

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32653/CH1941082-1094>



Research paper

Zoya B. Ramazanova  
Dr. Sci., Leading Researcher  
Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography  
Dagestan Federal Research Center of RAS, Makhachkala, Russia  
[zoya.ram@mail.ru](mailto:zoya.ram@mail.ru)

## FORMS OF LAND TENURE IN LAKS IN THE 19TH – EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

*Abstract.* The article aims to analyze information on the forms of land tenure among the Laks in the 19th – early 20th centuries. The primary focus lies in examining the various forms of land ownership and determining their prevalence within the territory occupied by the Laks during the specified timeframe. The author directs attention to the prevalence of distinctive easements in Laks' land tenure, emphasizing the insufficient coverage of the reasons for their persistence in the works of many researchers and presents her perspective on the sustainability of this particular type of land use. The theoretical and methodological framework of the study is rooted in the general principles of historicism and objectivism. Alongside the stated objective, the author employs specific historical methods, including logical, systemic, chronological, actualization, and periodization. In writing the article, the author also utilized her field ethnographic materials and relevant literature pertaining to the problem. Additionally, archival materials sourced from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Dagestan (CSA RD) were incorporated, contributing novel insights to scientific discourse. The study concludes in the identification of a significant factor contributing to the retainment of easement in Laks' land tenure: the absence of forced crop rotation, wherein the community actively regulated the exploitation of its plots, determining which lands to cultivate and which to leave fallow. The emergence of these easements can be traced to attempts aimed at legally addressing conflicting economic interests between various communities, as well as between communities and private owners. This occurred amidst escalating antagonism between communal and private property, intensified by land congestion, evolving economic specialization, and the waning influence of the community in matters of land tenure, economic activities, and social everyday life.

*Keywords:* Laks; Dagestan; easement; land ownership; land tenure.

**For citation:** Ramazanova Z.B. Forms of Land Tenure in Laks in the 19th - Early 20th Centuries. *History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Caucasus*. 2023. Vol. 19. N.4. P. 1082-1094. doi. org/10.32653/CH1941082-1094

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.32653/СН1941082-1094>

Исследовательская статья

Рамазанова Зоя Буттаевна  
д.и.н., ведущий научный сотрудник  
Институт истории, археологии и этнографии  
Дагестанский федеральный исследовательский центр РАН, Махачкала, Россия  
[zoja.ram@mail.ru](mailto:zoja.ram@mail.ru)

## О ФОРМАХ ЗЕМЛЕПОЛЬЗОВАНИЯ У ЛАКЦЕВ В XIX – НАЧАЛЕ XX В.

*Аннотация.* Целью статьи является анализ сведений о формах землепользования у лакцев в XIX – начале XX в. Основное внимание автора уделено формам земельной собственности и определению степени их распространенности на территории, занимаемой лакцами в исследуемое время. Автор обращает внимание на распространенность в землепользовании лакцев своеобразных сервитутов, причины сохранения которых не получили должного освещения в работах многих исследователей, и приводит свою версию устойчивости этого вида землепользования. Теоретико-методологической основой работы являются общие принципы историзма и объективизма. В соответствии с выдвинутой целью исследования автор использовал и частные исторические методы: логический, системный, хронологический, актуализации, периодизации. При написании статьи были использованы полевые этнографические материалы автора и специальная литература по проблеме. А также архивные материалы, хранящиеся в Центральном государственном архиве Республики Дагестан, которые впервые вводятся в научный оборот. В результате проведенного исследования мы пришли к выводу, что одной из причин сохранности сервитутов в землепользовании лакцев является отсутствие у них так называемого принудительного севооборота, при котором община регулировала процесс эксплуатации своих участков и решала какие земли засеять, а какие оставить под пар. Возникновение названных сервитутов было связано с попытками правового урегулирования противостоящих друг другу хозяйственных интересов разных общин, а также общин и частных владельцев в условиях нарастающего антагонизма взаимоотношений общественной и частной собственности на фоне земельной тесноты, развивавшейся хозяйственной специализации, ослабления позиций общины в землепользовании, хозяйственном и общественном быту.

*Ключевые слова:* лакцы; Дагестан; сервитуты; землевладение; землепользование

**Для цитирования:** Рамазанова З.Б. О формах землепользования у лакцев в XIX – начале XX в. // История, археология и этнография Кавказа. 2023. Т. 19. № 4. С. 1082-1094. doi: [org/10.32653/СН1941082-1094](https://doi.org/10.32653/СН1941082-1094)

© Рамазанова З.Б., 2023

© Дагестанский федеральный исследовательский центр РАН, 2023

The Laks represent one of the larger ethnic groups in Dagestan, with a reported population of 162518<sup>1</sup> according to the 2020 All-Russian Population Census. Predominantly residing in the Laksky, Kulinsky, and Novolaksky districts of the Republic of Dagestan, they have long inhabited the regions now known as Laksky and Kulinsky, referring to it as *lakku kJanu* (lit. “territory of the Laks”). Beyond these districts, Laks are also found in Akushinsky (Balkhar, Kuli, Tsulikana, Ulluchara), Rutulsky (Arakul and Verkhniy Katruk), Dakhadaevsky (Shadni), and Charodinsky (Shali) districts. To the south, the Samur Range serves as a natural demarcation, separating the Laks from their neighbors, the Tsakhurs and Rutuls. The lower Dyultydag ridge in the northwest acts as a geographical boundary distinguishing the Laks’ settlement territory from that of the Dargins.

The agricultural practices of the Laks did not emerge and evolve in isolation; rather, they developed through direct interaction and mutual influence with the economies of other Dagestan peoples. Consequently, the historiography of Lak agriculture and land tenure is intricately connected with the historiography of agriculture among other Dagestan ethnic groups and cannot be examined separately. The earliest ethnographic evidence, documented by ancient and Arab scholars, are outlined in the works of Soviet researchers [1]. J. Gerber, a foundational figure in Dagestan ethnography, presents valuable information about the economy. He was one of the first to provide the description of the Laks, referring to them as *Kazykumuks* [2], and published various details about their economic practices.

From the second half of the 18th century until the 1850s, the prevailing trend in literature was dominated by works of a general descriptive nature, encompassing diverse information. Primarily, these included reports, military-historical studies, and assessments from military officials. L.I. Tikhonov’s work<sup>2</sup> is representative of this genre. Towards the end of the 18th century and into the early decades of the 19th century, the ethnography of the Caucasus received partial attention from scholars, travelers, as well as officers and civil officials stationed in the region. Subsequently, during the 1840s to the 1860s, a substantial volume of ethnographic material was produced by military personnel, supplemented to some extent by civil servants and individuals from various professions. Notably, this period is distinctive for the active involvement of authors from local nationalities in the field of Caucasus ethnography.

Two studies by A. Omarov, featured in the “Collections of Information about the Caucasian Mountaineers” [3; 4], should be mentioned. Additionally, P.G. Przhetslavsky’s article, “Dagestan, its Morals and Customs” [5], is of significance. Based on the author’s valuable observations of Dagestani life, including that of the Laks, the article provides insightful material on their economy and daily life. Further contributions regarding the Laks are found in the works of A.M. Dirr [6] and S. Gabiev [7]. D.B. Butaev’s articles also deserve acknowledgment for their role in addressing land tenure issues among the Laks during this period [8].

Within the publications of the Soviet era [9], the works of G.G. Osmanov stand out as particularly relevant to our article [10; 11]. In 1961, H.-M.O. Khashaev’s monograph was

1. Results of the 2020 All-Russian Population Census according to the Rosstat website. Vol. 5. National composition and language proficiency Available at: [rosstat.gov.ru](https://rosstat.gov.ru). <https://05.rosstat.gov.ru> > vserosperep.

2. Tikhonov L.I. Description of Northern Dagestan // CSA RD. F. 59. Dagestan Regional Commission for the All-Russian Agricultural Census. Temir-Khan-Shura. Inv. 1. File 114, 115, 116, 111, 113.

published, discussing intriguing questions regarding the land and legal relations of the Dagestanis. Notably, the article draws on materials from the Central State Archive of the Republic of Dagestan and published archival materials [12]. Turning to the post-Soviet period, the article utilizes the expanded and republished monograph by A.G. Bulatova [13], the monograph by M.O. Osmanov [14], and the monograph by B.G. Aliev [15].

We refrain from incorporating works of the post-Soviet period on the history and ethnography of the peoples of Dagestan in our study as we believe that many of them reiterate the findings published by their predecessors.

In Lakia, forests were notably scarce. Expansive summer pastures situated on high mountain ridges were only viable for use during the summer months. The absence of winter pastures compelled the Laks to lease such spaces on the plains. Faced with a lack of self-sustaining resources, the Laks turned to various trades in their pursuit of alternative means of subsistence.

As correctly noted by H.-M.O. Khashaev, Kazikumukh played a role in Mountainous Dagestan akin to that of a medieval city in Western Europe. The villages surrounding Kazikumukh can be compared to the workshops of a medieval city, with each village specializing in the production of a specific item. Collectively, these villages produced everything necessary to fulfill various needs, including clothing, weapons, jewelry, and even cooking. Dagestanis aptly referred to Kumukh as a city [16, p. 162; 17, p. 155]. The centers of craft and trade, particularly in Kumukh and its neighboring villages, exhibited more advanced relations. In contrast, another part of the region, centered around the village of Kuli, maintained a degree of internal closure and isolation. Consequently, the process of feudalization permeated nearly the entire society in the Kumukh region, while other areas of the Laks retained semi-patriarchal-semi-feudal relations [9, p. 281–282].

This period was characterized by the following forms of land ownership: feudal, peasant-private, state, waqf.

Communal ownership extended to pastures, partially to meadows, and forests. Some privately owned lands comprised the possessions of the khan (until the first half of the 19th century), beks, and wealthy uzdens (*khuni katri*) – designated as the mulks of feudal lords. Another segment of privately owned lands consisted of small plots known as mulks, held by free uzdens [18, p. 38]. Mulks, categorized by status, were further divided into those of large landowners and those of free community members. In the former case, these were lands exploited by feudal lords through the mediation of dependent peasants, while in the latter, they were lands directly cultivated by their owners – free peasants [19, p. 277].

In the categorization of land ownership in Dagestan, particularly in Lakia, it is necessary to acknowledge the significance of the mulk. The mulk is a freely alienable unconditional property [1, p. 80]. Small free ownership of land not only conferred the right to own it without hindrance or limitations but also included the ability to transfer ownership [20, p. 167]. “Mulk could be sold, passed on by inheritance, gifted to another owner, or bequeathed to a mosque. In this respect, mulk is an analogy to the Russian patrimony, the Western European allod” [16, p. 80].

*Feudal landownership.* The basis of the feudal property of the Kazikumukh khans and beks was not arable land, but pastures. Pastures and grazing mountains were acquired through

the appropriation of communal lands and primarily through seizing the lands of neighboring peoples. For instance, the last Kazikumukh khan, Agalar, possessed 34 pasture mountains, constituting the primary source of his income [14, p. 264–265] and yielding 2500 heads of sheep annually [12, p. 27]. The khan distributed these sheep among the villages of his khanate for sale. The village elders forced the villagers to buy sheep at the price set by the khan. In the context of livestock farming, payment for pasture tenure amounted to feudal rent, as the khans, by controlling the pivotal aspects of livestock farming, specifically pastures, placed livestock breeders in a position of dependence [16, p. 161]. As an illustration, residents of the khan's villages, such as Urimi and Mukarki, annually contributed one bull, butter, and cheese to the khan. Similarly, residents of Mukar provided 15 load-packs of firewood and one kurdyuk (tail fat) each, those in Kamahi offered 15 load-packs of firewood and one sheep carcass each, and residents of Vikhli, in addition to firewood, supplied 1 ½ kurdyuk and 30 dachu<sup>3</sup> of barley. Furthermore, residents of the villages of Khusraninsky Magal contributed two datyals<sup>4</sup> of oil each [7, p. 86].

According to the household census of 1886, the Kazikumukh district comprised 10340 households with a total land area of 51808 desyatinas. This land distribution included 4542 desyatinas of hayfields, 6736 desyatinas of arable land, 39880 desyatinas of pastures, and 650 desyatinas of forests. On average, each household had access to 5 desyatinas of total land, of which 0.65 desyatinas were arable land. In contrast, 47 farm landowners collectively held 3622 desyatinas [12, p. 86].

In the Kazikumukh Khanate, alongside the khan, beks, and chankas, large landowners included representatives of the Qadi family. Unlike feudal economy in Russia, the system in Mountainous Dagestan, including the Kazikumukh Khanate, did not involve the continuous allocation of arable land to peasants by feudal lords, mainly due to the scarcity of such land in the mountainous terrain. Arable land in the mountains was assigned to only a small portion of dependent peasant rayats, a category of peasants reliant on feudal rulers. These rayats either paid rent or performed various types of work for the landowner, such as herding livestock, harvesting crops, plowing, reaping, and more [9, p. 278–279]. The majority of rayats were prisoners of war and their descendants, and their numbers were consistently replenished by impoverished commoners. Additionally, in villages like Tulizma, Khulisma, Khosrekh, and others, the rayat group primarily formed through the lags, forcefully attached to land [15, p. 158]. A lag was the full property of the owner; he could be sold, bought, gifted, exchanged, etc. [21].<sup>5</sup>

To clarify the questions of feudal relations and the interaction between feudal lords and peasants in Dagestan during the post-reform period, it is imperative to discuss the transformations in land ownership and land tenure. In the period under examination, notable changes unfolded in the evolution of commodity-money relations in Dagestan. The heightened demand for agricultural products facilitated the expansion of rental relationships with entrepreneurs within the feudal milieu. The majority of feudal lords sustained their

3. Dachu – a measure of volume among the Laks, equal to 12 kg.

4. Datyal – a measure of weight for butter, cheese, honey, equal to 3 kg.

5. In the Kazikumukh Khanate, as elsewhere in Dagestan, the original source of slavery were prisoners of war. However, slavery in Lakiya did not outgrow the framework of domestic, patriarchal slavery, since slaves were of interest to the owner not so much as labor force, but as a valuable commodity.



livelihoods through land lease. However, these earnings often proved insufficient for their luxurious or leisurely lifestyle. Consequently, many resorted to pledging their lands to moneylenders at interest, eventually falling into inescapable bondage and being compelled to sell their lands. Thus, feudal land ownership diminished, and classless land ownership strengthened [2, p. 167–168], which unequivocally resulted from the penetration of capitalist relations into Dagestan's agriculture. A subsequent stride in this trajectory was marked by the reforms of the 1860s. Following the conclusion of the Caucasian War and the establishment of "peace" in the region, the Tsarist government opted to abolish autonomous feudal estates. This move liberated up to 200 thousand people from the khan's dependence [2, p. 25].

The abolition of the khanates precipitated changes in land-legal relations. Previously, the escheated estates of peasants passed to the khans; however, following the liquidation of the khanates, village council assumed management of these estates. Khans no longer wielded influence over the communal-mulk land relations of peasants. In the 1860s, the former khan's lands were transferred to the ownership of the royal treasury. Consequently, all khan's lands in the Kazikumukh Khanate became state property, including 38 pastures generating an annual income of up to 1.7 thousand sheep [18, p. 143].

*Small-peasantry landownership.* Apart from the mentioned feudal ownership, a distinct form of land ownership emerged in the small peasant class. Mulki were personally owned by free uzdens as unrestricted private property. Exercising this right, they engaged in various transactions, including long-term leases, related to their land at their discretion. The community, however, preferred that peasants sell their lands within the community rather than to external parties.

Mulk ownership in Dagestan, especially in Lakia, differed somewhat from land ownership under feudalism in Western Europe. In Lakia, as well as in Mountainous Dagestan, mulk was allocated to a specific peasant from the lands he inherited for hereditary use from the village community.

*State-owned lands.* In Dagestan, the establishment of state land ownership transpired after 1813, involving the appropriation of both confiscated estates of feudal lords and seized peasant lands. During the 1860s, the state land fund experienced a significant surge, primarily at the expense of the khan's estates. State-owned lands, predominantly composed of pastures and forests, expanded notably. From the 1850s onwards, pastures were leased out, with payment accepted in kind or currency. In 1862, the tax-farming system was dismantled, and a fee per head of livestock was instituted as a replacement. Tenants were required to pay a fee based on the estimated number of livestock they grazed. Towards the end of the 1860s, in-kind contributions were substituted with cash payments. Starting from 1877, a tithe payment system was introduced, and plots were auctioned for rent [22, p. 149].

The peasant elite turned to renting extensive portions of state-owned pastures, contributing to the escalation of speculation in state pastures. The Tsarist government leveraged the State Land Fund to bolster its social support in Dagestan by allotting plots to individuals in service to the throne. For instance, in the Kazikumukh district, the daughter of Colonel Nutsal Khan, Shamaibike, received a pasture yielding an annual income of 1000 rubles [22, p. 150].

*Waqf land tenure.* In Lakia, as in other regions of Dagestan, the Muslim clergy assumed the role of large landowners through mosque lands – plots of land bequeathed by believers.

Both the property and a designated portion of its income were bequeathed. All this income was termed “waqf.” Mosque lands were non-negotiable and could not be sold to anyone. These mosque properties were categorized based on their use into three groups: 1) lands directly owned by mosques; 2) lands permanently utilized by the heirs of the waqf grantor, and 3) lands entrusted to the management of village communities [22, p. 151]. Tenants, as outlined in the will, allocated a portion of the harvest to the mosque. The village council determined the payment, which typically was half and one-third of the harvest [23, p. 10]. To provide context, data on the income received by a mosque in the Kazikumukh district in 1902 includes 2409 poods of grain, 3684 poods of baked bread, 292 sheep, 57 poods of meat, 135 pcs. of lamb thighs, 465 poods of lard, 32 poods of butter, 33 poods of cheese, 542 poods of tolokno, 2 poods of salt, 11 poods of halva, and 1 pood of crude oil [24, p. 92].

In the Kazikumukh district alone, there were more than 2 thousand desyatinas of mosque lands [16, p. 163]. Waqfs encompassed various assets, including lands, houses, animals, and more. The clergy, by leasing mosque lands to the impoverished on a sharecropping basis, claimed half of the harvest. Peasants, in return for their portion of the harvest, worked on waqf lands, involving activities such as cultivating the land, harvesting crops, providing firewood for the mosque, and undertaking the upkeep of mosque buildings and mills. Notably, peasants were not obliged to sustain a multitude of ministers of the Muslim religion, compensate them for performing religious rites, educating children, and handling Sharia affairs [11, p. 48].

*Communal lands.* In addition to various types of land, there existed communal lands, comprising pastures, partially meadows, and forests. A distinctive feature in the land tenure of the Laks during the period under study was the development of specific easements: *bart-urttu*, *dukhra*, and *kakh*.

The historical and ethnographic literature not only provides descriptions of the easements by D.B. Buttaev, Kh.-M.O. Khashaev, A.G. Bulatova, R.M. Magomedov [8, p. 1–10; 16, p. 164–166; 18, p. 39–41; 9, p. 266] but also offers interpretations. In particular, researchers explain their genesis and survival until the 20th century by the unique relationship between communal and private property in the context of land scarcity and distinctive economic practices. Many scholars, following M.M. Kovalevsky’s concept, argue that the preservation of easement appears to be a relic of former communal property. Previously, this phenomenon in agrarian law was construed by numerous researchers as the “ignorance” of the Laks regarding private property rights. However, Kh.-M.O. Khashaev demonstrated that easements emerge in conjunction with developed private property, reflecting its complex forms [16, p. 166].

1. *Bart-urttu* – the right to graze livestock on land owned by another person or another rural community. The permitted period spans three spring months, extending “until the 20th day of the last month of spring.”<sup>6</sup> In some cases, the duration of *bart-urttu* could be confined to just a few days.

2. *Dukhra* – the right to graze livestock during the autumn months, typically from mid-August to November. Essentially, this right could persist until the conclusion of *bart-urttu*

6. CSA RD. F. 90. Commission for the analysis of estate and land rights of the native population of the Dagestan region. Temi-Khan-Shura. Inv. 2. File 15. L. 4.

[16, p. 164]. *Dukhra* translates to “old grass,” indicating the right to utilize grass after haymaking<sup>7</sup>.

3. *Kakh* – the right to graze livestock on arable land after the grain harvest. Those holding the *kakh* right had the authority to prevent the owner of the arable land from winter sowing. To plow their own land in the fall, the owner needed the consent of the individual exercising the *kakh* right. The assignment of the *kakh* right required a payment of 2 rubles and 85 kopecks per desyatina. H.-M.O. Khashaev notes that after grain harvesting, little remained on the arable plot since the grain was harvested cleanly, and the straw was cut at the root, making it impractical to exercise this right. This right generated income only when autumn sowing occurred on the specific plot [16, p. 164]. In reality, *kakh* pertains not to the remnants of straw but to grass – specifically, young sprouts on the stubble. Individuals exercising the *kakh* right could utilize these sprouts, but also to graze some sheep on it, which remained in the village during autumn and winter.

The adat in the Kazikumukh district provided for *bart-urttu* to last until the 20th day of the last spring month<sup>8</sup>. Due to that, frequent abuses of this right led to disputes and legal conflicts among the populations of different communities. For instance, in 1865, residents of Sukhi village initiated a dispute with residents of Vikhli (present-day Kulinsky district), who possessed the right to three-day grazing not during the spring months but “after 27 days counting from summer.”<sup>9</sup> Concurrently, the residents of Sukhi pointed out the damage caused by the Vikhli villagers during that time, as grass only grows in the early days of summer, after which “nothing grows, and the communal land remains useless for our livestock.”<sup>10</sup> In 1907, the rural society of Chitur of the Kazikumukh district petitioned to reinstate the right to use land under the name *bart-urttu*, implying a claim about the use of the Kadiev lands by the Kumukh society of the village of Chitur, causing discontent among the Chitur population.<sup>11</sup>

Considering the next servitude of *kakh*, it should be noted that under *kakh* is meant autumn grazing, which started at the end of the grain harvest and lasted until winter, i.e. before the snow falls.<sup>12</sup>

In 1885, the community of the village of Turchi submitted a petition to the Chief Civil Commander of the Caucasus. The residents of Turchi complained that their fellow villagers, who owned herds of sheep, prohibited them from plowing their arable lands in the autumn season. Instead, these lands were left for grazing their sheep, and the petitioners were only allowed to plow them in the spring, resulting in no crops left for the petitioners. Consequently, they requested a prohibition against their fellow villagers and sheep farmers, who prevent them from plowing and sowing their lands. Additionally, the holders of the *kakh* right demanded an additional payment for conceding their right to autumn grazing. As part of this arrangement, the landowner, i.e., the one sowing, had to pay the holder of the *kakh* right “1/3 of saba of barley for each saba of bread sown.”<sup>13</sup>

7. Author's filed material. Archive Fund of IHAE. F. 5. Inv. 1. File 331. L. 20.

8. CSA RD. F. 90. Commission for the analysis of estate and land rights of the native population of the Dagestan region. Temi-Khan-Shura. Inv. 2. File 15. L. 4.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid.

11. CSA RD. F. 3. Army commander and civil manager in the Caspian region. Inv. 1. File 9. L. 7.

12. CSA RD. F. 90. Commission for the analysis of estate and land rights of the native population of the Dagestan region. Temi-Khan-Shura. Inv. 2. File 7. L. 7.

13. Ibid. L. 1-3.



In a report addressed to the Commission for the analysis of estate and land rights of the native population of the Dagestan region, dated September 26, 1885, the head of the Kazikumukh district informed about the following: 1) among the arable lands for which there are *kakhs*, some are the collective property of the entire village, while others are the private property of individual owners; 2) *kakh* is not limited to individual strangers but is exercised by entire rural communities in some fields. This right can involve fellow villagers of the field owners or individuals from different villages; 3) the *kakh* right originated from the sale of fields under special conditions. However, when exactly and in what order this right was formed, none of the supporters can explain; 4) the social position of both the owners of the fields and those entitled to the *kakh* has no significance in this context.<sup>14</sup>

Residents of the village of Khosrekh submitted a petition to abolish the right of Agalar Khan's daughter, Maya-khanum-bike, to *kakh*. Their argument was that she did not possess livestock and, instead, leased out the right to *kakh*, resulting in losses for the community [16, p. 165].

Evidently, the presence of livestock is a crucial condition for owning an easement right. The lands subject to easements may have formerly been communal pastures, later cultivated and converted into arable land due to the village's population growth.

Under *dukhra* and *bart-urttu*, the measurement of pasture size was based on the number of rams, with one desyatina per ram. Similarly, the area under crops was measured by the amount of saba. For instance, having the *kakh* right for 12 saba meant having the *kakh* right equivalent to one desyatina [16, p. 165].

These proportions underscore the significance of livestock ownership for acquiring various easement rights.

Dagestan ethnographers attribute the origin of these easements to the community's historical ownership of arable land and meadows. As the practice of communal redistribution ceased and individual plots transitioned into private ownership, the land, especially after the harvest, appeared to revert to the possession of the rural community [18, p. 40].

The royal agricultural system still prevalent among the Laks played a role in the transformation of former cultivated fields into communal pastures during fallow periods.

The genesis of easements, as explained by H.-M.O. Khashaev, can be traced to the unequal distribution of land among different societies, varying land needs due to land scarcity, the necessity to drive livestock to the mountains in spring and to winter pastures in the fall through lands belonging to other villages, and primarily due to the prevalence of private land ownership [16, p. 166].

We do not concur with the perspective presented by Kh.O. Khashaev regarding the origin of easements, as we believe that the emergence and preservation of certain easements must consider the conversion of land, once designated for communal pastures, into arable land.

Easements could come into existence through various means, including deed of giving by the khan, the forceful seizure of land for temporary grazing from a weaker rural society, concessions by societies granting the right to land use as compensation for blood price, or joint agreements by landowners to grant rights to use for a fee either temporarily or indefinitely [16, p. 166].

---

14. Ibid. L. 4.

We believe that one factor contributing to the emergence and persistence of these easements lies in the absence of “forced crop rotations” among the Laks. Unlike systems where the community regulates the exploitation of plots, determining which lands to sow and which to leave fallow, in Lakia, each owner independently decided which plot to cultivate and which to leave fallow.

The analysis above leads us to the conclusion that the emergence of these easements was linked to efforts aimed at legally addressing conflicting economic interests among various communities, as well as between communities and private landowners. This occurred within the context of increasing antagonism between communal and private property, set against the backdrop of land scarcity, evolving economic specialization, and the diminishing influence of the community in land use, economic, and social aspects [25, p. 46–47].

It’s worth noting that in Lakia, there were also lands that saw joint alternate use by several owners – “*lagal shayssa lukhchchiv*” [18, p. 42]<sup>15</sup>. A.G. Bulatova provides an explanation for the origin of the term *lagal*: “... an arable or hay plot that previously belonged to one family, which then divided, passed into the alternate use of new related families if it was impossible to use it rationally by dividing it between individuals (due to its small size or for other reasons). In cases where there were two or more of these plots, individual families would alternately use both the better and less favorable plots. Specifically, on arable land, the ownership would alternate every two years, corresponding to the fertilization cycle, while on haymaking, the change occurred annually. If one of the co-owners wished to sell their share, and there were two or more non-homogeneous plots, they could not sell the better one without the agreement of their partner. Consequently, the sale of a good plot often came with the condition of alternate use, encompassing both plots with another co-owner, essentially under *lagal* terms... However, during the period under study, shares in land were freely bought and sold, therefore *lagal* partnerships often formed without any familial ties [18, p. 43]. It seems that the emergence of the *lagal* institution was primarily linked to the scarcity of land in Lakia.

As stated in the Report of the acting head of the district dated December 12, 1849, materials concerning the ownership of plots of free land and villages by members of the Kazikumukh and Kyurinsky bek families highlight the presence of a category of land known as *lagan* in the Kazikumukh Khanate. The report states: “freer and larger land in this khanate is known as *lagan*. According to measurements, there were 10743 desyatins in it, including 9733 suitable and 1010 unsuitable; however, of this number, up to 4000 desyatins are occupied by neighboring villages, leaving no more than 6000 desyatins of land completely free, suitable for arable farming, and partially for grazing livestock.”<sup>16</sup> The report further states: “... I suggest to determine the amount of land to be allocated and make the allotment when the granting of villages takes place and when the measurement of the lands belonging to these villages themselves is carried out by decree, to whom and how much land needs to be added from *lagal*.”<sup>17</sup>

15. Author’s field material. Archive Fund of IHAE. F. 5. Inv. 1. File 331. L. 35.

16. CSA RD. F. 3. Army commander and civil administrator in the Caspian region. Inv. 1. File 9. L. 132.

17. Ibid. L. 132.

The institution of lagan, as highlighted by A.G. Bulatov, was brought to life by the private ownership of arable lands and, to some extent, hayfields, as well as by land scarcity and the challenges posed by dividing lands that were previously held in communal ownership by a large family. These challenges arose due to the small size of land plots, inconvenient locations, and variations in the structure and fertility of different parts of the same plot [18, p. 43].

It is essential to emphasize that, during the period under study, land ownership in Dagestan, including Lakia, retained a medieval character. A considerable portion of the land was still concentrated in the hands of prominent figures such as feudal lords, beks, the military-feudal state, and the Muslim mosque [11, p. 112].

After 1860–1867, the peasantry of Dagestan became subject to a household tax. Comparable to the state peasants of Russia, the Dagestan *uzdens* were obligated to fulfill in-kind duties in favor of the treasury: *povodnaya*, *dorozhnaya*, *kvartal'naya*, and the payment of tax. Prior to 1901, they were also responsible for paying *zemstvo* taxes, and following the tax reform of 1900, they contributed to the turnover tax as well as *zemstvo* taxes [11, p. 34].

Furthermore, the state land fund played a role in colonization efforts, involving the distribution of a portion of this fund among officers and the highest echelons of the bureaucracy.

The situation of the peasantry in Dagestan took a significant downturn following the reform on July 7, 1913, as outlined in the draft “Law on cessation of the dependent relations of the villagers of the Dagestan region and the Zakatala district from the beks and keshkele – the owners and on the establishment in their localities of regulations on peasant affairs” [12, p. 386]. This law detailed the conditions for terminating the dependent relations of peasants, setting the redemption amount to be paid to the beks by the peasants for each village individually. The redemption amount was provided to the beks exclusively from the state treasury, and the peasants were obligated to repay it through annual equal contributions spanning 20 years, from January 1, 1913 to 1933 [12, p. 388]. In total, the peasants were required to pay the beks a sum of 302309 rubles [26, p. 355–356]. On average, each peasant household in Dagestan had to contribute 23 rubles to settle canceled duties. The financial challenge of paying this amount becomes apparent when considering that the cost of one ram was approximately 3 rubles [26, p. 356].

In the Kazikumukh district, such relations persisted in eight villages with 842 households. In contrast to Southern Dagestan, the development of dependent relations in this region did not reach the same level. The dependent population, although obligated to fulfill duties in favor of the beks, was still classified as belonging to the category of *uzdens*, meaning free individuals [12, p. 359].

By the period under examination, the integration of the Dagestan region into the economic system of post-reform Russia had already achieved a significant degree.

In conclusion, it is evident that the Laks, much like other Dagestani peoples, have a rich agricultural heritage, supported by compelling archaeological and ethnographic evidence. The agricultural practices in Lakia were significantly influenced by natural conditions and vertical zoning, leading to a conceptual division of the region into two zones: mountainous and high-mountainous.

This study has revealed the crucial role played by social structure and land relations in the economic evolution of the Laks. Throughout the examined period, spanning the late 19th to the early 20th centuries, private ownership of arable land and, to some extent, hayfields predominated in Lakia.

A distinctive feature in Lakland tenure, distinguishing it from other regions of Mountainous Dagestan, was the persistence of specific easements such as *bart-urttu*, *dukhra*, and *kakh*.

## REFERENCES

1. Shikhsaidov A.R. *Dagestan in the X–XIV centuries*. Makhachkala, 1975.
2. Gerber J.G. Description of countries and peoples along the Western coast of the Caspian Sea. In: Kosven M.O., H.-M.O. Khashaev (eds.). *History, geography and ethnography of Dagestan*. Archival materials. Moscow, 1958.
3. Omarov A. Memoirs of a mutalim. *Collection of information about the Caucasian mountaineers*. Vol. I. Tiflis, 1868.
4. Omarov A. How Laks live. *Collection of information about the Caucasian mountaineers*. Vol. III. Tiflis, 1870.
5. Przhetslavsky P.G. Dagestan, its morals and customs. *Vestnik Evropy*. 1867, No. 9.
6. Dirr A.M. Excursion around Dagestan. IV. Kumukh and Laks. *Kavkaz*. 1903, No. 281.
7. Gabiev S. Laks, their past and life. SMOMPК. Vol. 36. Tiflis, 1906.
8. Butaev D.B. On the origin of land use, known in the Kazikumukh district under the names “Bart-Urttu”, “Dukhra” and “Kva”. *Dagestanskije oblastnie vedomosti*. 1910, No. 1.
9. Magomedov R.M. *Socio-economic and political system of Dagestan in the 18th – early 19th centuries*. Makhachkala, 1957.
10. Osmanov G.G. *On the social structure of Dagestan at the end of the 18th – beginning of the 19th centuries*. UZ IYAL DF AS USSR. Vol. 7. Makhachkala 1959.
11. Osmanov G.G. *Socio-economic development of the Dagestan pre-collective farm village*. Moscow, 1965.
12. Feudal relations in Dagestan (XIX – early XX centuries): Archival materials. Comp., preface and notes by Khashaev Kh.-M.O. Moscow, 1969.
13. Bulatova A.G. *Laks. Historical and ethnographic publication*. Makhachkala, 2000.
14. Osmanov M.O. *Natural types and systems of agriculture in Dagestan in the 19th – early 20th centuries*. Makhachkala, 2006.
15. Aliev B.G. *Agriculture and land tenure in late feudal Dagestan*. Makhachkala, 2014.
16. Khashaev H.-M.O. *Social system of Dagestan in the 19th century*. M., 1961.
17. Gidulyanov P.V. The estate-land question and rayat dependence in Dagestan. *Ethnograficheskoe obozrenie*. 1901, No. 1.
18. Bulatova A.G. *Laks*. Makhachkala, 1971.
19. Petrushevsky I.N. *Agriculture and agrarian*

## СПИСОК ЛИТЕРАТУРЫ

1. Шихсаидов А.Р. Дагестан в X–XIV вв. Махачкала, 1975.
2. Гербер И.Г. Описание стран и народов вдоль Западного берега Каспийского моря // История, география и этнография Дагестана (далее – ИГЭД). Архивные материалы / Под ред. М.О. Косвена и Х.-М.О. Хашаева. М., 1958).
3. Омаров А. Воспоминания муталима // Сборник сведений о кавказских горцах. Вып. I. Тифлис, 1868.
4. Омаров А. Как живут лаки // Сборник сведений о кавказских горцах. Вып. III. Тифлис, 1870.
5. Пржецлавский П.Г. Дагестан, его нравы и обычаи // Вестник Европы. 1867. № 3. С. 141-163
6. Дирр А.М. Экскурсия по Дагестану. IV. Кумух и лаки // Кавказ. 1903. № 281.
7. Габиев С. Лаки, их прошлое и быт // СМОМПК. Вып. 36. Тифлис, 1906.
8. Бутаев Д.Б. О происхождении землепользования, известного в Казикумухском округе под названием «Барт-Уртту», «Духра» и «Ква» // Дагестанские областные ведомости. 1910. № 1.
9. Магомедов Р.М. Общественно-экономический и политический строй Дагестана в XVIII – начале XIX веков. Махачкала, 1957.
10. Османов Г.Г. О социальном строе Дагестана в конце XVIII – начале XIX вв. // УЗ ИИЯЛ ДФ АН СССР. Т. 7. Махачкала 1959.
11. Османов Г.Г. Социально-экономическое развитие дагестанского доколхозного аула. М., 1965.
12. Феодалные отношения в Дагестане (XIX – начале XX вв.): Архивные материалы / Сост., предисл. и примеч. Хашаева Х.-М.О., М. 1969.
13. Булатова А.Г. Лакцы. Историко-этнографическое издание. Махачкала, 2000.
14. Османов М.О. Природные типы и системы земледелия Дагестана в XIX – начале XX века. Махачкала, 2006.
15. Алиев Б.Г. Земледелие и землевладение в позднефеодалном Дагестане. Махачкала, 2014.
16. Хашаев Х.-М.О. Общественный строй Дагестана в XIX веке. М., 1961.
17. Гидулянов П.В. Сословно-поземельный вопрос и раятская зависимость в Дагестане // Этнографическое обозрение. 1901. № 1.
18. Булатова А.Г. Лакцы. Махачкала, 1971.
19. Петрушевский И.Н. Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране XIII–XIV веков. М.; Л., 1960.

*relations in Iran of the 13th–14th centuries*. Moscow; Leningrad, 1960.

20. Marx K. and Engels F. Works. 2nd ed. Vol. 21.

21. Inozemtseva E.I. *The institution of slavery in feudal Dagestan. Essays on history*. Makhachkala, 2014.

22. Ramazanov Kh.Kh. Land ownership and land tenure in Dagestan in the post-reform period. *Questions of history and ethnography of Dagestan: Coll. scientific reports of DSU*. Vol. IV. Makhachkala, 1974.

23. Nakhshunov I.G. *Economic consequences of the annexation of Dagestan to Russia*. Makhachkala, 1956.

24. Review of the Dagestan region for 1902. Temir-Khan-Shura, 1903.

25. Ramazanova Z.B. Easement law in the land use system of the Laks at the end of the 19th – beginning of the 20th century. *III Conference of Young Scientists of the Dagestan Academy of Sciences of the USSR (Abstracts of reports)*. Makhachkala, 1980.

26. Essays on the history of Dagestan. Vol. 1. pp. 355–356.

20. Маркс К. и Энгельс Ф. Соч. 2-е изд. Т. 21.

21. Иноземцева Е.И. Институт рабства в феодальном Дагестане. Очерки истории. Махачкала, 2014.

22. Рамазанов Х.Х. Землевладение и землепользование в Дагестане в пореформенный период // Вопросы истории и этнографии Дагестана: Сб. научн. сообщ. ДГУ. Вып. IV. Махачкала, 1974.

23. Нахшунув И.Г. Экономические последствия присоединения Дагестана к России. Махачкала, 1956.

24. Обзор Дагестанской области за 1902 год. Темир-Хан-Шура, 1903.

25. Рамазанова З.Б. Сервитутное право в системе землепользования лакцев в конце XIX – нач. XX вв. // III конференция молодых ученых Дагфилиала АН СССР (Тезисы докладов). Махачкала, 1980.

26. Очерки истории Дагестана. Т. 1. С. 355–356.

*Received 12.05.2023*

*Accepted 18.08.2023*

*Published 15.12.2023*

*Поступила в редакцию 12.05.2023 г.*

*Принята в печать 18.08.2023 г.*

*Опубликована 15.12.2023 г.*