

Nana Meladze

## FOLK INTERPRETATION OF DREAM IN WEST GEORGIA

*Come to me in my dreams and then  
By day I shall be well again,  
For then the night will more than pay  
For the hopeless longings of the day.*  
(Matthew Arnold: "Longing")

This account discusses the theories that the Georgian people hold about their dreams. It describes folk beliefs, rituals, and dream interpretation collected by the author while conducting fieldwork in West Georgia in the summer of 1986.

Among mantic or divination rites, "oneiromantica" - the explanation of dreams - is one of the most interesting. Nevertheless, it has been somehow ignored by ethnologists in my country. Meanwhile dream research has become a subject of interest mainly to psychologists and psychiatrists, who, busy with conducting laboratory experiments, often ignore ethnographic material. Good ethnography could have provided rich and varied material on people's experience and knowledge on a multicultural scale, based not on single and accidental experiences, but on individuals' lifelong experience. For modern science now characterises an integration between the fields, as well as a differentiation within each field itself. Complex studies of traditional folk experience attract more attention nowadays and have been actualised. It should be noted that studies of folk medical treatment, weather forecasting, agriculture, or problems of mentality, carried out by the united efforts of ethnologists, folklorists, culturologists on the one hand, and physicists, biologists, and psychologists on the other, can only be effective if they deal with contemporary ethnographic material from living traditional ethnic cultures. This kind of research - valuable for ethnologists helps to widen knowledge about humanity and about humanity's links with nature. Such data will also enrich other fields.

Dreaming is a subject that both ethnologists and psychologists ought to study, and not separately, but in close contact and collaboration. Ethnologists are not psychoanalysts and it is not their role to explain psychological bases or mechanisms of dreaming; they would rather not strive for it; they cannot go beyond their competence and cross the boundaries of the "territory" of another field, where they will be strangers and will obviously appear as non-professionals, but they could present materials which could be interesting for the psychologists, who set their own experiments (when ethnographers do their fieldwork). However, if they look at such materials sceptically, I would also allow myself to mistrust their own data, drawn from laboratory experiments on dreams, making claims based on manifest and latent desire, and especially sexual desire (they have a surprising

inclination to see and explain everything in terms of sex, although the nature of humans is more complicated than that, and so is nature itself).

The ethnographers possess vivid material, containing the information accumulated in the oral tradition of the ages, repeated throughout an informant's entire life, proved or disproved by his experience of years. Our informants, mostly elders, led a healthy way of life in nature (in the open air, consuming ecologically clean products, in a healthy climate, without stresses etc.). They are not patients with neurotic disorders. (How would the material be "healthy" if an informant is not healthy?) Of course, it does not flatter the ethnographer to realise that in this case they may appear mainly as source-suppliers. The questions "Why?" or "Why does it happen so?", are not questions for ethnographers, and perhaps this is also a reason why the topic of dream was instinctively avoided by them. Ethnographers are bad psychologists and psychologists are not good ethnographers, but I think the balance kept between them in dream research, and the interaction between them, could be beneficial for the further development of this subject.

### BACKGROUND AND HISTORY: DREAMS AND THEIR CONTEXT

Dreams and their interpretation have been of interest to humankind from the earliest times. Considerable attention was paid to dream interpretation in ancient Egypt and in the Near East; interesting dream systems were created in Mesopotamia and ancient Greece (see B. Kilborne 1987). We can read about examples of symbolic dreaming in the Old Testament (as Joseph's dreams, those of the Pharaoh, those of the Prisoner - Genesis 37.5, 40.9, 40.16, 41.2-7). Even though "Christian tradition discredited dreams, delegated them to a secondary place, and treated them with suspicion" (Kilborne 1987: 175), ancient Christian nations such as Georgia<sup>1</sup> maintain rich traditions of dream interpretation."

Georgian people - in their cultural consciousness part of a Mediterranean civilisation - accumulated during many centuries of their development a great amount of information about dreams, those mysterious phenomena of human psychology. In Georgia an anonymous manuscript has been passed down from generation to generation, the so-called *Book of Dreams*,<sup>2</sup> which contains explanations of about 1000 symbols.<sup>2</sup> The theme of this "oneiromantica" is a cross between belief in omens and foretelling the future. It was little studied as a topic in the Soviet ethnographic literature;<sup>3</sup> in fact, psychoanalysis was denied here and Freud has been almost illegal reading.

1 Christianity was declared state religion in Georgia in 337, soon after it was established the declaration in Rome.

2 I counted 988 dream symbols in it (with obvious later additions).



Feeling on shaky ground, having at that time no access to the useful works to which I was introduced later,<sup>4</sup> I nevertheless decided to take on the responsibility to collect field material on dreams when working with the annual summer fieldwork expedition of the Institute of History, Archaeology, and Ethnography of the Georgian Academy of Sciences. My decision was met with a curious and severe silence, and it was supposed that the research would never be deeply developed. "You want to work on this?" exclaimed the late Professor A. Robakidze. That was the only reaction I received, and during my whole fieldwork I was surrounded by the numb silence of team members who sceptically observed my interviews.

The following paper is based on the material that I humbly gathered during this expedition. The research took place in 1986, in one of the provinces of West Georgia, Imerety - "Pretty Imerety", as it is called for its picturesque scenery. Imerety is one of the historical-ethnographic provinces of Georgia. It consists of Upper Imerety (*Zemo Imerety*), which is a hilly part of the country, and Lower Imerety (*Qvemo Imerety*), situated in the lowlands, with a humid subtropical climate characterised by soft, warm winters and hot summers. The absolute height of the plateau of *Zemo Imerety* is 1500 meters above the sea level. The climate there is relatively cold and has a great abundance of precipitation (Maruashvili 1980).

From the 15th till the 19th century, Imerety was a separate kingdom, having been formed after the political disintegration of Georgian feudal monarchy. Geographically it was separated from East Georgia by the range of Likhi. In the north it was surrounded by the Caucasus range, in the west its territory was spread on the lowland of Kolkhis, and in the south it was fringed by the Meskhety mountains. Imerety was an object of constant aggression by Turkey from the 16th till the 18th century. Although it appeared in the 17th century that the country could provide 40,000 soldiers, in the 18th and the 19th century its population remained only at 120,000 (Burjanadze 1962; Dumbadze 1957).

After the annexation of East Georgia, the Russians increased their activities for an occupation and the abolition of the kingdom of Imerety. In 1810 they declared King Solomon II to be dismissed from the throne and Imerety to be united with Russia. The Russians captured Solomon by fraud and wanted to exile him to Russia, but Solomon managed to escape and ran away to Osmalia. From there he called for rebellion against the occupiers. The national war of liberation began. Russia sent 3,200 soldiers and invaded the country. One part of these troops was defeated by the region. Solomon II, however, was defeated by the other part and found shelter in Turkey. The kingdom of Imerety was indeed abolished and Russian administration was established there (Berdzenishvili 1965).

The Russian action was followed by high taxes, a worsened jurisdiction and bureaucracy; corruption became rooted. The population took up arms. In 1819-20 another rebellion against the Russian policy took place. At the same time another province rebelled, Samegrelo; soon after also Guria.

The whole West Georgia was inflamed with rebellion. This sparked Imeretian emigration, and the feudal lords decided to use the situation and restore the monarchy. Russia sent its troops with heavy artillery to Samegrelo, occupied Imerety, ruined the province of Racha, and destroyed Guria. 70 rebels were captured, 10 of them were hung, others exiled to Russia (cf. the essays on Georgian history by Makharadze 1942, and also Nakasshidze 1968 and Paichadze 1970).

## COLLECTING THE DREAMS

The variety of the materials collected in this small region shows how much knowledge is accumulated by oral tradition. The information obtained from the interviewees do not contradict each other. On the contrary, the informants mostly repeat each other in their explanations of certain symbols. The people's mentality is well expressed in their interpretations. They represent the world view of the members of the culture.

People believe in dreams. In folk consciousness "*the dream is a presentiment*"; they consider dreams as omens about future events. Dreams predict and foretell the future. It was easy to detect certain negative attitudes towards dreams among the informants, their answers to my questions used to be pronounced almost with fearful intonations and suddenly changed faces: "How can dreams not exist!" This would be followed by stories from their experience of life, such as examples of how their dream once came true, etc.

My informants assured me that their answers were based on their personal experience, and that that was why they believed so much in dreams coming true. These were older people, from 70 to 80 years old. They have had enough time during their lifetime to have checked the meaning of the recurring symbols many times and to have individually worked out their own attitude towards them.

When I asked them to explain some symbols (e. g., from the "Book of Dreams" or from some dreams of my own), the respondents would sometimes answer that they could not explain the symbol's meaning to me, because they had not experienced it: "It was not experienced by me" (*ar maqvs dargdznili*) - they would say. On the other hand a dream with a certain plot with certain symbols could be "a bad experience" for the individual (after seeing it, something bad always happened in their lives - illness, the death of someone close, etc.). In this case they used to answer: "I have experienced it badly" (*tzudad maqvs dagrdznili*).

Dreamers received metaphorically encoded visions, based on their personal experience. There were occasions when an Imeretian, describing a certain symbol that had been experienced by her or him, assured me that that symbol "belonged" to her or him. In such cases the symbol has a meaning for this particular person, but it may not signify anything for another person. It may even be interpreted in another way.

The following is an example of a "belonging" symbol. Ac-

<sup>3</sup> Georgian psychologists paid considerable attention to dream studies; they appear in the works of the leading Georgian psychologist D. Unadze who made a great contribution to the study of the subconscious mind, and also in the work of K. Natadze (writing as a Marxist), who called believers in dreams merely superstitious and backward.

<sup>4</sup> I am very grateful to Edith Turner for pointing out Barbara Tedlock's (1989) edited volume on dreams.



ording to one mother's lifelong and repeated experience, if she sees in a dream that her child is lost somewhere (say in a park, yard, or street), that experience is telling her that the child will be ill. Even long after the daughter is grown-up and living separately far away, if the mother sees this particular plot in her dreams (e.g., mother and daughter are walking in the garden; the daughter is little; suddenly the mother looks around and cannot find the child), this is an omen that her daughter will fall ill, and so it happens in reality.

The people also recognise that "it depends on the person". For some of the people dreams would come true, for others not. Recommending a good discussant for me in the village, they would say, "She knows 'dream'" (*iman itsis sizmari*), which meant that this person was a good dreamer (not interpreter, exactly). Thus, some were inclined to see dreams as true, some not.

In addition to believing that dreams were message carriers, revealing something about the future, either literally or by the way of metaphorically based formulae, the folks could well distinguish those dreams which anticipated the future from those which were caused by remembering recent events, or caused by objective effects (cold, a blow, a pain in the body). They recognised perfectly well that the day's residue could participate in the formation of a dream. Such dreams were not considered meaningful, or there to reveal future events. The expression *sizmarshi chamkva* - the recent event "went (walked) with me in a dream" - well represents this view.

For this reason nightmares do not always predict something bad and are not literally interpreted. Thus, there are well recognised truthful and well recognised deceitful dreams.

People connect truthfulness of the dreams with the moon's cycle. Dreams which are seen at the new moon are believed to be truthful and are fulfilled in a short time, while those during the old moon are not truthful or come true much later. At first the expression of one of the informants, saying that "a dream in the new moon is bad", was confusing. Why should it be bad? It meant that this dream would most certainly come true.

As I mentioned above, people maintain a negative stereotype about dreams. It seems they almost never expect a dream denoting a good omen. (I myself always try to see a good sign in my dreams.) Fear of a dream with a bad symbol was so common that people were reluctant to dream, and used to cross themselves three times and bite their small finger three times before going to sleep.

Besides the moon's cycle, people paid attention to which day in the week they had a dream. Wednesday dreams were considered truthful. If Wednesday coincided with the new moon, the possibility of its fulfilment was great. Dreams on Saturday and Sunday were not truthful, or "they passed on small matter" - they were not worth paying serious attention to (there is an expression among people: "Saturday dream - until Sunday dinner"). If a dream seen on Sunday night is not fulfilled by the following Sunday, It meant that "it has passed, up to now", that is, it will not come true. Bad dreams seen on Monday and Wednesday were more "dangerous" than those seen on Tuesday and Thursday. According to some informants, dreams seen in the early morning

are expected to be fulfilled in a very short time.

Since the Imeretian oneiromantica, interpretation of dreams, was based on both the power of dreams to foretell the future and on magic (belief in omens), people developed rituals against the effect of bad dreams. These actions, mostly known in Imerety, but also in the whole of Georgia, consist of "giving the dream to the water" and the burning of a dream. After seeing a bad dream people used to get up in the morning without speaking a word to anyone, and went to the village stream. They turned their hand in the water three times and retold the story of the dream, ending with the phrase: "Let the water take my bad dream." (Nowadays people carry on this practice by turning on the tap in their houses and giving the dream to the water this way.)

Another widespread rite is the burning of a dream. Usually it is a piece of a paper that is to be burned. A piece of paper is passed around the head three times (left to right) and then burned, with the words: "Let my bad dream be burned and melt this way." The rite with a piece of paper must have been introduced later.

In Imerety I recorded the rite of burning a stick in the morning. If people saw bad dreams, they used to get up, pass a piece of a stick around their head three times, and put it down in a fire. The stick had to be totally burned. I recorded a more detailed version of this rite as follows: A person who had a bad dream and wanted to prevent its fulfilment would take a stick and break it in three pieces. First, one piece would be passed around the head three times, then the second piece, and after that the third one, saying: "Let my dream be burned like this stick." Then he or she would burn the sticks in the fire. In the old days a piece of cloth would be torn off from its seam, or a thread taken out from the dress and burnt. Bad dreams should not be told and shared before these actions, otherwise they would come true.

In other cases in Imerety and in Georgia generally, dreams are shared earnestly and informally among family members or friends. Dreams which are shared are mostly those which are puzzling, where the dreamers seek understanding. Usually they ask the old people, counting on their age and life experience to determine what the dreams could mean and what events they augur.

Many mantical (divination) rites are connected with dreams. Besides "destroying" the bad dreams in the above described ways, there were some ways of "calling out" desirable images during dreaming. Rites like these were practised mainly by young girls and were intended to call forth the foretelling of one's destined spouse in a dream. If a girl happened to stay overnight at a new place for the first time (e. g., visiting relatives), the hostess, secretly (without the girl knowing) would place a glass of water with a stick across it under her bed. In Low Imerety a comb is placed across the glass, and also a needle, thread, and a certain kind of wooden spoon - *sooty*. A stick, comb, and so on represent a bridge over the water. People say that the dreamer's future husband is able to cross the bridge and come to her. For the same purpose a bunch of nine keys would be placed under a girl's pillow. In both cases a girl must not be aware of what was done. Several informants confirmed that they happened to see their future as yet unknown husbands during those practices.<sup>5</sup>

5 To the same mantical rites belong the other Caucasian rites, such as the Armenian "Suph Sarkis" and Balkarian "Tuzlu Guttu". In those



Shushana, an old informant of mine who lived in a neighbouring household and who possessed an extensive dream lexicon, told me how in her youth she had seen herself in a dream crossing a bridge. Someone was coming in her direction from the other side. He approached her and then passed beside her shoulder like a shadow. Then she saw another person coming towards her... At the age of 17 Shushana got married. A few months after the wedding she became a widow. Now she was sharing her old days with her second husband, kind-hearted Bejana.

The last question in my fieldwork questionnaire was concerned with the explanation of the symbols. The answers here only reflect a part of the interpretation of dreams which almost signs, that is, those symbols about which meaning is well established in the folk beliefs and people's mentality. The explanations of different respondents from the region of Imerety seldom exclude or oppose one another, but usually repeat one another.

I wrote down a large list of the metaphoric meanings of dream signs from this region. I compared them with the manuscript *Book of Dreams* to discover local peculiarities. For instance, my attention was attracted by the explanation of "water" as a dream sign. In the Georgian *Book of Dreams* "water" is represented differentially (rain, clean water, dirty water, warm, cold, stream water, or dammed pool, etc.), each meaning bearing its own explanation and each interpreted variably in every dream context. However, back in Imerety, respondents sharply denied that water was a good sign. All respondents interpreted it as a bad omen (as tears or illness). I found a number of similar explanations when I compared Balkarian material with my own. Their dream systems are formulated in relatively similar conditions. Both are mountainous countries, with pretty hilly reliefs, and the villages are located high in the mountains.

## CONCLUSION

Would desert inhabitants also tell me that water is a bad sign in a dream? What would seashore residents say?<sup>6</sup>

This paper must be considered only as a preliminary account and should not be understood as exhausting all Georgian thoughts on the subject. As we can see, Georgian dream theory is progressive rather than regressive; a dream is a bridge between present and future and dreams are supposed to be sources of significant information by which the dreamer receives a warning about future events. By means of the material gathered in Imerety, we can see that dream stereotypes are negative in this region; dream sharing is informal and dreams are sometimes interpreted metaphorically and sometimes literally.

It is important to understand that people are well aware of how the day's residue may participate in the formation of dreams, and to note that over the centuries the people have well observed the influence of the cycle of the moon on the human psyche, now reflected in oral tradition. Thus they have realised their link with nature. As the famous Georgian poet Vaja-Pshavela said: "We are all children of nature, it is in us and we are in it."

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<sup>6</sup> rites salt is used to call out a dream. In mantical divining rites salt was intended to arouse thirst, because the pleasure of love "was explained under the metaphoric image of drinking water" (Afanasiëff 1982: 117).

<sup>6</sup> I myself noticed that after moving to Moscow I stopped having dreams. I live in a residential area, surrounded with high walls of beton concrete and see stones around me. But as soon as I go to the village for a holiday, I begin to have dreams again.



Nana Meladze

## LJUDSKE INTERPRETACIJE SANJ V ZAHODNI GRUZIJI

*Pridi k meni v mojih sanjah in potem  
bom čez dan spet dober,  
kajti noč bo več kot preplačala  
brezupno brepenenje dneva.*  
(Matthew Arnold, "Longing")

Pričujoče besedilo obravnava teorije, ki jih imajo Gruzij-  
ski ljudje o svojih sanjah. Opisuje ljudsko verovanje,  
rituale in interpretacije sanj, ki jih je zbrala avtorica na tere-  
nu v zahodni Gruziji poleti leta 1986.

Med razlagami mantičnih oz. divinacijskih obredov je ena  
od najbolj zanimivih "oneiomantika" - razlaga sanj. Toda v  
moji deželi so jo etnologi kljub temu ignorirali, medtem ko  
so raziskave sanj v glavnem postale predmet zanimanja psi-  
hologov in psihiatrov, ki, zaposleni z laboratorijskimi pos-  
kusi, pogosto ignorirajo etnografsko gradivo. Dobra etno-  
grafija bi lahko prispevala bogato in raznoliko gradivo o  
človeškem izkustvu in znanju v multikulturnem obsegu, ki  
ne bi temeljilo le na posamičnih in naključnih izkušnjah,  
temveč na izkustvu posameznikov skozi celo življenje.

Sodobno znanost označujeta tako integracija med po-  
dročji kot diferenciacija znotraj posameznih področij.  
Danes privabljajo več pozornosti kompleksne raziskave  
tradicionalnega ljudskega izkustva, ki so bile tudi uresniče-  
ne. Omeniti velja, da so lahko raziskave ljudskega zdravstva,  
napovedovanja vremena, poljedelstva ali problemov men-  
talitet, ki jih s skupnimi naporji izvajajo na eni strani et-  
nologi, folkloristi in kulturologi, na drugi strani pa fiziki,  
biologi in psihologi, učinkovite le, če se ukvarjajo s sodob-  
nim etnografskim gradivom, zbranim med živimi tradicio-  
nalnimi etničnimi kulturami. Ta vrsta raziskav - dragocena  
za etnologue - nam omogoča razširiti znanje o človeštvu in  
o človekovih vezeh z naravo. Ti podatki pa bodo obogatili  
tudi druga področja.

Sanje so predmet, ki bi ga morali preučevati tako etnologi  
kot psihologi, toda ne ločeno, temveč v bližnjem stiku in z  
medsebojnim sodelovanjem. Etnologi niso psihoanalitiki  
in njihova naloga ni razlaga psiholoških temeljev ali me-  
hanizmov sanjanja. Pravzaprav nima smisla, da bi si prizade-  
vali v tej smeri, saj ne morejo in ne smejo iti onkraj njihovih  
kompetenc in prekoračiti "teritorialnih" ločnic med posa-  
meznimi področji, kajti tam bodo postali tujci in se bodo v  
resnici pokazali kot nestrokovnjaki. Kljub temu pa bi lahko  
predstavili gradivo, ki bi bilo zanimivo za psihologe, ki  
pripravljajo in vodijo svoje eksperimente, medtem ko et-  
nografi zbirajo gradivo na terenu. Toda če bi psihologi na  
to gradivo gledali z nezaupanjem, bi si lahko tudi sama do-  
volila skepsa do njihovih podatkov, ki jih izvajajo iz labora-  
torijskih eksperimentov o sanjah in sklepajo na temelju

manifestno in latentno izraženih želja in potreb, v prvi vrsti  
spolnih želja (psihoanalitiki se neverjetno nagibajo k temu,  
da vse vidijo in razlagajo le v okviru spolnosti, čeprav je  
človeška narava - in narava nasploh - veliko bolj zapletena  
od tega).

Etnografi posedujejo razvidno gradivo, ki prinaša infor-  
macije, akumulirane skozi stoletja v ustni tradiciji, informa-  
cije, ki se ponavljajo skozi celotno življenje sogovornikov  
in ki jih potrjuje ali zavrača njihova dolgoletna življenjska  
izkušnja. Naši sogovorniki, v glavnem starejši, vodijo zdrav  
način življenja v naravi (na prostem zraku, konzumirajo eko-  
loško čiste proizvode, živijo v zdravem podnebnju, brez  
stresov itd.) in niso pacienti z nevrotičnimi motnjami.  
(Kako naj bo gradivo "zdravo", če sogovorniki niso zdravi?)  
Seveda pa etnografu ne govori v prid spoznanje, da lahko  
v tem primeru nastopajo zgolj kot oskrbovalci z viri. Vpra-  
šanja "zakaj" ali "zakaj se to tako dogaja" niso vprašanja za  
etnografe in morda je tudi to pogosto razlog, zaradi kate-  
rega so se instinktivno izogibali te teme.

Etnografi so slabi psihologi in psihologi niso dobri et-  
nografi, toda sama menim, da bi lahko ravnovesje, ki bi ga  
lahko našla oba pristopa pri raziskovanju sanj, in njuna  
medsebojna interakcija, plodno vplivali na nadaljnji razvoj  
tega predmeta.

### OKOLIŠČINE IN ZGODOVINA: SANJE IN NJIHOV KONTEKST

Sanje in njihova interpretacija so zanimale ljudi že od naj-  
zgodnejših časov. Veliko pozornosti so interpretaciji sanj  
namenjali v starem Egiptu in na Bližnjem vzhodu. Zanimive  
sisteme interpretacij sanj so ustvarili v Mezopotamiji in v  
stari Grčiji (glej Kilborne 1987). O primerih simboličnih  
sanj beremo v Stari zavezi (npr. Jožefove sanje, faraonove  
sanje, sanje jetnika: Geneza 37.5; 40.9; 40.16; 41.2-7). In  
čeprav je "krščanska tradicija sanje spravila na slab glas in  
jih pregnala v ozadje ter jih obravnavala z nezaupanjem"  
(Kilborne 1987: 175), so stara krščanska ljudstva, kot tudi  
Gruzijci,<sup>1</sup> ohranila bogate tradicije interpretacij sanj.

Gruzijski ljudje so - glede na svojo kulturno zavest se  
uvrščajo v del sredozemskih civilizacij - skozi mnoga stoletja  
razvoja akumulirali veliko informacij o sanjah, tem skriv-  
nostnem fenomenu človeške psihologije. V Gruziji je od  
generacije do generacije krožil anonimen rokopis, tako  
imenovana *Knjiga sanj*, ki vsebuje razlage kakšnih 1000  
simbolov.<sup>2</sup> Jedro (tema) te "oneiomantike" je presek med  
verovanjem v znamenja in napovedovanjem prihodnosti. V  
sovjetski etnografski literaturi so sanje obravnavali le v  
skopem obsegu;<sup>3</sup> pravzaprav so psihoanalizo tukaj zanikali

1 Krščanstvo je bilo proglašeno za državno religijo v Gruziji leta 337, kmalu potem, ko je bilo vzpostavljeno s proglasom v Rimu.

2 Sama sem našela 988 simbolov sanj (z očitnimi kasnejšimi dodatki).

3 Gruzijski psihologi so se kar precej ukvarjali s preučevanjem sanj. Te raziskave najdemo v delu vodilnega gruzijskega psihologa D.



in Freud je bil malodane ilegalno branje.

Čeprav sem se počutila nezanesljivo in v tistem času nisem imela dostopa do uporabnih del, ki sem jih spoznala kasneje,<sup>4</sup> sem se, ko sem bila na terenu z letno delovno terensko skupino Inštituta za zgodovino, arheologijo in etnografijo Gruzijske Akademije znanosti, vseeno na lastno odgovornost odločila zbirati terensko gradivo o sanjah. Kolegi in kolegice so mojo odločitev sprejeli z nenavadno in strogo tišino ter predvidevali, da raziskave ne bom nikoli razvila globlje. "To hočete raziskovati?" je vzkliknil pokojni profesor A. Robakidze. To je bila edina reakcija, ki sem je bila deležna, in skozi celotno delo na terenu sem bila obkrožena s trdovratnim molkom članov ekipe, ki so skeptično opazovali moje pogovore.

Pričujoče besedilo temelji na skromnem gradivu, ki sem ga zbrala med to odpravo. Raziskavo sem izvedla leta 1986 v eni od pokrajin zahodne Gruzije, Imeretiju - zaradi slikovitega okolja jo imenujejo "Krasni Imereti". Imereti je ena od zgodovinsko-etnografskih pokrajin Gruzije. Tvorita ga Zgornji Imereti (*Zemo Imerety*), ki je hriboviti del dežele, in Spodnji Imereti (*Qvemo Imerety*), ki se nahaja v nižavju s humidnim subtropskim podnebjem, ki ga označujejo blage, tople zime in vroča poletja. Absolutna višina planote Zgornjega Imeretija (*Zemo Imerety*) je 1500 m nad morjem. Tamkajšnje podnebje je relativno hladno in ima obilo padavin (Maruashvili 1980).

Imereti je bil med 15. in 19. stoletjem samostojna kraljevina, ki je nastala po političnem razpadu gruzijske fevdalne monarhije. Geografsko ga je od vzhodne Gruzije ločevalo pogorje Likhi. Na severu ga je obkrožalo Kavkaško pogorje, na zahodu se je njegovo ozemlje razprostiralo v nižavje Kolkhis, na jugu pa so ga obkrožale gore Meshkety. Imereti je bil med 16. in 18. stoletjem podvržen stalnim turškim grožnjam in vdorom. Čeprav se je sredi 17. stoletja zgodilo, da je lahko dežela oborožila 40.000 vojakov, je njeno prebivalstvo v 18. in 19. stoletju ostajalo le pri številu 120.000 (Burjanadze 1962; Dumbadze 1957).

Po priključitvi vzhodne Gruzije so Rusi stopnjevali svoje dejavnosti, da bi uničili in okupirali kraljevino Imereti. Leta 1810 so vrgli s prestola kralja Solomona II., Imereti pa priključili Rusiji. Kralja Solomona so ujeli s pretvezo in ga nameravali izseliti v Rusijo, vendar mu je uspelo uiti ter pobegniti v Osmalijo. Od tam je pozval k uporabi proti okupatorjem. Začela se je vojna za nacionalno osvoboditev. Rusija je poslala 3.200 vojakov in vdrla v deželo. Branilci so del teh čet porazili, toda tudi Solomon II. je bil poražen. Azil je našel v Turčiji. Kraljevina Imereti je tako bila v resnici ukinjena, vzpostavili pa so rusko administracijo (Berdzenishvili 1965).

Ruski zasedbi so sledili visoki davki, poslabšanje pravnega stanja in birokratizacija, ukoreninila se je tudi korupcija. Prebivalstvo se je uprlo ruski politiki in med letoma 1819 in 1820 vzelo v roke orožje. V istem času se je uprla še neka druga pokrajina, Samegrelo, kmalu zatem še Gurija. Celotno zahodno Gruzijo je zajel upor. To je zanetilo preseljevanje Imeretijcev, fevdalci pa so se odločili izkoristiti priložnost in poskusiti ponovno vzpostaviti monarhijo. Rusija je poslala svojo vojsko s težkim topništvo v Samegrelo, okupirala Imereti, potepala pokrajino Račo in uničila

Gurijo. Sedemdeset upornikov so zajeli, deset med njimi obesili, druge izgnali v Rusijo (glej Makharadze 1942 in Nakasshidze 1968 ter Paichadze 1970).

## ZBIRANJE SANJ

Različnost gradiva, zbranega na tako majhnem območju, kaže, koliko znanja se nakopiči skozi ustno tradicijo. Informacije, ki jih dobimo od sogovornikov, si med seboj ne nasprotujejo. Nasprotno, pri razlagi določenih simbolov pripovedovalci v glavnem ponavljajo izpovedi drugih. V njihovih interpretacijah se dokaj nazorno kaže mentaliteta teh ljudi. Te interpretacije reprezentirajo pogled na svet pripadnikov kulture.

Ljudje verjamejo v sanje. V ljudski zavesti "so sanje slutnje"; sanje razumejo kot znamenja, ki kažejo na prihodnje dogodke. Sanje prerokujejo in napovedujejo prihodnost. Med sogovorniki ni bilo težko odkriti določenih negativnih stališč do sanj, saj so na moja vprašanja odgovarjali skorajda z intonacijo strahu in nenadoma spremenili izraz: "Kako naj sanje ne bi obstajale!" Temu so ponavadi sledile zgodbe iz njihove življenjske izkušnje, kot na primer navajanje primerov, ko so se njihove sanje nekoč uresničile ipd.

Sogovorniki in sogovornice so mi zatrdili/e, da so njihovi odgovori temeljili na njihovih lastnih izkušnjah in da so zato tako verjeli/e, da se sanje uresničijo. To so bili starejši ljudje, stari med 70 in 80 leti. V svojem življenju so imeli dovolj časa, da so lahko velikokrat preverili pomen ponavljajočih se simbolov in da so lahko vsak zase dobili lasten odnos do tega.

Ko sem jih prosila, da bi razložili kakšen simbol (npr. iz *Knjige sanj* ali iz kakšnih njihovih sanj), so sogovorniki včasih odgovorili, da mi ne morejo razložiti pomena tega simbola, ker ga niso izkusili: "Tega nisem izkusil (*ar maqvs darddznil*)," so povedali. Na drugi strani pa so bile lahko sanje z določenim zapletom ali z določeno simboliko za posameznika "slaba izkušnja" (potem, ko so jih imeli, se je v njihovem življenju skoraj vedno zgodilo kaj slabega: bolezen, smrt bližnjih itd.). V tem primeru so odgovarjali: "To sem izkusil slabo (*tzudad maqvs dagrdznili*)."

Sanjajoči so prejeli metaforično zakodirane vizije, ki so temeljile na njihovem osebnem izkustvu. Obstajajo primeri, ko me je kakšen Imeretijec ali Imeretijka, ko je opisoval/a določen simbol, ki ga je izkusil/a sam/a, prepričeval/a, da ta simbol "pripada" njemu ali njej. V takšnih primerih ima simbol pomen za to določeno osebo, medtem ko se lahko zgodi, da za drugo osebo ne označuje ničesar ali pa ga lahko interpretira na drugačen način. Naj podam primer "pripadajočega" simbola.

Sodeč po izkušnji, ki se je pri neki materi ponavljala skozi celo življenje, ko je v sanjah videla, da se ji je nekje izgubil otrok (na primer v parku, na dvorišču ali na cesti), je ugotavljala, da ji ta izkušnja govori, da bo njen otrok zbolel. Celo dolgo po tem, ko je njena hči že odrasla in se je odselila daleč stran, je mati, kadar je sanjala takšno prigodo (npr.: mati in hči se sprehajata po vrtu; hči je majhna; nenadoma pa se mati ozre naokrog in ne more najti otroka), vedela, da je to znamenje, da bo njena hči zbolela, kar se je potem

Uznadzeja, ki je veliko prispeval k raziskavam nezavednega, in tudi v delu K. Nakadzeja (pisal je kot marksist), ki je imel tiste, ki verjamejo v sanje, za vraževerne in zaostale.

<sup>4</sup> Zelo sem hvaležna Edith Turner, da me je opozorila na zbornik Barbare Tedlock (1989), ki je posvečen sanjam.



tudi zares zgodilo.

Ljudje tudi spoznavajo, da "je odvisno od osebe". Nekaterim ljudem se sanje uresničujejo, drugim ne. Kadar so mi v kakšni vasi priporočili dobrega sogovornika oz. sogovornico, so ponavadi rekli: "Ona pozna 'sanje' (*iman itsis sizmari*)", kar pomeni, da je ta oseba dober sanjalec (ne ravno interpret). Tako so bili nekateri nagnjeni k temu, da sanjajo sanje, ki se uresničujejo, drugi pa ne.

Poleg verovanja v to, da sanje prenašajo sporočila, ki razkrivajo prihodnost - bodisi dobesedno ali skozi metaforično postavljene formule - so ljudje dobro razlikovali med tistimi sanjami, ki so napovedovale prihodnost, in sanjami, ki so jih povzročili spomini na pravkar minule dogodke ali pa so jih zakrivali zunanji učinki (hlad, veter, telesna bolečina itd.). Natančno so opazili, da so se lahko ostanki dnevnih doživetij vplivali na oblikovanje sanj. V takšnih sanjah niso videli pomenov in od njih niso pričakovali, da bi jim razkrile prihodnje dogodke. Fraza *sizmarsbi shamkhva* - pravkar minuli dogodek "se je sprehodil po mojih sanjah" - ustrezno osvetljuje ta pogled.

Zaradi tega nočne more ne napovedujejo vedno nečesa slabega in jih ne interpretirajo dobesedno. Ugotoviti je mogoče, da poznajo tako verodostojne kot lažne sanje.

Ljudje povezujejo verodostojnost sanj z mesečevim ciklusom. Sanje, ki jih sanjajo ob mlaju (in prvem kraju), so po njihovem verodostojne, sanje ob zadnjem kraju pa niso ali se uresničujejo veliko kasneje, medtem ko se sanje ob mlaju uresničujejo v kratkem času. Izjave nekaterih sogovornikov: "Sanje ob mlaju so slabe", so me sprva begale. Zakaj naj bi bile slabe? To je pomenilo, da se bodo te sanje skoraj povsem zagotovo uresničile. Kot sem omenila že zgoraj, ljudje ohranjajo tudi negativne stereotipe o sanjah. Videti je bilo, kot da skoraj nikoli ne pričakujejo, da bi sanje pomenile dobro znamenje. (Sama vedno poskušam v svojih sanjah najti dobra znamenja.) Strah pred sanjami s slabim simbolom je bil tako razširjen, da so ljudje sanjali proti svoji volji in da so se, preden so šli spat, trikrat prekrižali in udarili po mezincu.

Poleg mesečevega cikla so bili ljudje pozorni tudi na dan v tednu, v katerem bi lahko sanjali. Sanje, ki so jih sanjali v sredo, so imeli za verodostojne. Če je sreda sovpadala z mlajem, se je še povečala verjetnost, da se bodo sanje izpolnile. Sanje na soboto in nedeljo niso bile resnične ali pa so "se udejanile v manjši meri" - niso bile vredne, da bi jim posvečali večjo pozornost (med ljudmi je prisoten rek: "Sobotne sanje - do nedeljskega kosila"). Če se sanje, ki jih sanjajo v noči na nedeljo, ne uresničujejo do naslednje nedelje, to pomeni, da je "že šlo mimo", da se torej ne bodo uresničile. Slabe sanje na ponedeljek in sredo so bolj "nevarne" od tistih na torek ali četrtek. Po mnenju nekaterih sogovornikov naj bi se sanje, ki jih sanjajo zgodaj zjutraj, uresničile v zelo kratkem času.

Ker je imeretska oneiromastika, interpretacija sanj, temeljila tako na zmožnosti sanj pri napovedovanju prihodnosti kot na magiji (verovanju v znamenja), so ljudje razvili rituale proti učinkom slabih sanj. Ta dejanja, ki jih v glavnem poznajo v Imeretiju, toda tudi v drugih delih Gruzije, sestojijo iz "dajanja sanj v vodo" in "zažiganja" sanj. Potem ko imajo ljudje slabe sanje, zjutraj vstanejo, ne da bi izmen-

jali kakršnokoli besedo s komerkoli, in gredo k vaškemu izviru. Glavo trikrat namočijo v vodo in ponovijo zgodbo sanj, ki jo končajo s frazo: "Naj voda vzame moje slabe sanje." (Danes ljudje nadaljujejo to prakso tako, da odprejo pipo v umivalniku v svojih hišah in dajo sanje v vodo na enak način).

Drugi tam razširjeni obred je zažiganje sanj. Ponavadi gre za košček papirja, ki ga zažgejo. S tem kosom papirja trikrat zaokrožijo okoli glave (od leve proti desni) in ga potem zažgejo z naslednjimi besedami: "Naj moje slabe sanje na ta način zgorijo in se stalijo." Ta obred s kosom papirja je verjetno nastal kasneje. V Imeretiju sem naletela tudi na obred jutranjega kurjenja palice. Če so imeli ljudje slabe sanje, so vstali, trikrat zaokrožili s koščkom palice okoli svoje glave in jo potem položili na ogenj. Palica je morala povsem zgoreti.

Naj bolj podrobno opišem ta obred. Oseba, ki je sanjala slabe sanje in hoče preprečiti njihovo uresničitev, vzame v roko palico in jo razlomi na tri dele. Najprej trikrat zaokroži okoli glave s prvim koščkom, nato z drugim, potem pa še s tretjim, in reče: "Naj moje sanje zgorijo tako kot ta palica." Nato on ali ona zažge palico v ognju. V starih časih so si strgali košček obleke ali niti po šivih in ga zažgali. O slabih sanjah pred temi dejanji niso smeli govoriti, sicer bi se lahko uresničile.

Veliko mantičnih (divinacijskih) obredov je povezanih s sanjami. Poleg "uničenja" slabih sanj na zgoraj opisane načine so obstajali tudi nekateri načini "poziva" zaželenih podob med sanjanjem. Obrede te vrste so izvajala predvsem mlajša dekleta in so bili namenjeni priklicanju prerokovanja o tem, kdo bo njihov bodoči soprog. Če se je zgodilo, da je dekle prvič ostalo čez noč na nekem kraju (npr. na obisku pri sorodnikih), je gostiteljica pod posteljo na skrivaj (ne da bi dekle vedelo) nastavila kozarec vode s paličico, postavljeno prek njega. V Spodnjem Imeretiju nastavijo prek kozarca glavnik ali pa tudi šivanko, nit ali posebno leseno žlico, *sooty*. Paličica, glavnik in drugi predmeti predstavljajo most prek vode. Ljudje pravijo, da prihodnji soprog sanjajoče lahko prečka ta most in pride k njej. Zaradi istega namena dajo pod deklečin vzglavnik šop devetih ključev. V obeh primerih dekle ne sme vedeti, kaj so naredili. Kar nekaj sogovornic je potrdilo, da so v teh primerih videle svoje prihodnje, v tistem trenutku še neznanе so-proge.<sup>5</sup>

Moja starejša sogovornica Shushana, ki je živela v soseščini in je imela pri sebi obsežen leksikon sanj, mi je povedala, da je v mladosti sanjala o tem, kako sama prečka most. Nekdo ji je prišel nasproti z druge strani. Približal se ji je in šel mimo njene rame kot kakšna senca. Potem je videla še drugo osebo, ki se ji je približala... Ko je bila stara 17 let, se je Shushana poročila. Nekaj mesecev po poroki je postala vdova. Sedaj preživlja stara leta skupaj z drugim možem, dobrosrčnim Bejanom.

Zadnje vprašanje mojega terenskega vprašalnika je zadevalo razlago simbolov. Odgovori, ki jih navajam na tem mestu, le deloma odsevajo interpretacijo sanj, ki so skoraj vedno znaki. To pomeni, da so to simboli, katerih pomen je v ljudskem verovanju in mišljenju jasno vzpostavljen. Razlage različnih sogovornikov na območju Imeretija si le

<sup>5</sup> K istim mantičnim obredom sodijo tudi drugi kavkaški obredi, kot na primer armenski "Suph Sarkis" ali balkarijski "Tuzlu Guttu". V teh obredih za priklicanje sanj uporabljajo sol. V mantičnih divinacijskih obredih naj bi sol vzbudila žejo, kajti zadovoljstvo ljubezni "so razlagali z metaforično podobo pitne vode" (Afanastieff 1982: 117).



redko sprotno ali se izključujejo, temveč sogovorniki najpogosteje ponavljajo oz. potrjujejo drug drugega. Zapisala sem obsežen seznam metaforičnih pomenov posameznih znakov, ki nastopajo v sanjah na tem območju. Primerjala sem jih z rokopisom v *Knjigi sanj*, da bi odkrila lokalne posebnosti. Pozornost sem, na primer, usmerila na razlago "vode" kot znaka v sanjah. V gruzijski *Knjigi sanj* "vodo" predstavljajo različni znaki (dež, čista voda, umazana voda, topla, hladna, tekoča voda, stoječa voda itd.), ki vsak prenaša lastno razlago in ga je mogoče interpretirati drugače v vsakem kontekstu sanj. Toda tukaj, v Imeretiju, so sogovorniki odločno zanikali, da bi bila voda dober znak. Vsi sogovorniki so ga interpretirali kot slabo znamenje (kot solze ali bolezen). Veliko podobnih razlag sem odkrila, ko sem primerjala balkarijsko gradivo z lastnim. V Balkariji so svoje sisteme razlage sanj formulirali v relativno podobnih razmerah. Obe deželi sta gorati, s precej razgibanim reliefom, vasi pa ležijo visoko v gorah.

## SKLEP

Ali bi mi tudi prebivalec puščave povedal, da je v sanjah voda slab znak? Kaj bi rekli obalni prebivalci?<sup>6</sup>

Pričujoče besedilo moramo razumeti le kot preliminarno poročilo in ga ne smemo jemati kot besedilo, ki bi izčrpno ponazorilo gruzijsko mnenje o tem predmetu. Kot lahko vidimo, je gruzijska teorija sanj prej progresivna kot regresivna; sanje so most med sedanostjo in prihodnostjo in sanje razumejo kot vir pomembnih informacij, s katerimi sanjalec prejme svarilo glede prihodnjih dogodkov. S pomočjo gradiva, ki sem ga zbrala v Imeretiju, lahko vidimo, da so na tem območju stereotipi o sanjah negativni. Pogovarjanje o sanjah je neformalno; sanje občasno intepretirajo metaforično, včasih dobesedno.

Pomembno je razumeti, da se ljudstvo povsem zaveda, da lahko v oblikovanju sanj najdemo tudi ostanke dnevnega dogajanja, in pripomniti, da so ljudje skozi stoletja podrobno opazovali vpliv mesečevega cikla na človeško dušo (ki se danes kaže v ustni tradiciji). Tako so uresničili svojo povezavo z naravo. Kot je zapisal slavni gruzijski pesnik Vaja-Pshavela: "Vsi smo otroci narave, to je v nas in mi smo v tem".

(Prevedel Rajko Muršič.)

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<sup>6</sup> Po vrnitvi v Moskvo sem opazila, da sem nehala sanjati. Živim v stanovalskem predelu in sem obkrožena z visokimi betonskimi zidovi ter vse naokoli sebe vidim kamne. Toda kakor hitro grem na počitnice na vas, začnem ponovno sanjati.