

## GIORGI GOTSIRIDZE

### THE *ZEDASHE* CULTURE IN GEORGIA

In the Georgian culture *zedashe* is sacred food and donation. According to popular beliefs and imagination people prescribe it the sacral function of protecting the family fertility and abundance. Usually *zedashe* can be red wine, wheat, boiled butter and other products that should be consumed at *sakhato*, the icon holiday. *Zedashe* is classified as dedicated to family, to the whole group of people of the common family name, to the community or to the Church. Specialist literature gives different accounts on the origin of *zedashe*. Some consider it coming down from the pre-Christian, heathen period; others think that this is a tradition of the feudal times Georgian Church. I think that the origin of *zedashe* tradition belongs to the early Christian period; the phenomenon is created in accordance with the early Christian syncretism of beliefs and conceptions. It remains intact till the present, which should be regarded as the symbolic sign of protecting the ancient sacredness of the folklore.