

# Historical, legal and cartographic analysis of the formation of the Georgia-Azerbaijan state border (on the example of the David Gareji monastery complex and its surrounding area)

Gocha Gudzuadze <sup>a,\*</sup>, Nodar Khorbaladze <sup>b</sup>, Tedo Gorgodze <sup>b,a</sup>, Tengiz Gordeziani <sup>a</sup>, Gocha Jincharadze <sup>b</sup>

<sup>a</sup> *Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University. gocha.gudzuadze049@ens.tsu.edu.ge, tengiz.gordeziani@tsu.ge*

<sup>b</sup> *Geodesy Cartography Department of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia. nkhorbaladze@mod.gov.ge, tedo.gorgodze@gmail.com, jincharadze80@gmail.com*

\* Corresponding author

**Keywords:** state border, topographic map, cartographic source, legal document, historical document, border delimitation and demarcation

## Abstract:

Military cartography is one of the dynamic directions in modern cartography. In Georgia, research in this direction has a history of more than two centuries. At the beginning of the 19th century, the Russian Empire began topo-geodetic work on the territory of Transcaucasia, based on which verst maps of different scales were compiled. One of the topical subjects of military cartography is the study of the state borders' delimitation and demarcation problems. In this direction, within the framework of a scientific project at the Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University and in the Department of Cartography and Geodesy of the Ministry of Defense of Georgia, an interdisciplinary study of the state border zone was carried out from a historical, cartographic and legal perspective. The research specifically concerns the Georgia-Azerbaijan state border zone, the section of the David Gareji monastery complex.

The formation of the state border of Georgia began after the defeat and dissolution of the Russian Empire in World War I, after which the creation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia logically followed. The first cartographic source confirming the state border of Georgia is the map of the Democratic Republic of Georgia presented at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919 (Figure 1).

Border agreements between Georgia and Azerbaijan date back to the same period. The first legal document signed between the Democratic Republic of Georgia and the Soviet Socialist Republic of Azerbaijan is the Peace Agreement of June 12, 1920, the cartographic basis of which was the five-verst map published in 1915. The border established by the mentioned agreement is somewhat different from the border on the map of 1919.

Border problems between the two countries began in 1921 when Soviet Russia occupied the Democratic Republic of Georgia. Since this period, the outline of the border has changed several times due to various circumstances. An important legal document is the Resolution on the Border between the Georgian SSR and the Azerbaijan SSR, concluded on July 5, 1921, which determined the formation of the so-called "administrative-economic border." According to this document, the political, that is, state border remained unchanged and coincided with the border agreed upon in the Peace Agreement of June 12, 1920. This meant that the "Karayazi Valley" (today located on the territory of Azerbaijan) and, accordingly, the David Gareji monastery complex remained completely within Georgia. Subsequently, this conditional (administrative-economic) border became the basis for the formation of the state border, which is a violation from a legal point of view.

In the process of assessing the dynamics of the state of borders, cartographic material created in the Soviet Union in the 30-40s of the twentieth century is of great importance. The border shown on maps of this period was not based on the borderline established by the Peace Agreement of June 12, 1920, but on a revised version of the administrative-economic border which was established after the adoption of the USSR Constitution of 1936. These borders were depicted for the first time on the 1:200,000 scale topographic maps published by the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs of the Soviet Union in 1936-1938. These maps had both a military and economic purpose, as they were the largest and most detailed cartographic material for that period and were used for strategic planning during World War II. They form the basis of small-scale general geographical and administrative maps published during this period. The boundaries depicted on them coincide with the boundary of a map at a scale of 1:200 000 and is its generalized version.



Figure 1. dynamics of the state border of Georgia and Azerbaijan in the territory adjacent to the David Gareji monastery complex.

The next important legal document is the agreement concluded on March 5-7, 1938 between the SSRs of Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, which was related to the issue of clarification of the borders graphically between the three republics. The cartographic basis of this agreement is the administrative map of Transcaucasia at a scale of 1:500,000, created based on topographic maps of 1:200 000 scale from 1936-1938.

After the Dissolution of the Soviet Union, the most important legal document on border issues between Georgia and Azerbaijan is the agreement of June 13, 1996, which was concluded between Governmental Commissions for the Delimitation and Demarcation of the State Border of the two countries. According to this agreement, it was determined that the state border between Georgia and Azerbaijan should be regulated according to the situation in 1938.

In the course of the research, a cartometric study of the Georgia -Azerbaijan border zone was conducted, as a result of which it was determined that the 1:200 000 scale topographic maps published in 1936-1938 are the most important cartographic source for that period, and the border depicted on them shows the state of the Georgia -Azerbaijan state border at that time. Based on the study was created a map that shows the dynamics of the Georgia -Azerbaijan state border in different periods.

The research showed that a) for the study of the dynamics of the state border of Georgia, the study and analysis of cartographic material is extremely important; b) There are significant differences between the cartographic materials compiled and published in different periods, which should be studied and taken into account when discussing the border issue; c) The mentioned materials have historical and legal significance and their originals and copies are preserved in the State Archives of Georgia.

## References

- Cartographic sources of different years (preserved in the State Archives of Georgia ).  
 Javakhishvili I. Borders of Georgia, considered from a historical and modern point of view. Tbilisi, Georgia. 1919.  
 Kekelia J. The territory and borders of Georgia. Tbilisi, Georgia. 1996.  
 Vardosanidze S., Guruli V., Xaradze K., Jikia L., Kvarackhelia M. History of the State Border of Georgia (1917-1957). Tbilisi, Georgia. 2015.