

## WEDDING POEMS AND SONGS IN LAZ

### ABSTRACT

The proposed research aims to study and analyze Laz wedding poems and songs. When discussing the issue, we rely on the materials found at the Folklore collections of Niko Berdzenishvili Institute and those obtained through our expeditions over the years. Several wedding poems and songs recorded with Laz people living in the Republic of Turkey are also presented in the article. Comparison of materials revealed many such samples that were either unknown to the academic literature or known as other variations. Consequently, the above-mentioned research is significant and has theoretical and practical value. The poetic works preserved in the memory of the people, though more or less forgotten, will return to the people again, will come to life and enrich the Laz ethnomusical area.

As it is known, the traditional bridal institute has undergone a change, modernization and, consequently, the poems and songs typical to a traditional Laz wedding are gradually disappearing. We believe that the above-mentioned research will preserve the ritual poems and songs provided here for illustrative purposes.

Laz wedding has its own firm, traditional rituals. These rituals are reflected in the Laz folklore. Observations on folklore materials have revealed that in Lazeti, as in other parts of Georgia, the wedding ritual consists of several stages and every stage is filled with folk poems and songs. The paper discusses the poems and songs of the specified content.

The bride searching as well as selection is the most important moment in the Laz wedding folklore, just as in other parts of Georgia. One of the specific functions in the wedding ritual is assigned to the institution of a matchmaker. The next stage involves the engagement that has been appropriately presented in the Laz wedding poetry. According to the Laz tradition, the interval between engagement and wedding was quite long. During this time, the fiancé would secretly meet with his beloved thanks to her female relatives. Laz people refer to this process as “sijalikoba” (relationship between groom and his in-laws).

Some of the Laz wedding-ritual poems and songs related to the wedding ceremony belong to Makruli (Georgian wedding song) poems part of which is dialogic by nature.

Thus, Laz wedding poems and songs are an organic part of a unified, common Georgian folklore. The customs of the ancestors related to the wedding rituals and the corresponding examples of the Laz folklore occupy one of the outstanding positions in the Georgian folklore allowing us to gain deeper insight into the spiritual world of the Laz people. These specimens preserved in the Laz life are important not only from folkloric but also from linguistic and ethnographic points of view.

**Keywords:** Laz Folklore, Georgian folklore, Wedding poems and songs.