

## MAKA KATSADZE

### THE ROLE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF GELATI ACADEMY IN THE HISTORY OF GEORGIAN CULTURE

Gelati Academy has a special role in the history of the Georgian Culture. David IV the Builder (1089-1125) as its founder and great military leader and enlightener was well aware of the need for education, since military advantage was not the only basis for the country's revival and empowerment.

There was a need for intellectually advanced individuals who would stimulate already advanced Georgia (as a Byzantium's competitor) to a higher level of civilization.

King David "decided to build a monastery... and gathered all honest and virtuous men". The very monastery has later "become another Jerusalem of all East to gain knowledge of all kindness and leader of all scholars, another Athens".

Gelati Academy ceased to exist by the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Since the founding of the Academy, the following five centuries have witnessed an enormously complicated period for our country. Nevertheless, the development of the country was still maintained during the 16<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Since the 20<sup>th</sup> century there have been attempts of establishing a scientific academy (similar to Gelati Academy). Despite efforts of many scholars, only on May 25, 1995 was signed a document declaring the foundation (restoration) of the Academy whose traditions remain vibrant.