

## MALKHAZ MURUSIDZE

### FROM THE HISTORY OF TCHELISHI MONASTERY (MONASTERY HEADS)

Tchelishi monastery is located in the river Shareula valley in Racha province. The first written record about the monastery is found in the inscription of a 9<sup>th</sup> century gospel manuscript. However, the monastic life in this place seems to have begun much earlier. My conjecture is based on the presence of a cavern, *sadaqudeblo*, the rock shelter for hermit life.

The present paper discusses the lives and exploits of such eminent Tchelishi monastery superiors as were archimandrite Ioane (Ioseliani), archimandrite Makari (Janelidze), archimandrite Ambrosi (Khelaia), later Catholicos-Patriarch of Georgia, now canonized by the Georgian Church, and others. The institution of the head of the monastery was fairly important as his propensity greatly determined the normal functioning of the monastery. Hence, the study of the biographies of these fathers acquires great importance for the elucidation of particular questions of the monastery history.