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**ETHNOGRAPHY OF ZEDA (UPPER) MATCHAKHELI**

International project for the study of the Matchakheli valley population with the title *the study of musical legacy of the Matchakheli Valley, its preservation and popularization* was being implemented during the year 2008. The project encompasses the entire Matchakheli valley. However, because of the actuality of the issue, and because of the objective reasons yielded from the fact that the territory is located within the Turkish borders; the place had not been studied at all. In the present paper we provide only the part of the investigation of the ethnographic materials of Upper Matchakheli.

Matchakheli Valley with its stretch of ancient world trading route used to play a great role in the cultural and economic life of the south-west Georgia.

*Annals of the Tbeti souls (Annals of the Mitcikhiani(=Matchakheli) Valley)* provide interesting materials of 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> cc. life of Matchakheli valley. A part of the names and place names referred to in this manuscript are attested to the present Matchakheli.

The Matchakheli valley is a sort of exception in the historical territories of Georgia of the present day Turkey in the sense that as different from the other Georgian historical territories in Turkey its population is mono-ethnic, being inhabited only by Georgians and they speak Georgian but because of the underlying reasons they are left without Georgian literacy.

Within the project framework we have featured the traditional house of the upper Matchakheli, which presents a local variety of the traditional Acharian abode.

Upper Matchakheli whets interests in that respect that among the historical Georgian provinces under the jurisdiction of the modern Turkey Georgian folklore polyphonic musical arts has survived only in here. The people of Matcakheli have had the ensemble performing ancient Georgian songs. Moreover, the province has survived two-voice Georgian songs attesting one more times the archaic origin of these songs.

It is an important and encouraging fact that the varieties of legends about Queen Tamar, recorded in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. by Sakaria Chichinadze are alive to the present and we have recorded them as well.

We are preparing and will soon present several other papers about various historical, ethnographic and linguistic aspects of the region.