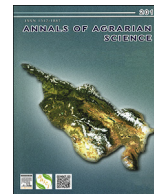


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The agrarian zones of Georgia according to the map by Ivane Javakhishvili

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ABSTRACT

The Map of Botanical-Agrarian Areas of Georgia compiled by Ivane Javakhishvili in 1930 is much valuable to study not only the ancient economic relations on the territory of our country, but the political history, as well, as the political and economic history are closely interwoven, and it is the natural environment and the style of the economic life of the country having formed Georgia as one body. The article shows the economic links, which, in the opinion of Ivane Javakhishvili, made for the formation of the statehood of Georgia. As the Map shows, there are 6 botanical-agrarian areas in Georgia with different natural environments and agricultural destinations: a Pomelo-and-Bitter Orange, Rice-Cotton, vineyard-and-fruity, non-vineyard-or-fruity, Grass-Flowery and Winter Pastures. In the view of Ivane Javakhishvili, in the ancient times, the demarcation of the mountains and lowland was done both, in the geographical and agricultural respects. Therefore, the identification of the areas of the mountains and plains (and consequently, the nature of some or other plants, animals, settled areas, economic activities, etc.) in the old sources, the ancient practice of drawing hypsometric boundaries between them (however, with some exceptions) must be taken into account.

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Introduction

Ivane Javakhishvili paid particular attention to the study of the history of economic development of the country. He considered the cultivation of wild plants and domestication of animals as a part of the societal culture and stated: “The study of all these matters extends and deepens the history of a man’s culture” [1]. In his works, he tried to show the nature of the economic activities followed by the Georgian nation in the given geographical region since the ancient times. As he concludes, this kind of economic culture was the result of concrete geographical conditions what on its turn, has led to the ethnic consolidation of the Georgian nation and development of the statehood of the country. In one of his works, Ivane Javakhishvili wrote: “The life of the Georgian nation was not confined to the political, social or cultural arena only, but the people have made selfless efforts in farming, as well ... If to date, we talked about the stories of battles with foreigners, now we clearly see that we had economic relations with them, too, and despite the political battles with them, the Georgians have favored from the useful

achievements and significant experience in the field of economy learned not only from their neighbors, but their enemies, as well. Similarly, the Georgian agriculture has contributed much to the economies of other nations” [1] Ivane Javakhishvili realized the importance of exploring the past economic picture and dedicated a number of papers to this kind of study. However, the heritage the great scientist handed down to us has not been realized in full even to date and neither are the geographical aspects of this issue evaluated.

The Map of Botanic-Agronomic Areas of Georgia by Ivane Javakhishvili is one of the most important sources giving us an idea about the study of the agrarian zones of Georgia and the economic links in ancient Georgia.

Research area

The article considers “The Map of Botanic-Agronomic Areas of Georgia according to Old Sources” compiled by Ivane Javakhishvili enclosed to the second edition of his work, “The Economic History of Georgia” [2]. The map was compiled by using old sources: the documentary materials, historical-literary works and cartographic works. However, these works do not describe the agronomic zones of Georgia individually, and the author had to collect and classify

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some scattered data. One of the principal sources used by the author was the composition by Vakhushiti Bagrationi “The Description of the Kingdom of Georgia” [3].

As a rule, a general geographic basis for such maps is mainly orographic-hydrographic units, and administrative units (regions, provinces, communities, etc.) to the less extent. The network of rivers plotted on the map facilitates the apprehension of the territorial distribution of the agrarian areas. There are total 4 orographic units (Ialbuzi (a mountain), Leketi Mountains, Rkinis Palo (a mountain) and Tsiv-Gombori Mountains).

The use of administrative units as a general geographical basis for such a map must be explained by one important fact: Ivane Javakhishvili wrote the history of the Georgian nation based on the premises of the economic development. He realized that the political and economic histories were interwoven and it was the natural environment and the style of the economic life having formed the country as one body.

The following objects are plotted on the map: rivers, lakes, main roads, capitals, cities and towns, villages and settlements, etc. – total of 202 toponyms, with most of them being oiconomies, with 67 names of villages and settlements and 42 names of the towns and cities. There are total 52 administrative units on the map. It is clear that the number of the mapped toponyms within the limits of Georgia much exceeds the number of those beyond Georgia.

The map is valuable in many respects (it shows a historical border of the country, settled areas, old geographical names, major lines of communication, etc.). It, together with the “*Economic History of Georgia*”, allows realizing the author's evaluation of the agro-economic potential of Georgia. In addition, its study in a botanical-agrarian view must be accented. Ivane Javakhishvili did not have any special agrarian education. Despite this, “The Economic History of Georgia” and “The Map of Botanic-Agronomic Areas of Georgia according to Old Sources” by him clearly evidence that he was a thoroughly educated scientist, proficient both, in the economic and the agrarian questions. As N. Ketskhoveli noted, “After Vakhushiti (since 1742) to the end of the first quarter of the XX century, no one has described the zoning of the cultural plants of Georgia as thorough as Ivane Javakhishvili. If the researchers of the Caucasus even wrote about this issue, their writings were either casual, or were dedicated to a certain species or group of cultural plants, or mentioned in connection to some other issue” [4].

However, the value of the Map in a narrow view of the thematic content must not be seen according to the botanical-agrarian areas only. Ivane Javakhishvili's view goes far beyond this limit. The Map allows specifying the tradition of agro-economic activities in Georgia by using the botanical-agrarian zones. This, on its turn, not only gives us an idea about the economic relations, but is valuable information in respect of the study of the history of the country. Based on the analysis of old sources, Iv. Javakhishvili concluded that “The study of all the data given below on its own and in conjunction with the map, will thoroughly consider the prospects of agricultural economy and will clarify a number of important issues of both, the economic and the political history for Georgia. Even some general view of the botanical-geographical and agrarian areas will give a man a very interesting picture ...” [1].

In his works, Ivane Javakhishvili talks about the importance of the agrarian and economic factors in establishing the statehood of the country. This also means that statehood is not a phenomenon limited to the political-legal frames only, but is also a field of economic activity. To be more exact, there is no statehood without such an activity. The scientist expressed these views in 1930, i.e. when Georgia was joining the USSR and its statehood was a fiction. However, this fact did not prevent him from writing these words, as every public figure is obliged to hope for the future.

As the study by Ivane Javakhishvili suggests, the major territory of Georgia is mostly spread in the basins of three rivers – the Mtkvari, Chorokhi and Rioni. This area is versatile with its natural conditions, and the three of its parts differ much from one another. Consequently, the diversified agro-botanical conditions of our country are based on these natural conditions, and the lives of the Georgians in these areas are different and versatile. Despite such a difference and diversity, the Georgians are one nation and Georgia is one cultural and political body. However, despite such versatility, historically, one economic “body” was formed here as a mutual necessary economic tool for the peoples living in such a diversified environment.

Iv. Javakhishvili, when describing the history of the Georgian nation, considered the territory of the country as one body, which “is bordered with natural barriers (mountains and rivers), and as the unit containing the basins of the rivers Mtkvari, Chorokhi and Rioni, is geographically and economically closely related” [1]. It was the diversity of the natural conditions of Georgia that helped establish different agricultural specializations on the territory of Georgia since the ancient times; in particular, the vineyard-and-fruity area on the lowland of West Georgia, alternating by non-vineyard-or-fruity and pomelo-and-bitter orange areas at some locations. As for the vineyard-and-fruity area on the lowland of East Georgia, it is replaced by winter pastures in the extreme eastern part of the region, while there are non-vineyard-or-fruity and grass-flowery areas spread in the mountains, with the cattle-breeding as the leading branch of economy. Thus, “Owing to the different agricultural and botanical areas, the communities did not and could not have everything needed by their members. The dwellers of the mountainous areas could not have their own wine or fruit, while the lowlanders must have envied the highlanders for their wheat and flour.

Besides, the small cattle could not bear cold winters, or snowy conditions and lack of grass in the mountains. Consequently, a cattle-breeder dwelling in the mountains could not retain cattle in his community in winter, but needed warm lowland places with winter pastures for his cattle. On their turn, the dwellers of the lowland could not leave their cattle in their communities in summer, as sheep hardly bear the summer heat and deficient pastures” [1].

Based on the above-mentioned, Ivane Javakhishvili concluded that the lowlanders and highlanders needed one another: “They cannot live without one another,” and their co-existence became possible right owing to the natural conditions” [1].

Based on the analysis of the consolidation of the Georgian nation and formation of the Georgian state and whole set of factors, Iv. Javakhishvili made a logical and laconic conclusion: “Under the impact of these geo-botanical and economic factors and based on the tribal relationship of the Georgians, Meskheti and Kartli in the first instance, as the area of the river Mtkvari basin ... were formed as one state body and became one kingdom, and only then did the west and east Georgia unite” [5].

By showing this general picture, the scientist demonstrated the course of natural development of the economic links between the different corners of Georgia making the whole area a single, interdependent and thus, indispensable unit. This, in the final run, made for the consolidation of the people dwelling in the area as one whole, i.e. one nation. Moreover, all these factors determined the state formation of the nation, and it was the political spectrum of this economic issue.

Agrarian zones according to the map

The study map shows **6 botanical-agrarian areas**, which are

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