

## MIKHEIL LABADZE

### REFLECTION OF THE NATIONAL UNITY OF THE GEORGIANS IN THE FOLKLORE OF THE LAZ IN TURKEY

At present the majority of an inalienable part of the Georgian nation, the Laz or the Chans, live outside the Georgian state. However, their national identity is still common-Georgian, which becomes evident after the study of the Laz folklore. The Laz are quite different from their neighbouring peoples of various origin (Muslim Armenians, Turks, etc.) in their mentality, folklore, and other components of material or spiritual culture. In this regard they are almost identical with other Georgian ethnic groups living in Turkey - the Livanans, the Machakhelians, the Imerkhevians and the Taoans.

The Laz folklore has preserved numerous traditions and legends on Queen Tamar, regarded by them as a Laz, Prince of Guria Kakhaber, also regarded as a Laz, and the struggle of the Laz, together with other Georgians, against the "Abaza" invaders in Abkhazia. On the basis of the historical memory, the present-day Laz identify themselves as Georgians.