International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science

e-ISSN: 2544-9435

Operating Publisher
SciFormat Publishing Inc.
ISNI: 0000 0005 1449 8214

2734 17 Avenue SW,
Calgary, Alberta, T3E0A7,
Canada
+15878858911
editorial-office@sciformat.ca

ARTICLE TITLE	HYDRONYMY OF THE DZAMA VALLEY
DOI	https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4(52).2026.6669
RECEIVED	17 August 2026
ACCEPTED	15 October 2026
PUBLISHED	22 October 2026
LICENSE	The article is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.**

© The author(s) 2026.
This article is published as open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

HYDRONYMY OF THE DZAMA VALLEY

Zina Kokozashvili
Sokhumi State University, Georgia

ABSTRACT

The Dzama Valley is located in Eastern Georgia. Historically, this region belonged to the Duchy of Kldekari. The hydronyms of the Dzama Valley include: Qintsura, Loshkineti Spring, Abukhalo Brook, Orbotsqali, Tqemlovanis Tsqali, Dzama, Ghvanana, Bateti Lake, Bedme Spring, Ilo Spring, Loshkineti Brook, Satetris Water, Abukhalo Waterfall… The aim of this publication is the linguistic (structural-semantic) analysis of these hydronyms. The article also presents the vocabulary and hydrographic terminology used in the formation of hydronymic features and geographical names in the Dzama Valley: water, spring, brook, ravine, waterfall, lake, river.

In the Dzama Valley, both simplex hydronyms-including primary roots and derived forms (e.g., Dzama, Qintsura, Ghvanana)- and complex-stem hydronyms (e.g., Bateti Lake, Orbotsqali, Tqemlovanis Tsqali, Bedme spring, Abukhalo waterwall) are attested.

A systematic and fundamental study of the hydronymy and geographical names of the Dzama Valley, alongside an overall onomastic analysis, is of great importance and yields highly intriguing insights.

KEYWORDS
Hydronym, Onomastics, Dzama Valley, Toponymy

CITATION
Kokozashvili, Z. (2026). Hydronymy of the Dzama Valley. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*, 4(52). https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.4(52).2026.6669

COPYRIGHT
© The author(s) 2026. This article is published as open access under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)**, allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

Main research: hydronymy constitutes an ancient and fascinating branch of onomastics- specifically, of toponymy. Water has historically held immense significance for human society.

Onomastics is the field of science where the interests of linguists, historians, and ethnographers converge (Margiani, 2015, p. 54-63).

In the study of the geographical names of the Dzama Valley, including its hydronymy, **Vakhushti Bagrationi's** work **"Description of the Kingdom of Georgia"** (XVIII century) must be cited first and foremost among historical sources. Onomastic literature notes that when describing valleys, Vakhushti attached great importance to waters and their description. He organized geographical and historical material by valleys and villages, thereby underscoring his focus on hydrographic features. Onomastic literature also observes that the meanings of valley (kheoba) and ravine (khevi) are nearly identical, "but the latter is smaller; both are connected with water and with hydronymy in general" (Otinashvili, 2013, p. 211).

The hydronyms of the Dzama Valley include: **Qintsura, Loshkineti Spring, Abukhalo Brook, Orbotsqali, Tqemlovanis Tsqali, Dzama, Ghvanana, Bateti Lake, Bedme Spring, Ilo Spring, Loshkineti Brook, Satetri Water, Abukhalo Waterfall…**

Hydronyms- geographical features incorporating the concept of water- structurally resemble toponyms in general and can be categorized as simple-stem, composite, complex-stem, or affix-marked. Among the derivational formants, diminutive and plural affixes are most frequently employed, reflecting the physical scale of the feature. In the Dzama Valley, **simple-stem (primary) hydronyms** include: **Dzama** — river, **Ghvanana** — river. Complex-stem hydronyms are also well-attested. As Guram Bedoshvili notes, these are geographical water names characterized by a 'modifier-head' structure; nouns or adjectives typically serve as modifiers, while generic hydrographic terms such as spring, pool or water function as the head elements (Bedoshvili, 1980, p.60). Attested complex-stem hydronyms in the Dzama Valley include: **Abukhalo Brook** — tributary

of the Dzama River, **Orbotsqali** — tributary of the Dzama River, **Tqemlovanis Tsqali** — tributary of the Dzama River, **Shuano Water**— tributary of the Dzama River; **Bedme Spring** — village of Zghuderi, **Ilo Spring** — village of Zghuderi, **Satetristskali**, **Loshkineti Brook, Loshkineti Spring, Abukhalo Waterfall, Bateti Lake…**

The gathered material indicates that the following vocabulary and hydrographic terminology are employed in the formation of hydronymic features and geographical names in the Dzama Valley: **"water" (tsqali) , "spring" (tsqaro), "brook" (ghele), "ravine" (khevi), "waterfall" (chanchkeri), "lake" (tba), "river" (mdinare).**

Let us consider one of the significant hydronyms of the Dzama Valley, the River Dzama, which, morphologically represents a simple-stem (root) form.

The Dzama River is located in Kareli district; it originates on the northern slope of the Trialeti Range at an elevation of 2,140 meters above sea level and joins the Mtkvari (Kura) River from the right near Kareli. It is 42 km in length, with a drainage basin area of 342 square kilometers. Its main tributaries are Tqemlovanis Tsqali, Satibe, and Ghvanana. The river is fed by snow, rain, and groundwater sources (Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia Vol. 11, 1987, p. 263). As the primary watercourse of the Dzama Valley, the river takes its source in the Tori Mountains, near which lies the small village Dzara. Near the village of Tsikhisgverda, the Dzama is joined by Satetris tsqali, while in Gverdzineti, it receives Abukhalos tsqali, which flows from Mount Abukhalo. Near the village of Zghuderi, it merges with Imerkhevis Tsqali (also known as Ghvanana). It then flows toward Kareli and joins the Mtkvari River south of the railway bridge. In scientific literature, both "Dzamis Kheoba" and "Dzamas Kheoba" are attested. Both variants are likewise observed in common usage, through Dzamis Keoba is more prevalent. This is evidently due to the influence of Old Georgian: when acting as a substantive modifier, the noun undergoes final-vowel truncation during genitive declension (losing the root vowel -a before the genitive suffix -is). Yielding forms such as Dzamis Kheoba (Dzama Valley) and Dzamiis tsikhe (Dzama fortress).

Another significant river of the Dzama Valley is the Qintsura, which flows near the village of Qintsvisi. Both the Qintsura river and the ecclesionym Qintsvisi share a common folk etymology. Traditional local lore connects the origin of the name Qintsvisi to the Georgian words qinul- ("ice") and tsuravs ("floats" or "swims"). This folk etymology relates directly to the Qinsura river, which flows adjacent to the church and whose name is, in turn, derived from Qintsivisi (Qintsvis-ura- Qints (v)-ura).

Bateti Lake is located in the Kareli District, on the Northern slope of the Trialeti Range in the Batetis-Tsqali Valley. The lake is home to the Asia Minor newt, a species listed in the Red Data Book of Georgia (Georgian Soviet Encyclopedia, Vol. 2, 1977, p. 228). The name Bateti is associated with the historical abandoned village (nasoflari) of Bateti located in its vicinity. The toponym consists of the root bat- and the Georgian geographical suffix -eti: Bateti Lake < Bat-eti-i.

Thus, a substantial group of hydronyms can be identified within the onomasticon of the Dzama Valley, including: Qintsura, Loshkineti Spring (tsqaro), Abukhalo Brook (Ghele), Orbotskali, Tqemlovanis Tsqali, Dzama, Ghvanana, Bateti Lake (tba), Bedme Spring, Ilo Spring, Loshkineti Brook, Satetri Water, Abukhalo Waterfall (chanchqeri)… The Dzama Gorge attests to both simple-stem (root, derived) hydronyms—e.g., Dzama, Qintsura, Ghvanana—as well as composite and complex-stem hydronyms: Bateti Lake, Orbotskali, Tqemlovanist Tsqali, Bedme Spring, Abukhalo Waterfall.

It becomes evident that the hydronymy of the Dzama Valley is structurally and semantically identical to the toponymy characteristic of both mountain and lowland valleys of Eastern Georgia, exhibiting similar naming models and uniform word-formation patterns.

On the basis of the onomastic material from the Dzama Valley, it can be concluded that the following hydrographic terminology is employed in the formation of water-related toponyms and geographic names: tsqali (water/stream), tsqaro (spring), ghele (brook), khevi (ravine), chanchkeri (waterfall), tba (lake), and mdinare (river). Vocabulary and terminology incorporating the concept of water, as well as the hydronyms derived from them, can be morphologically categorized into simple-stem, affix-marked, composite, and syntagmatic forms. A systematic and fundamental study of the hydronymy and geographical names of the Dzama Valley is of vital importance and yields highly insightful conclusions.

REFERENCES

Bagrationi, V. (1941). *Description of the kingdom of Georgia*. TSU [Tbilisi State University] Publishing House.
Bagrationi, V. (1973). *Description of the kingdom of Georgia*. *Kartlis Tskhovreba [Georgian Chronicles]* (Vol. IV). Publishing House.
Bedoshvili, G. (1980). *Toponymy of Ertso-Tianeti*. Metsniereba Publishing House.
Margiani, M. (2015). Factors and motivation of naming in Svan toponymy (according to the materials of the Dali Valley). *Works of Sokhumi State University, XIII*.
Otinashvili, N. (2013). *Onomastics*. 6. Publishing House.
Red book of Georgia. (1982). Soviet Georgia.
Georgian Soviet encyclopedia (Vol. 2). (1977). Main Scientific Editorial Publishing House.
Georgian Soviet encyclopedia (Vol. 11). (1987). Main Scientific Editorial Publishing House.
Tskhadaia, P. (2004). *Kartvelian onomastics collection 2*. Tbilisi University Publishing House.
Tskhadaia, P. (2007). *Kartvelian onomastics collection 3*. Tbilisi University Publishing House.