

THE FATE OF THE DAVID GAREJI MONASTERY COMPLEX IN THE SOVIET ERA.
დავით გარეჯის ბედი საბჭოთა პერიოდში

NATIA MIRIANASHVILI

Doctor of History

Head of the Department of Contemporary

History at the Central Archives

Tbilisi, Vazha-Psavela Avenue N1

Georgia, +995577340583, natia.mirianashvili@gmail.com

ORCID ID- 0000-0002-5087-0042

NODAR SHOSHIASHVILI

Doctoral Candidate

,Associate Professor of GAU-Georgian

American University (GAU),

Tbilisi, Merab Aleksidze St. N10

Georgia, +995593437486, nshoshia86@gmail.com

ORCID ID-0000-0002-7453-9258

Abstract. Today, when Georgia is an independent and sovereign state, the issue of border regions has once again become a subject of active discussion. Particularly urgent is the question of Georgia's eastern border—the Gareji Valley—and the fate of the monastic complex located there. This topic continues to generate public interest, provoke important questions, and demand well-founded answers from Georgian society.

Soviet historiography devoted minimal attention to the extensive archival materials related to this matter, despite the fact that they are preserved in significant volume within Georgian archival collections. In this study, we have attempted to examine the issue through the critical analysis of archival documents, memoir literature, periodical press, and established historical scholarship.

During the period of the Second Republic of Georgia, border issues effectively lost their state significance. At that time, the borders between the republics were intentionally blurred: customs posts, border pickets, and other technical mechanisms were abolished. "We reject natural borders that lead to war," they proclaimed, attempting to resolve territorial questions through abstract and poorly understood "internationalist" slogans. Guided by the principles of "proletarian internationalism," the Georgian Bolsheviks addressed the border question within the Transcaucasian Soviet Republics in a way that resulted in the cession of significant portions of Georgia's historical territories to neighboring states.

Key words: Georgia; border; state; diplomacy; territory.

ნათია მირიანაშვილი

ისტორიის დოქტორი

სსიპ საქართველოს ეროვნული არქივი

უახლესი ისტორიის ცენტრალურ არქივი

განყოფილების უფროსი

ქ. თბილისი, ვაჟა-ფშაველას გამ. N1

საქართველო, +995577340583, natia.mirianashvili@gmail.com

ORCID ID- 0000-0002-5087-0042

ნოდარ შოშიაშვილი

დოქტორანტი

ქართულ-ამერიკული უნივერსიტეტის

ასოცირებული პროფესორი,

ქ. თბილისი, მერაბ ალექსიძის ქ. N10

საქართველო, +995593437486, nshoshia86@gmail.com

ORCID ID-0000-0002-7453-9258

აბსტრაქტი. დღეს როცა საქართველო დამოუკიდებელი და სუვერენული სახელმწიფოა, არაერთხელ წამოიჭრა საზღვრისპირა რეგიონების საკითხი. საქართველოს აღმოსავლეთი საზღვარი, გარეჯის ველი, და იქ განთავსებული სამონასტრო კომპლექსის ბედი, დღეს განსაკუთრებით აქტუალურია – ის საქართველოს საზოგადოებაში აღძრავს ინტერესს, ბადებს საინტერესო კითხვებს და მოითხოვს პასუხებს. აღნიშნულ საკითხზე, საქართველოს არქივსაცავების ფონდებში დაცულ მრავალ ინფორმაციას საბჭოთა ისტორიოგრაფია ნაკლებ ყურადღებას აქცევდა. ჩვენ შევეცადეთ საარქივო, მემუარული ლიტერატურის, პერიოდული პრესისა და არსებული საისტორიო ზღრის კრიტიკული გააზრების საფუძველზე შეგვესწავლა ეს საკითხი. საქართველოს მეორე რესპუბლიკის დროს საზღვრების საკითხმა დაკარგა სახელმწიფოებრივი მნიშვნელობა. ფაქტიურად იმ ეტაპზე რესპუბლიკებს შორის სახელმწიფო საზღვრები შეგნებულად წაიშალა, რაც საბაჟოების, პიკეტების და სხვა ტექნიკური ფორმების გაუქმებით გამოიხატა. ჩვენ ვერ მივიღებთ ომის გამომწვევ ბუნებრივ საზღვრებსო – აცხადებდნენ ისინი და საზღვრების საკითხს ცუდად გაგებული ინტერნაციონალური – ლოზუნგებით სწყვეტდნენ. საქართველოს კომუნისტებმა ამიერკავკასიის საბჭოთა რესპუბლიკებს შორის საზღვრის საკითხი გადაწყვიტეს პროლეტარული ინტერნაციონალიზმის – თვალსაზრისით და მეზობელ სახელმწიფოებს დაუთმეს საქართველოს ისტორიული ტერიტორიების მნიშვნელოვანი ნაწილი.

საკვანძო სიტყვები: საქართველო; საზღვარი; სახელმწიფო; დიპლომატია; ტერიტორია.

Introduction

During the period of the Second Republic of Georgia, state borders gradually lost their political significance. The discourse shifted away from legally defined state boundaries and instead focused on “*territories of de facto control*.” The administrative-economic borders established between the republics were never formally affirmed through political or legal acts such as delimitation or demarcation treaties.

The ideological psychosis of the anticipated world revolution played a far greater role in the worldview of Georgian Bolsheviks than national considerations. As a result, they ceded to Azerbaijan several historically and culturally significant territories: the Zaqatala region, the David Gareja Valley, the Kvemo Qaraiazi sector—rich in ancient Georgian historical and archaeological heritage—and the Eldari Valley.

Methods

This study is grounded in methodological principles fundamental to archival science and historical research, including systematic analysis, classification, and the objective interpretation of historical facts and events. The core methodological basis will be the complex analysis of archival materials.

Comparative and historical methods will be employed to determine:

- the major stages and defining characteristics in the evolution of the research problem across an extended historical period;
- the key factors that shaped the borders between Soviet republics over time—ideology, economic considerations, political decisions, or local ethnic dynamics.

Results

The findings of the article will have both theoretical and practical value. Newly uncovered archival data will be incorporated into the scientific discourse, and the resulting recommendations will provide essential insights for academic institutions, the media, non-governmental organizations, and state agencies.

Discussion

Back in 1918, the famous Georgian historian Ivane Javakhishvili wrote the following: “The Georgian nation and its government are obliged to future generations and to history to show due attention and respect to the resolution of issues related to the state border of the country. It is necessary to take care of its inviolability. This will not interfere with brotherhood and unity with other nations and will not harm good neighborliness with those who truly strive for brotherhood and good neighborhood. Such an attitude will protect the Georgian people from all sorts of threats” (Javakhishvili, 1919:51). Unfortunately, it should be noted that the warning of this famous historian and public figure did not remain fully heard. The territory of Georgia has gradually decreased over time and this vital problem for the country remains also very relevant today.

The main attributes of any sovereign state are territory, borders, flag, coat of arms, anthem and constitution. The state border is one of the most important issues in this list. The political border of Georgia has not always been the same. It has changed over the centuries. During the period of Georgia's prosperity and greatness, especially during the reign of King David the Builder and Queen Tamara, the Georgian state border covered almost the entire territory of Transcaucasia. Historical, political, state, geographic and economic factors contributed to the formation of Georgia's borders.

The history of Georgia has determined the country's geographic contours. Its historical borders ran along the edges established by nature itself. "Georgia is like a fortress surrounded by its walls on all sides. In the east it is adjoined by the Caucasus mountain range, in the south by a single mountain system covered with snow - the Greater Caucasus watershed (the basin of the Kura and Chorokh rivers); in the west it is abutting to the Black Sea. In the east, Georgia borders with Azerbaijan only

through one narrow strip of land. But even here, the largest river in the Caucasus - the Kura, separates these countries with the help of its tributaries Dzeghami and Alazani-Kurmukha.

The territory surrounded by the above-mentioned geographical barriers is a one whole country called Georgia. "Classically complete in its nature-created boundaries, and also formed by industrial and economic factors, Georgia is a holistic organic body" (Ingorokva,1990:1-2). Thanks to these factors, the Georgian people, throughout their history, have been able to repel the attacks of many, often more powerful, external enemies and preserve their identity. The process of forming the Georgian state border in its current form began in 1918, when Georgia declared its independence. The government of the then independent Georgia was guided by state interests in the issue of borders. Historical, strategic, economic and political considerations formed the basis for determining state borders.

In this essay we consider the border changes that have taken place between Georgia and Azerbaijan. First of all, we are talking about the changes that have occurred on the section of the border where the David Gareji monastery complex is located. We believe that in this context it would be important to touch upon the agreements that were reached between Georgia and Russia, as well as Georgia and Azerbaijan on this issue during the existence of the Georgian Democratic Republic in 1918-1921.

On April 27, 1920, the 11th Red Army entered Azerbaijan and established Soviet power there. On April 28 of the same year, a meeting of the presidium of the constituent assembly was held in Tbilisi, at which the head of the Georgian government Noe Zhordania informed the members of the presidium about the Bolshevik coup in Azerbaijan and pointed out to them the threat of a similar development of events in Georgia.

In order to neutralize the emerging threat, the Georgian government carried out the following measures: 1) A defense council was established, headed by the head of the country's government. 2) General Kvinitadze was appointed as supreme military commander. 3) According to the council's resolution, a semi-martial law was introduced in eastern Georgia. 4) General mobilization was declared. 5) A significant sum of money (300,000,000 rubles) was allocated from the state treasury for military needs (file 1833: 713: 105).

On April 30, 1920, the following provision was included in the resolution of the Constituent Assembly: "The Constituent Assembly is deeply convinced that the entire population of Georgia, regardless of nationality, religion and political beliefs, as well as the Georgian army and people's guard, seasoned in many battles together with the entire armed population of the country, will be able to defend the independence, democracy and freedom of the country. The Constituent Assembly appeals to European democracy and calls on it to raise its voice in defense of justice. The Assembly is confident that European democracy will support Georgia and will not abandon it alone in this struggle. The Constituent Assembly assures the government of the country of its full support in this sacred struggle for independence and freedom" (file 1833: 1135: 4).

At that time, the problematic issue in relations between the Georgian Democratic Republic and the Republic of Azerbaijan was the Zakatal district. After the Sovietization of Azerbaijan, the government of this republic began military actions against Georgia. It was supported in this by the Russian Red Army. On May 2, 1920, the Azerbaijani army, supported by the 11th Red Army of Soviet Russia, attacked the Georgian border troops at the Red Bridge, near the Khrami River, on the administrative border of the Tbilisi and Elizavetpol governorates. The Georgian government tried to resolve the problem peacefully. At that time, secret negotiations were underway in Moscow between Georgia and Russia on concluding a peace and cooperation treaty. In response to the Georgian government's inquiry

regarding Azerbaijan's attack on the Georgian border post, Moscow responded that this was only a local incident and that it had nothing to do with it.

On May 12, the Georgian army under the command of General Giorgi Kvinitadze launched a counteroffensive and liberated Georgian territory. When the Georgians were preparing for a decisive battle, the government gave the order to suspend all military activities. This decision of the Georgian government turned out to be a big political mistake. As a result, the Georgian army retreated and, without a fight, ceded to the enemy the lands it had captured in battle before. "One can say that this has happened for the first time in history: a victorious army surrenders territory to an enemy who has been routed and is ready to flee the battlefield.... This strange and reckless order turned out to be a death sentence for Georgia" (Duguet,1994:162). The Georgian government made this decision under pressure from Moscow. Georgian diplomat Grigol Uratadze, who was in Moscow, sent one dispatch after another to Tbilisi, informing the government of Moscow's demands and desires. If these demands were met, Uratadze assured the government that Russia would resolve the Zakatal issue in Georgia's favor.

On May 7, 1920, in Moscow, under conditions of confidentiality, Russia and Georgia signed a treaty, in which Russia de jure guaranteed Georgia's independence. On the Georgian side, the treaty was signed by Georgian diplomat Grigol Uratadze, on the Russian side by Lev Karakhan. Below we want to present some fragments of this treaty:

"Proceeding from the right, proclaimed by the RSFSR, of all peoples to free self-determination up to and including separation from the State of which they constitute a part, Russia unreservedly recognizes the independence and sovereignty of the Georgian state and voluntarily renounces all its own sovereign rights which had appertained to it regarding the people and territory of Georgia."

The Article 3 establishes the border between the two countries:

The state border between Russia and Georgia, runs from the Black Sea, along the river Psou ... and continues along the northern frontier of the former Chernomorsk, Kutaisi, and Tiflis provinces to the Zakatal district and along the eastern boundary thereof up to the frontier of Armenia. The summits of all mountains along this boundary line shall be considered neutral until 1 January 1922. ... The exact determination of the state boundary between the two contracting parties shall be carried out by a special mixed border commission composed of an equal number of representatives of each party. The results of the work of this commission shall be confirmed by a special treaty.

Article 4:

1. Russia undertakes to recognize as unconditionally part of the Georgian state, in addition to the parts of the Black Sea Governorate that are transferred to Georgia by virtue of paragraph 1 of Article III of this treaty, the following governorates and regions of the former Russian Empire - Tiflis, Kutaisi and Batumi with all the districts and okrugs that make up the said governorates and okrugs, as well as the Zakatal and Sukhumi districts.

2. Subsequently, as the relationship between Georgia and other state formations besides Russia, existing or to be created in the future and which are adjacent to Georgia, as it described in the preceding Article III of this treaty, is clarified, Russia expresses its readiness to recognize those or other parts of its former Caucasian viceroyalty as part of Georgia that will be transferred to it on the basis of treaties concluded between the government of Georgia und these units.

Article 6 stated that this treaty would come into force from the moment it was signed and would not require ratification since the authorized representatives of both parties have personally signed this treaty and put their signature (file 1833: 903: 9-12).

The treaty was made in two copies in Moscow, on May 7, 1920.

Therefore, Russia recognized the Zakatal District as part of Georgia. However, after the leaders of the Soviet Azerbaijan learned of this, they began sending urgent dispatches to Moscow, expressing their disagreement with Russia's position on this issue. It is easy to understand that the Bolsheviks in Moscow did not want to offend their Baku colleagues. As a result, on May 12, an additional agreement was concluded between Russia and Georgia, according to which the solution of the Zakatal issue was assigned to a mixed commission. This included an equal number of Georgian and Azerbaijani representatives. The chairman of the commission was to be a representative of Russia. Until the decision was made by this commission, neither Georgia nor Azerbaijan had the right to introduce additional military forces into the Zakatal District. It became obvious that the conclusion of an additional agreement turned out to be detrimental for Georgia, because since of May 12, only units of the 11th Red Army were in the Zakatal district and Georgia could no longer introduce its military contingent there. Russia, in the case of need to "establish peace in the Caucasus," demanded that Georgia withdraw its troops from this district. Everything had been calculated in advance. If the commission had considered this issue and it had come to a vote, the position of the Russian representative would have been decisive, since he would have supported the Bolsheviks in any case and thus the problem would have been resolved not in favor of Georgia. Why did Grigol Uratadze agree to sign this additional agreement? Here we can only assume that the fact of legal recognition of the Georgian state by Bolshevik Russia was a priority for him. As for territorial problems, he obviously thought that they could be resolved peacefully, especially as such a possibility theoretically did really exist.

On June 12, 1920, in the Azerbaijani border town of Agstafa was signed a big treaty for peace and friendship between the Georgian Republic and the Soviet Azerbaijan. On the Georgian side, the treaty was signed by Minister of War Grigol Lortkipanidze, Deputy Chairman of the Constituent Assembly of Georgia Simon Mdivani and member of the Military Council of Georgia Andronikashvili (file 1833: 239: 17-19).

The treaty was ratified at the meeting of the constituent assembly of Georgia, which took place on June 25, 1920 (file 1833:239: 14).

It should be especially noted that the issue of David Gareji monastery complex was not controversial during this period and that the monastery was the property of Georgia.

The circle gradually closed around Georgia. Russia and Azerbaijan violated the terms of the treaty permanently. On February 25, 1921, Georgia became the Soviet Republic. After that, under the conditions of occupation, Georgia finally lost a significant part of its historical territories.

After the abolition of the Second Georgian Republic, the attitude of the Georgian leadership to the issue of state borders changed radically. "Customs posts and other similar barriers are abolished.... Nationalists shout at the top of their voices: independence means having our own army, our own borders and our own economic policy. In other words, having all the attributes necessary for a state... We say: independence means the independence of our peoples, our working masses from foreign

imperialists, from foreign capital; it means having our own Soviet military, foreign and economic policy in a single strong Soviet fist" (Ordjonikidze, 1986:164,211).

During the Soviet era, state borders between individual republics were deliberately erased. This was expressed in the abolition of customs services, border posts and other technical services. The Bolsheviks believed that inter-republic borders were also only temporary appearance. "In the future, we will have one communist world republic, the borders of which will circle the entire surface of the globe and which will not be called a state" (The newspaper „The Communist“ of August 30, 1921). At one of the meetings, the Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of Azerbaijan N. Narimanov stated that "thanks to communism, the borders between the republics of Transcaucasia were erased." The famous Georgian public figure and scientist Shalva Nutsubidze responded to such an anti-national policy of abolishing borders as follows: "What does it mean to abolish the borders between the republics of Transcaucasia? Where is it written and who proved that communism and the abolition of borders are the same thing? Georgia is an independent state, and as such it has the right to have all the attributes of an independent state: its own language, its own territory, its own borders, etc. How can a state exist without its own borders? What is the connection between communism and the erasure of borders...?" (The newspaper „The Socialist-Federalist“ of Mai 4, 1921) From the point of view of the communists, "for the Soviet government, state independence is not determined by where this or that border passes... Whatever our attitude toward the borders of two independent republics, one thing is clear: we cannot subordinate the concept of strategic expediency or the concept of natural borders to this issue... The issue of having one's own borders can be resolved differently at different times, in accordance with the presence of the actual population or economic circumstances" (The newspaper „The Socialist-Federalist“ of Mai 11, 1921).

Most of the Georgian intelligentsia of that time properly perceived what was happening in Georgia. They sought to justify the need to restore the territorial integrity of the country. The famous Georgian politician and member of the constituent assembly T. Glonti wrote the following on this matter: "The territory of Georgia and its borders are a symbol of Georgian sovereignty. This is the knot that gives impetus to the development of our entire republic. And those who show weakness of will and senseless submission in this cardinal issue will not be able to create a state and earn the love and respect of the Georgian people" (The newspaper „The Socialist-Federalist“ of March 25, 1921). But the Bolsheviks did not work for the love of the people. They were obsessed with the idea of a "world revolution" and immediately after seizing power in Georgia, they began to distribute its territories.

In order to resolve issues related to the ownership of certain territories in the republics of Transcaucasia, the plenum of the Central Committee of the Caucasian Bureau of the Communist Party, which took place on May 2, 1921 under the chairmanship of the famous Soviet political figure S. Kirov, decided to create a special commission. A. Svanidze and T. Todria from Georgia, Huseynov, Gadzhinsky, Rasul-zade and Omar-faik from Azerbaijan, and Bekzadyan from the Armenian side became members of this commission. The first meeting took place in Tbilisi on June 25-27, 1921. A few days later, a second meeting was held, which in addition to the commission members was also attended by such leading party figures of Transcaucasia as G. Ordzhonikidze, M. Orakhelashvili and S. Eliava. The commission considered the issue of demarcation of the border between the Georgian SSR and the Azerbaijan SSR. After some debate, both sides managed to develop a common model on such contentious issues as the Zakatal district and the village of Garayazi, which was formulated as follows: "For political reasons, the Azerbaijan SSR does not express any claims to the incorporation of these

areas. However, it demands that the Georgian SSR legally recognize the indisputable right of the Azerbaijani peasants living in these territories to the actual use of the lands (pastures and agricultural lands) that they owned both during the tsarist era and during the Menshevik rule. In this case, Georgia will only retain political power over these territories, while all other power must be transferred to the local population. In addition, Georgia does not have the right to issue any order regarding these territories without first coordinating it with the leadership of the adjacent Gazakh region (Azerbaijan). An extraordinary mixed commission is being created to precisely determine the agricultural lands that the Azerbaijani peasants must use" (Toidze, 1990:26). However, no final decision was reached. On the third day of the commission's work, the Georgian representatives protested that "on the spot, all power does not belong to the peasants." Things got to the point that Kirov was forced to invite the leaders of the Transcaucasian Republic G. Ordzhonikidze and M. Orakhelashvili to the meeting. After that, the participants in the meeting managed to find an agreement and a new resolution was adopted, the draft of which was drawn up by the Azeris. The wording "all power" was changed to "all power, except political one" (Toidze, 1990:27). In the first document, in which the Azerbaijan SSR already declared that it "refuses the demand of incorporation of these lands and does this only for political reasons. It only requires to secure the right of local population to this land and to its agricultural use. One can see how the Azerbaijan communists maneuvered the interests of "their working masses – i.e., Azerbaijani peasants". During the Soviet period, when the internal borders of the individual republics actually ceased to exist, and there were only administrative and economic borders, using lands for agricultural purposes was in reality equal to their possession.

On July 5, 1921, a conference of representatives of the Georgian and Azerbaijan SSRs was held in Tbilisi, which considered the question of the border strip. Resolutions were adopted, from which, among other things, it becomes obvious that the existing political borders between the Azerbaijan SSR and the Georgian SSR remain unchanged. This is evident from the fact that they do not say anything about any changes in this area. Regarding the question of the ownership of the Garayazi plain, the conference decided the following:

a) The peasants of the Gazakh district are granted full and special rights of ownership and use of the lands of the Garayazi plain; at the same time, the state border between the Azerbaijan SSR and the Georgian SSR remains unchanged.

Further, the resolution lists specific localities and geographical names, the lands of which are transferred for actual use to the Azerbaijani peasants. Red Bridge, Boyuk Kesik station, the mount Kirishli, the mount Keshish-Gzoi, the pass Shikhli-Karavan and others. The resolution includes a map compiled in five different versions, the scale of which is indicated in inches.

Postscript: a) The mixed commission was authorized to determinate the precise plots of land that have to be transferred to the peasants of the Gazakh region by right of ownership. The commission must begin work in two weeks after the signing of this agreement. b) The peasants of the Gazakh region, who were the actual owners and users of the Garayazi plain, in all cases fell under the jurisdiction of the constitution of the Azerbaijan SSR and had to obey to the executive committee of the Gazakh region. c) With regard to the Eldar steppe, the conference decided to order the above-mentioned mixed commission to determine and legitimize on the spot the actual owners of this plain. d) With regard to the Zakatal rayon, the conference decided the following: The Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic renounces all claims on this territory as part of Georgian republic. The Revolutionary Committee of Georgia must therefore publish a corresponding declaration. e) The peasants who reside on both sides of the border may freely use the pastures and other agricultural lands, as was the case before.

This preliminary agreement was signed by the chairmen of the revolutionary committees of the Georgian SSR and the Azerbaijan SSR, F. Makharadze and N. Narimanov, respectively (file 288: 5: 14.) .Thanks to this official agreement, the decision of the Transcaucasian Bureau of the Central Committee of the Russian Communist Party of Bolsheviks on the transfer of the Zakatal region to the Azerbaijan SSR was implemented. Based on the resolution of the conference, a special mixed commission was created, which was to regulate the internal borders of individual Transcaucasian republics. The commission held its first meeting in the village of Agstafa on July 27, 1921. The Azerbaijan in this commission was represented by member of the Commissariat of Internal Affairs of this republic I. Ibrahimov, (the head of the delegation), the adviser Jafar Akhundov and deputy chairman of the Ganja regional party committee M. Aliyev.

The Georgian SSR was represented by delegates P. Ingorokva and S. Machabeli who were advisors to the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs of the Georgian SSR. I. Ibragimov read out the resolution of the conference of July 5, 1921 on the delimitation of internal borders between the republics of Transcaucasia. The text was taken into account and accepted as a guide for further actions. After this, the issue of the Garayazi plain was addressed. On behalf of the delegation of Azerbaijan, I. Ibragimov stated that the mixed commission was obliged only to establish the exact boundaries of the land holdings by the peasants living in the Garayazi plain. To this, the representative of the Georgian delegation P. Inogorkva responded that the mixed commission should first study the Gazakh region and its precise boundaries which are mentioned in the resolution of the conference. In the opinion of the representative of the Georgian delegation, it was necessary to accurately establish the real land holdings of the Gazakh peasants and it must be made on site. I. Ibragimov rejected this proposal.

P. Ingorokva stated that the Georgian delegation understood the text of the resolution differently and believed that paragraph 2 of this document implied a study of the situation in the entire Gazakh region. The conference did not make any decisions on this day (file 288: 5: 14).

The meeting resumed its work the next day and at the end the following decision was made:

"1. The work of the commission should be postponed until September 1 of this year. 2. Before that, it is necessary to collect all the necessary data to establish the real borders. 3. Until the exact borders are established, the peasants of the Gazakh region should be given the right to freely use the agricultural lands of the Garayazi plain, as was the case before. The corresponding entry from this protocol should be sent to the executive committee of the Gazakh region, which will take note of this order and will be guided by it. The disagreements that have arisen in the mixed commission regarding the 2nd point of the resolution adopted at the conference by the delegations of the Transcaucasian republics must be discussed with the government of the Transcaucasian republic and resolved before September 1 of the current year. 5. The city of Ganja must be the venue for the next meeting of the delegation" (file 288: 5: 16).

The meetings of the mixed commission were held on August 27-28, 1921 in the Azerbaijani town of Agstafa, on September 5 in Ganja and on October 8 in Gazakh. However, they did not produce any real results. On November 8, 1921, a meeting of the mixed commission, which included representatives of the Azerbaijan and Georgian SSRs, was held in Tbilisi. It was attended by the chairmen of the commission V. Kandelaki and A. Abasov, as well as its members: D. Vekilov, A. Beridze and M. Shikhlinski. The agenda of the meeting included the approval of the exact contours of those agricultural lands that were actually in use and had already been studied by the commission by that time (in accordance with the resolution of the conference of July 5, 1921)(file 607:72:2).

According to the decision of the mixed commission, the complex of clergy house of the David Gareji Monastery consists of two parts: the Western and Eastern clergy houses. The area of the first part covers approximately 3020 dessiatines, which remained within the borders of Georgia. The area of the second part of the clergy houses was 2040 dessiatines and it was transferred to Azerbaijan. On November 15, 1921, an agreement was signed between the Azerbaijan and Georgian SSRs on the state border between them. On the Georgian side, it was signed by the chairman of the revolutionary committee of the Georgian SSR B. Mdivani, and on the Azerbaijani side, by the chairman of the central executive committee of this republic Mukhtar Haji Zade (file 288: 5: 8).

This agreement finally recorded the legal incorporation of this region into Azerbaijan. Since then, the issue of ownership of part of the David Gareji monastery complex has also become controversial. As a result, the historical part of Georgia - Zakatal - finally went to another country. Although the dispute over the ownership of this land continued, it mainly concerned not the entire region, but individual plots of land – forests, pastures, etc.

The contentious issues in relations between Georgia and Azerbaijan were as follows: 1. The right of residents of the village of Kovachcholy in the Zakatala (Azerbaijan) district to use parts of the Chiauri forest, which is located in the Signagi (Georgia) district. 2. The issue of ownership of the Shirak steppe along the Alazani River remained unresolved between the Zakatal and Signagi districts. 3. The winter pastures called Eldar-Samukh remained disputed between the Ganja and Signagi districts. 4. There was no agreement between the Tbilisi and Gazakh districts on the issue of ownership of the Gareji winter pastures. 5. The Tbilisi and Gazakh districts could not agree on the issue where must be the border line from the clergy house of David Gareji to the Mtkvari River.

On April 26, 1923, a meeting of the commission of the Transcaucasian Central Committee of the Party on territorial division of districts was held, at which the Georgian delegation put forward a demand to transfer the entire complex of clergy house of the David Gareji monastery to Georgia. The majority of the commission members agreed with this demand. Only a member of the Transcaucasian Central Executive Committee, the Azerbaijani Talibov, abstained. He refused to take part in the vote. For this reason, this issue remained unsolved for a long time (file 607: 83: 67).

On November 20, 1924, a decisive meeting of the commission of representatives of three individual republics comprising the Transcaucasian Socialist Federative Republic was held. This commission was created by the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia and dealt with issues related to the use of land, forest and water resources. The meeting considered the territorial disputes existing between the Georgian SSR and the Azerbaijan SSR. A resolution was adopted with the following content: "The dividing border line in the Garayazi plain, which was determined in November 1921 and on January 28, 1922 by the mixed commission must be finally approved" (file 607: 239:15). (This decision of January 28, 1922 did not affect the clergy house of the David Gareji Monastery at that time). On November 24, 1924, this resolution was finally approved by the Central Executive Committee of the Transcaucasian Federation (file 607: 239:14). Therefore, the territory of Georgia with its numerous ancient historical and archaeological monuments, such as one part of the David Gareji monastery complex, ended up within the territory of Azerbaijan. In particular, this part of territory included such elements of the monastery complex as the Udabno monastery, the Chichkhrituri tower (located near the monastery), Gansashor and Bertubani monasteries. This is how the integrity of the David Gareji monastery complex was violated.

The belonging of this territory to Georgia was indisputable. In order to avoid the destruction of the mentioned monuments, the Central Executive Committee of Georgia on January 15, 1925 filed a petition to the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia for the return of the above-mentioned lands to Georgia in order to preserve and protect the David Gareji monastery complex. Only such a justification for such a demand gave a chance for the return of it, which was the historical territory of Georgia. Under conditions as only administrative and economic borders were valid and there were no territorial boundaries, the historical past of certain territories did not play an important role in determining their belonging to one or another republic. Thus, the decisions on these issues were made only on the basis of "friendship and mutual agreement".

This was well understood by the political leaders of Georgia at that time. Therefore, the Central Executive Committee of Georgia justified this demand for the return of these territories to Georgia with economic considerations. In the letter of the Chairman of the Central Executive Committee of Georgia S. Todria dated October 15, 1925, we read the following: "On January 15 of this year, the Executive Committee of Georgia filed a petition to the Executive Committee of Transcaucasia for the return of the previously mentioned territories of Georgia in order to protect and preserve the David Gareji monastery complex. However, this petition did not have the justification necessary today. Therefore, it is necessary to change its justification and find another. Before the last delimitation of these territories, they have been used by the residents of the Tbilisi district as pastures. Today, these lands are within the borders of Azerbaijan and the population of the Tbilisi district is deprived of the opportunity to use them. It is necessary to raise the issue of restoring the right to use these lands, which will entail a revision of the borders between the republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan" (file 288: 1371: 31).

In a letter to the Central Executive Committee of Georgia dated December 8, 1925, the People's Commissar for agriculture of Georgia A. Gegechkori wrote as follows: "This region is an indisputable territory of Georgia. This is evidenced by the indisputable fact of the use of these lands by Georgian cattle breeders, as well by many historical monuments which the David Gareji desert abounds with. The population of the Signagi and Tbilisi districts (the villages of Yormuganlo, Karayaz, Sartichala and Sagarejo) have been using these pastures since ancient time and continue to do so today... The problem of pastures has always been extremely acute for our cattle breeding branch. Not only would the Georgians not give them up to others, but in addition to this, they tried to find additional pastures elsewhere. And they found them on the territory of Azerbaijan, where there were many plots of land for grazing cattle. It is precisely because of the lack of territory for pastures in Georgia and the critical situation in the field of animal husbandry in our republic that all pastures around the David Gareji desert must remain within the borders of Georgia" (file 288: 1375: 35).

This was the request of the Georgian representatives. The head of the department for the protection of monuments of art and antiquity of Georgia, S. Kakabadze, demanded in his message to the People's Commissar for Culture the following: "1. The creation of a scientific observation post for the David Gareji monastery complex, whose task will be to care for and maintain all archaeological and historical sites in the Garayazi plain, as well as for ruins of the Rustavi fortress. 2. Transfer the income of the David Gareji and Saint John monasteries to this post. Use the property (vineyards and other lands) in the villages of Sagarejo and Khashmi, currently in the possession of private individuals, and use the income received from it to pay benefits and salaries to the staff of the above-mentioned observation post. 3. The entire territory where these ancient architectural complexes are located, from the Boyuk-Kesik station and the monastery of Saint John and further south to the monastery of Bertubani, up to

the border of Azerbaijan, should be under the jurisdiction of Georgia and should be governed by the Georgian administration. For this purpose, the issue of revising the agreement concluded with the Azerbaijani side on the delimitation of borders should be raised. It should also be taken into account that these desert territories are not populated (neither Azerbaijanis nor Georgians live here). Scientific interests require proper care of the ancient monuments. Such care can only be guaranteed from Tbilisi, since the historical monuments of the Garayazi plain are of Georgian origin and represent an organic and most important part of Georgian archeology" (file 607: 549: 4).

In March 1925, the technical staff of the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia, together with representatives of the commissariats for agriculture of Azerbaijan and Georgia, began to study the area of the territory of the David Gareji Monastery, where the clergy houses were located. It turned out that the southeastern part of this territory, where the monastery was located, was used by cattle breeders of the village Iormuganlo (Signagi district, Georgia). The rest of it was leased by the Georgian Commissariat for Agriculture to the department of the Central Association of Consumer Cooperatives for hay making, as well to the joint-stock company "Meat products trade".

On October 6, 1925, the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia, at a meeting of the small presidium, took into account the demand of the Central Executive Committee of Georgia. In particular, it agreed that this monastery complex was of great archaeological value and that it was necessary to carry out appropriate measures to protect this historical monument. The Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia proposed that the Georgian and Azerbaijani sides develop a common solution for its protection (file 607:1162: 11). Based on the joint resolution of the small presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia and the secretariat of the Central Executive Committee of Georgia dated October 20, 1925, a special commission was created, which included the following persons: as the head of the commission, a representative of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of Georgia Z. Adikashvili; as its ordinary members, a representative of the People's Commissariat of Education of Georgia Sh. Chkhetia and a representative of the People's Commissariat of Agriculture of Georgia I. Khidirbegashvili (file 607: 1371: 33).

The commission's task was to resolve issues related to the David Gareji monastery complex together with representatives of Azerbaijan. A Georgian delegation was sent to the David Gareji desert to meet with representatives of Azerbaijan and to get acquainted with the situation on the spot. However, representatives of Azerbaijan preferred to avoid this meeting. Despite this, the Georgian commission decided to begin studying the disputed territories independently.

The conclusion reached by the commission as a result of its work was the following: In the above-mentioned area there were ancient historical and archaeological monuments at a distance of 1, 3, 5 or 8 miles from each other. We are talking about the following monuments: a) The Monastery of Saint John with a number of structures carved into the rock. b) The Monastery of the Martyrs. c) The David Gareji Monastery, with numerous buildings carved into the mountain. d) The Dodo Gareji Monastery. e) Two towers in the vicinity of the David Gareji Monastery. f) The Veran-Gareja Monastery. g) The Bertubani Monastery with its structures carved into the rock. All of the listed monuments represent a single and indivisible architectural complex of the Christian religion, which from ancient times until 1921 was in the possession of Georgian monks, and the territory where the above-mentioned monuments are located has always been part of Georgia.

In 1922, when the demarcation and division of territories between Azerbaijan and Georgia was completed, most of these monuments (the David Gareja, Veran-Gareja and Bertubani monasteries, as

well as one monastery tower) ended up on the territory of the Azerbaijan Republic and thus, the integrity of the single architectural complex was completely disrupted.

The monuments of the David Gareji monastery complex, which ended up on the territory of Azerbaijan, were deprived of care and maintenance, since they did not represent historical significance for the Azerbaijani culture. The government of Soviet Georgia could not show them due attention in such a situation. As a result, these monuments, deprived of care and attention, were damaged and partially destroyed. Many lands on which they were located, in fact, became pastures. In the listed disputed territories, in the immediate vicinity of historical architectural monuments, sheep-breeders built sheepfolds. This occurred above all in the Signagi district. And to this day, residents of the Signagi district (approximately 60-70 families) use these lands as pastures.

The lands around the David Gareji monastery complex were used as pastures in Georgia due to the fact that Georgia had very few winter pastures of its own. The pastures in this area played a very important role for the residents of the Tbilisi district. After studying the situation by a special commission of Georgia on this issue, the following conclusions were made: 1) The historical architectural monuments located on the territory of Azerbaijan are an indivisible part of the David Gareji monastery complex, which is of great value for Georgian culture and science. 2) According to the legislation of the Soviet republics, the state is obliged to take care of the inviolability of historical and archaeological monuments. 3) According to the same legislation, all lands and estates adjacent to historical and archaeological monuments and previously representing the source of their existence should be considered as their indivisible part.

On the other hand, the following factors must also be taken into account: 1) All buildings in the David Gareji desert have belonged to Georgia since ancient times. 2) This territory is still in use by Georgian sheep breeders and is the only source of livelihood for them. Based on the above, the commission came to the following conclusion: In order to protect all historical monuments in the David Gareji desert and to create favorable living and working conditions for Georgian sheep breeders, it is necessary to recognize that the current border between the republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the Garayazi plain must be changed by restoring the dividing line that existed before 1921" (file 288: 1371: 34).

The Republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan could not agree on this issue. The pastures where the clergy houses were previously located were claimed by both the residents of the village of Shikhli, Gazakh district of Azerbaijan, and the residents of the village of Iormuganlo, Signagi district of Georgia. This confrontation between the residents of these villages often took on a violent character. On July 27, 1926, the Central Executive Committee of Georgia filed a petition with the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia to reconsider the issue regarding the ownership of individual plots of land of the David Gareji Monastery. This issue was considered at a meeting of the Land Commission under the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia on November 12, 1926. The Commission made the following decision:

"Taking into account the following circumstances: 1) The statement made at today's meeting by the representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan A. Alekperov that the consideration of this issue at the meeting of the state land commission is not legitimate, since the border between the republics of Georgia and Azerbaijan, including the area where the clergy houses of the David Gareji Monastery are located, were determined by the agreement of July 5, 1921. This is confirmed by the minutes of the work of the mixed special commission of November 8, 1921. 2) The study of the area of the territory where the clergy houses of the monastery are located was carried out by the land commission in March

1925 without needed permission of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia. The issue of revising the borders is thus declined"(file 607: 71: 7).

"On December 5, 1926, the next meeting of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia took place. The issues of the David Gareji monastery complex and those of its territory where the clergy houses were once located were not considered. It was removed from the agenda and postponed to the next meeting"(file 607: 570:82).

On January 11, 1926, a new meeting of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia was held. The Presidium instructed the commission, which included S. Kasyan (chairman), A. Gegechkori and D. Buniatzade (commission members), as well as representatives of the executive committees of the relevant districts, to study the issue on site within one month and present its findings to the Presidium of the Transcaucasian Central Executive Committee" (file 607:1363:6).

Due to the fault of the Azerbaijani side, it was not possible to carry out an on-site visit and the issue remained unresolved for a long time. The People's Commissariat for Agriculture of Georgia repeatedly raised the issue with the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia and demanded that the border line in the vicinity of the David Gareji Monastery be changed. Moreover, these places were actually used by the population of Georgia. Residents of the village of Iormuganlo in the Signagi district (Georgia) had been using the pastures where the clergy houses of the David Gareji Monastery were located for many years. It goes without saying that the Azerbaijani side was not going to agree with this and presented its arguments against the Georgian version.

The Azerbaijanis accused the Georgian government of arbitrariness on the territory of Azerbaijan, under the pretext of protecting archaeological monuments, and demanded the expulsion of Georgian cattle breeders from Azerbaijani land (i.e. from the territory where the clergy houses of the David Gareji monastery were located). There were some incidents as residents of the Azerbaijani village of Shikhli in the Gazakh district attacked Georgian shepherds. The unresolved nature of this issue aggravated the situation and heated up relations between the residents of the two neighboring republics. In order to prevent further escalation, it was necessary to correctly demarcate the border in this area.

On February 18, 1929, a meeting of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia was held, at which the issue of winter pastures on the territory of David Gareji was considered. The following resolution was adopted: The disputed part of the territory on which the clergy houses of monastery complex are located, with an area of 2,000 dessiatines, is recognized as the property of the Georgian SSR and transferred to the Tbilisi district (file 607: 1150: 93). As a result of this resolution, a significant part of the Georgian territory again remained part of the Azerbaijan SSR.

All decisions taken at the meeting of the Presidium of the Transcaucasian Executive Committee were considered final.

On May 14, 1929, the Council of People's Commissars of Georgia adopted a resolution on the implementation of the resolution of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of Transcaucasia dated February 18, 1929, concerning disputes between individual republics of Transcaucasia over the ownership of certain forest and land plots. The adopted resolution states as follows: a) The resolution of the Presidium of the Transcaucasian Executive Committee dated February 18, 1929 is to be implemented. b) This decision was made by the relevant officials, unanimously, on the basis of an on-site study of all the circumstances that underlie the existing disputes and disagreements regarding the ownership of certain territories. c) This decision is final and can't be subjected to revision. d) The implementation of the resolution of February 18, 1929 is entrusted to the commission created under

the Central Executive Committee of Transcaucasia which is responsible for settlement of disputes over the ownership of certain land and forest plots" (file 284:866:18).

However, after this, the border dispute between Georgia and Azerbaijan continued. Meetings of various commissions were held. However, it was not possible to achieve significant results in resolving the differences.

In 1936, the Transcaucasian Soviet Socialist Federative Republic as state structure was dissolved. The individual republics of Transcaucasia independently of each other became part of the Soviet Union. It was necessary to demarcate the borders of these republics. For this purpose, on March 5, 1938, a meeting was held in Tbilisi with the participation of members of the executive committees, as well of representatives of the people's commissariats for agriculture of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. At it, after discussing controversial issues, a decision was made not to make any significant changes to the existing borders between the republics (file 2119: 4: 1-2). This decision was subsequently ratified at a meeting of the Central Executive Committee of the Georgian SSR on March 23, 1938 (file 284:3226: 394).

After that, no significant changes of the existing borders between Georgia and Azerbaijan took place. It should be taken into account that at that time it was not a question of a state border. Therefore, the name of the commissions created for the resolve of border issues were not called commissions for the demarcation of state borders, but commissions for the establishment of borders between several uezds (districts). No one would have dared to talk about state borders at that time. Agreements on administrative and economic borders were concluded between individual republics. Representatives of the Georgian SSR tried to resolve contentious issues related to these borders in favor of Georgia and always, as an argument, they referred to the economic interests of the republic, as well as the interests of the working class.

According to the resolution No. 550-ბ of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR of 25 May 1948, the Transcaucasian Military District of the USSR received land plots on the territory of the historical and architectural monastery complex of David Gareja: 10,224 hectares for permanent use and for the creation of a military training ground on it, and 24,800 hectares for temporary use and for the creation of a shooting range there. They were located in three Georgian regions at once - Gardabani, Sagarejo and Signagi.

In addition, the command of the Transcaucasian military district was granted the right to use a three-kilometer highway located in Georgia, the width of which was 15-20 meters, and the area of 5-6 hectares. This highway led to a tank-training ground located on Azerbaijani territory, in the vicinity of the Georgian lake Jandari, which is located on the border with Azerbaijan (file 600: 149)

These artillery fires were dangerous for the David Gareji monastery complex, because it could cause its destruction. It is noteworthy that it has always been in the center of attention of the Georgian public and precisely because of this, the Georgian government was forced to take care of it. There are numerous government decrees regarding the protection of David Gareji. One of them is the following:

Resolution No. 685 of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR of November 20, 1975 on the condition of the cultural monuments of the David Gareja Monastery and on improving the measures for their care.

The Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR notes that the care, concern, protection and popularization of cultural monuments on the territory of the David Gareji monastery complex, such as the monasteries of Dodos-Rka, Lavra, Saint John, Udabno, Chichkhrituri, Tsamebuli, Bertubani and

others, are not at the proper level... (as can be seen from the resolution, we are talking about the entire complex – N.M.).

In order to protect and further popularize the David Gareji monastery complex, the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR decrees:

- 1) To declare the adjacent territory of the David Gareji monastery as a museum-reserve.
- 2) The Ministry of Culture of the Georgian SSR is obliged to pay special attention to the care of the monastery complex, which implies the following activities:

- a) Opening a small area on the territory of the David Gareji monastery complex, where several workshops necessary for restoration works will be located. The workshops will be subordinate to the Department for the Protection of Historical Monuments under the Ministry of Culture of the Georgian SSR;

- b) The capital investment plan for 1977-1980 must include the construction of the David Gareji Museum;

- c) In 1975-77, it is necessary to study all cultural monuments located in the desert that have not yet been taken into account and submit a proposal to the Ministry of Culture of the Georgian SSR on the necessary measures for their protection;

- d) In 1975-76, together with the Ministry of Agriculture of the Georgian SSR, determine the measures necessary for the protection of cultural monuments on the territory of the David Gareji monastery complex.

3. The Ministry of Land Improvement and Water Management of the Georgian SSR was tasked in 1976 with organizing of water supply system for the main monastery of this complex, the Lavra of David, and after that, in 1977-1980, to solve the problem of water supply for all other monasteries.

4. The I. Javakhishvili Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography, the G. Chubinishvili Institute of the History of Georgian Art, Tbilisi State University, the S. Janashia State Museum of Georgia, the State Museum of Art of Georgia and the special experimental laboratory for recording art monuments operating under the Ministry of Culture of the Georgian SSR were given instructions to study and record the architecture, archaeological material and murals of the David Gareji monastery complex.

5. The Ministry of Highways of the Georgian SSR was instructed to build new roads and repair the existing one leading to the David Gareji monastery complex.

6. The Main Directorate of Energy and Electrification of the Georgian SSR was instructed to develop and implement a project for external power supply of the monastery complex in 1977-1980.

7. The Ministry of Communications of the Georgian SSR was instructed to provide telephone communication between Tbilisi and David Gareji.

8. The Ministry of Agriculture of the Georgian SSR, together with the Ministry of Culture, was instructed to develop safety rules that would guarantee the safe exploitation of land plots on the territory of David Gareji.

9. The Republican Council for Tourism and Excursions of Georgia was instructed to build a tourist base on the territory of David Gareji.

10. The State Planning Committee of Georgia was instructed to find additional financial resources for the Ministry of Culture of Georgia to purchase one truck and one motorcycle for the David Gareji Monastery during the restoration work.

11. The State Coordination Commission for the restoration and conservation of museum-reserve on the territory of David Gareji Monastery Complex was approved (file 600: 2002).

Taking into account the unique significance of the David Gareji architectural complex, its grave emergency condition, as well as the decision of the USSR Ministry of Defense to cease artillery firing exercises on the territory of David Gareji, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR adopted a corresponding resolution. Here are some of its provisions:

1. It must be stressed that in the second quarter of 1988, the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR allocated 250 thousand rubles from its reserve fund and transferred them to the Main Directorate for the Protection of Historical, Cultural and Natural Monuments. The latter had to use these funds to begin construction of a training complex for the Transcaucasian Military District in exchange for the military leaving the territory of the Saint John Monastery.

3. To ask the command of the Transcaucasian Military District about the following:

- In order to ensure joint security measures, to inform the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR about all training events that are to take place at the military training ground on the territory of the David Gareja monastery complex.

5. The Main Scientific and Industrial Directorate for the Protection and Use of Natural Monuments under the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR is given the following assignment:

- Together with the Executive Committee of People's Deputies of the Sagarejo District and the archaeological expedition to Kakheti (organized by the Center for Archaeological Research under the Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR), proposals must be submitted by June 1988 on the creation of a protective zone on the territory of Naomari-Gora (a settlement of the late Bronze and Iron Ages (II-I millennia) in the David Gareja desert). This territory is located in the area of Salt lakes.

- Creation of a specialized scientific and economic site for the design and restoration of the David Gareja monastery complex.

- Together with the State Committee for Nature Protection and the Ministry of Culture of the Georgian SSR, proposals must be submitted by the end of this year regarding creation and operation of a national park on the territory of the historical and architectural complex David Gareja....

10. To instruct the State Planning Committee of the Georgian SSR to do the following:

- When drawing up a plan for the economic and social development of the republic for 1989-1990, to find the necessary financial resources for the Main Scientific and Economic Administration operating under the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR. This service has to use this money to build a basic building for the museum-reserve on the territory of the David Gareja desert, as well as two standard houses in Bertubani and in the area of the Sabareebi cave monasteries (which means that Georgia and no other country carried out again the construction works here – N.M.).

- For 1989-1990, allocate 10 thousand linear meters of metal mesh to the executive committee of the council of people's deputies of the Sagarejo district to create a wire fence around architectural monuments in the territory of Naomari-Gora.

12. The State Committee for Labor Protection and Social Issues of the Georgian SSR has been instructed to consider the issue according to which the salaries of the seven supervisors of architectural monuments on the territory of the David Gareji desert should be equal to the salary of the chief gamekeeper at the State Service for Hunting Supervision.

And at the end of all this, a decision was made to create a group that would exercise control over the museum-reserve David Gareji. This group was tasked with creating permanent observation and control points for the monastery complex. Together with the Main Scientific and Economic Directorate for the Protection and Exploitation of Cultural and Natural Monuments under the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR, as well as with the Society for the Protection of Cultural Monuments of Georgia and the State Commission for Control over the Conservation and Restoration of the David Gareji monastery complex, this control group was to arouse the interest of the general public, and especially young people, in this historical monument of the country. In addition, it was charged with establishing interaction with the command of the Transcaucasian Military District and the command of its military training ground.

A control committee on conservation and restoration of the David Gareji monastery complex was approved, which included representatives of the intelligentsia and students (Collection of resolutions adopted by the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR in April 1988).

According to the order No. 663 of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR dated July 18, 1988, it was decided to equalize the salaries of seven guards of the monasteries – David Gareji Lavra, Udabno, Chichkhatura, Saint John, Dodo-Rka, Bertubani and Sabereebi - with the salaries of senior rangers in the state service of hunting supervision of the Georgian SSR (file 306:99:30)

As we can see, all 7 guards of the monastery complex received their salaries from the Georgian state treasury. During the specified period of time, the Azerbaijani side did not make such a decision, since David Gareji's Georgian origin was an indisputable fact for them as well.

On April 24, 1991, the Government of the Republic of Georgia adopted Resolution No. 315, according to which Resolution No. 550 of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR of May 25, 1948 was declared invalid. In addition, the new resolution spoke about the redistribution of those land plots of the monastery complex and its surrounding territories that served as an artillery shooting range for the Transcaucasian Military District of the USSR.

The Government of the Republic of Georgia notes that the artillery shooting range located on the territory of the unique David Gareji monastery complex poses a serious threat to the existence of the unique monuments of the 6th-13th centuries located here, because the detonation of shells and grenades during military exercises may cause irreparable damage to them.

As a result of widespread public protest in Georgia, the command of the Transcaucasian Military District has not conducted military exercises in the area of the David Gareji monastery complex for the past three years (1988-1991). Today, it is ready to return the entire territory of the military training ground to the Georgian government. However, in exchange, it is asking for a three-kilometer section of the highway located in the area of Lake Jandari (the width of the highway is 15-20 meters, and its area is 5-6 hectares), which leads to a tank's training ground located on the territory of Azerbaijan.

The Government of the Republic of Georgia decrees the following:

1. To declare invalid Resolution No. 550 of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR of May 25, 1948 on the transfer to the Transcaucasian Military District for permanent use of part of the territory of the historical and architectural monastery complex of David Gareji (covering the districts of Signagi, Sagarejo and Gardabani), with a total area of 10,224 hectares, for the creation of an artillery shooting range there, and also to transfer to it for temporary use during military exercises a territory of 24,800 hectares.

2. Allow the command of the Transcaucasian Military District to use a three-kilometer section of the highway (15-20 meters wide, with a total area of 5-6 hectares) located on the territory of Georgia

in the vicinity of Lake Jandari, which leads to a tank's training ground located on the territory of Azerbaijan.

3. The land plot of 10,224 hectares allocated for permanent use, but currently ownerless, shall be transferred for permanent use to the following entities:

- The Soviet cattle breeding farm of the village of Udabno (Sagarejo district) - 6,735.99 hectares;
- The Shiraki winter pasture administration – 262,60 hectares of territory, which includes a route for sheep driving;
- The Soviet cattle breeding farm of the Gardabani district – 759,40 hectares of pasture;
- The collective farms of the Signagi district - 2,225 hectares of pasture in their actual use, which the Transcaucasian Military District has never used;
- The Patriarchate of Georgia – 241,01 hectares of land, on which are located such historical monasteries as the Dodos-Rka– 143 hectares, the Lavra of David – 84,76 hectares and Veran-Gareji – 12,50 hectares.

4. Transfer to the Patriarchate of Georgia from the land of the sovkhoz of the village of Udabno (Sagarejo district). This is a pasture with an area of 101.68 hectares (this includes lands that were used for artillery shooting). The monasteries of "White Senaki" (with an area of 55,11 hectares), "Tsamebuli" (16,20 hectares) and "The Saint John" (30,30 hectares) are located on this territory.

5. In order to protect the historical monastery complex of David Gareji, declare the territory of the sovkhoz for cattle breeding in the village of Udabno with an area of 5555.10 hectares, where historical monuments are located, as monument protection zone. This land consists of the following parts:

- An area of 2437.36 hectares, which was temporarily used for artillery firing;
- The territory of the already abolished military training ground with an area of 3117.74 hectares.

A special regime shall be introduced on the territory declared as a monument protection zone, which implies such measures as a ban on any construction works, cultivation of perennial plants, cutting down trees and shrubs, destruction of reptiles, construction of a quarry, carrying out geological or other work causing soil erosion, damaging of flora and fauna, and measures capable of climate changing. In case of extreme necessity, one of the above-mentioned types of activity may be allowed, but only with the consent and supervision of the Patriarchate of Georgia and the Directorate of the David Gareja Museum-Reserve (Collection of resolutions adopted by the government of the Georgian SSR in April 1991).

Conclusion

The cloisters of the David Gareja monastery complex keep a lot of interesting historical information in their labyrinths, inscriptions and frescoes. They represent a chronicle of everything that happened in Georgia over the course of 16 centuries. The monastery complex is the silent history of our people. It is only necessary to read it correctly and take care of it. In terms of studying the monastery complex and its history, various services have carried out extensive and painstaking work. However, there is still much to be explored and learned.

დამოწმებული წყაროები და ლიტერატურა

- დიუგე, რ. (1994). *მოსკოვი და წამებული საქართველო*, თბილისი.
- ინგოროყვა, პ. (1990). *საქართველოს ტერიტორიის საზღვრების შესახებ*, თბილისი.
- თოიძე, ლ. (1990). *25 თებერვლის შემდეგ*. მაცნე, ისტორიის სერია №1, თბილისი.
- ორჯონიკიძე, გ. (1986). *ამიერკავკასიის შესახებ (სიტყვები და სტატიები)*, თბილისი
- ჯავახიშვილი, ი. (1919). *საქართველოს საზღვრები*, თბილისი.
- გაზეთი „კომუნისტი“, 1921 წლის 30 აგვისტო
- გაზეთი „სოციალისტ-ფედერალისტი“, 1921 წლის 4 მაისი
- გაზეთი „სოციალისტ-ფედერალისტი“, 1921 წლის 11 მაისი
- გაზეთი „სოციალისტ-ფედერალისტი“, 1921 წლის 25 მარტი
- გაზეთი „კომუნისტი“, 1921 წლის 30 აგვისტო
- საქართველოს ეროვნული არქივი, ცენტრალური საისტორიო არქივი (შემდგომში ცსა), ფ. 1833, ან. 1, საქ. 713,
- ცსა, ფ. 1833, ან. 1, საქ. 1135;
- ცსა, ფ. 1833, ან. 1, საქ. 903;
- ცსა, ფ. 1833, ან. 1, საქ. 239;
- ცსა, ფ. 1833, ან. 1, საქ. 239;
- საქართველოს ეროვნული არქივი, უახლესი ისტორიის ცენტრალური არქივი (შემდგომში უიკა, ფ. 288, ან. 1, საქ. 5;
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 72;
- უიკა, ფ. 288, ან. 1, საქ. 5;
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 83;
- უიკა, ფ. 617, ან. 1, საქ. 239;
- უიკა, ფ. 288, ან. 1, საქ. 1371,
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 549,
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 1162,
- უიკა, ფ. 288, ან. 1, საქ. 1371,
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 71,
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 570;
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 1763;
- უიკა, ფ. 607, ან. 1, საქ. 1150;
- უიკა, ფ. 284, ან. 1, საქ. 866;
- უიკა, ფ. 2119, ან. 4, საქ. 4;
- უიკა, ფ. 284, ან. 1, საქ. 3226;
- უიკა, ფ. 600, ან. 23, საქ. 149;
- უიკა, ფ. 600, ან. 24, საქ. 2002;
- უიკა, ფ. 306, ან. 1, საქ. 99;

საქართველოს სსრ მინისტრთა საბჭოს 1988 წლის აპრილის თვის დადგენილებების კრებული;
საქართველოს რესპუბლიკის მთავრობის 1991 წლის აპრილის თვის დადგენილებების
კრებული.

REFERENCES

- diuge, r. (1994). mosk'ovi da ts'amebuli sakartvelo, [“Moscou et la Géorgie Martyre ”]. tbilisi.
- ingoroqva, p. (1990). sakartvelos t'erit'oriis sazghvrebis shesakheb,[About the borders of the territory of Georgia]. tbilisi
- toidze,l. (1990). 25 tebervlis shemdeg.[After February 25th] matsne, ist'oriis seria №1, tbilisi.
- orjonik'idze, g. (1986). amierk'avk'asiis shesakheb (sit'qvebi da st'at'iebi), [About the Transcaucasia (Speeches and Articles)]. tbilisi
- javakhishvili, i. (1919). sakartvelos sazghvrebi, [Borders of Georgia] tbilisi.
- gazeti „k'omunist'i“, [The newspaper "Communist"]. 1921 ts'lis 30 agvist'o
- gazeti „sotsialist'-pederalist'i“, [The newspaper “Socialist – federalist”]. 1921 ts'lis 4 maisi
- gazeti „sotsialist'-pederalist'i“, [The newspaper “Socialist – federalist”]. 1921 ts'lis 11 maisi
- gazeti „sotsialist'-pederalist'i“, [The newspaper “Socialist – federalist”].1921 ts'lis 25 mart'i
- gazeti „k'omunist'i“, [The newspaper "Communist"]. 1921 ts'lis 30 agvist'o
- sakartvelos erovnuli arkivi, tsent'raluri saist'orio arkivi (shemdgomshi tssa), [Central historical archive]. 1833, an. 1, sak. 713,
- tssa, p. 1833, an. 1, sak. 1135;
- tssa, p. 1833, an. 1, sak. 903;
- tssa, p. 1833, an. 1, sak. 239;
- tssa, p. 1833, an. 1, sak. 239;
- sakartvelos erovnuli arkivi, uakhlesi ist'oriis tsent'raluri arkivi (shemdgomshi uitsa) [Central Archives of Contemporary History], p. 288, an. 1, sak. 5;
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 72;
- uitsa, p. 288, an. 1, sak. 5;
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 83;
- uitsa, p. 617, an. 1, sak. 239;
- uitsa, p. 288, an. 1, sak. 1371,
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 549,
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 1162,
- uitsa, p. 288, an. 1, sak. 1371,
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 71,
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 570;
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 1763;
- uitsa, p. 607, an. 1, sak. 1150;
- uitsa , p. 284, an. 1, sak.866;
- uitsa, p. 2119, an. 4, sak. 4;
- uitsa, p. 284, an. 1, sak. 3226;
- uitsa, p.600, an..23, sak. 149;
- uitsa, p.600, an24, sak. 2002;
- uitsa, p.306, an 1, sak. 99;
- sakartvelos ssr minist'rta sabch'os 1988 ts'lis ap'rilis tvis dadgenilebebis k'rebuli [Collection of resolutions of the Council of Ministers of the Georgian SSR of April 1988].
- sakartvelos resp'ublik'is mtavrobis 1991 ts'lis ap'rlis tvis dadgenilebebis k'rebuli [Collection of resolutions of the government of Republic of Georgia of April 1991].

Gratitude. This publication was prepared within the framework of the project “*Georgia in the Transcaucasian Federation: Internal Administrative-Territorial and Inter-republican Borders, 1922–1936*” (Grant FR-22-2916, 2023–2025), funded by the Shota Rustaveli National Science Foundation of Georgia. The authors express their sincere gratitude to the Foundation for its support.