

The
V. Sarajishvili
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The News

Ethnomusicological Life of Georgia

(July-December, 2019)

Festivals, Conferences, Competitions

10-17.07.2019 – Teona Lomsadze – a specialist of the IRCTP and ICTM regional representative in Georgia, participated in the 45th ICTM World Conference at Chulalongkorn University (Thailand).

15.07-3.09.2019 – “Folk garden” of the Folklore State centre hosted series of concerts with the participation of ensembles: Sakhioba, Basiani, Didgori, Adilei, Kimilia, Mcheli, Sathanao, Ialoni, Erisioni, Berelidze family ensemble, trio Balada and singer Lela Tataraidze as part of the campaign “Spend Summer in Georgia”.

7-9.09.2019 – the Folklore State Centre held the 3rd International festival “Georgia” which was opened at “Black Sea Arena” and continued in Racha (Oni and Ambrolauri municipalities). The Festival comprised joint concerts of Georgian and foreign ensembles, the scientific conference with the participation of Western ethnomusicologists and Agro Festival.

10.10-4.12.2019 – the Folklore State centre organized series of folk evenings with the participation of ensembles: Anchiskhati, Adilei, Sakhioba, Didgori, Sathanao, Shilda, Shav nabada, Kutaisi State Ensemble, Riho, Tbilisi, Naduri, trio Iarali, Basiani in Tbilisi and 8 municipalities of Georgia with the support of LEPL Creative Georgia.

12-13.10.2019 – 2nd Festival of Kartlian Traditional Song and Chant was held in the courtyard of Samtavisi church, Kaspi municipality. Among the participants were folk ensembles and the students of Choirmaster’s schools from different parts of Georgia.

7-9.11.2019 – Batumi Conservatory hosted Gigi Garakanidze 14th International Festival of Folk and Sacred Music.

17-22.11.2019 – Rusudan Tsurtsumia, Head of the IRCT, a UNESCO expert of ICH participated in the 7th International Festival Intangible Cultural Heritage in Chengdu (Sichuan province, South China).

21-23.11.2019 – Teona Lomsadze, a specialist of the IRCTP, participated in the ethnomusicological conference for Master and Doctoral students at the University of Aveiro (Portugal).

2-4.12.2019 – International Conference “Music in the Context of Culture” dedicated to renowned Georgian musicologist Givi Orjonikidze at Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

Expeditions

12-22.07.2019 – On the initiative of Georgian Chanting Foundation and Potsdam University (Germany) Frank Scherbaum –professor at Potsdam University led a scientific-musical expedition in Khulo, Shuakhevi and Keda municipalities (Achara).

13.07-1.09.2019 – Giorgi Kraveishvili – a winner of the competition “Your Folklore Idea” of the Folklore State Centre conducted expeditions in Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha municipalities, Sarpi, Batumi and Makhinjauri.

6-20.08.2019 – Ensemble Adilei organized an expedition to Racha-Lechkhumi-Svaneti to record and learn folk songs.

27.08-6.09.2019 – Choreologist Aleko Gelashvili – a winner of the competition “Your Folklore Idea” of the Folklore State Centre conducted a choreological expedition to Khulo, Shuakhevi and Keda municipalities of Zemo Achara.

lectures, Meetings, Masterclasses, Presentations...

5.07.2019 – Baia Zhuzhunadze, a specialist of the IRCT delivered public lecture “Georgian Traditional Dance in Georgian Cinematography” at Zakaria Paliashvili Memorial House, as organized by the Union of Tbilisi Municipal Museums.

25.09.2019 – The Folklore State centre of Georgia opened a choirmaster’s school in Senaki municipality, Samegrelo.

26.09.2019 – The Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments of the Art Palace hosted ethnomusicologist Nino Naneishvili's master class for Georgian and Foreign guests.

26.09.2019 – As part of the Science and Innovation Festival, Nino Razmadze and Baia Zhuzhunadze – specialists of the IRCTP of Tbilisi State Conservatoire organized a presentation/work shop – Georgian Diaspora in Bursa region (Turkey).

26.09.2019 – As part of Science and Innovation Festival. "Folklore Garden" of the Folklore State Centre hosted the event dedicated to David Javishvili's 125th Anniversary.

7-11.10.2019 – Together with Georgian Association of Arts and Culture, IRCTP organized the 4th transnational project meeting of the countries participants (Macedonia, Estonia and Latvia) of the Erasmus+ project "Network of UNESCO recognized values" in Georgia, the guests visited the sights in Kakheti and Imereti regions, attended the workshops of traditional crafts, song and dance, and meetings with local folk ensembles organized specially for them.

15.10.2019 – the Hall of Erisioni State Ensemble of Georgia hosted presentation of the monograph about Jemal Chkuaseli (author, Eter Tataraidze) held by Georgian Chanting Foundation and the Folklore State Centre.

28.10.2019 – The Folklore State Centre hosted presentation of the project "Expedition to Samegrelo" of Giorgi Kraveishvili, a winner of the competition "Your Folklore Idea"; presented was the report of the expedition to ten villages of Zugdidi and Tsalenjikha municipalities.

29.10.2019 – The Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments of the Art Palace hosted Magda Sukhiashvili's public lecture "Georgian Ecclesiastical Chant – Tradition and Performance".

7.11.2019 – The Folklore State Centre of Georgia opened a choir master's school in Tianeti municipality.

24.11.2019 – Presentation of the books "Svan Folk Songs" and monograph "Islam Pilpani" (author Maka Khardziani) at the concert hall of the Folklore State Centre.

25.11.2019 – The Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments of the Art Palace hosted the evening of Svan folk song with the participation of folk ensemble Shgarida of Dmanisi municipality.

25.11.2019 – Beka Bidzinashvili's public lecture "Diversity and Performance Peculiarities of Kakhetian Song" at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting.

27.11.2019 – Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting hosted a meeting with Prof. Anzor Erkomaishvili, who was awarded the title of Emeritus Professor for his contribution in the founding of the University and productive administrative-pedagogical activities there.

6-8.12.2019 – Ucha Dvalishvili - Head of Choreographic Direction of the Folklore State Centre held a master class of Acharan dance together with choreographic ensemble Pesvebi, of Shuakhevi municipality at the Folklore State Centre.

10.12.2019 – Tamar Chkheidze, Doctor of Arts, Associate professor delivered the lecture "Georgian Musical Culture the Contemporary of European Baroque" at the Conference Hall of the National Parliamentary Library.

15.12.2019 – Opening ceremony of the renovated concert hall at the Folklore State Centre, at which Giorgi Donadze, director of the Centre, summarized three years of activity.

Concert Tours

15-25.07.2019 – Ensemble Adilei was on a concert tour to Italy and France.

1-10.09.2019 – The cities of Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv and Haifa hosted joint concerts of the State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi and Chamber Orchestra of Georgia

14-15.09.2019 – State Ensemble Basiani's solo concerts in the cities of Perugia and Montefalco as part of the Festival *Perugia Musica Classica*.

26.09.2019 – Ensemble Shav nabada's concert in Baku, as organized by the Embassy of Mexico.

14.10.2019 – State Ensemble of Georgian Folk Song and Dance Rustavi participated in the Festival "Golden Violins" at Odessa Regional Philharmonic Theatre.

10-15.10.2019 – At the request of the Georgian Embassy ensemble Shav nabada participated in the 47th International Festival in Servantino (Guanajuato), Mexico.

17-20.10.2019 – Ensemble Didgori in Latvia: concert together with Latvian female ensemble Era, meetings-lectures with Latvian choir directors at Latvian National Cultural Centre as part of "Rigas Acapella Festival".

29.10-2.11.2019 – Ensemble Shav nabada's concert tours in Sochi and Moscow (Russia).

11-20.11.2019 – State ensemble Bssiani was on a concert tour to the USA, held concerts and masterclasses at "Lincoln Centre", at California and Princeton universities.

20-30.11.2019 – Ensemble Shav nabada was on a concert tour to Regensburg (Germany).

3-6.12.2019 – Ensemble Anchiskhati held 2 solo concerts in Ludwigshafen (Germany) as part of the project of Goethe Institute Tbilisi.

12.12.2019 – Ensemble Shav nabada held a solo concert at Estonia Concert Hall (Tallinn).

13.12.2019 – The choir of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting participated in the evening of Georgian culture "Folk Meets Blues" at Stuttgart State Theatre (Germany).

19.12.2019 – On St. Nicolas Day, Italian city of Bari hosted the concert of Georgian folk songs and sacred hymns, prepared by Natalia Kveliashvili, a Master student of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting, sent there for studies.

20.12.2019-28.01.2020 – Sergo Urushadze, a lecturer at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting, was sent to St. Nino parish (Florence) to teach Georgian traditional songs and sacred hymns.

28-29.12.2019 – Ethnomusicologist Nino Naneishvili held "Christmas master classes" in the cities of Liege and Attart (Belgium).

Concerts, Evenings, Exhibitions, Jubilees....

10.07.2019 – The choir of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting performed in a concert at the Recital Hall of Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

6.08.2019 – "Ethno house" in the village of Ledzadzame, Senaki municipality hosted the joint concert of Georgian, Bulgarian and Balkan polyphony with the participation of ensemble Ialoni and Swiss women's folk ensemble as part of ethnomusicologist Nino Naneishvili's "cultural-educational tour".

11.08.2019 – Ensemble Shav nabada's solo concert for the Diplomatic corps and Tbilisi School of Political Studies in Truso Gorge.

3.09.2019 – Ensemble Didgori's solo concert for the internally displaced population in the village of Tserovani.

22.09.2019 – Ensemble Didgori's 15th-anniversary concert at Jansugh Kakhidze Tbilisi Centre for Music.

24.09.2019 – As part of the Science and Innovation Festival, Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting hosted the master class of Georgian folk round-dance song for the pupils of S. Chiaureli Tbilisi School #54.

19-22.10.2019 – Tbilisi hosted a joint concert of the Georgians, Abkhazians, Ossetians and representatives of other nationalities from Turkey as invited by the Ministry of Education and Culture of Abkhazia and ensemble Shav nabada within the framework of the project "Georgian-Abkhazian Musical Dialogue".

7.11.2019 – Exhibition-concert "The Folklore of One Valley – Chvana" at Batumi State Music Centre.

8.11.2019 – Concert of the choir of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting and a masterclass of the University students for the pupils of Ozurgeti choirmaster's school at Ozurgeti branch of the Folklore State Centre.

14-18.11.2019 – The choir of the Choirmaster’s Direction of Theatre University held a concert in the villages of Bershueti and Nikozi as organized by Shida Kartli regional administration in support of the citizens living near the occupation line.

25.11.2019 – The Vakhushti Kotetishvili 40th anniversary evening of folk poetry at the Small Hall of Rustaveli Theatre.

14.12.2019 – Folk performance “Christmas Heralds” of Edisher and Gigi Garakanidze Folk-ethnographic studio Amer-Imeri at the renovated hall of the Folklore State Centre.

28.12.2019 – Traditional “Alilooba” at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting.

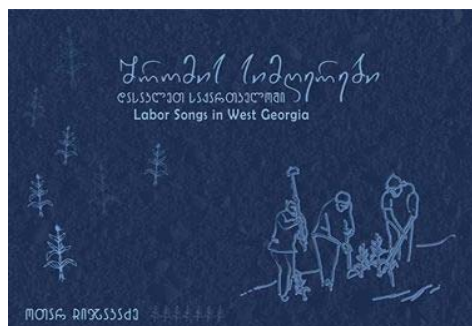
Publications

**The Folklore State Centre
published:**

Georgian Chant Anthology
(volumes IX-XIII)

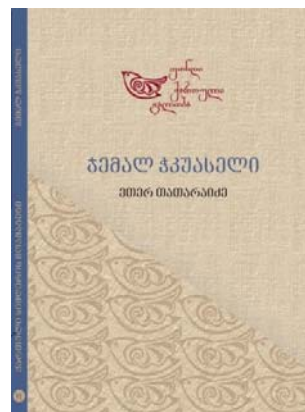


Otar Chijavadze
Labour Songs in West Georgia

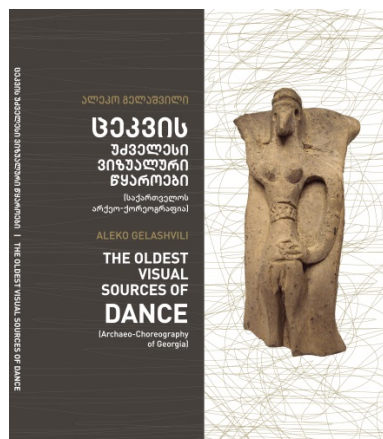


**Georgian Chanting Foundation
published:**

Eter Tataraidze
monograph *Jemal Chkuaseli*

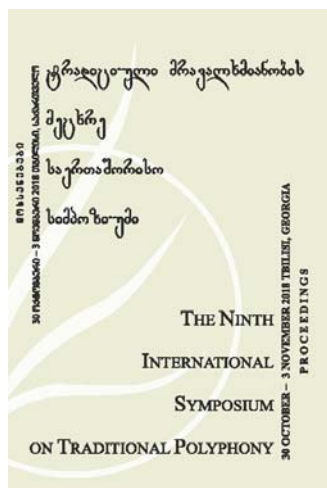


Aleko Gelashvili
The Oldest Visual Sources of Dance
(Archaeo-Choreography of Georgia)



IRCTP
published:

Proceedings of the Ninth International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony



Prepared by **Maka Khardziani**

In Memory of Bruno Nettl

International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony expresses deep sorrow over the passing of the world-renowned scholar; American researcher referred to as “Father of American Ethnomusicology” Bruno Nettl and extends condolences to his family, international ethnomusicological community and all admirers of Nettl’s creation. We had pleasure of cooperating with this legendary figure and will always remember his benevolence and kindness to the unknown to him young colleagues from a distant country.

First of all, we acknowledge professor Nettl’s great support in Georgian translation of the last, third edition of the book “The Study of Ethnomusicology: Thirty-three Discussions” – the all time and most important book in ethnomusicology. Thanks to his application, we received permission from the University of Illinois to

translate the book at a bargain price; which allowed Georgian ethnomusicologists to get familiarized with this unique work.



Prof. Bruno Nettl

How can we not appreciate his friendly gesture – to join the 7th International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony (2014) by Skype; which added particular meaning to the Tbilisi Forum.

Young specialists of the Centre – doctoral students Nino Razmadze and Teona Lomsadze will remember the meetings with Prof. Nettl during their scientific-research visits to the USA, throughout their lives. When the great scientist and hospitable host shared to them not only his knowledge, but also the warmth of his family.

Invaluable is Prof. Bruno Nettl’s contribution to the development of contemporary ethnomusicological science. The innovative approaches characteristic of his writings and free thinking will always be exemplary in the history of ethnomusicology.

Grandmasters of Georgian Folk Song are Slowly Leaving Us

International Research Centre of Traditional Polyphony expresses deep condolences over the passing of **Andro Simashvili**, a well-known and beloved great master and a true beneficient of Kakhetian folk songs. Andro Papa, as everybody called him, lived in the village of Artana in Telavi district. It is the Simashvili family, who have preserved the singing tradition of the famous Karalashvilis from Artana. Andro Simashvili turned out to be the last Mohican of the old generation of singers, whose passing is a great loss for Georgian folk music; however, he has decent followers, thanks to whom Andro Papa's legacy will never sink into oblivion...

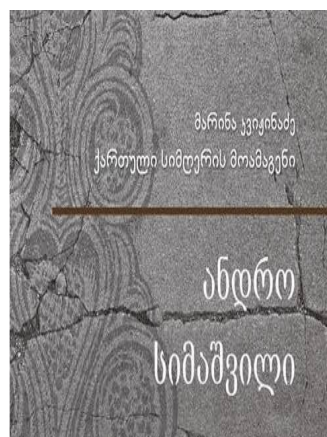


Andro Simashvili

Andro Simashvili spent his entire life mastering native songs. He raised many generations of Kakhetian singers. There is hardly any Georgian or foreign singer of Georgian traditional music, who has not heard his name! Despite the age (he was 96) he continued his relations with youngsters until the end of his life; and transmitted to them his knowledge and experience. All who have ever had the happiness of relation

with Andro Simashvili express their gratitude and love for him along with grief.

In 2013 Georgian Chanting Foundation awarded Andro Simashvili "For the contribution to the revival and popularization of Kakhetian song" and published a monograph about him (author – Marina Kvizhinadze); in 2015 the Folklore State centre of Georgia and Georgian Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection held an event dedicated to the renowned singer and song master at Telavi State Drama Theatre, when Andro Simashvili was awarded the title "Priest of Art" for his special contribution to the development of Georgian culture.



Monograph Andro Simashvili

Find more about Andro Simashvili's life and work in the next issue of the Bulletin.

Children's Traditional Ensemble

Ensemble Unisoni

*New children's vocal ensemble Unisoni was formed in Tbilisi several years ago; the children sing Georgian folk songs, church hymns and examples of city folklore. **Zurab Bakuradze** – one of the directors of the ensemble, a soloist of ensemble Kartuli khmebi, tells more about it.*

M.K. – When did you decide to create a children's ensemble and how did you do that?

Z.B. – I started teaching children in 1998. Initially, I worked at different schools. In 2007 I became head of the Children's Studio of Kartuli khmebi; together with which we re-launched the program "Lessons of Georgian Songs" on Georgian Public Broadcaster in 2007-2009. During this time I got quite experienced in working with children. As a result, in 2014, I decided to create children's ensemble, which I realized together with my brother Givi Bakuradze – also a singer of Kartuli khmebi.

M.K. – Why did you name the polyphonic song ensemble Unisoni?

Z.B. – We thought much about the name, considered many options. Finally, we agreed on the name which, in many cases, unites Georgian polyphonic song in one sound at the end. I think the word *unison* (unison), in this case, expresses unity in the ensemble, which is very important and necessary for the success of our work.

M.K. – How many children do you have in the ensemble and what age?

Z.B. – Unisoni comprises two groups - basic and preparatory. Currently, there are 45 children in the basic group and 20 – in the preparatory. Regarding the age, the preparatory group unites 5-10-year-old children; the basic group comprises the age group of 8-18.

M.K. – How does generation change affect the ensemble membership?

Z.B. – Generation change is a very difficult process for all ensembles, but this difficulty only occurs in the beginning of the school year. Therefore, when studying a new song, we especially warn the children to carefully listen to all voice-parts. This makes it easier to overcome the problem.



Zurab Bakuradze

M.K. – How often do you rehearse and where?

Z.B. – We rehearse 3 times a week at public school #155.

M.K. – As far as I know, Unisoni is a sort of successor to the ensemble Kartuli khmebi. What can you say about that?

Z.B. – It can certainly be said that Unisoni is the successor of Kartuli khmebi and continues its traditions. This is natural because we too are the "heirs" of the old generation of Kartuli khmebi, whose repertoire and performance manner has endured for years and is as popular and familiar to the listener as it was in the beginning. I can say this with confidence from our experience of the young generation of Kartuli khmebiThis is why we continue in the same spirit, in similar style of repertoire and performance manner.

M.K. – How do you select the repertoire?

Z.B. – Our repertoire is fairly diverse.

It comprises folk songs and church hymns, examples of city folklore and Georgian composers' songs. We try to often update our repertoire. We have solo concerts every year and naturally, have to offer novelty to the listeners. In the prep group, we teach relatively simple songs, in the basic group, we select songs with regard to polyphonic complexity, popularity and scenic efficiency.



Ensemble Unisoni

M.K. – Please tell us about the ensemble's creative activity

Z.B. – The ensemble is quite busy. At the end of each school year, we perform in a sort of summary solo concert; we traditionally participate in famous festivals such as "Folkloriada" and "Mravalzhamieri". The night of December 31, 2018, was especially memorable for the children, when ensemble Unisoni congratulated whole Georgia with New Year from Rustaveli Avenue. Last year we participated in Tbilisoba celebration. Noteworthy are the Ensemble's concert tours to Czech Republic, Azerbaijan and Italy, which was an important scenic experience for the children. We have recorded CD and DVD albums; we also have an advertising clip.

M.K. – Your plans for the future?

Z.B. – We are preparing for a solo concert at the end of the school year; also for a tour in Greece to participate in the "Days of Georgia". We plan to record a new audio album in the near future; we

are going to shoot another clip at the end of the school year.

M.K. – On behalf of the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony, I wish success to ensemble Unisoni.

Z.B. – Thank you very much.

*The interview was recorded
by Maka Khardziani*

Foreign Performers of Georgian Folk Music

Ensemble Satchoukari from France

Satchoukari (lit. a gift in Georgian language) is a France-based vocal-instrumental quartet of Georgian traditional music. The ensemble selected the name with the idea of gifting everyone with their love for Georgia, Georgian people and polyphony. The ensemble members have sung together for 8 years.



Ensemble Satchoukari

Satchoukari's repertoire includes examples of different genres: work, wedding, table, traveler's, love-amusing songs. The repertoire is enriched and refined with regular assistance of their Georgian friend Soso Kopaleishvili, and via listen-

ing to the recordings of Georgian folk song masters. Satchoukari enriches A Cappella songs with Georgian traditional instruments such as *chonguri*, *pan-duri*, *chuniri* and *doli*. Current membership of the group is as follows: Lela Khutsishvili, Colombe Lecat-Warda, Hervé Rolland, Etienne Bégouen.

It all started when Colombe Lecate-Warda, whose grandfather was a Georgian Assyrian, decided to find out more about her ancestors. This led her to Georgian polyphony. In 2005, after participating in the work-shop organized by Georgian folk ensemble Mze-shina from France, Colombe decided to create a Georgian folk song ensemble from non-Georgians, which she realized together with Hervé Rolland in 2006. Most of the ensemble members were from the city of Angers, so the ensemble was given a symbolic name Angeorgien (i.e. Georgian Angers).



Ensemble Satchoukari

In 2008 Colombe and Hervé travelled to Georgia. Even though the trip was short, due to the war, they had a rich experience by meeting with Islam Pilpani and visiting Batumi Conservatory.

In 2010 Colombe and Hervé travelled to Georgia for the second time. It was at this time that they met Soso Kopaleishvili in Bolnisi, at the first solo concert of his ensemble Orbeli. They created a program for the group of non-Georgians (Angeorgien).

In 2011 Kopaleishvili conducted one-week master classes for the group which was vesting Tbilisi and taught them many Georgian songs. After the master classes ensemble Angeorgien held a joint concert together with ensemble Sakhioba.

In 2013, the ensemble invited Soso to France for a one-month workshop and master class. In Angers Soso delivered lectures and conducted

master classes with French music groups at Bergson High School at the Angers Conservatory. At the end of the master class, Thierry Dechaume, a music teacher at Bergson Lyceum organized a conference and concert.

In 2014 Colombe, Hervé and Cathy (Ferri Catherine) decided to create Satchoukari and travel to Tbilisi to work with Soso, and to adapt Georgian songs for the trio.

In 2015 the group was invited to Batumi International Festival by Khatuna Managadze. Satchoukari used this opportunity to enrich and refine the repertoire and performance style. The same year Etienne Bégouen joined the group; later after Cathy's leaving the group was joined by Lela Khutsishvili, who had known them for a long time.

After performing a large number of concerts in France, in 2018 the group was invited to Poti, then again to the Batumi festival, and finally to Tbilisi International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony. Parallel to this Giorgi Ushikishvili dedicated a television program to the group on TV Company Rustavi 2.

It is noteworthy, that in the 2019 ensemble Satchoukari started learning Georgian sacred hymns to perform them for the French audience.

According to the ensemble members, for each of them Georgian song is "a palette of colorful harmonies that resonate with the desire to share this amazing song and music with everyone".

Beneficents of Georgian Folk Song

Rema Shelegia

Brilliant Megrelian singer and choirmaster, Rema Shelegia, belongs to the generation of Georgian figures who dedicated their lives to the revival and promotion of Georgian folk song. A talented disciple of famous Dzuku Lolua, brought the performance of Georgian folk song to a high level, revived many forgotten examples of Megrelian song and introduced them to wider audiences, created a large number of his own variants

and took a worthy place in the pantheon of great Georgian folk song masters.



Rema Shelegia

Romanoz (Rema) Shelegia was born on 7 October, 1883, in the village of Jolevi, Senaki district. He fell in love with folk song in his native village; spent hours listening to folk songs and sacred hymns. At the age of 8-10, he could sing all voice-parts of the songs and hymns he heard in the village, from the age of 12 Shelegia sang in a choir and chanted at the church. Supposedly he learned chanting from Dimitri Chalaganidze.

In 1897 Shelegia heard the choir of Dzuku Lolua, a grandmaster of Megrelian folk song, in Kutaisi. That's when he decided to choose collecting folk songs, performing and teaching them to others as his profession. After that, singing became part of Rema's daily life.

In 1907 Shelegia moved to Sokhumi together with his family. The reason was the desire to get closer to Dzuku Lolua. "I wanted to work with him – the best connoisseur of songs. Before I got to know Dzuku, I created a choir of 30, after 3 months of work we held a concert at Sokhumi summer park. The audience comprised about

2000 people.... Dzuku liked the concert and offered collaboration to me" his autobiography reads. Shelegia became a leading singer in Dzuku Lolua's choir. Together with him, among the other members of the choir were Kitsi Gegechkori and Kirile Pachkoria – both renowned choirmasters later.

According to contemporaries, Shelegia was a singer with filigree technique – a soloist, an incomparable improviser. His sweet, velvety and extremely flexible voice, scenic simplicity, natural artistry and light humor always enchanted the listeners. He was unparalleled in performing Megrelian songs. According to his students, Shelegia was a very considerate, warm-hearted and sincere person.

It is noteworthy that Shelegia never violated the principles of Georgian folk song performance. His concert program included songs accompanied by a round dance, a dance or an instrument. The choirmaster sought to maintain the charm of Megrelian song and to present its characteristic lyrical coloring. Among Georgian choirmasters Rema Shelegia is distinguished as an extremely active and prolific figure. He directed a record number of choirs. At various times he directed the choirs in the cities and villages in Samegrelo, Imereti and Abkhazia; also the united choir of West Georgia. These collectives successfully performed for both Georgian and foreign audiences. Thus, Rema Shelegia presented Georgian song onto the international arena, and, in this regard, he became the successor of Lado Agniashvili and Kote Potskhverashvili.

Rema Shelegia raised many talented singers and choirmasters. Among his trainees were: Noko Khurstia; Valerian Svanidze; Nikoloz Kakachia; Tamar Kakachia; Porpile Gabelia; Biktoria Abshilava; Lena Khorava; Ksenia Khoperia; Dzabu Tavdgiridze; Giorgi Gelantia; Longi Miminoshvili; Kosta, Dimitri, Potine and Pisti Mamporia; Maksime Gogia; Leonti Chikhladze;

Vazha Abakelia and others. His children – Luba, Venera and Shalva also sang wonderfully.

Rema Shegelia's manuscript with his playlist of up to 500 songs! has survived to this day. The list comprises Megrelian, Abkhazian, Gurian, Imeretian, Rachan, Svan folk songs, as well as the examples of city folklore, sacred hymns and Georgian composers' works.

The songs performed by Rema Shelegia are preserved at the Radio Fund, are released as LPs, and published in music collections.

With their high artistic qualities they still amaze the listeners. Their study helps researchers to better understand the genre features, modulation regulations and performance traditions of Megrelian folklore.

With his performing and pedagogical activities, Rema Shelegia played a major role in the cultural life of Samegrelo.

In 1948, on his 65th anniversary Rema Shelegia was awarded the title of Merited Artist.

Rema Shelegia passed away after long illness at the age of 72 in 1955.

Nino Kalandadze

Associate Professor of Ilia State University

Lela Urushadze

Ethnomusicologist, Choirmaster

Expedition Diary

Complex Expedition to Achara

“A Comparative Study of Traditional dance and dance instrumental pieces of the Acharans from İnegöl (Turkey) and Achara” is a winning project of the competition "Your Folk Idea" announced by the Folklore State Centre of Georgia. The expedition took place on August 27 - September 6, 2019 in Khulo, Shuakhevi and Keda Municipalities of Upper Achara.

The project was supported by the Folklore State Centre of Georgia and Georgian Chanting Foundation. The expedition included ethnomusicologist Nino Razmadze – project manager; choreologists: Ucha Dvalishvili and Aleko Gelashvili; dancers and instrumentalists: Nurullah Yildirim, Kadir Kandemir and Hasan Genç; Turkish choreologist – Idris Küçük; and a technical group.

The expedition aimed to identify and research similar and different elements of traditional Acharan and İnegölian dance and dance instrumental pieces, to reveal which traditional elements have been maintained in the practice of the Acharans in Turkey and in what form.

At public gatherings and celebrations the Acharans from İnegöl perform the following traditional dances: “Qolsama”; “Qolsamas gadaktseuli”; “Tsakvai”; “Khorumi”; “Khorumis gadaktseuli” (aka “tikva-tikva”); women’s dance – “Nardanina”, Abkhazian dance – “Abazurai”; “Apsua koshara”; “Qarabaghi” – “Samshalakho” (“Abazurai” and “Qarabaghi” are of Georgian origin).



A fragment of the expedition

The expedition schedule: 1. Meeting with ensemble Pesvebi of Shuakhevi municipality ; 2. attending the public celebration “Jvarmindoroba” on the mount Gomi; 3. Meeting with ensemble Bermukha of Khulo municipality; 4. Meeting with ensemble from the village of Khikhadziri,

Khulo municipality; 5. Interview with Nurullah Yildirim in the village of Merisi, Keda municipality; 6. Meeting with the dancers from the villages of Tskhmorisi, and Dandalo, Keda municipality; 7. Sorting of the material.

The research conclusions were as follows:

1. The dances of the Acharans from İnegöl, naturally, show particular proximity with the dances of Achara; 2. In their dances also encountered are dance movements characteristic of Caucasian people in general; revealed were similarities with Armenian and Kurdish dances; 3. The movements of the dance "Khorumi" are almost analogous to the movements of "Khorumi" from upper Achra. The only difference is in the rule of performance and the sequence of movements; 4. The movements of "Khorumis gadaktseuli" show similarity with the movements of "Gadakhveuli khorumi" from the villages of Nagvarevi, Tskhomorisi and Dandalo, and also with some movements of "Ohoi Nano"; 5. In "Khorumis gadaktseuli" original are the dancers' jumps towards the centre and jumps on one feet (not encountered anywhere else); 6. The movements of "Qolsama" show similarity with the movements of "Gandagana". The difference is in the character and peculiarities of movements. Here we encounter variations of *bukna* (squat-jump) movements, which distinguishes it from "Gandagana"; 7. Particularly noteworthy is that "Qolsama" is performed in pairs by men, which is not typical for Acharan dance; 8. Original is "Qolsama gadaktseuli" – "Tsakvai". This detail is not characteristic of Acharan dances either. However, Achran dancers say that it is "Lekuri" and is danced separately.

Particularly noteworthy is the attitude of the Georgians from İnegöl to their dance culture. They take great care of every detail and say that these dances were performed exactly this way 150 years ago and they invariably continue these traditions.

Aleko Gelashvili

Doctor of Arts, choreographer, choreologist

Foreigners about Georgian Traditional Music **Voices of the Ancestors - An English** **Woman's Journey** **Through Georgian Folk Songs and Singers**

*Here's an interview with **Susan Thompson**, an English musician, a Bachelor of Science, Member of the Institute of Fundraising, the current chair of Maspindzeli choir. She is a huge fan of Georgia and its culture.*

M.K. – Could you tell us briefly about yourself, your main interests?

S.T. – I live in a small English village with my husband Phil. I work as a freelance consultant writing funding bids for charities. Family is very important to me, my Dad (85) and I love to go to "Singing for the Brain" - a group for people with dementia. I have always loved singing; wherever I have lived I have found a choir to join. As a teenager, I was so sad that no one in my village went from house to house singing Christmas Carols, that one dark December night I organized my friends and neighbours to go carol singing and collect money for a local charity.



Batumi Festival in 2019

M.K. – How did you first meet Georgian traditional music and what was your first impression?

S.T. – In the 1990s when my daughters were very young I sang with an Acapella world music community choir with my mother, her sister and

my cousin. We learnt songs aurally from all around the world, Africa, Polynesia etc. Our teacher, Sally Brown, loved voices in harmony and rarely taught anything in unison. I think Sally was a member of the Natural Voice Network and spent time with choir leaders who had learnt from Edisher Garakanidze and Joseph Jordania. Sally passed on these “new” songs and taught us – Batonebo, Asho Chela and Shen Khar Venakhi. Singing those three songs I was captivated, entranced and intrigued by Georgian Folk singing, in a way that music from other countries had not touched me. Before I had the chance to go to Georgia I took every opportunity to learn from visiting teachers – Edisher Garakanidze, Nato Zumbadze, Anzor Erkomaishvili. So my first meeting with Georgian traditional music was through listening and repeating, listening and repeating, listening and repeating.

M.K. – What do you think attracts foreigners to Georgian folklore?

S.T. – It is difficult to articulate the main reason for non-Georgians being interested in Georgian folk music. It is like “marmite”, people either love it or hate it, there are few who are undecided. Those who love it, really love it, finding it touches something deep within. There is something very special about the way in which the vibrations of 3 singers touch in Georgian traditional music. In all styles, the act of singing is open and honest, with Georgian traditional music when this openness aligns with the vibrations of the other singers something extra is created, something intangible.

M.K. – Did you have an opportunity to meet any interesting Georgian musicians in the urban and rural environment as well? And how could you describe this experience?

S.T. – In 2004 I joined Maspindzeli and performed at the second International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony. Through Maspindzeli, I have been very lucky to have travelled in Georgia and met many wonderful musicians. I had the

joyous experience of singing in Georgia with our daughters, Rowan and Hazel in 2006 when they were 15 and 12Yrs. In Tbilisi we learnt to sing and dance Voisa from Gigi Garakanidze and Mtiebi. In Tsinandali we were exposed to the intricacies of Kakhetian ornamentation by the teaching of Levan Abashidze. I owe a debt of gratitude to Michael Bloom and his wife Eliso who generously organized excursions for Maspindzeli through which I visited Zedashe in Sighnaghi and learnt about the flowers and plants that only grow in Georgia e.g. Pennyroyal.

I am thankful to Tamta Turmandidze and Malkhaz Erkvaniidze who were responsible for me seeing village life in Bukistsikhe first hand. I have such fond memories of waking to the sound of the turkeys being let out and learning songs from Malkhaz. It was wonderful to learn Agideli in a place where we could see vines growing up through the trees and understand how they were collected in the conical “gideli” basket. It was a complete revelation to hear the dancing voices of Gurian songmaster sing at the evening supra - table.

More recently I was again delighted to travel in Georgia with my daughters (now in their 20's) – this time on a trip led by Nino Naneishvili. A lasting memory will be meeting with Bela Kamadadze, Darejan Pachulia and Eka Kogua of the Kolkhuri trio at the Art gallery in Senaki. (I am not sure if Hazel has forgiven me yet for putting a *chonguri* in her hands and asking her to play in front of them!)

Trips with Nino introduced me to singers in Racha and Svaneti. In Ambrolauri it was touching to sing a song I knew to be from Racha – supruli, to Rostrom Gogoladze and have him recognize it and sing it back in true Rachan style.

In Glola it was amazing to stand in a green glade between the fir trees and watch as Lali and an older performer disagreed about the steps to a round dance – it reminded me of a Maspindzeli rehearsal!

In Lenjeri it was touching to find a copy of 99 Georgian Songs with a handwritten inscription of thanks to the Pilpani's for their contribution to the book.

M.K. – What can you say about the Georgian ethnomusicological environment, about the events which you have attended here?

S.T. – The academic study of Ethnomusicology feels very far from my subjects at university – Geography and Geology. However, when listening to a presentation of the work by Nana Mzhavanadze and Frank Scherbaum bringing a different perspective to the recording and presentation of Svanetian singers perhaps the subjects are closer than I think. Attending the International Symposium on Traditional Polyphony in Tbilisi and the Gigi Garakanidze International Festival of Folk and Church Music in Batumi has given me a great respect for the depth of knowledge and years of study devoted by talented ethnomusicologists in both Georgia and the world.



After the rehearsal of Maspindzeli choir

M.K. – Please tell us about your future plans?

S.T. – I am currently part of a British-Georgian collaboration – Voices of the Ancestors. This new theatre project looks to tell the story of how Georgian folk songs came to the UK – not just in great performances by Rustavi but actually, learnt and passed on by ordinary people. Working with Magda Kevlishvili, leader of Amer-Imeri and

Holly Taylor graduate of Rose Bruford College of Theater and singer with Maspindzeli, we wish to tell the story of the Garakanidze family. We have performed a ten minute short in London, which was well received. The project is still in the early phase where we are seeking funding to research and develop the piece. It is very exciting to hear people in the UK say, completely unprompted, that their lives were changed for the better by learning to sing Georgian Folk songs.

If you'd like to know more please get in touch - voicesofancestors@gmail.com or follow our progress on Facebook - voices of the ancestors.

M.K. – I wish you success.

S.T. – Thank you.

Interviewed by Maka Khardziani

Ethnographic Letters

Work Songs in Guria (part II)

Khelkhvavi

Khelkhvavi means abundance, plenty. In Kartli and Kakheti a worker on the threshing floor would be greeted with the word “abundance” instead of “good day” – the same was the case with a person who collected, shucked and stored corn in Guria – and believed that with this, the crops would become abundant. *Khelkhvavi* is the song which matches with this work. Unlike a Kartlian, a Gurian does not cut ears of corn from the stem, but breaks them and puts them close to the barn or another convenient place. Corn ears are thrown into the baskets. Then comes a man “a collector” with a large basket on his back, all baskets are emptied in his large basket and he brings the corn to the thresh-

ing floor. When collecting the harvest, a Gurian repeatedly uses the word "abundance": instead of just "basket" he will say "basket for abundance", etc.



Apolon Tsuladze

In the evening, after the sunset, Gurian peasants shuck corn on the light of the wick-lamp. Shucking corn for the Gurians was as fun, as was sowing and digging corn; singing at meal-time during sowing and weeding, was like receiving an advance, today the crop is harvested, so they have more reason to sing and rejoice, to shuck the corn collectively, to dine in the bosom of nature, to sing, enjoy, and please the neighbors too. Corn shucking is a merge of labour and pleasure. This can be done by the family members during one night or two, but it is boring for a Gurian; who is quick and impatient, besides, the threshing floor is outdoors, he is afraid that it will rain. He considers all this and invites *nadi*. Along with work, he tries to have fun, talk, even sing and laugh. For a Gurian corn shucking *nadi*, was also the opportunity for showing off. He could boast with big threshing floor and good hospitality, accompanied by singing and joking.

The participants of corn-shucking *nadi* could be: women and men, married and unmar-

ried, old and young; everyone could shuck the corn and people eagerly participated in *nadi*, to work with fun, sing, make jokes, tell riddles or fairy tales, mock friends and neighbours (being there or not), compete in saying tongue-twisters, tell funny stories..... In a word, if corn shucking lasted even for 4-6 hours, the time was passed so that laughing would not stop.

If the threshing floor was big and people got bored (started yawning), the host would not mind completing the job - he would say: let's stop now, blessed be your hands, have little dinner and rest - we will continue tomorrow.

Khelkhvavi (affluence of hands) was the song which accompanied corn shucking. Just like *naduri* accompanied hoeing, *Khelkhvavi* accompanied the work done by hands; the shucked ears of corn were thrown aside to the beat of the song. Everybody tried to match their singing with the work, not to break the harmony and rhythm. *Khelkhvavi* was the axis of the corn-shucking process. It facilitated and encouraged labour, made it more productive.

There were many women singers (and also chanters) in Guria; but there is no example of a woman singing *naduri*; however, there were many good women singers (both married and unmarried) of *Khelkhvavi*. It is an antiphonal song, and women (one choir) and men (the other choir) would often compete in singing.

There were three types of *Khelkhvavi*: short, long and feast. Similar to *Qanuri*, *Khelkhvavi* was essentially the same, but, there was and still is *Khelkhvavi* of West Guria (*Guri-antulai*), middle Guria, East Guria, and *Kobule-turai*.

The Gurians considered St. Grigol to be the protector of the harvest by, and also mentioned him in *Khelkhvavi*: "St. Grigol comes to our threshing floor, makes it abundant and goes away...." Nor did they forget the angels: "Michael and Gabriel made our threshing floor abundant"...

During corn shucking *Khelkhvavi* was sung many times, so, for diversity, they would sing the verses of different, often with a humorous content, which characterized this or that village in Guria.

After the spread of literacy in Guria, *Khelkhvavi* and other songs were sung on the verses from the books. The singers tried to sing new verses, and not use the same ones.

When shucking the corn, the workers often lay a bet, who would fill the basket faster, without stopping laughing and joking. Upon completing the work each employee said to the host: “May you use this corn with as much fun and joy as we shucked it”.

Nadi was served dinner, which was accompanied with joy and singing, dancing of women and men, sometimes even gun shooting.

Boiled or fried new corn was served during both the work process and after dinner. And so, the feast joyfully ended with singing.

Landowners, as well as the nobility, were happy to attend corn shucking because this work was easy and enjoyable. Besides, everyone was happy to touch the “harvest of the year” (which is collected once a year).

The material is taken from
Apolon Tsuladze’s book “Ethnographic Guria”
(Tbilisi: Sabchota Sakartvelo, 1971)

Mixed Georgian-Foreign Families on Guard of Georgian Traditions

The Interest of foreigners in Georgian traditional culture has a long history; however, in the last decades, Georgian folklore attracted an unusual number of foreign musicians, researchers and singers. It was thanks to Georgian song and chant that our Georgian and foreign respondents met, later got married and continue with love the family tradition of music performance established in Georgia.

Family of John Ananda Graham and Ekaterine Disamidze

Ekaterine and John met each other thanks to Georgian traditional chant. They got married in 2011 and live in Tbilisi.



Family of John Ananda Graham and Ekaterine Disamidze

John Graham: Ekaterine and I got acquainted via Georgian traditional chanting. The thing is that when I came to Georgia for the first time in 2003, in the autumn of the same year, Ekaterine went to study at St. Petersburg Conservatory. We heard about each other, but met a little later. Our friendship is largely due to the interest in the same field. We are often told that we are very much like each other I think this implies the

same energy, interests that we have, because we – people born on different continents have many similar and common things, including music, traditional music in particular. As soon as I got acquainted with Ekaterine I discovered that our articles were published side by side in the collection of scientific works in musicology of the Conservatoire.



John Ananda Graham with a choir Aghsvali

We both have scientific degrees (Ph.D.) in music sciences; I – in musicology, Ekaterine – in musical anthropology. Over the years Ekaterine worked at classical music radio "Muza" as a program instructor and radio presenter; then we moved to Princeton, where we acquired a lot of interesting musical and general experience.

Before returning to Georgia, I taught MA and Ph.D. students at Yale University Institute of Church Music, who, in addition to Western wanted to study Eastern Orthodox chanting traditions. While we were in the USA we sang in the choirs such as "Handel Society" and "Yale Camerata".

From time to time we work on various printed and audio editions in both Georgia and the USA; often participate in international conferences and symposia. In summer I organize "monastery tours", during which we visit Georgian churches and monasteries with the people interested in old Georgian Christian culture, including the orthodox of another ethnic origin. I can't imagine living without traditional songs and

chants. For many years I have been listening to Georgian folk music and hymns in the car as well. We hold workshops of Georgian songs outside Georgia; they are often organized by the figures of Georgian Orthodox church abroad.

Naturally, our children constantly listen to Georgian traditional music, and so 7-year-old Elisabeth and 3-year-old Sebastian sing from early age and play musical instruments for children. When we are in the church together, Elisabeth asks us to chant in three voices. She correctly sings top part from the age of 5. She is as happy as we are when we chant in three voices. She asked the same when we were visiting one of the oldest Orthodox monasteries in Cyprus. The monk serving there gave us permission and we chanted together with Elisabeth.

They sing everything they hear. Elisabeth learns many songs at home – from us, as well as at school, from music teachers. Our repertoire is fairly diverse, it includes both Georgian and non-Georgian melodies. When we live abroad, at Christmas time we invite interested people to our house and teach them "Alilo" from different provinces of Georgia. Now we are in Georgia and we invite people who want to sing traditional Christmas carols. Every Sunday of last December was dedicated to such musical encounters in our home. We provide guests with notes. Last year the guests were mostly foreigners, who especially miss their families and friends in this season and probably soothe their nostalgia with these songs like we soothed our feeling of Georgian Christmas and New Year with Georgian "Alilo" songs abroad. The collection of songs which I copy for my guests was compiled by my father in my childhood. These are four-part hymns, which our children learn by ear and sing.

As for Georgian folk songs, we sing simpler melodies together with our children; however they also listen to more complex songs from all parts of the country.

One Regional Ensemble

Ensemble Riho

In 1903, an expedition composed of Polievktos Karbelashvili, Aleksandre Khakhanashvili and Zakaria Paliashvili visited Svaneti to explore cultural heritage and record Svan songs. Their guide was Ivane Margiani, the *blagochinni* (a priest who managed the affairs of several parishes in Russian Empire) of Lashkheti district. It was during this expedition that the idea of creating a regional choir was born; this was realized later by Ivane Margiani with the help of Aleksi Pilpani.



Mestia Regional Ensemble directed by Ivane Margiani, with Aleksi Pilpani as choirmaster (1928)

At this time Aleksi Pilpani already had a small choir consisting mainly of Philphanis and a few other singers. That is why, in 1926, Mestia authorities, commissioned Aleksi to create a regional song and dance ensemble on the basis of his choir, together with Ivane Margiani. They visited all villages of Upper Svaneti on the horseback to select singers and in 1928 the newly formed Mestia ensemble directed by Ivane Margiani, with Aleksi Pilpani as choirmaster performed concerts first at Tbilisi Opera and Ballet Theatre and then in a number of cities throughout the Soviet Union. According to the press of the time, the Svan ensemble caused a furore everywhere.

In 1937, the Mestia regional choir participated in the First Decade of Georgian Art in Moscow, where its performance was described as an “Avalanche from the mountains”. From the “Decade” the ensemble returned with solid monetary and nominal awards.

After Ivane Margiani’s passing (1933) Mestia regional ensemble of song and dance was directed by Murzaqan Dadeshkeliani for a short time, then – by Sebi Guledani, by Platon Dadvani from 1938, however, Aleksi Pilpani was an invariable choirmaster until the end of his life.

In 1967 Platon Dadvani entrusted Islam Pilpani to be the choirmaster of the ensemble, and artistic director from 1982. From here starts the history of Riho, however, the ensemble was given this name later.

The history of Mestia regional choir is unimaginable without Maharbi Gurguliani, a matchless dancer and singer, whom Platon Dadvani accepted in his ensemble at the age of 14 (in 1940). Those, who had even once seen his fiery dances would never forget them.



Mestia Regional Ensemble directed by Platon Dadvani (1950)

After Maharbi Gurguliani’s passing Kandit Merlani was appointed the choreographer of the ensemble. Merlani made a great contribution to the creation of the scenic variants of Svan folk dances. He still continues his activities in Riho.

The ensemble was always large about 40 members, aged 15-70. But despite the size, the group never violated the regularities of traditional performance and still follow them: regardless of the choir size, top and middle voice-parts are always performed by one singer each.



Three generations of ensemble Riho directed by Vakhtang Pilpani, with Islam Pilpani as choirmaster (2016)

It is noteworthy, that Riho was one of the first regional ensembles which were brought to Tbilisi on Anzor Erkomaishvili's initiative to record an LP in the 1980s. At this time it became necessary to select a name for the ensemble and it was named Riho, as selected by Islam Pilpani. All-Union sound recording studio Melodya recorded Riho's singing on the multi-track equipment in a very original way: there was a microphone placed in front of each singer, thus the entire song and each voice-part were recorded separately. Later these voices were "separated" and the songs were recorded in four tracks: in the first track, all voices are equally heard, in the other three – separate voices are put in the forefront.

These recordings were made for educational purposes, and in 2017 Georgian Chanting Foundation released them as a series – Teach Yourself Georgian Folk Song, which includes 2 CDs with 13 audio examples.

Riho is still actively involved in ethnomusicological processes of Georgia and promotes

Svan folk music and dance both in Georgia and elsewhere. The ensemble visited (concerts, master classes) many countries of the world and the fact that today many foreign ensembles successfully perform Svan songs and even play *chuniri* and *change* is largely thanks to ensemble Riho.

Recent awards are also proof of Riho's merit: first place among the municipal ensembles at the 2015-2016 National Folklore Festival of Georgia; award of the Georgian Chanting Foundation in the nomination "Beneficent of Georgian folklore" for its contribution in the development of Svan folklore. Choirmaster Islam Pilpani was also holder of many awards: "Beneficent of Georgian Folk Song" of the Georgian Chanting Foundation, "Priest of Art" award of Georgian Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection (2016); Georgian Chanting Foundation published a monograph about Islam Pilpani (author Maka Khardziani, 2019) under the series "The Beneficents of Georgian Folk Song".

Since Islam Pilpani's passing in 2017 the ensemble has been directed by his son – Vakhtang. For his contribution to the preservation and promotion of Svan Folklore Vakhtang Pilpani was awarded Platon Dadvani prize at the 2015-16 National Folklore Festival of Georgia. The State Folklore Centre of Georgia and the Ministry of Culture and Monument Protection of Georgia awarded him a solid cash prize.

It should be noted, that a few years before Islam Pilpani's passing, Vakhtang's son Beshken also joined Riho. And we saw three generations of the Pilpanis on the stage; which is an encouraging fact.

Thus, ensemble Riho suitably continues the traditions of the Mestia Song and Dance Ensemble; there are lots of interesting creative projects ahead.

The IRCTP wishes Riho a long, creative life.

Maka Khardziani

Foreign Polyphony

Icelandic *Tvísöngur*

Icelandic *tvísöngvar* (singular *tvísöngur*), are songs for two voices in Lydian mode, usually sung in parallel fifths, and distinguished by multiple voice-crossings. Typically, one of the two singers performs main melodic line and the second singer performs contrapuntal line; this counterpoint singer begins one fifth above or below the melodic line, and shifts periodically between the two positions. Singers tend to be of the same gender.



Danica Boyce

Compared to many traditional polyphonic singing styles, two-part polyphony was probably embraced in Iceland quite a bit later than other places in the world. The earliest polyphonic musical notation in Iceland dates to the early fourteenth century. Through the middle ages and into the mid-eighteenth century, two-part polyphony was transmitted via the church. It appears that it was only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, under the hardships following the plague and earthquake, and when Icelanders had little access to musical education,

that this practice of singing in parallel fifths with voice-crossing fully entered the oral tradition.

At this point singers began making use of different texts for *tvísöngvar*. No longer devotional, but more recent, secular poetry, often about love or drinking. It's hard to tell how widespread the practice of *tvísöngur* singing was in Iceland in the era after it entered the oral tradition, because documentation from that time is scarce. The main, and nearly only, source of *tvísöngur* transcriptions from the era of oral transmission is a collection of Icelandic folksongs called *Íslensk þjóðlög* gathered by pastor and folk music enthusiast Bjarni Thorsteinsson between 1880 and 1905.

Though this foundational folksong collection contains no fewer than forty-two *tvísöngvar*, the style is not as large a part of contemporary Icelandic folksong repertoire as may be expected. Iceland is lauded internationally for its indie and classical music, but the folk music of Iceland is comparatively little-known, even among native Icelanders. This imbalance is very probably the result of colonial influence by Denmark, which, it appears has had a detrimental effect on Icelanders' musical self-concept. *Tvísöngur* singing in particular, perhaps because of its medieval flavour, and its difficulty has not as yet received the level of scholarly and aesthetic attention it merits. As of a survey I conducted in 2018, the number of singers who perform *tvísöngur* regularly as a significant part of their repertoire appeared to be fewer than ten but could have been as many as twenty-five.

In the future, it would be worth considering the impact of the internet as a positive influence on interest in *tvísöngur*, and perhaps, consequently, a motivator for singers to learn and perform in the style. Though only one of the performers I interviewed in Iceland in 2018 reported they had observed any impact of the internet on *tvísöngur* transmission, a video of

a *tvísöngur* performance in northern Iceland that I posted on social media at the time of the survey received 4,000 views in the first four days it was online and was shared by Icelanders and foreigners alike. The sheer number of people who clicked on this link suggests that potential interest in *tvísöngur* among Icelanders and a worldwide audience is considerable.

Danica Boyce

Graduated Master of Medieval and Early Modern Studies and a Bachelor of Education from the University of Victoria, Canada

One Traditional Instrument

Apkhartsa

Apkhartsa is an Abkhazian string-bowed folk instrument, which has the form completely different from that of the similar instruments (*chianuri*, *chuniri*) common in Georgia. It has a boat-like body and two strings. Its scroll, handle and bowl are made from the whole tree and is about 70-80 cm long. It has horse-hair strings, attached to the bottom of the body and supported by a high bridge. *Apkhartsa* is played in seated position with the instrument held obliquely between the knees; it has fourth tuning.

Traditionally the function of *apkhartsa* is to accompany Nart legends and epic (historical-heroic) songs which are widespread in Abkhazia. There are data, testifying that at war every detachment had *apkhartsa* players, who had their instruments attached to the saddle. In between the battles, they sang the songs praising heroes and reproving the cowards.



Apkhartsa

Apkhartsa was also attributed pain-relieving function. It was for this purpose that *apkhartsa* was played when removing a bullet from the wound. Well-known are the so-called “songs of the wounded” of this genre, traditionally performed with *apkhartsa* accompaniment.

The Abkhazians also attributed healing properties to *apkhartsa*. When spending a night with the ill it was traditional to play the *apkhartsa*; sing and dance with its accompaniment.

Ritual songs were also performed with *apkhartsa* accompaniment, for example, the songs for “catching the soul” of the drowned, those who fell from the rock, the tree and generally, those dead of unnatural death (sometimes wind instrument *acharpani* also participated in the ritual). The song for “catching the soul” entitled “*Apstgaga*” has survived in Abkhazia to this day. The ritual was as follows: After the funeral of the deceased in an accident, the relatives would gather to “catch his soul” and “bring it” to his body, because they believed that his soul was distanced from his body and bothered the deceased at night until it was “caught” and “reunited” with the body. For this, they prepared a sack, attached a silk or silver string to it, the sack was held in the presumable direction of the person’s demise. *Apkhartsa* is attributed the property of “calling the soul into the sack”. As soon as the sack was filled with air, it meant that the soul had entered the sack. They tied the neck of the sack with the strings and headed towards the cemetery where the “soul was freed from the sack” under *apkhartsa* accompaniment.

Apkhartsa was also played to the deceased, the night before the funeral. In Abkhazian tradition, father had no right to bewail over his son, and so he expressed all his sorrow by playing the *apkhartsa*; in Abkhazian belief this would ennoble the soul of the deceased and relieve the father's grief. There is also evidence of father playing the *apkhartsa* at his child's funeral.

Currently, *apkhartsa* has practically disappeared from the Abkhazian life mode and has become a museum exhibit.

*The material processed by Maka Khardziani
basing on Manana Shilakadze's work*

“Traditional Musical Instruments and Georgian-
North Caucasian Ethno-cultural Relations”
(Tbilisi, Caucasian House, 2007)

One Traditional Ritual

Lasharoba

Lasharoba is chief feast in Pshavi, Tusheti and Ertso-Tianeti. Main shrine, located upper of the Aragvi River in Pshavi, is called Lashari St. George shrine. Lasharoba was celebrated on Monday following Peter-Paul Day. According to *khevisberi* (a cult servant in the East Georgian highlands) Pilipe Baghiauri the preparations for the feast were as follows: the cult servants of Lashari surf communities would gather at night on the eve of the feast and sit up all the night, the next day they would perform all the rules of the feast: blessing- commemoration, slaughter the cattle, bake *kada* bread, light candles, perform *perkhisa* round dance, take farewell to the shrine...

The following legend about Lashari cross has been preserved in people's memory: Once King Lasha-Giorgi came to Lasharoba celebration together with his men. The Pshavians met the king with honours, as a token of appreciation, the

king sent a precious cross to his hosts shortly afterwards. The Pshavians kept it at Lashari. As the legend tells after that the shrine was called *Lasharis Jvari* (Lashari cross). People had high hopes for the cross. The shrine of Lashari cross was considered a warrior and its flag led the army to the battle.

Inside the fence of the shrine, there was a square stone wall, where the icon of St. George and the cross were placed. The person who came to pray would kiss the cross and would be sprinkled with holy water by the shrine servant. The cult servant would slaughter the cattle and bless the people as it was the tradition at mountain shrines. Lashari shrine had a preacher who delivered St. George's will to the people.

A large bowl is known as “sageino” was preserved at Lashari shrine in Pshavi, with which people drank a toast to the deceased heroes.



Lashari Shrine

Lashari is also one of the main shrines in Tusheti. Lashari cross celebration was also held in July in the village of Chigho. Chief cult servant in Tusheti is *dekanosi* (archpriest), who, like cult servants in all other parts of East Georgia, follows all the established rules; after fulfilling them he has the right to serve the shrine. The archpriest had an assistant called *shulta*.

The preacher would go to the celebration early, bringing with him food, candles and the cattle to sacrifice. The flag of the shrine, adorned with fabric and coloured ribbons, was kept at the

shrine or in a separate building. The archpriest would bring out the flag and lean it against the shrine niche.

Later in the afternoon, the archpriest and *shulta* would stand near the shrine niche, light the candles and the archpriest started blessing the people.



Round dance “Korbe ghela”

The archpriest would drink the sacrificed arrack from a drinking horn, attach the candles to the horns of the sacrificed sheep and utter a blessing. With the same candle, he would sing the fur on the sheep’s head, hand the sheep to the *shulta* who would slaughter the animal and roll it down the slope. At this time, people would cry out: “Glory to the shrine!” The children tried to catch the sheep rolling down the slope, whoever succeeded to touch it first would get the sheep entrails.

This was followed by the preparations for a party, the tables were laid and the food was served. In the evening the *shulta* would bring a big vessel full of beer and the blessing of the vessel would begin. Only men were allowed to attend the blessing, they would sing near the beer vessel and cry out “Glory to St. George of Lashari!” In the morning the archpriest would bring out the flag and the party continued. At the same time, it was customary to dance “Korbe ghela” and hold horse racing.

“Korbe ghela” is a two-storey male round dance. The men in the two-storey circle walked to the door of the shrine, singing “Lashari Song”: (whose day is this? It is St George’s day....). The circle had to move so as not to disintegrate. At the shrine door, the circle would go round three times, the “Korbe ghela” dancers would shout: “May you be blessed by Lashari cross” and disintegrate. The *shulta* would bring out beer and host the dancers. After this, the youth would hold horse racing and the feast would end with this.

Lashari St. George was also chief shrine in Ertso-Tianeti. The feast was celebrated on the ninth Thursday from Easter. The celebration started in the evening and ended on Saturday morning. People would bring cattle, *kada* bread and candles for sacrifice. Some pilgrim women were dressed in white, with white kerchiefs on the heads and barefooted. Some men had red kerchiefs on the head. The shrine flag was offered pieces of a white or motley fabric as a sacrifice; people would tie motley ribbons and pieces of fabric on the branches of the shrine tree. The feast was accompanied by dancing. People came from Kakheti to pray and participate in the celebration.

Lasharoba is still celebrated in Pshavi, on this day all communities gather on the hill at Lashari shrine. However, much has been changed; *khevisberi* has been deprived of one of his main functions: gathering and uniting the communities, punishing the wrongdoers...

Ritual song “Perkhisa” is rarely performed. There are only a few soloist-coryphaei. The number of the *khevisberi*, who can perform the ritual has also decreased. However, Lasha Dzebniauri – the current *khevisberi* diligently fulfils his obligation and leads the people.

prepared by **Teona Nozadze and Maka Khardziani**
basing on **Nino Gambashidze’s and**
Nino Nakeuri’s materials

Lasharis simghera

Recorded and notated by Shalva Aslanishvili in 1947

dghes am dghe-o - ba vi - si - a, dghes am dghe-o - ba vi - si - a,

ts'min-di - si gi - or - gi - si - a, ts'min-di - si gi - or - gi - si - a,

ts'min-dis gi - or - gis k'ar - ze - da, ts'min-dis gi - or - gis k'ar - ze - da,

khe al - vad a - mo - su - li - qo, khe al - vad a - mo - su - li - qo,

zed a - moskh - mi - qo qur - dze - ni, zed moskh - mi - qo qur - dze - ni,

sach'me - lad mo - ts'e - u - li - a, sach'me - lad mo - ts'e - u - li - a.

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