

KHULA – AN OUTHOUSE AND SACRED BUILDING

Khula is an outhouse for dry foodstuffs. At the same time it is an object of the worship of powers of fertility, reflecting the cosmogonic view of the outer world and its relation to the household environment.

Beginning with the feudal period, khula is a literary fact, being mentioned alongside other structures (sra "palace", sasakhle "edifice", paiati "chamber") in literary sources. These terms naturally constitute different ethnolinguistic units.

In historical sources khula is a structure designed for a smithy and for the storage of candles and incense. In church documents khula is a room-shed for which rent is paid, and the rent is given as an offering. Even the land rent of khula occurs in the text.

Khula-khuli is genetically linked with an ancient tradition, both terms reflecting different developmental periods of this tradition. The fact, that the word **khula** does not seem to be Georgian, appears to have entered from a foreign language source underscores the ritual and sacred meaning of this structure in Georgian life.

The original names of objects of ritual (sacred) purpose are often subject to tabooing, being replaced with other words, and are occasionally of descriptive derivation. Cf. the Slavic **medved** of descriptive formation: "eater of honey", which replaced the ancient word denoting "bear" – a word of ritual significance for Indo-Europeans (cf. Greek "bear")¹