" was established, which was transferred to Tergi district in 1859 and because of this an important territory, that was historically part of Georgia (approximately 500 m²) was artificially removed from our country and the historical part of Georgia - Dvaleti was annexed to Ossetia (actually - Russia).

Keywords: Toponyms, Hydronyms, Oikonyms, Didi Liakhvi Gorge, Shida Kartli, Machabeli

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1. Introduction

On February 25, 1921 the violent act against the Independent Republic of Georgia ended with the Sovietization of the country and the overthrow of the legitimate government abroad. The assault on Georgian statehood by the Bolshevik regime did not end there. At the initiative of the Soviet authorities, by using ethnic minorities to "solve" their problems autonomous formations emerged in our historical land, where there was a continuous line of life of Georgians, their socio-political, economic or cultural existence. The Bolshevik government had a perfidious idea that the autonomous units created in Georgia should function as "permanent mines". Such a load was acquired by the mountainous part of historical Shida Kartli, where Ossetians moved from the North Caucasus. A decree adopted on April 24, 1922 legalizing the creation of an autonomous region for Ossetians migrating from the north in several of Shida Kartli valleys, further deepened the narrative created by Bolshevik government, according to which Ossetians living in Georgia had been oppressed for centuries and they deserved broad autonomous rights in a country

based on "equality" principle. Despite the creation of an autonomous region for Ossetians by force at the expense of Georgian villages, peaceful life seemed to be between Ossetians and local Georgians in Georgia, however, the "Cold War" between them was going on continuously and was constantly promoted by Soviet authorities, because this effective tool of Kremlin policy - the epicentre of ethnic conflict - has not lost the ability to act at the desired time. At first glance, relations between Georgians and Ossetians living in the former autonomous region were well-established, but in reality, the ideologues of a totalitarian state instilled in the Ossetian society, that of a constant hatred of Georgians. At the dawn of the collapse of this huge monster of the Soviet Union, when the expectation was created that of the leaving the Russian orbit of our country, the first signs of confrontation between Georgians and Ossetians appeared, which very soon, as a result of the reckless, emotional action of both sides, according to the scenario drawn up by the special forces of the "Third Force", turned into a fratricidal war. Cracks have deepened in the relationship between peoples living under one roof over the centuries. The



immeasurable steps taken by the unpatriotic forces of the Georgian and Ossetian peoples endangered the future prospects of the two brotherly nations, insulted ethnic and civic values. The Georgian - Ossetian conflict, after the 90s of the XX century, was once replaced by peaceful coexistence. Although the Ossetian separatists created a de facto state in the Georgian space, the severe consequences of the war did not stop the mutual longing of Georgian and Ossetian people. The traditions of Georgian - Ossetian relations continued, mixed families were formed and hope for reconciliation of the two peoples arose. In anticipation of the embryo of a future peaceful coexistence, the Russian provocation did not delay and the fatal mistakes of both sides led to the August 2008 war, which killed many people of both Georgian and Ossetian nationality. The territory of the South Ossetian Autonomous Region - historic Georgian villages and settlements were occupied by the Russian occupation forces. Ethnic cleansing was carried out: Georgians were expelled from their homes and thousands of Georgian families became refugees in their own country, the occupation of the mountainous range of historic Shida Kartli did not end there. The occupation forces and the Ossetian separatists in their service burned and destroyed the Georgian villages. This vandalism was followed by the conversion of indigenous Georgian onomastic units into Ossetian and Russian, with the aim of erasing traces of Georgian life. The rich cultural heritage was in a difficult situation in the occupied territory: historical monuments, frescoes, lapidary inscriptions ... After the recognition of South Ossetia as an independent state by Russia, appeared the so-called line of occupation, which is often expanded through „creeping occupation” at the expense of Georgian villages and lands. Beyond the barbed wire were: Gorges of East, Middle and West Prone, Didi and Patar Liakhvi, “Saeristavo” of Historical Ksani... The current paper aims to showcase the history of one of the parts of historical Shida Kartli - Didi Liakhvi Gorge captured by the occupation forces. The name of the territory of the former South Ossetian Autonomous Region - „Samachablo”, which is often used in the context of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict and the August war 2008 is incorrect and has been mentioned many times in our historiography and in various publications. After the occupation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia, the territory, which belonged to several noble houses in Shida Kartli in the Middle Ages moved in the artificially created South Ossetian Autonomous Region. The villages of the Machabeli nobility, the historic Ksani “Saeristavo”, the small parts of Pavlenishvili and Palavandishvili nobility, Racha “Saeristavo” and Satseretlo were forcibly converted to the borders of the district. One third of the occupied territory of Shida Kartli is Didi Liakhvi Gorge, where continuous traces of Georgians life can be seen from the Eneolithic-Bronze Age. This is confirmed by archaeological excavations conducted at several locations in Didi Liakhvi Gorge in the last century. Didi Liakhvi

Gorge for a very long period of time of the history was in Machabeli nobility ownership in the mentioned area and it is not accidental that it is still referred to as “Samachablo”. The social, economic, cultural or political processes in Didi Liakhvi Gorge for many centuries were closely connected and intertwined with the noble house of Machabeli, which left an indelible mark in the memory of the people living in this part of Shida Kartli. The villages of Didi Liakhvi Gorge owned by the Machabeli often play a crucial role in the processes, that were organically related to the state life of our country at all stages of its development.

2. Method

The article uses not only empirical but clear theoretical methodologies such as: generalization, analyses, syntheses, abstraction, systemic approach, comparative-historical method and causality analyses.

3. Results and Discussion

Didi Liakhvi basin covers an area under 1500 km². It originates between the Dvaleti, Mtiuleti and Gudisi ridges, in Keli volcanic highlands at the confluence of the rivers: Kadlasanistskali and Deskokhirdon, 2338 m. above sea level and it flows to Muguta in the northwest (Georgian Soviet Encyclopaedia, 1983).

At the confluence of the Kharuli and Ermani ridges at the village Zgubili, Liakhvi is joined with Ermanistskali from the left, relatively south - Gudisdoni and from the right - Jomalistskali. Above Gupta in the middle of Didi Liakhvi, there is its left tributary –the river Patsa and at Sverisi joined with the river Trapula from the west. Then DidiLiakhvi turns to the southeast. PataraLiakhvi joins in the village Shertuli at Dzevera and in Gori joins the river Mejuda, and thenLiakhvi flows into the Mtkvari as a left tributary. The total length of the river reaches 115 kilometres.

The climate in Didi Liakhvi Basin is continental and humid. The upper part is an alpine and subalpine zone. The average annual amount of atmospheric precipitation is 600-650 mm. The average annual air temperature near Tskhinvali is 9.6 °C and 1.6 °C in January and 20.3 °C in July. With increasing altitude, the temperature decreases and the average temperature on the volcanic summit of the neck is -5 °C and -6 °C.

The mountains at the headwaters of the river reach an altitude of 2500-3000 meters above sea level, while the lowlands around Tskhinvali are up to 870 m (Megrelidze, 1986). Vakhushti Batonishvili describes Didi Liakhvi Gorge as follows: “From the east of Kekhvi, Liakhvi is joined by a ravine Sveri and falls in the middle of Kemerti from the north, flows out to the mountain between this and Geri...Will go up the mountain to the north of the forest and reach the mountain Geri. At Sveri bridge trapula falls from the west and joins Liakhvi. Above it to Gupta, Liakhvi is joined by the river Patsa, flows out of Ertso, rises in the middle of the mountain to the east and

another ravine joins this ravine to the south, flows out of the same mountain to the east. Between the confluence of this ravine is joined with Patsa Patara - Java ravine, flows to Dualt-Gora, it is joined with Pasha Sokho ravine. Sokho ravine is joined with Keshelti ravine at Patsa and these ravines flow to Dualt-Gora (Batonishvili, 1973).

Traces of the population can be seen in Didi Liakhvi Gorge from ancient times. "Mtkvari-Araksi Culture" of the Early Bronze Age, which dates back to II half of IV millennium - II half of III millennium BC and is widely represented in Shida Kartli, including Didi Liakhvi gorge, which is confirmed by the archaeological material (Apkhazava, 1996) discovered during the excavations of Tskhinvali Natsargora, Zghudrisgverdi, Dzagina, Nuli, Gupta.

From the archaeological point of view, it is extremely important monuments Upper Palaeolithic period of Asheli found in Achabeti, as well as folds of andesite found out in 1952 as a result of archaeological excavations at Tamarasheni, Kusireti and Kverneti, which archaeologists attribute to the Lower Palaeolithic period (Tsozniashvili, 1986).

Neolithic tools were found in the village Rustavi and fragments of Eneolithic pottery, round hearths and other materials were found on the right bank of Prisi Gorge (Tsozniashvili, 1986).

From Trialeti cultural monuments in the Shida Kartli mountain range of the Middle Bronze Age it is noteworthy: Mounds of Nuli, Muguti, Avnevi, Prinevi, Tsunari, where variety of pottery has been revealed, weapons and other materials (Japaridze, 1968).

Among the archeological monuments of the Late Bronze-Early Iron age Kvasatlia burial draws attention, which presents both collective and individual tombs. Here the dead are buried in a mounded condition, on the right side. Such burials of the dead are common in Georgian burial monuments and are almost invariably found from ancient times to the IV century (Gotsadze, 1990). To the pottery, weapons and jewellery found in Kvasatlia burial many analogues can be found in the archaeological materials of Beshtasheni, Samtavro, Plavismani, Kornisi and other locations. Important archaeological materials were found in Striptazi (Striptazi is located in Gorge of the river DidiLiakhvi, north of Java, 4 kilometres away) Cemeteries of Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages (I-VIII centuries) revealed in Didi Liakhvi gorge, where the vast majority of more than 8 studied tombs indicates to a local, purely Iberian "rural culture". The similarity of the archaeological materials found in Shida Kartli and its mountainous strip confirms that the historical process was developing in the same way throughout its territory and the population living in the mentioned area has a common genesis. As for the onomastic units (hydronyms, toponyms, oikonimes) common in Didi Liakhvi Gorge, there is no doubt about their antiquity and Georgian origin. The roots of the Ossetian oikonimes in the relatively mountainous area are also of Georgian origin and they changed late, after the settlement of Ossetians.

The main hydronym of the gorge - Liakhvi - is still mentioned in written sources by Leonti Mroveli in the form of "Liakhui" (Kaukhchishvili, 1955).

Vakhushti Batonishvili uses the form "Liakhv" when naming the river. Researcher Abramishvili considers "Liakhvi" to be a compound of two composites: "Lami / Lia" (marsh) and "Khui" (roaring, comes whooshing, roared, etc.) - in the sense of noise and a number of Georgian historical sources gives an example (Abramishvili, 1971). Z. Chumburidze (1971) supports Svan origin of the name of the river: Li-Lekhu and Li-Lkhve (in Svan snow melting), Otinashvili (2016) thinks that Liakhvi is a combination of Lia and Khevi (ravine) and so on. One of the oldest Georgian toponyms is also "Tskhinvali", which has undergone the following changes over time: "Krtskhinvali/ Krtskhilvani/ Krtskhinuali/ Krtskhinvali/ Tskhinvali" should be explained with the existence of hornbeam forests in this area (M. Tsozniashvili, History of Tskhinvali, p. 31-33. Awesome, but in Ossetian and Russian Internet space, the toponym, "Tskhinvali" is described as an Alan "Sinkh/Sikh" settlement and a "Ual" upper, compound of composites. As we will see below, Ossetians still did not live in Tskhinvali at the end of the XIX century and the beginning of the XX century and discussion on the existence of an Ossetian toponym 1700 years ago, in the III century is completely unfounded. According to the German scientist Johann Anton Guldenstedt, who visited Georgia in the in the 70s of the XVIII century, the Ossetians called Tskhinvali Kreba, Kreba (assembly). See: Guldenstedt's Travels in Georgia; German text was published with a Georgian translation and the research was attached by G. Gelashvili, Volume I, Tbilisi, 1962, p. 279). Platon Ioseliani considers Aspaguri, the king of Kartli, III century, to be the founder of the city (Иоселиани, 1850). It is connected with the reign of Queen Tamar (1184-1213), the establishment of another city near Tskhinvali - Tamarasheni. The old Georgian toponym is "Tiri" existing in Didi Liakhvi Gorge. According to Sulkhan - Saba, Tiri is a "soft and easy-to-cut rock". Sergi Makalatia (1971) connects the origin of Sabatsminda with St. Saba from Cappadocia (+532). We do not say anything about toponyms such as: Mskhlebi, Skhlebi (pears), Monasteri (monastery), Rustavi, Abotsminda, Natsargora, Dedagvitisa, etc.

Professor Gvasalia (1983) searches for Megrelian-Svan explanations for numerous toponyms in Didi Liakhvi Gorge. For example, in Didi Liakhvi Gorge there is a well-known village called Kurta and its equivalent in Chanuri and Megrelian is Kurta. "Tiri" means snow in Megrelian and others (Sosiashvili, 2013).

As it is known, in the early stages of the origin of the state and the social differentiation of the society, the territorial-administrative unit was "Khevi". "Khevebs" "Khevisuplebi" "Khevebis" abundance was properly reflected in Georgian micro and macro toponymy. Achabeti ravine mentioned in Armenian anonymous geographer of the VII century included the middle and

upper parts of the river Didi Liakhvi. According to Professor J. Gvasalia: "Later, the establishment of the feudal unit Samachablo in the mentioned area should have taken place on the basis of the pre-feudal Achabeti ravine" (Gvasalia, 1997).

Several "ravines" were formed into one of the "countries" (Ninidze, 2005). During the internal confrontation in Kartli in the 30s of XVIII century, "Machabeli accompanied KakhtBatoni, in anger Amilakhori brought an army of Lezgin and ravaged the Country of Machabeli" (Papuna Orbeliani, Stories of Kartli, the text was established, the introduction and dictionary and were added by Elene Tsagareishvili, Tbilisi, 1981, p. 76). Didi Liakhvi Gorge is very rich with flora and fauna. There are spruce and pine trees, as well as beech, hornbeam and oak forests. The wood-rich Mountains were an important source of income in Samachablo. The river Didi Liakhvi was used to move the extracted material (Tsozniashvili, 1986). Historic Samachablo is rich with healing sites as well. Vakhushti Batonishvili especially mentions in front of Khvtisi, on the other side of the river Liakhvi existing the so called "karkali smelling", which smells very hard, but cures wind, sadness and indigestion with smells" (Batonishvili, 1745). Java, Bagiata and others were famous for their healing waters in Didi Liakhvi Gorge (Га3, 1900). 31Vakhushti Batonishvili emphasizes the useful features of Didi Liakhvi: "Here Didi Liakhvi flows from Magran - Dvaleti, Truso and Zakhis Caucas and flows in the middle of south - west... There are the mountains adorned with flowers and grass... In these mountainous places flow pure, salty sources, making you to eat and drink, they are called acidic water, nourishing and fattening animals" (Га3, 1900). Liakhvi was rich with trout, carp and salmon (Gelashvili, 2002). In the mountainous part of Didi Liakhvi, the population had livestock, which was facilitated by the existing pastures here.

Vakhushti Batonishvili has described in detail the terrain of Didi Liakhvi Gorge. According to him the fields of agriculture were developed here, in particular fruit - growing and viticulture. The great geographer and historian speaks of the merits of the local wine: "Mount rises of the west, particularly from Krtskhinvali and emerges to the north and at Kekhvi narrows with the rock and then goes to the west up to Bekmara and at Kekhvi there is a bridge going to Sveri and under this Liakhvi annihilates even strong bridges. And from Gori to Suera there are villages with fruit-vineyards beyond Liakhvi, the wine is watery and sour, excellent for drinking" (Batonishvili, 1973). Vakhushti Batonishvili also points out the distinctive appearance and masculine qualities of the population of Didi Liakhvi Gorge: "The men of the Gorge are beautiful-airy, fighters, pursuers of shame, proud, loyal" (Batonishvili, 1973).

Didi Liakhvi Gorge was crossed by a number of important roads, through which it was possible to connect with different parts of the country, as well as with the North Caucasus. According to Vakhushti Batonishvili:

"Following the beginning of Zarmagi ridge the road of Kartli crosses Zekari on Didi Liakhvi" (Bagrationi, 1941). About the mentioned road G. Togoshvili writes: "From north to south it crossed the Ardon River Gorge and at the beginning of this Gorge on the northern border of the Nara Mamisoni basin was divided into two parts at the village Kvemo Zramagi. One branch of the road crosses the Mamisoni, or Chanchakhi pass, through Mamisoni (or Zhgele) Gorge and runs in the head of the Rioni River in Racha. From here it is connected with Kutaisi and other regions of western Georgia. The second branch of the road runs south from the same lower Zramaga through the Nardoni and Zakidoni Gorges, crossing the Roki pass and connects with Kartli plain districts with the Gorge of river Didi Liakhvi" (Togoshvili, 1966).

Samachablo had a great importance with the so-called "Achabeti Road". In this way it was possible to connect with Dvaleti and North Caucasus. Due to its territorial proximity, viceroy of the Caucasus Mikheil Vorontsov built a new road from Tskhinvali to Roki connecting with Transcaucasia (Epemiashvili, 1867). In the beginning of XIX century at the initiative of the Russian government in Samachablo, they also used the postal road. The mentioned road passed through the village Kurta. A letter dated July 14, 1804, sent by a Russian official Volkonsky to Governor-General Pavle Tsitsianov, stated that in Didi Liakhvi Gorge, the road used by the post office had already been opened. According to a written decree of Pavle Tsitsianov, Ksani Eristavi and Machabeli were given some instructions on how to use the road by the local population. Kurta postal road was to be serviced by conductors. For security reasons, hostages should be taken from Ossetians living in the mountains to prevent Ossetians from attacking passengers (Epemiashvili, 1867).

There were several roads from Samachablo to Racha. According to the professor J. Gvasalia, these roads were: 1) Tskhinvali - Kekhvi - Patsa, river Keshelta - Letisi, Zekari, Jejori Gorge - Oni; 2) Tskhinvali - Kekhvi - Patsa - Javistavi - Zamtareti - Arashenda - Chasavali, Jejori bank - Oni; 3) Tskhinvali - Patsa - Ertso - Jejori bank - Oni (Gvasalia, 1991).

Road route from Didi Liakhvi Gorge to western Georgia, according to S. Makalatia was presented as follows: From "Gori-Tskhinvali - to Kekhvi, then from Tsona - Chikhati - to Sachkhere, Oni and so on". Johann Anton Guldenstadt- German traveller, who visited Georgia in the 70s of the XVIII century, used the road from Samachablo to western Georgia. The traveller moved from Didi Liakhvi Gorge with an accompanying detachment to Patsi Gorge. On the left bank of Patsi, he mentions the villages: Gvertseri, Kolalto. The traveller crossed the bridge near Kolalto and passed the village Tamuta, then Tsakho, which was located on the west side of Patsi. Here he saw the castle that Prince Machabel used as a summer residence. From Tsakho he arrived in the village Tsona at the head of the river Kvirila (Sosiashvili, 2015). The road used by Guldenstedt to go from

Tskhinvali to Racha was one of the most important at that time. Guldenstedt addresses this path in a brief review, which he wrote about Russian-Georgian relations. He mentions that in 1768, Lieutenant Fabulov (G. Gelashvili - translator and publisher of Guldenstedt's text equates him with Khvabulov, also known as Kobulashvili) in Didi Liakhvi Gorge passed Nari from Ardoni Gorge up to Tskhinvali, and from there went to Racha through Jaukoma (Java) to the Racha to meet Solomon I (Gelashvili, 1964). This road was used even later. Solomon II used it when he moved from Imereti to Patara Liakhvi Gorge, in particular to the village Vanati and met with the governor Tormasov. Ioane Kartvelishvili, scribe of Yulon (Erekle's son) mentions the road from Patara Liakhvi Gorge passing Didi Liakhvi Gorge going to Imereti. According to him, Yulon Batonishvili fleeing to safety in Imereti with this way, when Davit Batonishvili (Giorgi's son) was going to invade in Patara Liakhvi Gorge against him (Kartvelishvili, 1952). 47 Guldenstedt named other roads, including the road connecting with Stepantsminda: "The usual road from Stepantsminda goes to Kutaisi, through Largvisi Monastery (on Ksani). Approximately - 93 verst. On Didi Liakhvi to Krtskhinvali - 50 verst" (Gelashvili, 1964). This report does not show the exact route of the road, but other sources at our disposal make it possible to determine the road from Stepantsminda to Didi Liakhvi Gorge. Giorgi Liakhveli (Chochishvili) the correspondent of the newspaper "Droeba" in the 80s of the XIX century used this way. From Stepantsminda he arrived in Patara Liakhvi Gorge, in the village Vanati (Sosiashvili, 2007). 49 The road from Stepantsminda connected to Patara Liakhvi gorge, from there it was possible to go to both Ksani and Didi Liakhvi Gorges. As Guldenstedt points out, the road connected Didi Liakhvi Gorge with the Aragvi Gorge as well. This route was also used by the Lezgin, who invaded from the North Caucasus: "Near Iltoz, between Ksani and Narekvavi, there is a normal road for the Lezgin, from which they go from Aragvi, through Mchadisjvari, to the mountains to Lamiskana and Krtskhinvali" (Gelashvili, 1964). In the first half of the XV century, the Machabeli feudal house was established in Didi Liakhvi Gorge. The influence of Machabeli's also extended to Dvaleti and Zhgele Gorges. "Samachablo" was bordered by Ksani Saeristavo estates from the east. The nobility of Pavlenishvili, Amilakhvari and Kherkheulidze were bordered on the south and south-west and on the north-west Racha Saeristavo. According to one relatively late (1886) document and map attached to it (We would like to thank Mr. Vladimir Tsverava, Professor of Kutaisi State University and Mr. Merab Kezevadze, Director of Kutaisi Archives, for providing a copy of the map), which give us an idea of the estates owned by the descendants of Abesalom Machabeli (Davit's son). Machabeli estate was 11568 Tithe land. To the west, it was separated from the Tsereteli estates in Racha Mazra. The northern border followed river Terg and main ridge of the Caucasus. According to the above

mentioned map, Machabeli estates were bordered on the north by Tergi district and Vladikavkazi district (Tsverava and Katamadze, 2018). In the North Caucasus Machabeli owned an integral part of Georgia from ancient times - Dvaleti, where Ossetians settled later. The Dvals occupy an area of about 500 km² from the left bank of the river Tergi - to the head of the Ardon, in Nar - Mamisoni Cave and six Gorges (Zakha, Nara, Zramaga, Zrogo, Zhgele and Kasri). Dvaleti was included in the flock of Nikozi Bishop. Most of the toponyms, anthroponyms, ethnonyms common in Dvaleti are of Georgian origin (Topchishvili, 1997).

In 1843 at the initiative of Russian government, "Ossetian District" was created, which administratively entered in Tbilisi province. However, in the territory of historical Dvaleti, the so-called "Nari district" was established, which was transferred to Tergi district in 1859 and because of this an important territory, that was historically part of Georgia (approximately 500 km²) was artificially removed from our country and the historical part of Georgia - Dvaleti was annexed to Ossetia (actually - Russia) (Topchishvili, 1997).

4. Conclusion

As we have pointed out, in Didi Liakhvi Gorge there are ancient Georgian toponyms, hydronyms and oikonoms, the transformation of which into Ossetian onomastic units started from the time the Soviet government came to power in the country. E.g. Bagini became Bagiati, Bzhiskhevi - Sbaidoni, etc. (Topchishvili, 1997). Georgian village Tkisubani mentioned in the descriptions of 1804 and 1818 was renamed Znaur-Kau after the immortal Bolshevik revolutionary Znaur Aidarov. The process of transforming Georgian toponyms into Ossetian became more active especially after the August war 2008. In the official description of the so-called Republic of South Ossetia in 2015, Kemerti is already mentioned as Chemerti, Artsevi - Artseu, Goiantkari became Goata, Rustavi - Rustau. Indigenous Georgian villages such as Tamarasheni, Kekhvi, Dzartsemi, etc. are no longer mentioned in the description at all (URL 1).

Author Contributions

All works were done by the single author and the author reviewed and approved the manuscript.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

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