SACRED PLACES, EMERGING SPACES

Space and Place

Bodily, geographic and architectural sites are embedded with cultural knowledge and social value. The Anthropology of Space and Place series provides ethnographically rich analyses of the cultural organization and meanings of these sites of space, architecture, landscape and places of the body. Contributions to this series will examine the symbolic meanings of space and place, the cultural and historical processes involved in their construction and contestation, and how they are in dialogue with wider political, religious, social and economic institutions.

Volume 1
Berlin, Alexanderplatz: Transforming Place in a Unified Germany
Gisa Weszkalnys

Volume 2
Cultural Diversity in Russian Cities: The Urban Landscape in the Post-Soviet Era
Edited by Cordula Gdaniec

Volume 3
Settling for Less: The Planned Resettlement of Israel's Negev Bedouin
Steven C. Dinero

Volume 4
Contested Mediterranean Spaces: Ethnographic Essays in Honour of Charles Tilly
Maria Kousis, Tom Selwyn and David Clark

Volume 5
Ernst L. Freud, Architect: The Case of the Modern Bourgeois Home
Volker M. Welter

Volume 6
Extreme Heritage Management: Practices and Policies from Densely Populated Islands
Edited by Godfrey Baldacchino

Volume 7
Images of Power and the Power of Images: Control, Ownership, and Public Space
Edited by Judith Kapferer

Volume 8
Performing Place, Practising Memories: *Aboriginal Australians, Hippies and the State*
Rosita Henry

Volume 9
Post-Cosmopolitan Cities: Explorations of Urban Coexistence
Edited by Caroline Humphrey and Vera Skvirskaja

Volume 10
Places of Pain: Forced Displacement, Popular Memory and Trans-local Identities in Bosnian War-Torn Communities
Hariz Halilovich

Volume 11
Narrating Victimhood: Gender, Religion and the Making of Place in Post-War Croatia
Michaela Schäuble

Volume 12
Power and Architecture: The Construction of Capitals and the Politics of Space
Edited by Michael Minkenberg

Volume 13
Bloom and Bust: Urban Landscapes in the East since German Reunification
Edited by Gwyneth Cliver and Carrie Smith-Prei

Volume 14
Urban Violence in the Middle East: Changing Cityscapes in the Transformation from Empire to Nation State
Edited by Ulrike Freitag, Nelida Fuccaro, Nora Lafi, and Claudia Schroeder

Volume 15
Narrating the City: Hi-stories, Space, and the Everyday
Edited by Wladimir Fischer-Nebmaier, Matthew P. Berg, and Anastasia Christou

Volume 16
Post-Ottoman Coexistence: Sharing Space in the Shadow of Conflict
Edited by Rebecca Bryant

Volume 17
Sacred Places, Emerging Spaces
Edited by Tsypylma Darieva, Florian Mühlfried and Kevin Tuite

SACRED PLACES, EMERGING SPACES

RELIGIOUS PLURALISM IN THE POST-SOVIET CAUCASUS

Edited by Tsypylma Darieva, Florian Mühlfried
and Kevin Tuite

berghahn
NEW YORK • OXFORD
www.berghahnbooks.com

First published in 2018 by

Berghahn Books

www.berghahnbooks.com

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

[to come]

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-78533-782-6 (hardback)
ISBN: 978-1-78533-783-3 (ebook)

Chapter 2

Women as Bread-Bakers and Ritual-Makers

Gender, Visibility and Sacred Space in Upper Svaneti

NINO TSEREDIANI, KEVIN TUITE AND PAATA BUKHRASHVILI

One of the principal themes of this volume is the sharing (or non-sharing) of sacred places. In our chapter, we wish to draw attention to another parameter, visibility, which can intersect in various ways with the susceptibility of sites to sharing or contestation. Visibility is not necessarily the same as accessibility; highly visible sites can be off limits to some groups, and less visible sites can be accessible to those who know where they are. Contributing to the visibility of a site are a number of factors, including:

(i) Salience: The ease of detection of a site or installation, even by outsiders who do not participate in the local ritual economy. Contributing to the salience of a site are its size, shape, architectural features (in the case of a built object) and its prominence against its background.
(ii) Coexisting or superimposed geographies of the sacred: A given territory may contain sites that are 'visible' to members of one community or group, but not to others.

Some of the sacred sites analysed by the contributors to this volume are institutionally affiliated houses of worship (churches, mosques, etc.), which owe their visual salience to their size, placement and distinctive architecture. Other types of site – such as the gravesites of Muslim saints – are marked by ribbons and pieces of cloth tied onto a fence or tree branch by pilgrims (Grant 2011), which set them apart from similar

objects nearby. Not all sacred places are so readily identifiable, however, as will be shown later in this chapter. Less salient sites included in the sacred geography of one community, might, therefore, remain undetected by other groups, including those competing for control of the local territory. Furthermore, the visibility of a given sacred site can change; this may be conditioned by a changing social or political situation, or be due to individual initiative. The pilgrimage route described by Abrahamian et al. in this volume includes shrines that are highly salient for both 'folk' and institutional Armenian Christianity, as well as folk-ritual sites and home shrines that only recently became 'visible' to the official Church (which is now seeking to exercise control over them). Sites that are 'invisible' to the powers-that-be are nonetheless at risk of being settled, razed, excavated or sold to developers. The literature on indigenous land claims contains numerous examples from Oceania, the Americas and elsewhere. The traditional lands of the Circassian tribes appear to have been cleansed of their sacred sites as well as indigenous inhabitants after the Russian conquest of the Western Caucasus a century and a half ago (Kuznetsov, this volume).

In our chapter, we will present the preliminary results of what we hope will become a long-term investigation of Svan sacred sites, centred upon the issues of gender and visibility. Although (as will be shown below) the placement of sites used by both men and women appears to mirror the spatial layout of an Orthodox church and its adjoining properties, there is a marked contrast between the visibility of those sites where men perform the central ritual functions, and the near-invisibility of women's sites, many of which are known only to a small group of families. After a brief introduction to Svaneti and certain features of 'folk' Christianity as practised there, we will turn our attention to the spaces used for ritual performances, with a special focus on women's ritual sites. The chapter will conclude with some observations concerning the intersection of visibility and contestation with regard to the sacred places of Svaneti.

Svaneti and the Svans

Most of the research to be presented in this chapter was carried out in the Upper Svanetian commune of Lat'ali. Lat'ali comprises fourteen neighbourhoods or hamlets, with a total population of 1,496, according to the most recent government figures (making it the third largest commune in Svaneti). Many of those registered as residents of Lat'ali live part or all of the year elsewhere, in large cities such as Tbilisi or

even abroad. During the winter months, there appear to be only a few hundred people remaining in the commune.

Svaneti is known for the medieval defence towers still to be seen in the villages of the upper Inguri valley (that part of the province earlier known as 'free' or 'lordless' Svaneti); the profusion of small but lavishly decorated churches; and the distinctive Kartvelian language spoken by the indigenous population, the Svans. This ethnonym (Geo. *svan-*, Sv. *šwan-*, Ming. *šon-* < Proto-Kartv. **šwan-* (Klimov 1998: 179)) is old in Kartvelian, and in all likelihood designated the first known inhabitants of Svaneti, the oldest archaeological evidence of whom goes back to the Middle Bronze Age (Chartolani 1977). In view of the degree of its lexical and morphological divergence from its sister languages, the separation of Svan from the Kartvelian proto-language might have begun at this time.

Svaneti is mentioned as early as Strabo's *Geography*, from around the time of Christ, as a powerful tribe with a king, a council of 300 warriors and an army of 200,000 men. While some of Strabo's affirmations seem unlikely to have been accurate, there is ample evidence that Svaneti was linked to the state formations of Western Transcaucasia in antiquity, and of sufficient importance to have been fought over by Byzantium and Persia in the sixth century. Orthodox Christianity could have been introduced to Svaneti around this time; claims have been made of churches dating as far back as the fifth century on Svan territory (e.g. the ruins underlying the Mother of God church at Pxut'reri, Etseri commune (Xvist'ani 2013). The principal phase of church-building in Svaneti was during the Georgian High Middle Ages of the tenth to thirteenth centuries; over a hundred churches were erected in Upper Svaneti alone. During this period the province also became a major centre of fresco painting and icon production. The local aristocracy, the most prominent members of whom enjoyed high status at the Georgian royal court, sponsored the building and decoration of churches in each village, hamlet and neighbourhood of Upper Svaneti. Aristocratic patronage also accounts for the exceptional prominence of iconographic themes favoured by the military elite: frescoes and icons of St George spearing his enemies (emperors as well as dragons), and scenes from the knightly romance of Amirani (most notably on the outer walls of a church in Lenǰeri commune).

Svan 'Folk Christianity' and the Ritual Uses of Public and Private Space

Alongside the Georgian Orthodoxy practised in the churches that dominated public space in each Svan village, a parallel, non-institutional

set of beliefs and practices emerged, which we will designate as 'folk' Christianity or 'folk' religion. The extent to which Svan folk Christianity continues the local pre-Christian religion remains a matter of investigation and debate (Bardavelidze 1957; Charachidzé 1986, 1987; Tserediani 2005; Tuite 2006). The cults of St George and Michael the Archangel – military saints popular with the medieval aristocracy – found fertile soil in Svan folk religion, as did Mary the Mother of God and Saint Barbara. The principal type of ritual is the presentation of offerings to Xoša ɣerbet ('Great God') or other divinities, while petitioning for assistance, prosperity, health or some other favour. Offerings take the form of (1) sacrificed animals; (2) bread; (3) vodka or wine; (4) candles; and (5) money. There are also rituals directed towards the souls of the dead, for the swearing of oaths, and for other purposes, which will not concern us here.

Before proceeding further, we will explain what we mean by words such as 'divine' and 'sacred'. Rather than making any claims concerning the ontological status or special attributes of sacred beings and places, we ground our usage of these terms in particular types of observable practice. Svans perform special types of speech acts, often accompanied by prestations of food, drink and candles, which are directed at invisible addressees, who do not answer (at least not in the manner of ordinary interlocutors).[1] These invisible addressees can be grouped into three categories: the souls of deceased ancestors, who are commemorated on particular occasions throughout the year; demons and devils (mentioned in curses); and a third group of supernaturals, to whom Svans address prayers and offerings. The entities in this third group – invoked in prayers with the formulas *didäb äǰqäd* 'may glory come to you' or *didäbi leqed* 'to whom glory comes' – will be referred to as 'divinities' or 'divine patrons' (by this latter expression we denote those invisible addressees who are linked to a church, shrine or site). The prayers, offerings and associated acts will be designated as 'rituals'; and the spaces where ritual acts regularly occur will be referred to as 'sacred' sites.

Aside from Xoša ɣerbet and a few other figures, which are not linked to a specific shrine or church, most invisible addressees of prayers have composite designations, consisting in a saint's name and the name of a locality, such as 'Archangel of Nesk'əldäš' or 'Lam̄ria (Virgin Mary) of Samt'äiš'. In Lat'ali, as in Svaneti as a whole, the saints' names are drawn from a rather short list, so that a given village can have multiple sites bearing the name of St George, Mary or the Archangel. Furthermore, it should be noted that a designation of the type 'Archangel of Nesk'əldäš' can refer to either the divine patron or the site linked to that patron. In this chapter, we will not take a stance on the question of the individuality

of the various entities bearing the same saint's name, nor on the extent to which the powers attributed to them inhere in (i) the sacred site; (ii) some object at the site, such as an icon or cross; or (iii) a supernatural being attached to the site.

Folk-religious practices were likely to be limited to domestic and peripheral spaces within the Svan communes during the period when Orthodox clergymen staffed the local churches. With the decline of Georgian administrative and ecclesiastical control over the highland regions after the Timurid invasions of the early fifteenth century, and the imposition of Ottoman power in the Western Caucasus, the churches of Svaneti were appropriated as ritual sites by the local communities. With respect to Svan folk-Christian ritual practice, three components of church architecture and land use came to have special importance (see Figure 2.1):

(i) *t'ərbez*. The sanctuary – which, in keeping with Orthodox practice, is oriented towards the east – continues to be the focal ritual space, as least as far as men are concerned. The Svan name for it is t'ərbez (< Georgian *t'rap'ez-* < Greek *trapeza*).
(ii) *lamāria, ladbäš*. One distinctive feature of Svan ecclesiastical architecture is the inclusion of one or more rooms adjoining the church proper. One of the side wings attached to the church serves as a kind of kitchen, where, until recently, women baked the bread to be presented as offerings in the sanctuary on portable hearths (Chartolani 1961: 189, 228; Bardavelidze 1941: 15).[2] On the occasion of communal festivals featuring the sacrifice of a bull, a large cauldron might be set up in the side wing to boil its meat.[3] One designation of the food-preparation wing is ladbäš, but in Lat'ali it is commonly referred to as lamāria. This second term is formally ambiguous: it can denote (1) a shrine dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but also (2) a place for preparing something, from the verb *li-mār-e* 'prepare'. Both senses are relevant, to some extent: Mary is the patron of women, and the side wing is associated with women engaged in the gender-specific activity of bread-baking.
(iii). *lelt'abil*. Doubtless in continuity with the medieval Georgian institution of ecclesiastical ownership of land, several churches in Svaneti have land plots associated with them, on which grain for ritual use was grown. Flour made from this grain was used to make the bread that was offered on feast days. The commune of Mest'ia, for example, had parcels of land classified as lelt'abil (based on the root *t'abəl*, one of the Svan names for bread offerings), on which such grain was produced until recently (Shanidze, Kaldani and Ch'umburidze 1978: 11–14; Pircxelani 2000). According to research carried out by the

botanist Tamar Girgvliani, several distinctive subvarieties of wheat have evolved in the vicinity of major shrines in Upper Svaneti, such as the monastery of St Ivlita and St Kvirike in K'ala, the Kashveti church in Lenǰeri, and Məxēr outside of Lat'ali (Girgvliani 2010: 62–73). This is evidence of centuries of selection of high-quality grain at these sites for baking offering-bread, possibly continuing a practice initiated by the Orthodox church for the production of communion bread.

One remarkable feature of Svan folk religion is the extent to which the basic spatial layout of the Orthodox Church and its land holdings is paralleled in the domestic realm (see Figure 2.2). Corresponding to each of the three spatial domains listed above is a segment of the house and its associated property, which serves as a comparable function in the practice of family rituals. That is, the home has its (i) 'sanctuary' – designated by the same word, t'ərbez –; (ii) food-preparation area; and (iii) consecrated land owned by the family. By pointing out this parallelism, we do not intend to imply that the church served as a matrix for the division of domestic space rather than the other way around. The tripartite division of ritual space may well have resulted from convergence: the domestic 'sanctuary' acquiring features of the one in the church (e.g. the east-facing window), while the lam̄ria adjoining the church took on characteristics of a domestic kitchen.

In the following section, we will describe the distribution of ritual space according to gender. Women's ritual sites were not at the centre of our interests when we began fieldwork in the Lat'ali commune, but it soon became evident to what extent sacred geography in this community was women's geography. The sites they use, far less visible to outsiders than the medieval churches and public places where male practitioners preside, have yet to be studied or mapped out in detail.

Whereas the space within which the male 'priest' or head of household operates is in most circumstances circumscribed by the 'sanctuary' (t'ərbez) of the church or home, women's ritual spaces are more varied; indeed, it could almost be said that any space that is not a t'ərbez is in principle available for women's ritual use. We will discuss

Table 2.1 Ritual spaces in the church and domestic realm

	Church/Shrine	*Domestic realm*
sanctuary (t'ərbez)	church sanctuary	east window (*lämzər laqwra*) in home
bread-baking area	lam̄ria/ladbäš in side wing of church	hearth and other spaces in the home
field	church-owned land	private consecrated land plots (*lalcxät', laguz*)

male-dominated sites in the churches and private homes only briefly. Nor will we have much to say about women's rituals at the hearth or elsewhere in the home; many of these have already been described in the ethnographic literature (Bardavelidze 1939, 1941; Chartolani 1961; Tserediani 2005).

Men's Ritual Space: T'ərbez

Festivals in Svaneti are celebrated by groups of various dimensions. A small number of annual festivals are for the entire commune, and feature the sacrifice of a bull whose meat is shared out to the resident households. Others are limited to a particular lineage, or to the families living in one of the neighbourhoods or hamlets within a commune. Yet others are celebrated by small groups of neighbours (*lask'är*; Bardavelidze 1939: 38–39; Tserediani 2005: 406–7) or even single households. These latter tend to be private affairs, from which outsiders are excluded. But in another sense, all of the above-mentioned festival types, from the largest to the smallest, can be considered 'public', in that the presiding man or men present offerings on behalf of a constituency (commune, lineage, lask'är, household), who are in attendance. There are two types of places in which men officiate at 'public' rituals, which share the designation of 'sanctuary' (t'ərbez).

The Church Sanctuary

As ordained Orthodox clergymen vanished from Svan parishes, they were replaced by village and communal 'priests' (*bap'är* < *p'ap'-*), these being senior men with orally transmitted ritual knowledge loosely based on Orthodox practice. During the initial phase of a typical Svan festival, the local bap'är, in groups of three (or multiples of three), present offerings of bread, alcohol and sacrificed animals brought by members of the community within the church sanctuary. If a communal bull has been sacrificed, its *q'wiže* (liver and heart) is roasted on a spit and offered in the sanctuary. After all of the offerings have been presented, choral hymns and round dances are performed, and then the participants partake in a banquet.

The Eastern Window within the Home

Among the features of Orthodox ritual that were appropriated by non-institutional practitioners was the spatial opposition between the sanctuary (t'ərbez), where male priests present offerings before the eastern window; and the female-linked preparation space in the side wing. The space in the home between the central hearth and the right-side window on the east wall (*lämzər laqwra* 'offering/prayer window') serves as a domestic sanctuary, where offerings are presented on behalf of the household by the senior man *(maxwši)*. This area in the home is denoted by the same term as the church sanctuary, t'ərbez (Bardavelidze 1957: 215). Aside from private ceremonies for family members only (on New Year's Eve, for example (Bardavelidze 1939)), the home can also be the venue for festivals celebrated by lask'är groups of neighbouring families. On these occasions, teams of bap'är present the offerings before the eastern window (for example, at the Liqduši festival in Lat'ali, in February 2006).

Women in the 'Kitchen' as Bread-Bakers and Ritual Celebrants: The *Lidbäš* Rituals

Within the Svan home, the space traditionally reserved for women was centred at the hearth, where cooking and baking take place, and included the food-storage areas. Among the tasks relegated to women in Svaneti, as elsewhere in the Caucasus, is the making of bread. The role of chief bread-baker *(merbiēl)* is held by the senior woman of the household. In addition to making bread for family meals, she prepares special types of bread called lemzir, to be offered in churches and other sacred sites (Tserediani 2005). Bread as an offering to supernatural beings echoes the Orthodox Eucharist, but in all likelihood continues a practice that predates Christianity. Throughout Georgia, bread is a canonical offering at folk-religious ceremonies, along with sacrificed animals, alcoholic beverages and beeswax candles. Svaneti, however, stands out from the rest of Georgia both with respect to the elaborate variety of lemzir breads, and the ritual functions assumed by the merbiēl. She is in many respects the female counterpart of the maxwši, as the senior member of her gender within the household, and as ritual specialist.

Based on our fieldwork of the past three years, and earlier investigations carried out by Tserediani and Bardavelidze, the sites where women preside at rituals, usually to the exclusion of men, are of three kinds. The

collective term sometimes used for these rituals is lidbäš, a participle formed from the same root as ladbäš, mentioned previously as one of the names of the food-preparation wing of a Svan church. [4] The Svan language even has a special verb *idbäši*, based on the same root as ladbäš, which denotes the baking and offering of bread by women (Shanidze, Kaldani and Ch'umburidze 1978: 23, 38, 137, 143; Oniani, Kaldani and Oniani 1979: 108, 286). Women might also offer vodka and candles, but do not sacrifice animals (that being an exclusively male prerogative).

Home and Hearth Rituals

The woman-led ceremonies that have drawn the most attention from ethnographers take place at the hearth, or sometimes at other places inside the house (Chartolani 1977). These are directed at female-gendered divinities, such as Barbal (St Barbara) or Lam̄ria (Mary), or a domestic spirit known in some localities as mezir. These rituals, especially those invoking the mezir, are strictly off limits to men (Nizharadze 1962: 75; Chartolani 1961: 172–87). A text recorded in Lenǰeri describes a ritual performed at the laying of the foundation for a new house, at which women bake bread offerings for 'the God of the Underworld' *(čube buāsdä ɣērbat)*, who is asked to assure the good fortune of the household (Shanidze, Kaldani and Ch'umburidze 1978: 108–13).

The Side Wing (lam̄ria, ladbäš) of Churches

At particular times of the year, such as the week between Christmas and the New Year *(yärunensga)*, and the period following the Sunday after Easter called Uplišiēr, the senior women *(xoša zural̄r)* of Lat'ali make the rounds of the principal churches, bearing offerings of lemzir breads, candles and home-made vodka. Each of the seven principal divine patrons of the commune has a particular day for receiving offerings: *Tār̄ingzel* (the Archangel) on Monday; *Macxwär* (the Savior) on Tuesday; *Yän* (Jonah) on Wednesday; *Lam̄ria* (the Virgin Mary) on Thursday; *Məxēr* (the Evangelist) on Friday; *Jgər̄g* (George) on Saturday. Sunday is dedicated to Xoša ɣerbet (Great God), who has no shrine bearing his name; offerings for him are presented either at home or at the Church of the Savior.

Usually women who married into the same clan or phratry *(samxub)* go together. They do not enter the church interior – which was until recently off limits to women (the reopening of churches for Orthodox

services has put an end to that interdiction, at least during Mass) – but rather present their offerings in front of the eastern window of the lamāria, using gestures and formulas similar to those employed by male priests (bap'är). Older (i.e. postmenstrual) women stand while praying, whereas some younger women kneel. Should men happen to be near the church they may look on; and should there be fewer than three women praying, one or two men might assist in the presentation of offerings. In April 2015, on the occasion of a visit by women married into the Girgvliani clan to the Jonah Church, the policeman guarding the site was recruited to help present offerings in the side wing of the church. Afterwards, the women spread out a picnic in the churchyard, and held a woman-only banquet, with one of their number playing the role of *tamada* (toastmaster).

The divine patrons of certain sacred sites are believed to grant particular types of favours, or heal particular ailments. The Archangel (Tāringzel), whose medieval church stands atop a hill in central Lat'ali, is petitioned by women for relief from pain in the side of the body:

> *didäb äǰqäd i mäld äǰqäd nesk'äldäši tāringzels! isgu mepšde lesgä mäzig ankābin, mädliän, mädilš gweši. ǰemzird i ǰeqərāld let'roš, lemzirš i ənǰār nāq'r ali limzir didābi leqed!*
>
> (Glory come to you and grace come to you, Archangel of Nesk'äldäš! (site of the church). The flank/side pain released by you keep away from us, gracious, grace-filled one! We pray to you and we implore you with candles, with offering-bread; bless our prayer, (you to whom) glory comes!)[5] (text transcribed by N. Tserediani)

Women in the Field: Rituals at Outdoor Sites

Lidbäš rituals are also performed by women at particular sites on the edges of the community. Unlike the Orthodox churches where men preside, these places are not easily identified by outsiders. Some outdoor sites are marked by the ruins of a building (church or a tower); whereas others are only indicated by a natural object, such as a tree or bush, adorned with beads left by pilgrims. An otherwise unremarkable bush at the site Lemkəldäši Tāringzel on the outskirts of Laxušdi, for example, is visited by women seeking healing from ear-related ailments. According to Pircxelani (1999), the land surrounding the bush is believed to have once belonged to a church dedicated to the Archangel, of which there is no longer any visible trace.

Certain sites specializing in the prevention or healing of specific ailments are visited by women during Uplišiēr. Those where offerings are made for the health and productivity of dairy cattle are visited during the festival of Həliš in June. (As noted above, the day on which the site is visited is determined by its patron deity: sacred sites dedicated to the Archangel receive offerings on Monday, those dedicated to Mary on Thursday, and so forth). One of us made video recordings of offering presentations at two such sites: the tree marking the site known as Samt'äiši Lam̄ria (during Həliš, 7 June 2015; Illustration 2.1); and the ruined tower Xat'ən-cxovel (during Uplišiēr, 27 April 2015). Here is one of the prayers recited by a woman offering bread and vodka at Xat'ən-cxovel, which is reputed to protect against joint pain and injuries:

> *didäb äǰqäd mäld äǰqäd xat'ən-cxovels! xwäy c'q'əliän didäb i mäld äǰqäd. isgu mepšde aswä mäzig i mak'wša, numagweš lintəle nišgwey korä merde m̄ra.*
>
> (Glory and grace come to you, Xat'ən-cxovel! Very holy glory and grace come to you. The limb pain and breaking released by you, let none of it touch the men in our household.)

In the following table (2.2) are listed some of the outdoor sites in Lat'ali where women perform lidbäš rituals, along with the purposes for whwich the sites are visited:

Lidbäš Rituals on Dedicated Land Plots *(lalcxät')*

Although invisible to the untrained eye, scattered among the cultivated fields of each Upper Svan neighbourhood are small plots of unused land designated as *lalcxät'* or *ləcxät'*. According to the Lat'ali-based ethnographer D. Pircxelani (1999), there are two categories of lalcxät' land: (1) privately owned plots, and (2) land that earlier (according to local tradition) belonged to a church, even if the church in question is no longer visible (the site Lemkəldäši T̄aringzel, mentioned above, is of this kind). Privately owned lalcxät' plots are usually quite small, typically three to five meters wide and about ten meters long, situated on the edge of cultivated fields. These are dedicated by their owners to a particular divinity whom they hope will heal a seriously ill family member. Thenceforth the lalcxät' plots are left clean and untouched, to be neither sown nor ploughed. (According to one source, the land parcel is offered to Mary if a female falls ill; to St George in the case of a male family member;

Table 2.2 Outdoor sites in Lat'ali where women perform lidbäš

Name	*Type of site*	*Group*	*Purpose*	*Date*
Aləngweri Tā̄ringzel	large rock	all Lat'ali women	health of dairy cows	Uplišiēr Monday; Həliš
Samt'äiši Lamā̄ria	beech tree	K'wanč'ianar neighbourhood	milk and cheese production	Həliš
Hā̄rt'i Tā̄ringzel	two small towers (near hamlet Ipx)	all Lat'ali	safety of livestock and owners; from bad weather	
Lemkəldäši Tā̄ringzel	bush	Laxušdi village	earache	Uplišiēr
Lemta Lamā̄ria	church ruins	Kemezša phatry (Ivečiani)	menstrual pain; bone pain	
Bāla ǰgərā̄g	ruins (church?)	Gwičiani clan	successful hay-mowing	Axanaxa (start of haying)
Zägri Tā̄ringzel	church foundation (ruins)	Girgwliani clan (Macxwariši)	fortune and force of shrine	Uplišiēr Monday

or to the Archangel for certain illnesses.) A survey of only two neighbourhoods in central Latʼali revealed no fewer than two dozen lalcxätʼ plots. In one case, a woman who had moved to Latʼali from another part of Svaneti set aside a lalcxätʼ behind her new home to replace one left behind in her previous village. According to informants, women once performed lidbäš rituals on these land parcels, usually during Uplišiēr, baking offering-breads on the spot and praying for family health.

The Visibility of Women's Ritual Sites

The residents of Latʼali are aware of the exceptionally large number of sacred sites on the territory of their commune. In 1931, Bardavelidze recorded the names of fifty-eight 'churches, church ruins and holy places' (Tserediani 2005: 248–49). According to Pircxelani (1996), about 200 such sites are said to have once existed, of which informants can recall fifty-nine (fourteen of them still functioning). Tserediani (2005: 250–51) added twenty-one names to Bardavelidze's 1931 list, bringing the total to seventy-nine. Informants cannot specify the locations of many of the sites, or have only a vague idea of where they once stood. At the midwinter festival Liqduši, held in the Macxwariš neighbourhood, the male celebrants commemorate no fewer than 116 divinities and their associated shrines, of which about half are situated in Latʼali (Tserediani 2005: 165–66). When we attended this festival in 2006, the head of the household hosting the event held a typed list of the 116 sacred sites in his hand, and called out the names to the men presenting the offerings. The Liqduši list and Tserediani's 2005 inventory include the names of the women's lidbäš ritual sites mentioned at the beginning of this section. Several of these names, however, are not on Bardavelidze's 1931 list. As for the lalcxätʼ land plots discussed above, these appear to be known only to families from the neighbourhood where they are situated. Other residents might be aware of their existence, but not necessarily of their precise location.

The Outdoor Kitchen: Lidbäš Bread-Baking on Portable Hearths

One of the distinctive components of the lidbäš rituals at the venues described in the preceding paragraphs – the side wing of the church, outdoor sacred sites and lalcxätʼ plots – was the baking of offering-breads (lemzir) on the site, using simple stone hearths (*kʼasgwila, kʼalakʼwin*;

Table 2.3 Gender-linked trajectories and their associations with ritual space in Svaneti and Pxovi (Xevsureti)

	INTERIOR		EXTERIOR	
	Private, ♀	Public, ♂	Public, ♂	Private, ♀
Prototype	in-marrying ♀ in domestic interior	♂-dominated public space in home/ community	♂-dominated public space outside community	exogamy: marriage with ♀ from unrelated clan
Svaneti	HOME		COMMUNE	
Ritual space	♀ rituals at hearth	♂ rituals at east window of home	♂ rituals at public site (church t'ərbez, communal ritual)	♀ rituals at lalcxät' plots and other outdoor sites
Xevsureti	HOME/COMMUNE		OUTSIDE THE COMMUNITY	
Ritual space	——	♂ at communal *xat'i* (shrine)	♂ at satellite shrines (Tusheti, Ingushetia)	——
Myth	Samdzimari cohabiting with oracle			Samdzimari of underworld origin

Chartolani 1961: illustration XVI). According to informants, this was the case until the 1960s. Until that time, the Svans grew their own cereal crops for bread-making, including varieties of wheat indigenous to the Caucasus (Girgvliani 2010, 2014). The preparation of flour was a labour-intensive process – harvesting, threshing, grinding the grains in local watermills – and perpetually at risk of poor harvests, hail, early frost, etc. About half a century ago, sacks of flour, ground from wheat produced elsewhere in the USSR, began to appear in stores. No longer needing to produce their own wheat, the Svans began growing corn, potatoes and other crops instead.

Among the practices that disappeared with the change of crops was the use of flour from special wheat *(gwiz)* for making offering-breads. In most parts of Svaneti, the highest-quality grains were set aside from the harvest, and used to produce gwiz flour. In the adjoining communes of Lat'ali and Lenǰeri, however, wheat for gwiz was grown in special plots, called laguz (Pircxelani 2000). Lat'ali residents interviewed by us still recall the location of laguz plots in their neighbourhoods, even though these are now planted with potatoes and other crops. The special nature of gwiz wheat was also manifest in the exceptional treatment accorded to the flour and the lemzir bread made from it, which at particular times of the year was not to be eaten or even seen *(uc'ēna)* by anyone who was not a member of the household.

The Trajectories of Real and Imaginary Women

The distinctive aspects of Svan folk Christianity, and women's functions within it, appear with especial clarity when contrasted with the traditional belief system and practices of the north-east Georgian highland communities. Unlike Svaneti, which was closely integrated into the sociopolitical regime of lowland Georgian feudalism, and an active centre of the production of Georgian Orthodox art and architecture, the north-east Georgian provinces of Pshavi and Xevsureti – known collectively as 'Pxovi' in medieval documents – remained largely outside the zone of feudal control and Orthodox church-building. At some point several centuries ago, however, the structural principles and symbolic elements of Georgian Orthodoxy and feudalism served as the framework for a thoroughgoing restructuration of the inherited belief system, a process we have elsewhere described as the 'Pxovian Reformation' (Tuite 2004). By the choice of term we underscore the role of certain members of premodern Pxovian society in the formulation of what Tsarist and Soviet-era ethnographers described as Pshav-Xevsur 'paganism'. Rather

than being the result of a passive overlayering of Christian elements on an inherited religious system (Bardavelidze, Charachidzé), or, conversely, the partial reversion to paganism of once-Christian highland communities (Kiknadze 1996; Tuite 1996), the restructuration was so systematic, internally consistent and finely organized that, in our view, its emergence can be attributed, at least in part, to the active participation of an elite group of religious specialists – the predecessors of the shrine priests and oracles of recent times.

Among the key innovations of the Pxovian Reformation are (1) the reconceptualization of the relations between the human and divine worlds in accordance with feudal principles of hierarchy, dependence and land tenure (Bardavelidze 1960, 1974; Charachidzé 1968; Tuite 2002, 2004); and the (2) professionalization and masculinization of the functions of establishing contact with the supernatural realm through the presentation of offerings and spiritual possession. In Pxovi, the role of sacrificer came to be the exclusive privilege of shrine priests (called *qevisberi* or *xucesi*) selected from specific lineages in each community. The function of a divine spokesperson was appropriated by authorized oracles known as kadagi (Ochiauri 1954; Charachidzé 1968: 113–33), whereas occurrences of spiritual possession in women were ascribed to demons (Charachidzé 1968: 167).

The progressive monopolization of religious functions by authorized priests and oracles was accompanied by the centring of ceremonial life around the shrine complexes of each community, to the detriment of rituals in domestic and peripheral spaces. But even as the involvement of human women in the religious sphere was severely circumscribed and marginalized, at the level of myth a powerful supernatural female was attributed a crucial mediating role between the divine and human domains. This is Samdzimari, celebrated in Xevsurian ballads and legends as a woman from the subterranean realm of the Kajis, a race of demonic artisans with magical powers and incredible wealth (Charachidzé 1968; Kiknadze 1996; Tuite 2004, 2006). These texts relate how St George led the other divine patrons (known collectively as 'children of God' *(xtišvilni)*) on a raid to the kingdom of the Kajis, bringing back gold and copper artefacts, and also Samdzimari and her sisters, whom he installed at his shrine at Xaxmat'i, one of the principal sacred sites of Xevsureti. Elevated to divine rank, she appears as the supernatural consort of legendary oracles known as *mk'adre* ('those who dare', i.e. dare approach the deities), enabling them to have privileged access to the divine realm, and to accompany St George and the other 'children of God' on visits to holy sites beyond the borders of Xevsureti: in Tusheti to the east, and Chechen and Ingush territory to the north. The myths of Samdzimari

and her companions license, one could say, the expansion of the sphere of influence of the major Xevsurian shrines to adjacent territories. Until Soviet times, Xevsur priests annually visited satellite shrines in Tusheti (which bore the names of the main shrines in Xevsureti); and Xevsurs and Chechens jointly officiated at the sanctuary of Anat'oris-Jvari, a short distance from the present-day Georgian-Russian border.

It is a curious paradox that the supernatural female Samdzimari fostered the forging of cross-border networks in the east-central Caucasus, whereas the actual movements of female ritual specialists in Svaneti remain circumscribed by the frontiers of the commune. On the mythic plane, Samdzimari contributed to network-building by acting through male beings: divinities and human oracles, whose circulation and contact she enabled.[6] Human women, in the exogamic societies of the Southern and Western Caucasus, likewise foster network-building through the agency of men – most notably through the institution of marriage, which forges alliances between otherwise unaffiliated lineages. The woman herself, however, remains in the private domain, being transferred from the household of her father to that of her father-in-law. Women acting alone, performing rituals within the home or at the outer fringes of the community, likewise remain within the private domain. These events are marked by the exclusion of outsiders, and, sometimes, men.

The associations among gender, space and ritual function are summarized in Table 2.3. The trajectories of the two sexes in traditional Georgian culture are grounded in two principles: (1) exogamy (women circulating between unrelated clans and domestic interior); (2) male domination of public space both locally and outside the community. Among the Svans, both female and male trajectories are represented in ritual space, but the limits of women's circulation between private interior and exterior ritual sites is contained within the frontiers of the commune. In Pxovi, women's ritual roles have been erased or appropriated by male specialists, but female circulation between the extremes of private interior and remote exterior space has been projected onto the supernatural figure of Samdzimari.

Hidden in Plain View

Ironically, it is the privacy of women's lidbäš rituals that may contribute to their survival, even as male ritual practitioners find themselves obliged to share their sacred places with tourists, pilgrims and Orthodox clergymen. Until quite recently, Svan church festivals were

local affairs. In 1991, a Svan from Mest'ia expressed to one of us her reluctance to attend the midsummer feast day of the celebrated medieval church of St Ivlita and St Kvirike (Lägurk'a), in the commune of K'ala. The festival is for the people of K'ala, she explained, and it would be inappropriate for an outsider to attend. Since the re-establishment of Georgian independence that same year, and even more so as a consequence of the development of tourist-related attractions and infrastructure during the Saakashvili administration, the influx of outsiders into Svaneti has increased dramatically. In the summer of 2015, the Lägurk'a festival drew visitors and pilgrims by the hundreds; and even the Ličān̄iši ceremony, held a few days later at a site an hour's hike from the remote village Hädīš (Adishi), attracted backpacking tourists from Western Europe, Russia and Israel. Another change during the same period that has considerably impacted the sacred landscape of Svaneti is the resurgence of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Accorded special recognition in the Georgian Constitution, the Orthodox Church has retaken control over church buildings that were inactive during the Soviet years, reopened them for regular liturgical services, and installed clergymen in many villages. At sites such as Lägurk'a, the local ritual practitioners – who in 1991 exercised unquestioned control over the proceedings – found themselves twenty-four-years later quite literally shoved aside by swarms of tourists, while Orthodox priests celebrated Mass inside the church. At some localities, the reassertion of dominion over Svan churches by institutional Orthodoxy has led to conflicts with local men. The midwinter torch festival (Limp'äri) in the provincial capital of Mest'ia, on the other hand, has in the past couple of years been transformed into a spectacle for tourists, with bonfires and folk dancers.[7] In terms of the parameter of visibility, the sacred sites of Lat'ali can be ranked as follows:

As noted in Table 2.4, the most visible sites (those of rank 1 and 2) are drawing the interest of the Church and outsiders. But whereas Svan men face a rapidly changing situation at increasingly 'public' sacred sites, the ritual practices and spaces of their female counterparts

Table 2.4 The sacred sites of Lat'ali ranked by visibility

Rank	
1	Visible to all: the half-dozen or so principal churches of Lat'ali
2	Visible to the local population (both sexes): churches, ruins and other sites where male ritual practitioners ('priests') preside
3	Visible to local women, and known to the men (at least by name): women's outdoor lidbäš sites (such as Samt'äiši Lamāria)
4	Visible only to residents of a neighborhood: lalcxät' land plots

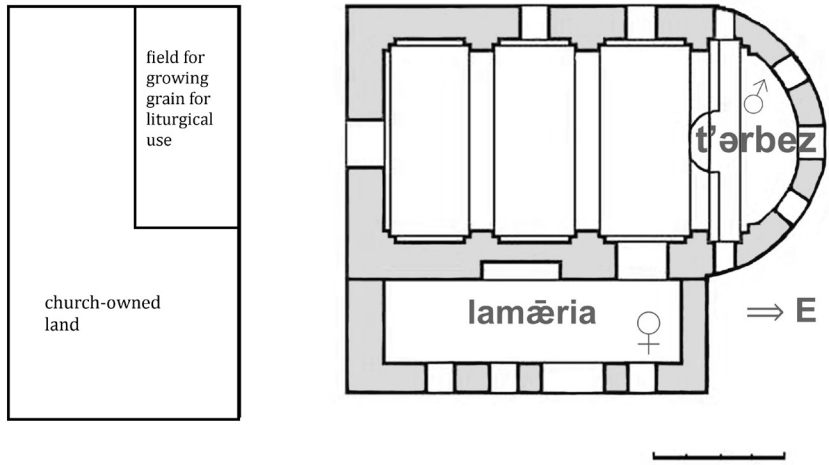

Figure 2.1 Church building in Svaneti and associated land

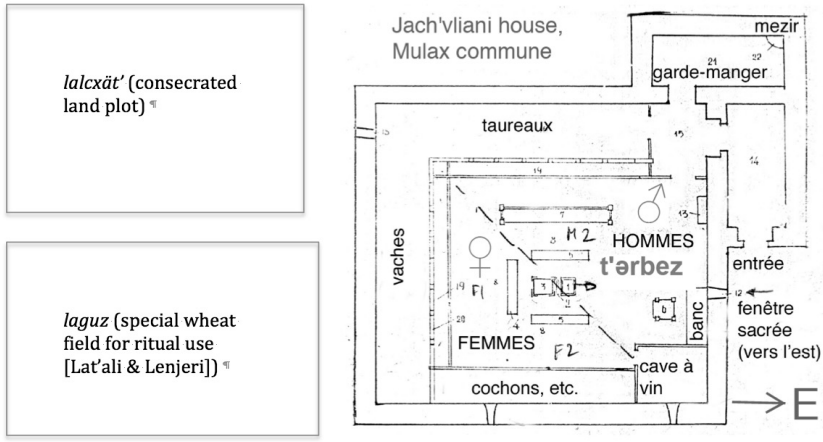

Figure 2.2 Traditional Svan home and consecrated land plots (based on Chartolani 1961: 13)

seem to be almost unaffected by the recent changes sweeping through the region. It is an indication, we believe, that visible and contested sacred places may share the landscape with networks of sites that are, one could say, hidden in plain view, and, at least for the time being, off the radar screens of the Church, the authorities, and the tourism industry.[8]

Illustration 2.1 Lat'ali women presenting offerings at Samt'äiši Lam̄ria (festival of Həliš, 7 June 2015). Photograph by N. Tserediani

Acknowledgements

The fieldwork reported on in this chapter was supported by the Volkswagen Foundation (2012–2015) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (2006). The authors express their heartfelt thanks to the people of Lat'ali and the other Svan communes we visited, for their generosity, hospitality and willingness to answer our questions. Special thanks go to Medea Saghliani, Leri and Levan Tserediani, Bagrat Nansqani, Madona Chamgeliani and Miron Pircxelani.

Nino Tserediani is an ethnologist specializing in the traditional religious practices of Svaneti, the region of Georgia where she was born and presently lives. She is the author of the two-volume monograph *Yearly Calendar of Svan folk Holidays (Svanur xalxur dɣeobata sac'elic'ado k'alendari)*, which was based on her PhD research.

Kevin Tuite is Professor of Anthropology at the Université de Montréal. He also held the chair of Caucasus Studies at the Friedrich Schiller University of Jena from 2010 to 2014. Since 1985 he has conducted ethnological and linguistic fieldwork in Georgia, with focus on the highland provinces of Svaneti, Pshavi and Khevsureti. His publications include the *Anthology of Georgian Folk Poetry* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994); *Kartvelian Morphosyntax* (LINCOM, 1998), and *Language, Culture and Society: Key Topics in Linguistic Anthropology* (Cambridge University Press 2006, co-edited with Christine Jourdan).

Paata Bukhrashvili is Professor of Anthropology at Ilia State University, specializing in the ethnology and archaeology of the Caucasus, and also director of the university's Laboratory of Visual Anthropology and Local History. He received his PhD from Tbilisi State University in 1989. He is the author of the monographs *The Habitation in the Life and Culture of the Ancient Georgian (Sacxovrisi kartveli eris q'opasa da k'ult'uraši dzvelad)*, and *St George, the Glorious Knight (C'minda giorgi, didebis mxedari)*.

Notes

1. Furthermore, the speech acts directed at these invisible addressees share certain textual attributes (that is, they represent a distinctive discursive genre), and are accompanied by stereotyped gestures.
2. This probably continues the practice, still observed in many Orthodox communities today, of local laywomen baking communion bread *(prosphora)* for use in the divine liturgy.
3. We observed this practice at the midwinter festival of the Tanɣi Taringzel church, overlooking the Lat'ali hamlet of Laxušdi, Feb. 2006.
4. The origin of the root *-dbäš-* is unclear. Madona Chamgeliani (pers. comm.) derives it from the genitive-case form of *dideba* (glory). Lidbäš would thus have meant 'making that (offerings) with which glory is given' (see also Nizharadze 1962: 75). A phonetically more straightforward source would be *dabäš* 'of the field', although the semantics require explanation (perhaps referring to the peripheral locations of lidbäš rituals). Interestingly, the word ladbäš also appears as an equivalent of 'altar' or 'sanctuary' in an unpublished Svan translation of the New Testament (e.g. Matthew 23: 18–20; Hebrews 9: 25).
5. In this and the prayer quoted in the following section, the divinities are asked to provide relief from illnesses that they themselves released (mepšde). The power to both cause and prevent specific types of misfortune – or, more

generally, the capacity to use supernatural power to effect either harm or good – is an attribute of divine beings in the folk-religious systems observed in other regions of the Caucasus as well (Tuite 2004).

6. In the view of Bardavelidze (1940), the ancient Svans had their own narratives of travelling supernatural females. Ritual songs in honour of St Barbara (Barbal) describe her voyaging from one church or sacred site to another, covering almost the entire length of Upper Svaneti, from Chubeqevi to Ushguli. Many of the localities said to have been visited by Barbal also figure in the Svan ballad 'Mirangula' (Tuite 1994: 138), as contributors to a funerary banquet in Ushguli. The association of a mobile St Barbara with the sociopolitical unity of Svaneti is an intriguing one, which deserves to be looked into anew.
7. See, for example, the tourist-oriented blog http://georgiaabout.com/2013/10/05/lamproba-celebration/.
8. The very invisibility of women's sacred sites might, on the other hand, leave them vulnerable to contestation of a very different kind. Some of the land on which new tourism-oriented installations in the Mestia area were recently built was appropriated from local residents in a manner that, in their view, violated traditional concepts of land ownership (Patsuria 2011; Protection of Property Rights in New Touristic Zones of Georgia 2011; Transparency International Georgia 2011). We can only hope that increased transparency and improvements in the procedures for registering land ownership will permit local owners to protect their holdings – with their sacred sites – from those who see nothing on these land plots but open space for a hotel or a ski run.

References

Bardavelidze, V. 1939. *Svanur xalxur dɣeobata k'alendari 1: axalc'lis cik'li* [*Calendar of Svan Folk Holidays I: New Year's Cycle*]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

_____. 1940. 'Svanuri sagalobeli "Barbal Dolaši"' ['The Svan Hymn "Barbal Dolaši"'], *ENIMKI-s Moambe* V–VI: 540–73.

_____. 1941. *Kartvelta udzvelesi sarc'munoebis ist'oriidan: ɣvtaeba barbar-babar* [*From the History of the Most Ancient Beliefs of the Kartvelians: The Deity Barbar-Babar*]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

_____. 1957. *Drevnejšie religioznye verovanija i obrjadovoe grafičeskoe iskusstvo gruzinskix plemen.* Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

_____. 1960. 'Rapports sociaux des montagnards de la Géorgie orientale au début de l'époque esclavagiste d'après des survivances ethnographiques', *Communications de la délégation soviétique au VIe Congrès international des sciences anthropologiques et ethnologiques* 1–16.

_____. 1974. *Aɣmosavlet sakartvelos mtianetis t'radiciuli sazogadoebriv-sak'ult'o dzeglebi* [*Traditional Cultic Monuments of the East Georgian Mountain Districts*]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

Charachidzé, G. 1968. *Le système religieux de la Géorgie païenne: analyse structurale d'une civilisation.* Paris: Maspéro.

_____. 1986. *Prométhée ou le Caucase.* Paris: Flammarion

_____. 1987. *La mémoire indo-européenne du Caucase.* Paris: Hachette.

Chartolani, M. 1961. *kartveli xalxis mat'erialuri k'ult'uris ist'oriidan* [*From the History of the Material Culture of the Georgian People (The Hearth in the Svanetian Home)*]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

_____. 1977. 'čxudani – svanuri saxlis k'erp'I' ['Chxudani: An Idol in the Svanetian Home'], in M. Chartolani (ed.), *Svaneti 1: masalebi mat'erialuri da sulieri k'ult'uris šesc'avlisatvis*. Tbilisi: Mecniereba, pp. 122–48.

Chartolani, Sh. 1977. *Svanetis brinjaos xanis arkeologiuri dzeglebi, 1. k'at'alogi* [*Bronze Age Archaeological Artefacts from Svaneti, 1. Catalogue*]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

Girgvliani, T. 2010. *Zemo svanetis xorblis aborigenuli pormebis ist'oria* [*The History of the Aboriginal Wheat Varieties of Upper Svaneti*]. Tbilisi: Artanuji.

_____. 2014. *Zemo svanetis marcvlovani da samarcvle p'ark'osanta k'ult'urebis mravalperovneba* [*The Diversity of Cereals and Legumes in Upper Svaneti*]. Tbilisi: Intelekti.

Grant, B. 2011. 'Shrines and Sovereigns: Life, Death, and Religion in Rural Azerbaijan', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 53(3): 654–81.

Kiknadze, Z. 1996. *Kartuli mitologia, 1. jvari da saq'mo.* Kutaisi: Gelatis mecnierebata ak'ademia.

Klimov, G. 1998. *Etymological Dictionary of the Kartvelian Languages.* Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

Nizharadze, B. 1962, 1964. *Ist'oriuli-etnografiuli c'erilebi* [*Historical and Ethnographic Essays – in Two Volumes*]. Tbilisi: Tbilisi State University Press.

Ochiauri, T. 1954. *Kartvelta udzvelesi sarc'munoebis ist'oriidan* [*From the History of the Ancient Religion of the Georgians*]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

Oniani, A., M. Kaldani and Al. Oniani (eds). 1979. *svanuri p'rozauli t'ekst'ebi 4: lašxuri k'ilo* [*Svan Prose Texts 4: Lashx Dialect*]. Tbilisi: Mecniereba.

Patsuria, N. 2011. 'Land Expropriation is Rampant in Svaneti', *Georgian Journal*, 28 July 2011. Retrieved 16 April 2016 from http://www.georgianjournal.ge/index.php?option=com_content&view=article &id=5712%253Aland-expropriation-is-rampant-in-svaneti &catid=4%253Aeconomy&Itemid=6.

Pircxelani, D. 1996. 'lat'ali: zogadi lingvist'ur-etnograpiuli mimoxilva' ['Lat'ali: General Linguistic and Ethnographic Overview'], *Kutaisuri saubrebi* III: 137–38.

_____. 1999. 'lalcxat': religiuri da xalxuri asp'ekt'ebi' ['Lalcxat: Religious and Folk Aspects'], *Kartveluri memk'vidreoba* III: 164–68.

_____. 2000. 'lagwiz dabär' ['Ritual Grain Fields'], *Kartveluri memk'vidreoba* IV: 319–24.

Protection of Property Rights in New Touristic Zones of Georgia. 2011. 'Problems Related to the Protection of Property Rights: The Case of Mestia'

[report prepared by NGOs 'Green Alternative', 'Georgian Young Lawyers' Association', 'Transparency International Georgia', 'Georgian Regional Media Association']. Retrieved 4 August 2017 from https://www.osgf.ge/files/publications/2011/Report_Mestia_ENG_July_2011_.pdf.

Shanidze, A., M. Kaldani and Z. Ch'umburidze (eds). 1978. *Svanuri enis krest'omatia* [*A Chrestomathy of the Svan Language*]. Tbilisi: Tbilisi University Press.

Transparency International Georgia. 2011. 'Property in Mestia, Selective Recognition of Traditional Property', *Transparency International Georgia*, 16 August 2011. Retrieved 4 August 2017 from http://www.transparency.ge/en/blog/property-mestia-selective-recognition-traditional-property.

Tserediani, N. 2005. *svanur xalxur dyeobata sac'elic'ado k'alendari* [*Yearly Calendar of Svan Folk Holidays*], *Amirani*, vol XI. Tbilisi and Montréal: Amirani.

Tuite, K. 1994. *An Anthology of Georgian Folk Poetry.* Madison, WI: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press.

_____. 1996. 'Highland Georgian Paganism – Archaism or Innovation?', *Annual of the Society for the Study of Caucasia* 7: 79–91.

_____. 2002. 'Real and Imagined Feudalism in Highland Georgia', *Amirani* 7: 25–43.

_____. 2004. 'Lightning, Sacrifice and Possession in the Traditional Religions of the Caucasus', Part I, *Anthropos* 99: 143–59; Part II, *Anthropos* 99: 481–97.

_____. 2006. 'The Meaning of Dael: Symbolic and Spatial Associations of the South Caucasian Goddess of Game Animals', in C. O'Neil, M. Scoggin and K. Tuite (eds), *Language, Culture and the Individual: A Tribute to Paul Friedrich*. Munich: LINCOM, pp. 165–88.

Xvist'ani, R. 2013. 'Svanetis adreuli krist'ianizacia arkeologiuri masalis mixed-vit' ['The Early Christianization of Svaneti According to Archaeological Materials']. Retrieved 18 April 2016 from http://tornikesshemecnebiti.blogspot.ca/2013_08_14_archive.html.