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FAMILY NAMES OF THE POPULATION FOOTHILLS AND PLAINS IN GEORGIA

(On the basis of ethnographic data of Lechkhumi family names)

The importance of the study of ethnographic materials reflecting the origin of Georgian family names has often been noted in the historical sciences in Georgia. The same is true about the materials describing the origin of some family-names in certain villages of Lechkhumi. The analysis of some family-names in Lechkhumi allows us to conclude that inner-migration, discussed in the scholarly literature of Georgia, is a historical fact. Chiefly the migration took place from the mountains to the foothills and plains to the mountain feet and to the land. The reasons of the migration from the historical Takveri were overpopulation and social contradictions. People from other parts of Georgia, mostly Svans, also migrated to Lechkhumi; however, rarely, there were the converse situations when families from Lechkhumi migrated to higher mountains. In all the cases the migrated people were welcomed and sheltered by the common homeland and Orthodox Christian communities. Lechkhumi is the province where people migrated from lands mainly for the reason of social disagreements.

It is also the historic truth that at a certain period of history the part of Lechkhumi fell under the domain of the Megrelian Princes. The mixture and merging of traditions of the people with different rites and customs had positive effects on the consolidation of the common national organism.