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Annotation

Speri is a historical Georgian region located at the headwaters of the Chorokhi River. In 1514 it was detached from the Georgian state and incorporated into the Ottoman Empire. More than five centuries have passed since then, during which the assimilation of Speri has unfolded continuously and reached deep layers of cultural life. Today Georgian is no longer spoken in the region—the local population has lost the ancestral language. For this reason, traces of Georgian presence must be sought in the ethnology, in the surviving monuments of material culture, in the Turkish-language folklore of the local inhabitants, and, notably, in toponymy. Researchers of historical Georgia generally include Bayburt and Basiani (Fasiani) within the broader territory of Speri. Toponymy—often described as “the language of the land”—preserves essential information on past populations, their subsistence practices, everyday life, and the natural environment.

This study focuses on the anthrotoponyms of Speri, with particular attention to those found in Basiani. The analysis demonstrates that in Basiani, as in Speri more broadly, a substantial number of toponyms derive from house names and nickname-surnames. Their morphological patterns closely correspond to those attested in Tao, Klarjeti, Shavsheti, Adjara, and Lazeti, and more generally align with the common Georgian model of toponymic formation. Of note are the forms produced by adding the suffix -n to personal names (e.g., Abdika-n, Surbekha-n), as well as forms marked by the suffix -is. Each preserved toponym is of considerable scholarly value, and its careful analysis contributes to reconstructing the historical landscape of Speri—a region subjected to long-term assimilation. The main contours of this landscape, we believe, remain recoverable.

The more intensively Speri is examined, the more evident it becomes that it constitutes a Georgian cultural space, regardless of present-day competing claims.

Keywords: Toponymy; Affix; Kvekana; Sakhlis sakheli; Anthrotoponimi.