

## MADONA NIJARADZE

### WATER AND ITS RESIDENTS IN GEORGIAN MYSTICAL FAIRY TALES

Water is the source of life. Water and flood are often the reason of death, but curing with water is a stark fact nowadays, while water of immortality in fairy tales gives life to and cures the ill.

There are a lot of remnants in Georgian habits and traditions that naturally explain the phenomenon of the cult of water in Georgia. The cult of water is also reflected in the vocabulary of Georgian man. It can be easily proved by words existing in the Georgian vocabulary which are connected with water: 'wyaloba', 'mowyaleba', 'mowyale'.

There are a lot of legends about the water of immortality in Georgian folk lore. The water is located only in unreachable places and is guarded by dragons. A character of the tale is sent to fetch the water with two aims: 1) to cure the ill 2) to die. The water can be fetched only by a hero.

A snake and a dragon are mentioned very frequently among the water residents. Snake is a man's friend, while a dragon is its enemy. A snake gives a man a divine force and often saves him from the evil.

Unlike S.S. Orbeliani's explanation a dragon is a huge snake in folk fairy tales. It has reigns over drinkable water and demands only a virgin or a lad in turn. Later the reader feels sympathy for the victim. This is the motive of saving a woman.

The hero who kills the dragon marries the saved woman becomes the king's son-in-law.

Among the water residents there are 'golden fishes', frogs and witches as well who actively participate in opening the plot of the tale.