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SURNAMES AS SOURCE OF STUDY OF SOCIO-POLITICAL AS WELL AS CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS LIFE (ACCORDING TO ETHNOGRAPHIC MATERIALS OF WESTERN GEORGIA)

Ethnohistoric study of proper names (names, surnames) reveals the socio-political as well as cultural and religious life of Georgians which is a result of coexistence and blending of pre-Christian and Christian phenomena.

The article provides the analysis of anthroponyms collected in various parts of Western Georgia.

Each of the clans with a common surname spread in Imereti, Samegrelo, Adjara, Svaneti and Lechkhumi is a worshipper of a church built and named after a specific saint and therefore performs rituals according to the requirements of the Christian religion. Even though there are relatively few shrines of pre-Christian era in Western Georgia, there still are some cult chapels established in honour of specific saints. In almost all cases, prayers are performed by the clan elder rather than a clergyman. The way of performance, text and of course the language of the prayer are identical in Svaneti and Samegrelo. Only a minor difference is identified in performing of the ritual. Contact with the original shrines would have certainly been restored. During some Christian holiday the migrants would offer sacrifice at the shrine located in the territory settled by their clan (with a common surname). Often, out of respect of faith and traditions, the migrants were followed by those bearing other surnames. Thus, the relations between different Georgian regions become stronger contributing to binding power of common Georgian traditional life.