

Irine Darchia (Tbilisi)

GREEK MANI AND GEORGIAN SVANETI
(Typological Similarities)

A lot has been written and said about centuries-long multifaceted relations between Georgia and Greece since ancient times. However, there are so many various aspects of links between the two countries and the roots of these aspects are so deep and far-reaching, that it is not easy to exhaust what you have to speak and think about.

This article is devoted precisely to such kind of similarities and links. Mani, a region sharply different in many respects from other regions of modern Greece, was known until recently only to a very narrow circle of Georgian Hellenists. However, an increasing number of Georgians are speaking about it now mostly because of its strange similarity with the Georgian province of Svaneti. I will make an attempt in this article to analyse two of the similarities between Mani and Svaneti.

How do modern Greeks view Mani? They regard it as one of the most ancient regions of Greece, which is, at the same time, different from other regions. Rigid climate and nature, peculiar churches and mural paintings, towers that have no analogue in Greece, traditions not characteristic of other Greek regions, and people, who are known for their rigid character that is sometimes merciless, make the region different from other regions. I think it is no mistake to say that we, Georgians, would describe Svaneti approximately in the same manner.

It is noteworthy that Mr Avtandil Mikaberidze, the founder of the Georgian Institute in Athens, was the first to start disseminating ideas on the interrelations of Mani and Svaneti. It is remarkable that my colleague Ani Udzilauri recently started research on Mani-Svaneti ties. Her Master Thesis is devoted to links between Mani and Svaneti and she has already

found a number of typological similarities between Svan and Maniot towers and settlements, public order, blood feud, beliefs and rituals linked to death, burial, mourning, the world of the deceased, and the next world.¹

I suppose research on the wedding ritual widespread in Mani and Svaneti would be also interesting. In this article, I touch on one detail linked to marriage, which I think is important – a kind of bigamy.

Mani has a number of traditions not found in any other Greek region. It is noteworthy that some exclusive traditions of Maniots can be found in Svaneti, but not in other Georgian regions. A good example of the aforementioned is the institution of bigamy or so-called "co-matrimony" (θεσμός της σύγκριας), a term I will consider again below.

According to Greek ethnologists, the so-called institution of σύγκριας is one of the strangest traditions that is, at the same time, extremely interesting from legal and social viewpoints. It was practiced for many centuries and was alive even at the start of the XX century.²

The word σύγκρια has different meanings in different regions of Greece. For example, on the islands, σύγκρια is the wife of an unfaithful husband (η μοιχευομένη σύζυγος) and the unfaithful husband is ironically referred to as σύγκριος. In other Greek regions, σύγκριες means "sisters-in-law" (συννυφάδες).

The etymology of the word σύγκρια is also interesting. Greek linguists have different opinions in this regard. According to A. B. Daskalakis, the word σύγκρια (συγκορία, συγκορά, σύγκρια) consists of two parts - prefix συν- ("with, together with") and the noun κορία/κορά ("woman, lady, wife, spouse"). So σύγκρια can be translated as "co-spouses".

According to the philologist and historian Anargyros Koutsilieris, σύγκρια seems to be derived from σύγκρια, with a semivowel before and after ρ.

Lawyer St. Petropoulakos offers yet another etymology. He believes that σύγγρια is the correct form, not σύγκρια and the former consists of two parts: συν- ("with, together with") and γριά ("old woman"). A Maniot man would never refer to his wife as woman, wife, spouse, or particularly lady. He used to call her "my old woman" irrespective of her age.

¹ Cf.: Udzilauri A., Ψηφίδες από τη Μάνη και ψηφίδες από το Σβάνετι που ψάχνουν να ενωθούν, Επιβλέποντες της μεταπτυχιακής εργασίας: Καθηγητής Μηνάς Αλεξιάδης και Λέκτορας Γιώργος Θανόπουλος (Manuscript).

² For details of the aforementioned tradition cf.: Δασκαλάκης Απόστολος Β., Ο Θεσμός της Σύγκριας εις την Μάνην, Αθήνα 1974.

My personal opinion is close to the first version and I believe that *σὺγκρῖα* is to be translated as "co-spouse".

The word *σὺγκρῖα* had two meanings in Mani. First, the second wife of a Maniot would use it to refer to the deceased first wife of her husband. Although sisters-in-law (*συννυφάδες*) usually do not have good relations with each other even today, the second wife of a Maniot was usually very respectful to the memory of her husband's first wife, establishing very close relations with the family and children of the deceased woman.

The second use of *σὺγκρῖα* is quite different. It reflects an ancient tradition that must be traced many centuries back in the past. In this case, the word must be translated as "co-spouse". A young Maniot from a wealthy aristocratic family of Niklianos' had the right to marry another woman if his first wife gave birth only to daughters.

Of course, there were no traditions that would prohibit a childless or sonless Maniot to marry another woman, but the tradition was effectively restricted for the use by the economically more powerful Niklianos' layer and was rare in the lower strata of Maniots called *φαμέγιος*. Researchers suspect that in this case, *σὺγκρῖα* was simply a disguise of marital unfaithfulness.

Researchers have two explanations for this double standard. The ancient ancestral tradition was of special importance for both the social stratum of Niklianos' and the socio-political purpose of survival of ordinary Maniots. The strength and political power of every family depended on the number of sons and the reduction of their number was tantamount to the extinction of the ancestry or the so-called *πατριά*.³ As regards the remaining strata of Maniots - *φαμέγιος* - the number of sons was not politically so important for them and that was not their purpose either, as a big number of sons would create problems in dividing a small property.

It should also be said that the young women, who became a "co-spouse" and agreed to a role that was to a certain extent humiliating, was usually from the stratum of *φαμέγιος*. By entering a wealthy and powerful family, she could ensure a higher social status and well-being of her children. "Co-spouses" were usually found in families that remained without children for a long time and they were much rarer in families that had only daughters.

³ *Πατριά* is a family uniting blood relatives in a broad sense. "Ancestry" can be used as an equivalent.

The Maniots' tradition of "co-matrimony", which, as researchers argue, is contrary to Greek traditions and the Christian faith of Maniots, becomes understandable if we take into account the geographic, historical, and social peculiarities of Mani. It was mostly a highly hierarchic belligerent and militant society that constantly fought with weapons in their hands to protect their freedom. According to Greek researchers, it is natural for such a militant society, which constantly had to be vigilant, live in houses with gun-ports, and search for refuge in the inaccessible peaks of Taygetus, a society with no governmental organisation and power, to create its own traditions and customs, which were gradually transformed into unwritten laws.

It is noteworthy that this tradition, which is so unacceptable to the Christian faith, could also be found in Christian Svaneti. Here is a quotation of Georgian scholar Besarion Nizharadze: "I would like to mention a rare case here: if a man had no children with his wife or had only daughters, he could take another wife, but only if his wife and her parents allowed him to do so. Although the man kept his first wife at home, from the day he married a second wife, there would be no matrimonial relations between them. I deem it necessary to add that marrying a second wife was very rare. The main reason for a Svan to marry a second wife, while his first wife was alive, was the Svan's desire to protect his family from extinction, which was a major misfortune for Svans. A man could even marry his brother's widow".⁴

In this article, I would also like to consider one interesting problem linked to Mani that has remained without attention of scientists up to now. It would seem that the family names of Maniots do not differ from the names in other Greek regions.⁵ Maniots' family names had no specific ending before 1600. This is particularly true of genuine family names, not the so-called patronymics.

The most widespread ending of family names in Mani is -άκης (later -άκος), which comes from Byzantine -άκιος (E. g. Σταματάκος, Λεωτσάκος, Πουλικάκος etc.). It is noteworthy that later, Maniots changed the ending -άκης into -άκος, which was not accidental. This was a way to separate themselves from other Greek regions, where the ending -άκης became widespread. This means that those with names ending in -άκης, would

⁴ Nizharadze B., *Free Svan*, in: *Historic-Ethnographic Studies*, Tbilisi University Publishers, Tbilisi 1962, 111 (*in Georgian*).

⁵ For Maniot family names cf.: Κυριάκος Δ. Κάσσης, *Μοιρολόγια της Μέσα Μάνης Α'*, Αθήνα 1979.

change the ending to -άκος and this used to happen even before 1960. For example, Μιχαλόλιας became Μιχαλολιάκος in 1930, but reverted to the old ending in 1960. There were cases, when the names of members of one family had different endings, for example: Λεοντακιανάκης and Λεοντακιανάκος.

Here is a list of the endings of the family names found in Mani:

1. **-έας** is found only in Mani from 1800 (Messenian Mani). For example: Αχειλαρέας (αυτός πούχει μεγάλη χείλη), Κοιλαρέας, Παδαρέας, Μυταρέας, Καβλέας, Χορταρέας, Χρηστέας, Χριστοδουλέας, Σαραντέας, Βαχαβιολέας, Κουρέας, Αρκουδέας, Κατσουλέας, and so forth.
2. **-όγιαννης** points to its origin from Inner Mani. For example: Φραγκόγιαννης, Βαβουλόγιαννης, Βιτσιλόγιαννης, Γιωργουλόγιαννης, Λυκόγιαννης, Αγριόγιαννης, Λιόγιαννης, Ψουρόγιαννης, Κλεφτόγιαννης, Καλογερόγιαννης, and so forth.
3. **-όλιας** is a purely Maniot ending. For example: Μπουρόλιας, Πετρόλιας, Μιχαλόλιας, and so forth.
4. **-όδημας** is found in some Maniot family names. For example: Γιαννακόδημας, Χουλόδημας, Παπαδόδημας, and so forth.
5. **-όγγονας** is also purely Maniot: For example: Παπαδόγγονας, Δημαρόγγονας, Λιακόγγονας, and so forth.
6. **-έλος** is found in some Maniot names. For example: Ταυραντζέλος, Μπαθρέλος, Καπαρέλος, Κατσιβαρδέλος, and so forth.
7. **-άρος**. For example: Καλονάρος (Καλονιοί), Λαουνάρος, Κατσικάρος, Τσιμπιδάρος, Καπερνάρος, Τορνάρος, Σκανταλάρος, Αντώναρος, Κουτριγάρος, Καναβάρος, Κοντράρος, and so forth.
8. **-ούρος**. For example: Κουμουνδούρος, Μουσούρος, Γιαννακούρος και Φατούρος, Φερεντούρος, Πατσούρος, and so forth.
9. **-ούτσος**. For example: Μαυρούτσος, Καρλούτσος, and so forth.
10. **-άτσος**. For example: Κουβάτσος, and so forth.
11. **-ώτσος**. For example: Κοτρώτσος, Βρώτσος, and so forth.
12. **-όννος**. For example: Μπουφόννος, Τσατσαρόννος, and so forth.
13. **-ούζος**. For example: Κωσταντούζος, Αραούζος, and so forth.
14. There are Italian-style family names. For example: Κοβορίνος, Μπαλίνης, Κάσσης, Δεκούλος, Αλετουράνος, Μονέδας, Μαντούβαλος, Ρίτσος, Καντήρος, Ρόζος, Βεντικός, Μπουρικός, Σάσσαρης, Μαγγιόρος, Μπαλιτσάρης, Τσαπατσάρης, Βαραμέντης, Δραγουμάνος, Ντουρέκας, Μέντισης (=Γιατράκης), and so forth.
15. The following family names are of foreign origin: Κοβορίνος, Μπαλίνης, Κάσσης, Δεκούλος, Αλετουράνος, Μονέδας,

Μαντούβαλος, Ρίτσος, Καντήρος, Ρόζος, Βεντικός, Μπουρικός, Σάσσαρης, Μαγγιόρος, Μπαλιτσάρης, Τσαπατσάρης, Βαραμέντης, Δραγουμάνος, Ντουρέκας, Μέντισης (=Γιατράκης), and so forth.

16. The following names are believed to be Byzantine: Κοσμάς, Πόθος, Πάτρος (Πάτρων), Μόφορης, Δεμέστιχας, Γερακάρης, Μεσιόκλης, Λυμπέρης, Παντελέος, Καπηλωρύχος, and so forth.
17. **-αίος**. For example: Κουτσιλαίος, Κοτιλαίος, Γιαμπαίος, and so forth.
18. **-όπουλος** (patronymics). For example: Γεωργόπουλος, Μιχαλόπουλος, Δικαίοπουλος, and so forth.⁶

One more peculiarity of Maniots is especially interesting for us. They have official family names and in addition, they are called by each other in a different way using, let's say, an Italian-style ending **-ιάνος** (**-ιάνοι** in plural, pronounced as [-iani]), which denotes the unity of blood relatives (γένος). For example:

Μιχαλίτης, το μέλος της οικογένειας: Μιχαλιτσιάνος, Μιχαλιτσιάνοι [Mikhalitsis, the member of the family: Mikhalitsianos, Mikhalitsiani];

Δρακουλάκος, το μέλος της οικογένειας: Δρακουλιάνος, Δρακουλιάνοι [Drakoulakos, the member of the family: Drakoulianos, Drakouliani];

Λεφατζής, το μέλος της οικογένειας: Λεφαγγιάνος, Λεφαγγιάνοι [Lephadzis, the member of the family: Lephagianos, Lephagiani];

Κάσσης, το μέλος της οικογένειας: Καχιάνος, Καχιάνοι [Kassis, the member of the family: Kakhianos, Kakhiani];⁷

Μπράτης, το μέλος της οικογένειας: Μπραϊτιάνος, Μπραϊτιάνοι [Bratis, the member of the family: Braitianos, Braitiani];

Λιόπουλος, το μέλος της οικογένειας: Λιοπουλιάνος, Λιοπουλιάνοι [Lioroulos, the member of the family: Lioroulianos, Liorouliani].

Thus, all Maniots, irrespective of the ending of their official family names, call each other differently, using the word (adjective) ending on **-ιάνος/-ιάνοι** [-ianos/-iani], which denotes belonging to this or that family.

The names of settlements linked to specific families usually end in **-ιάνικα**. For example: Κριελιάνικα, Σκαφιδιάνικα, Μερμηγκιάνικα. According to one opinion, such endings found in some other Greek regions point to the fact that people originating from Mani live there.

⁶ The name Βουδικλάρης does not belong to any of the categories, but is also a Maniot name.

⁷ Similarity with Georgian family name Kakhiani is obvious.

I would like to stress again that Maniots are referred to with the words (adjectives) ending in *-ίανος* only in Mani proper, not in other Greek regions. I have even heard from one Maniot that they differ from other Greeks in that they refer to each other in a manner different from other Greeks, which confirms that the ending *-ίανος*, *-ίανος* [-ianos, -iani] is for domestic use in Mani.

The similarity between the Maniot ending with the ending of Svan family names - *-ian-* - is quite obvious and can easily be seen. However, to look into the problem deeper, it is necessary to take into account materials from other languages. It should be born in mind that a similar suffix is widespread in Italy and also in neighbouring Armenia.

According to Georgian researchers, the ending *-ian-* denoted in Georgian provenance from someone. Later, its meaning broadened and it is now added to a lot of names to denote possession of something (ცოლი [tsol-i] "wife" - ცოლიანი [tsol-ian-i] "married", თავი [thavi-] "head" - თავიანი [thav-ian-i] "clever", წვერი [tsver-i] "beard" - წვერიანი [tsver-ian-i] "bearded", ნაბადი [nabad-i] "felt cloak" - ნაბადიანი [nabd-ian-i] "wearing felt cloak", and so forth). The initial meaning of *-ian-* can be found in family names: დადებქელიანი [Dadeshkel-ian-i], დადიანი [Dad-ian-i], კახიანი [Kakh-ian-i], კვიციანი [Kvits-ian-i], ჟორჯოლიანი [Jhorjhol-ian-i], ასათიანი [Asath-ian-i], გორდეზიანი [Gordez-ian-i]. Such names are now mostly widespread in Svaneti and partially in another region of Georgia, in Racha-Lechkhumi. Family names ending in *-ia* widespread in Samegrelo and Abkhazia have the same suffix, but without *n*. For example: კობალია [Kobal-ia], კეცბაია [Ketsba-ia], and so forth.⁸ This was substantiated in the studies by Z. Kvitsiani, Z. Chumburidze, and R. Topchishvili.

Incidentally, the aforementioned is linked to the Greek world and specifically, Greek derivation of names of provenance, the so-called *nomina gentilia* or εθνικά ονόματα. Greek has the following suffixes to derive names: *-ανός*, *-ανή* (< Ancient Greek), *-ιανός*, *-ιανή* (< ι of the stem + *-ανός*). For example, Αφρικανός, Αφρικανή, Βενετσιάνος, Βενετσιάνα and so forth. Interestingly, the suffix *-αν(ο)/-ην(ο)-* is linked to Georgian -

⁸ Topchishvili R., *Ethnology and History of Names, Universali*, Tbilisi 2010, 213-229 (in Georgian); Kvitsiani Z., *Kvitsiani Family* (Manuscript in Georgian).

an, which can be traced back to the common Kartvelian level (Megr.-Chan. *-a(n)*, Svan. *-an*), as substantiated by Rismag Gordeziani.⁹

It should also be mentioned that the connection or similarity between the suffix *-iav-* spread in Mani with the ending in Svan names gives rise to a number of questions. For example, there is one thought-provoking circumstance: "The nominative case has no morphological sign in the Svan language. It is an unmarked member of the opposition".¹⁰ However, scientific debate on the ending of the nominative case in the Svan language with the participation of such scholars as A. Shanidze, V. Topuria, T. Sharashenidze, G. Klimov, I. Chantladze, M. Kaldani, and Z. Chumburidze is not relevant here. The only thing that needs to be said is that the vowel *-i* is reconstructed as the ending of the nominative case both in singular and plural in all three Kartvelian languages. In different cases, it underwent different changes. It is also known that in Kartvelian languages, this case ending is linked to a pronoun.¹¹

Given the aforementioned questions and circumstances, a deep study of the connection between the Maniots "domestic names" (words denoting the origin, belonging to the family) and Svan family name is still to be done in the future.

What can be said as a conclusion on the similarities and connections between Maniots and Svans? Everything can be easily explained as a typological similarity of the two regions caused by almost identical natural conditions and similar social and cultural factors that have led to the similar paths of historical and cultural development. To support my statement, I would like to quote an excerpt from Ani Udzilauri's work: "Both Greek Mani and Georgian Svaneti are closed patriarchal societies based on the existence of **tribes** and **communities** and reigned by a strict social hierarchy. Due to historic, geographic, and social conditions, specific laws of **traditional justice** developed in both Mani and Svaneti. In both regions, community councils and councils of elders supervised the implementation of the law. It is known that the two regions have common traditions like blood feud (vendeta), burial rituals, mourning songs, establishment of relations through sworn brotherhood, and child

⁹ Gordeziani R., Pre-Greek and Kartvelian, Tbilisi University Publishers, Tbilisi 1985, 112 (*in Georgian*); Gordeziani R., Mediterranean-Kartvelica. Mediterranean-Georgian Links, II, Pre-Greek, Publishing Programme Logos, Tbilisi 2007, 64-65 (*in Georgian*).

¹⁰ Chumburidze Z., The Svan Language (Grammatical Survey, Texts, Glossary), Petiti Publishers, Tbilisi 2007, 85 (*In Georgian*).

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

adoption. In addition, both regions are famous for their numerous dwelling towers¹²

Ani Udzilauri specially notes that her study did not aim at researching genetic connections between the two peoples, which is quite understandable, acceptable, and logical. However, when similarities are so comprehensive and systemic, how can we speak about typological similarities alone? Why can we not think that these connections are more far-fetched and deep? Is it possible to consider similarities between Mani and Svaneti not only in the context of typological similarities, but also in the context of Greek-Georgian historic relations? These are questions that are to be answered in the future.

It is particularly noteworthy that together with the concrete instances of typological similarities that have already been found, interesting materials could also be discovered in the fields of linguistics, church architecture, mural paintings, marriage, traditions of celebrating Christian holidays, ritual dances, and so forth.

I think it is necessary to conduct an interdisciplinary study of the similarities with active involvement of Georgian and Greek scholars working in various fields. Special attention should be given to the investigation of every link in the Greek and Georgian anthropological contexts. It is necessary to see what the two extremely peculiar regions have in common in linguistics, architecture, art, music, ethnography or mentality and to what extent the common features are present in other Greek and Georgian regions. In other words, it is necessary to unveil what draws Mani and Svaneti closer on the one hand and what makes them different from other Greek and Georgian regions on the other.

¹² Udzilauri A., *Op. cit.*, Conclusions.