

The Retrospective Image of State Border according to Alexandre Javakhishvili's Maps



Geography

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ABSTRACT

Main purpose of this work has been to create a retrospective picture of the natural and anthropogenic environment of Georgia by using the map by Al. Javakhishvili published in 1931-1932. The study also used the territorial-administrative setting, non-mative, geographical, historical and archives materials about Georgia, as well as unpublished records by Al. Javakhishvili. The study was based on GIS-technology. The study showed that the maps contain unique information about the state border of Georgia. These works give a clear picture of the historical transformations of the borders of the country and help identify the scales of those transformations. The study showed that the major portion of the state border is adequate to the present-day border contour, with some exceptions, such as so called Aibga, Mamisoni, Mkinvarstveri, Dariali, Diklo, Tinovroso, Eldari, Davit-Gareji, Debeda and Loki sections being "hot spots" of the modern state border of Georgia to date.

1. Introduction

Old maps give valuable information about the objects of the past, such as settled areas, administrative division, state border, toponyms, distribution of the vegetation cover, land use, anthropogenic transformation, etc. Therefore, studying old maps gives an important original source for different branch professionals. The old maps help create a retrospective picture of the past, compare it to the present-day situation and identify intensity of changes.

The development of cartography has a long history in Georgia. There are a number of maps survived about Georgia and its adjacent territories. In the XX century, Al. Javakhishvili made a valuable contribution to the development of cartography in Georgia. "A.N. Javakhishvili's contribution to the development of cartography in Georgia can hardly be overestimated" [Kavrishvili, Kipiani, 2016]. Together with other scientists, Al. Javakhishvili created more than one different-scaled scientific and training map of Georgia and Caucasus. Particularly great is his contribution to compiling the national atlas of Georgia.

Some outstanding maps among the ones compiled by Al. Javakhishvili are two general geographic maps of Georgia published in 1931-1932 [Javakhishvili, Tskhakaia, 1931-1932]. Virtually, the two are the same map, with one of them using the colored relief as the general geographical basis, while in another map it is not the relief colored, but forest cover. Both maps contain great many pieces of interesting information about the past of the country in respect of the scales of both, the physical-geographic and social-economic as well as anthropogenic transformation of the territory of the country. This is why it is so important to study the anthropogenic changes of the environment, social-economic development of Georgia, historical transformation of the state border and toponyms, and to restore the retrospective picture of the past based on the maps by Al. Javakhishvili.

The main purpose of the study is to create a retrospective picture of the natural and anthropogenic environment of Georgia by using the map by Al. Javakhishvili published in 1931-1932.

Following the goal of the study, the following objectives were set:

- Compiling an e-version and database of the maps.
- Doing a temporal and spatial analysis of the maps according to several parameters.

Comparing the gained results to different sources and modern state.

2. Research Methods and Initial Data

The study was mainly based on the map by Al. Javakhishvili published in 1931-1932; however, with the purpose of matching and showing the existing situation better, the following cartographic sources of different periods were also analyzed and assessed: the Verst maps of the XIX century and Soviet topographic and political-administrative maps. The study also used the territorial-administrative setting, normative, geographical, historical and archives materials about Georgia, as well as unpublished records by Al. Javakhishvili. The study was based on GIS-technology.

3. Study Area

The map was developed at the Institute of Cartography of Georgia and published in 2500 copies by the State Publishing House under the leadership of Al. Javakhishvili in 1931-1932. The map was made by lithography by "Mtavlit". Several map copies are preserved at the scientific-research institutes; however, the map remains unknown and unexplored even for the scientific society. The map is of an average scale (1:200,000, 1 cm for 2 km) and is compiled in a metric system. The map is interesting in that it uses both, Greenwich and Ferro meridians as a coordinate system. The map has 12 sheets. It is printed on paper, with color tones.

The map gives the information about the historical borders, administrative setting, toponyms, settled areas, fortification buildings, roads, forest cover of the country, etc.

The map shows:

- Borders of the USSR, Georgian SSR, autonomous parts and regions.
- Altitudinal steps (m): 0-50, 50-100, 100-200, 200-500, 500-750, 750-1000, 1000-1500, 1500-2000, 2000-3000 and over 3000.

The settled areas given in the map are of 3 types: towns and settlements and villages, etc.

However, the map legend is deficient. In particular, the names of the settled areas and other conventional signs are not included in the legend. Clearly, this makes it difficult, though not impossible, to read the map.

3. Main Results

In the XIX-XX centuries, the state border of Georgia was subject to quite significant transformations, with their scales possible to specify with the help of the study map, which can be compared to the scientific works of the scientist. Such an important role of the study map in the above-mentioned job results from the fact that the basic transformations of the country borders took place before the 1930s. It is clear that we mean the state border transformations in 1943-1958 associated with the involuntary resettlement of the native North-Caucasian people to Central Asia and Kazakhstan and distribution of their "own" territories among the boundary republics, with further appropriation of the same "own territories" to the Union Republic of Russia [Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 1943; 1944; 1955; 1957].

The analysis of the maps by Al. Javakhishvili shows that the greatest part of the state border is adequate to the present-day border contour, with some sections inconformant. Such inconformant sections are so called Aibga, Mamisoni, Mkinvarstveri, Dariali, Diklo, Tinovroso, Eldari, Davit-Gareji, Debeda and Loki sections being "hot spots" of the modern state border of Georgia to date.

The primary source for Al. Javakhishvili to identify the state border of Georgia was The Description of the Kingdom of Georgia by Vakhushti Bagrationi and the "Atlas of Georgia" published by him (all three editions), as well as the studies carried out in this field by Ivane Javakhishvili. This is also evidenced by an unpublished work of the scientist, only with its fragments survived and preserved at TSU Museum of Geography. As it becomes clear from this document [The Brief Data about the Border of Georgia in the Tergi Gorge], in 1957, Al. Javakhishvili applied to the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR and described the borders of Georgia from the first half of the XVIII century through the contemporary times. In this document, he notes "The brief data about the border are enclosed by 18 pages of the Georgian and Russian maps and written supplements." One must assume that he must have developed such a description of the state border of Georgia if not for the whole border of the country, at least for its northern section. Such an assumption is logical if considering the date of the letter writing, the year of 1957, i.e. when based on the Decrees of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the northern border of Georgia in the Soviet period acquired a "solid" shape and was thus close to the shape and location it had in 1944.

The above-mentioned work was written on March 8, 1957, i.e. after the Supreme Soviet of the USSR had the decision made, and on January 9, 1957, a resolution to restore Chechen and Ingush Autonomous Republic and its integration with the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic [Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, 1957]. This decree annulled the Decree of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of March 7, 1944 annulling Chechnya and Ingushetia and distributing its territories among the boundary republics, including Georgian SSR: "Integrate the following rayons of former Chechen and Ingush ASSR: Itum-Kalinsky rayon with its present-day borders, western part of Sharoev rayon, southern part of Galanchezh rayon, Galashkin rayon and Prigirodnyi rayon, as well as the south-western part of Gizeldon rayon of the North Ossetian ASSR".

Regulation of the state border of Georgia depends on a number of factors. They can be considered in different contexts. If considering the historical trends of the transformations of the state border of Georgia and present political situation in the Caucasus region, it is clear that all the above-listed factors are political in nature, i.e. they are caused by political aspirations [Nikolaishvili, Tolordava, 2015].

According to the study maps, the major part of the state border of Georgia coincides with the modern border. Such sections are for example, the longest section of the Caucasioni Ridge along the northern boundary and Turkish borderline along the southern boundary of the country. However, many sections in the map do not coincide with the present-day borders of Georgia, such as the ones of the river Psou, Dariali, Tinovroso, Iori Plateau, etc.

According to this map, the north-western border of Georgia runs along the watershed of the rivers Mzimti and Psou and not along the Psou gorge, as it is today. However, the border in the study map follows the lower reaches of the river Psou, alternating between the left and right sides of the gorge and reaches the river Ahahcha. The reasons for drawing the same border section differently in the maps of the same period are difficult to understand, as no decree about changing the state border was adopted in that period.

When drawing the state border, Al. Javakhishvili, by using the principle of restoring historical equality, tried to consider the local natural conditions, what is rational, as he himself states. For example, in Dariali gorge, he thinks that the state border must run where "the Caucasioni mountains cross the Tergi gorge before it reaches the lowland" [unpublished manuscripts, TSU Museum of Geography]. He thinks that such a place is Jeirahi. In Russian 5-verst map of the XIX century, this location is named as Jerahovskoye [5-verst maps of the Caucasus]. Presently, this site is located south of village Chmi (Chmi, territory of Alania). It is also interesting that the scientist suggests an alternative way of drawing a border, in particular, further southwards of the named location of Jeirahi. If referring to the scientist's words again, "the border must be drawn near Larsi "in the latter case", and explains this view by the physical-geographical peculiarities of the location: "where the Tergi gorge is confined by high ridges (3,000-2,000 m) in the east and west is closed before it reaches the lowland", [The Brief Data about the Border of Georgia in the Tergi Gorge]. Such an "extreme case" can be explained by the existing political surroundings, in particular, some or other sections of the Georgian state border were subject to frequent transformations, with a bulk of precedents of shrinking inland. A certain parallel from this conclusion can be made with Ivane Javakhishvili's conclusion, when he wrote: "The Georgian nation and its government are obliged to the posterity and history to pay due attention to the shape of the state borders of their Republic and to be a sober guard for it. This will not hinder either brotherhood or friendship, or kind neighborhood with those really caring about the brotherhood and neighborhood and will save the Georgian nation against any expected threats. It is for the sake of establishing and strengthening the kind neighborhood, the Georgians may waive their right where it is not so very much harmful for the self-defense of Georgia..." (underlined by the authors) [Javakhishvili, 1919]. However, the question as to how "this section of the border is not so very much harmful", is disputable.

As per the map published in 1932-33 under the leadership of Al. Javakhishvili and S. Tskhakaia, the eastern boundary of the country starts at mountain Diklosmta and by passing mountain Shaviklde and watershed of Caucasioni of Kakheti, reaches mountain Tinovroso (3370,0 m), up to the confluence of Georgian, Russian and Azerbaijani borders. It is remarkable that mountain Tinovroso is located on the Georgian-Russian border, not beyond Georgia, as it is shown in the Soviet topographic maps (scale 1:100,000. K-38-81; scale 1:50,000, -38-81- ; scale 1:25,000. K-38-81-Б-6), at about 1,5 km from the Georgian border. If considering the physical-geographical conditions of the location, the border here must run across mountain Tinovroso, as it is located on the crest of the Caucasioni of Kakheti and at its highest point. It is remarkable that the contour of the country border in the Soviet topographic maps is drawn south of mountain Tinovroso, while the same border in almost all scientific and educational literary sources of the same or later periods [Javakhishvili, 1926; Maruashvili, 1969; Geography of Georgia, 1999; 2000] runs along mountain Tinovroso. However, as per the Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, the route of the border

coincides with that of the Soviet topographic maps: “the border descends the southern slope of the Caucasioni, near mountain Tinovroso...” [Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, 1985].

According to the above-mentioned map, some sections of the contour of the southern border of the country run a bit more southwards than at present. Such is the perimeter of Lokhi Ridge for example: in the map, mountain Lalvari is fixed on the Georgian-Armenian border, while today, it is on the territory of Armenia. The difficulty in solving the problem is associated with the fact that this section of the state border is given differently in the topographic maps published in the Soviet period, in particular, in 1940s, 1960s and 1980s. In addition, as the map shows, the whole of the lower reaches of the river Iori is located on the territory of Georgia, while at present, the border runs left of the river Iori, leaving this section beyond Georgia.

5. Conclusions

The study showed that the maps compiled by Al. Javakhishvili and other of his scientific works contain unique information about the state border of Georgia. From 1921, the borders of Georgia remained more or less stable, if not considering the changes in 1943-1958. This is why the maps compiled under the leadership of Al. Javakhishvili in the 1930s are so important. These works give a clear picture of the historical transformations of the borders of the country and help identify the scales of those transformations.

The study showed that the major portion of the state border is adequate to the present-day border contour, with some exceptions, such as so called Aibga, Mamisoni, Mkinvarstveri, Dariali, Diklo, Tinovroso, Eldari, Davit-Gareji, Debeda and Loki sections being “hot spots” of the modern state border of Georgia to date.

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