

NINO ABAKELIA

THE MYTHICO-RITUAL COMPLEX ASSOCIATED TO "THE HOUSE OF WINE" -

MARANI IN GEORGIAN TRADITION

The early Christian tradition of the divine worship at houses can be traced in Georgia in the custom of "breaking bread" over the sacred wine-vessel, dug deep into the ground on the right side of the special building for storing wine, called in Georgian – *maran-i*. The religious ritual performed there is considered to be analogous to the Greek *anaphora*.

In the term *maran-i* can be traced the Aramaic words *maran-atha* (i. e. the recurring words in the eucharistic prayer and the last words in the Bible – "Come Lord to us"), which in the course of time might lose the incomprehensible – *atha*, and could transform into quite local form – *maran-i*. In this case the name of the building implies in itself the essence and the meaning of the performed cult. The name also comprises the predicate. The refrain of the prayer explains the meaning of the cult acts.

Thus, *maran-i* is the meeting-place with the Lord; it is His representative place. Consequently the symbolic of *marani* and the concept of the Christian God are closely connected to each other.

The cult act in *marani* is considered to be not only the *anamnesis* (remembrance) of the Last Supper, but as well the *epiklasis* (invocation) of the Lord and the constant revival of the contacts with Him.

Thus, Christ, "the bread of God" himself, "which comes down from Heaven", and is born in Bethlehem (i. e. in the House of Bread) has been worshipped in Georgia from the Early Christian period in the house of Wine - *marani* -, which in the course of time has transformed into the traditional norm and still continues its life alongside the Church.