

№30

The
V. Sarajishvili
Tbilisi State
Conservatoire
International
Research
Center for
Traditional
Polyphony
BULLETIN

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Tbilisi, June, 2021

The News

Ethnomusicological Life in Georgia

(January-June, 2021)

Festivals, Conferences, Competitions

08.03.2021 – Scientific conference “Woman, Tradition, Music” organized by Women’s Union of Georgia and Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Musical Instruments of the Arts Palace was held in online format

31.05.2021 –Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University of Chanting hosted Students’ scientific conference “Issues of Christian Theology and Musicology” dedicated to the memory of eminent Georgian musicologist Manana Andriadze.

12.06.2021 – Teona Lomsadze – a specialist at the IRCTP, presented her paper “*Krimanchuli* – Yodeling Phenomenon in Georgian Traditional Polyphonic Music Structure” at the VI International Conference on Analytical Approaches to World Music (AAWM) 2020-2021

12-20.06.2021 – Anzor Erkomaishvili First International Folklore Festival at Jansugh Kakhidze Music Centre with the participation of ensembles Erisioni, Rustavi, Basiani, Shavnabada.

14.06.2021 – Ekaterine Geliashvili’s webinar in Choreographic art “Dance Pattern and the Ways for its Construction” at the National Centre of Choreography NCC “GE ART”

25-27.06.2021 – Festival of choirmaster’s schools “Voices of Future” at Ozurgeti Folklore Centre

25-26. 06.2021 –Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgian State University and Federation of National Dances held Choreographic Forum-Festival “Terpsichore 2021” in online format.

Lectures, Meetings, Awards, Workshops, Presentations, etc

7.01.2021- 28.02.2021 –Folklore State Center of Georgia launched a project to popularize family ensembles, with the participation of the families of Urushadze, Gordeladze, Turkia, Philpani, Veshapidze, Gersamia, Skhiereli, Bidzinashvili,

Tikaradze, Meladze, Nakeuri, Berelidze, Gorelishvili, Kacharava and Kvirikashvili.

13.01.2021 – On the decision of the Georgian Theatrical Society, ensemble Erisioni was awarded the Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani award “Ambassador of t Georgian Stage”.

10.03.2021 – Director of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony, Emeritus of Tbilisi State Conservatoire Rusudan Tsurtsunia was awarded the Order of Queen Tamar for her outstanding personal contribution to the popularization of Georgian polyphonic music abroad and on the world polyphonic musical map.

17.03.2021 – Presentation of the book “Svan Folk Art” at St. Karbelashvili Brothers School in Telavi.

24.03.2021 – presentation of the online concert “From the Sunrise to the Sunset” – the joint project of ensemble Ialoni and the Library of Congress

25.03.2021 – Public lecture “Profession Ethnomusicologist” of Tamaz Gabisonia, Associate Professor at Ilia State University, on the ZOOM platform.

25.03.2021 – The project of the International Research Center for Traditional Polyphony became the Georgian winner of the UNESCO International Competition “Participation Program” for 2020-2021. The project will prepare and publish a bilingual (Georgian-English) collection of articles on the topic “The Role of Women in European Traditional Singing Practices Recognized by UNESCO”.

4.04.2021 – An online meeting “Anzor Erkomaishvili's Merit” organized by the Student Parliament of Georgia; the meeting was chaired by Davit Tsintsadze, Master of Church Music, director of ensemble Shavnabada.

13.04.2021 – Ethnomusicologist Ketevan Baiashvili’s public lecture “Musical Identity in Georgian Traditional Music” on the ZOOM platform organized by Ilia State University.

15.04.2021 – Online presentation of the project “Expedition in Khada Gorge” at Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Higher School of Church Chanting

14.05.2021 – Memorial plaque to Anzor Erkomaishvili was unveiled at Ozurgeti Folklore Center.

30.05.2021 – Ensemble Sakhioba’s meeting with the population of the village of Udabno, Sagarejo district and a joint concert with ensemble Kasletila

31.05.2021 – Georgian traditional church music - Georgian chanting was conferred the monument of intangible cultural heritage.

31.05.2021 – An online meeting between the students of Ozurgeti Choimaster’s school and Georgian community in Sweden.

15.06.2021 – Georgian Writers’ House hosted the presentation of the publication “Maro Tarkhnishvili 130” prepared by the Georgian Chanting Foundation

16.06.2021 – Presentation of unique recordings (6 audio albums) of Samuel Chavleishvili, Varlam Simonishvili, Vano Sarajishvili, Mikheil Kavsadze, Apolon Tsamtsishvili and Vano Mchedlishvili at Anzor Erkomaishvili Folklore Hall of the National Parliamentary Library of Georgia.

29.05.2021 – Ensemble Turachela’s workshops in the city of Rustavi.

17.06.2021 – Ensemble Basiani participated in the reception held in Rome on behalf of the President of Georgia to promote Georgian culture and Georgian polyphonic folk songs.

24.06.2021 – Presentation of the books published by the Training-Research Center of the Georgian Patriarchate in recent years in the yard of Anchiskhati church

25.06.2021 – Teona Lomsadze defended doctoral dissertation “Modern Forms of Functioning of Georgian Folk Music (on the Example of Folk Fusion)” at Tbilisi State Conservatoire.

Expeditions

9-12.02.2021 – Folk expedition of ensemble Ialoni (dir. Nino Naneishvili) in Shuakhevi Municipality, Upper Achara.

Nino Nakeuri, a student of the University of Chanting, organized expeditions to:

13.02.2021 – the village of Magharoskari, Pshavi;

7.05.2021 – the village of Misaktsieli, Mtskheta Municipality;

8.05.2021 – the village of Gometsari, Pshavi.

Ethnomusicologist Maia Gelashvili, an employee at Ozurgeti Folklore Center, organized expeditions to:

6.05.2021 – Lanchkhuti Municipality;

15.05.2021 – the village of Mtispiri, Ozurgeti Municipality;

30.05.2021 – Chokhatauri Municipality.

7-14.06.2021 – The employees of the Folklore State Center were in expedition to the villages of Likhuri, Jurukveti, Dzimiti, Zomleti, Surebi, Chochkhati, Naghobilevi, of Guria province;

11.05.2021 – Ethnomusicologist Giorgi Kraveishvili was in expedition to the village of Sarpi.

Concerts, Evenings, Projects, Exhibitions, Anniversaries, etc

13.01.2021 – A concert in support of the pandemic-affected singers and dancers at the Arto Garden on the initiative of Tbilisi City Hall.

8.03.2021 – The 8 March event dedicated to the women members of the “Club of Women-Winners” at Ozurgeti Folklore Center on the initiative of the Ozurgeti Folklore Center and with the support of Ozurgeti City Hall.

11.03.2021 – Certificate Award Ceremony for the Graduates of Choimaster’s Schools at the Folklore State Center

14.03.2021 – Ensemble Sameba’s 10th Anniversary online solo concert

19.03.2021 – Reception dedicated to the 135th anniversary of ensemble Erisioni at Tbilisi City Council.

Evenings of local traditional music were held in different regions of Georgia as part of the project “Singing Georgia”, organized by the Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Instruments of the Palace of Arts:

26.02.2021 – Evening of Kakhetian music with the participation of ensemble Shilda at “Shilda” winery;

28.03.2021 – Evening of Gurian music at Chokhatauri Municipality Centre of Culture with the participation of ensembles Amaghleba and Guria;

27.04.2021 – Evening of Rachan music at Oni Municipality with the participation of ensemble Rachacha;

27.06.2021 – Evening of Acharan folk music at Keda Centre of Culture;

25.04.2021 – Omar Mkhedze’s 85th anniversary evening organized by the Georgian Choreographers’ Union at the “Art Hall”.

25.04.2021 – Online concert of Ozurgeti choirmaster’s School students at Ozurgeti Folklore Center

30.05.2021 – Ensemble Gorda’s concert on the ZOOM online platform

1.06.2021 – On the occasion of the International Children’s Day ensemble Erisioni’s concert for the children of the heroes and soldiers who died in the August 2008 Russian-Georgian war

3.06.2021 – Ensemble Ialoni’s online solo concert together with ensemble Stumari, Misho Javakhishvili and Tina Mehtieva.

8.06.2021 – Concert of the students of Tsalenjikha Municipality choirmaster’s school in the borough of Jvari, Tsalenjikha Municipality

16.06.2021 – Concert of male ensemble Alilo in the yard of the Folklore State Centre

17.06.2021 – Concert of the students of Samtredia and Lentekhi choirmaster’s schools at the Folklore State Centre

20.06.2021 – Nanina, the creative group of ethnomusicologists, implemented the first stage of the project “Regional Female Ensembles for the Preservation of Traditional Music” (dir. Maia Gelashvili)

23.06.2021 – Presentation- concert of Ensemble Kirialesa at the Folklore State Centre of Georgia

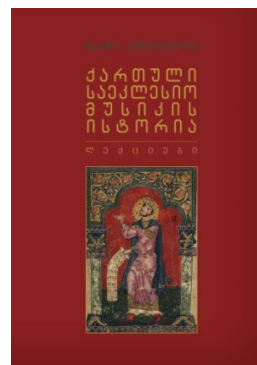
24.06.2021 – solo concert of the students of local choirmaster’s school in the city of Poti

Publications

Tbilisi State Conservatoire has published:
the book “History of Georgian Music from Ancient Times to the 20th Century” by Rusudan Tsurtssumia, Emeritus Professor of the Conservatoire



Magda Sukhiashvili's book “History of Georgian Church Music – Lectures”



Ensemble Basiani has released an audio album of Georgian traditional songs and hymns, concert recordings of 2010-2019



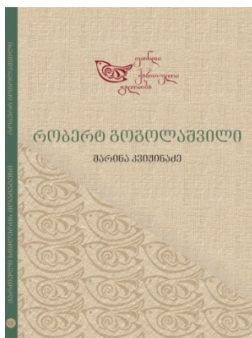
Ensemble Shavnabada has released an audio album of Easter hymns



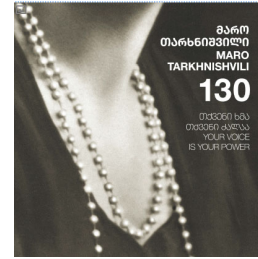
Folk ensemble Mzeshina from Telavi has released its first audio album



Georgian Chanting Foundation has published: a monograph “Robert Gogolashvili”, authored by ethnomusicologist Marina Kvizhinadze



the book “Maro Tarkhnishvili – 130”



National Parliamentary Library of Georgia has released audio albums of Samuel Chavleishvili, Varlam Simonishvili, Vano Sarajishvili, Mikheil Kavsadze, Apolon Tsamtsishvili and Vano Mchedlishvili



Prepared by Sopiko Kotrikadze

In Memory of Anzor Erkomaishvili

Anzor Erkomaishvili, the greatest beneficent of Georgian culture, the last representative of the Erkomaishvili dynasty, passed away on 31 March, 2021. Last year Anzor turned 80, which was celebrated with an immense jubilee event in his native Guria. In the previous issue of our bulletin, we tried to show the merits of Anzor Erkomaishvili in restoring, preservation and popularization of Georgian traditional music. Much more will be written and said about this, generations will proudly follow in his footsteps ...

Anzor Erkomaishvili was precious not only for Georgia; he was a figure of world importance, who earned love and respect of everyone with whom he had creative or personal relations. There were many such people from almost all countries of the world, where he traveled with ensemble "Rustavi" or alone. This is why the world community responded to his passing with such heartache ...

Here are excerpts from memoirs written in the days of Mr. Erkomaishvili's demise.



Anzor Erkomaishvili

“We won’t meet any person as BIG as Anzor again, big in his art, in his contribution to the culture of the world, and a big heart that embraced everyone passing through his life, including “Cloud Gate” members and me. He enriched and enlightened us. It was truly a blessing to have him as a colleague, a friend and, most

of all, a great inspiration! It is a great pride and privilege to have you as a friend and an inspiration. Thank you very much for sharing with us your art through the heavenly voice of the Rustavi and your big-hearted generosity and for teaching us what a great artist and a great human being should be”.

Lin Hwai-min

Artistic Director, Cloud Gate Dance Theatre of Taiwan

„What we learned from him became our blood and flesh. It enabled us to form Geinoh Yamashirogumi as of today. The passing away of this great musician, researcher and leader is not only a loss for people in Georgia but a loss of the world treasure. He gave a new life to the world art. No one in the world could have accomplished this great feat in such a comprehensive and consolidated way. Without his great effort and achievements, the Georgian Polyphony should have never been selected as the Intangible Cultural World Heritage. He will live in my heart and mind forever. The true blissfulness of human lies in the singing of Georgian Polyphony. And I strongly believe you will assure the whole world in the truthfulness of these words time and again. To our eternal friendship and to the health and prosperity of Anzor-sensei, Gaumarjos!“

Shoji Yamashiro

Artistic Director, Geinoh Yamashirogumi

“We highly respect his great achievements and contributions towards the peace of the world through music and culture”.

Kazuto Ito

President of Min-On Concert Association

“He was a true gentleman and font of knowledge, activator on behalf of Georgian music and culture”.

Peter Gold

American anthropologist

“I was proud to be part of Anzor's world, and to play a part in the preservation and promotion of Georgian folk music. I thank God that I was able to know Anzor and to be part of his life. I will miss him deeply”.

Carl Linich

Singer, Director of Georgian Choir Bard College

“The world lost such an important and beautiful human... This loss is so big - he was the most generous, talented, and beautiful singer, from a long line of acclaimed centenarian singers! His popularization of Georgian polyphony is of epic proportions. He was so successful in his work but he was also always so generous and selfless... We have still so much to learn from him. There are just no words to convey what is lost”.

Andrea Kuzmich

Ethnomusicologist

“The greatest man of the 20th century. He built a building of incredible beauty, the Palace of Music. He inherited us the greatest treasure – the Music Culture. A man of a rare talent, warm, sweet, and deep as the Gurian character. He is a part of the world culture. Our pride leaves us forever. He is and will remain a significant and big monument of the Georgian culture.”

Rezo Gabriadze

Georgian Producer

“Georgia has lost a national figure, rescuer of the traditional music; Presenter of our greatest treasure before the world; Educator of several generations; Modern time Ekvtime Takhaishvili,

Pilimon Koridze, Ekvtime Kereselidze... As for me, I've lost the most precious teacher, master, devoted and caressing friend who had always been taking care of me like my own father leading me the right way to choose. His kindness towards the students and colleagues is immeasurable! His dedication and selflessness for the sake of mother country and music is underwhelming as well as his modesty and smiling face full of light and love! We've lost the greatest love of all, but at the same time we've gained a symbol, celestial prayer and patron of our treasure who is to light up our ways of life standing by the divine ancestors like Ilia with his eternal glory and prayers from the Mta-sminda Pantheon from today...”

Giorgi Donadze

Director of the Folklore Centre of Georgia

“Each of us had his own Anzor Erkomaishvili... but they all had one thing in common – an amazing memory, a rare sense of humor, compassion, humility, the feeling of being a member of your family, a friend that loved and admired you recklessly..... My teacher praised me like no one... he praised everyone, not only me. His praise was criticism and one had to know how to accept it... He was unique! No matter which side to approach, what to say, whoever to mention - Anzor Erkomaishvili created an era. He was undisputedly best! From now on his name will grow even more; his deeds will become more exposed. I think that no one will ever be able to do what he did. Anyone who is compared with him will be diminished. Now his name was born in eternity...”

Davit Tsintsadze

Director of ensemble Shavnabada

Tamar Meskhi

Georgian urban folk music a “younger” branch compared to the centuries-old, traditional, rural folk music, which was formed and developed on Georgian soil over the past few centuries under the influence of various musical cultures and still boasts big popularity among general public. Urban folklore became the subject of special research thanks to prominent Georgian ethnomusicologist Tamar Meskhi. She has been involved in pedagogical and scientific activities for more than five decades. Tamar Meskhi was a teacher at Georgian Folk Music Department of Tbilisi State Conservatoire, a member of the Union of Georgian Composers and Musicologists, a participant of numerous folk expeditions, and various local and international conferences; has published scientific papers in the collections of scientific works of the Conservatoire, articles in the journal “Sabchota khelovneba” and periodicals. Among them, dedicated to urban folklore were: “Verses Turned into Songs” (Journal: “Sabchota khelovneba”, 1965, # 6), “Urban Music of Georgia” (“Sabchota khelovneba”, 1989, #5), “The Stream of Lyrical Songs” (“Sabchota khelovneba”, 1992, #7), “On the Issue of Contemporary Georgian Folk Music” (Proceedings of the TSC, 2000), “Georgian Urban Folk Music” (Handbook “Georgian Folk Music”, Tbilisi, 2005), etc.

On behalf of the IRCTP, we wish Tamar Meskhi good health and longevity; and offer the article on Georgian urban folk music based on her works.

“He showed love to everyone, who knew him and had contact with him. Entire Georgia, whole earth knew him for his musical activity. We all felt that despite the humanity and great love we received from him, he was no ordinary human being. He was the son of God who had come from the reality beyond time, like Georgian harmony, Georgian music which originated in the depth of time; God took him and left us his works and his eternity”.

Svimon Jangulashvili

Precentor of the Holy Trinity Cathedral choir

“The era is over! The greatest figure has left us ... Mr. Anzor, thank you very much for what you have done for Georgia, for Georgian culture ... Your selfless work, devotion to love and love for traditions will forever remain an example for us ...”

Ensemble Didgori

“Anzor Erkomaishvili through and as a result of his true love of the Georgian folk song, devotion and titanic work, managed to raise the Ensemble “Rustavi”’s works to the peaks of perfection. The father of the Georgian folk song. A true diplomat, a man of genius. Had the peoples and states of the world had ambassadors like him, there wouldn’t have been any wars on earth. His each phrase was the symphony of wisdom. One of the greatest public figures of all time”.

Giorgi Begiashvili

PR of ensemble Rustavi



Tamar Meskhi

Georgian Urban Folk Music

Georgian urban music is an integral part of national musical treasure, however, unlike centuries-old traditional folk music it is much younger and does not come from purely national soil.

In terms of stylistic specificity and musical expression, urban folk music examples are divided into two groups: the so-called Eastern branch, formed under the influence of *Ashugh* culture, and the so-called Western branch, resulted from the influence of Russian everyday romance and Italian opera music.

Ashugh tradition is an Oriental legacy, introduced to Georgia by the Muslim settlements in the 16th-17th centuries, on the basis of long-standing relations with the peoples of Asia Minor.

The Georgians enfeebled by constant raids of the enemy, relentlessly defended their architectural, literary or musical monuments. But the domination of Eastern countries left its mark, and willingly or unwillingly, paved the way for a foreign culture. *Ashugh* culture was one of the important factors that contributed to the development of cultural communication between the peoples of the Caucasus. Talented *ashugs*, who toured all over the Caucasus, were popular in Georgia as well. The art of *ashugs* was syncretic in nature.

They were poets, composers, singers, instrumentalists and dancers at the same time. *Ashugh* art was distinguished in the abundance of lyrics, particularly intimate love stories, a passionate romance, what was missing in Georgian traditional, rural lyric-satirical songs. This explains the seemingly strange fact that the Georgians, boasting unique polyphony and strong choral traditions, instead of rejecting monotonous *Ashugh* tunes, easily assimilated them. Our *ashugs* and poets “with their fiery love songs introduced a strong flow into Georgian folk music”.

Ashugh traditions were clearly manifested in the regions with non-Georgian population, and, therefore, interest in the oriental repertoire prevailed. Thus, in Georgian reality, main centers of *Ashugh* art were the towns and boroughs of Kartli-Kakheti (Tbilisi, Telavi, Gori) and, also Samtskhe-Javakheti, which was torn off the homeland from the 16th century.

Tbilisi, located at the crossroads of major trade routes, had long housed the representatives of many nationalities and become an international city. Traditions of oriental music and national culture coexisted here. Local *ashugs* performed Persian-Azerbaijani mughams as well as the examples originated in the practice of local musicking. The *ashugs* of Georgia adopted classical forms of Oriental poetry such as *baiati*, *mukhambazi* and *shikasta*. One of the most prominent figures among them was Sayat-nova (Harutyun Sayatyan, 1712-1795), referred to as the father of Tbilisi *ashugs*; he composed and sang in Armenian, Azerbaijani and Georgian languages.

It is known that Georgian poets - Besiki, Alexandre Chavchavadze, Grigol Orbeliani, whose works lay in the foundation of many *Ashugh* songs, had also been influenced by Oriental poetry.

Eastern branch of urban folk music is not distinguished in the breadth of the genre and, unlike traditional rural songs, is characterized by the

simplicity of expression and stereotypical uniformity. Noteworthy are augmented second interval and the abundance of melismata characteristic of Oriental music, as well as polyphonization tendency of monodic tunes, which is a clear manifestation of Georgian traditional thinking. The examples of famous Ashugh songs are: “Kargi iqo ar gametsan tavidan”, “Tsiv zamtarshi usakhl-karod”, “Patara gogo damekarga”, etc.



Sayat-nova

The Oriental-style urban monophonic song reached its zenith in the second half of the 18th century; new stage connected with the introduction of Russian-European civilization began from the 19th century. The visit of the first opera troupe followed by the creation of permanent theater (1850), revival of concert life, introduction of foreign instruments, resulted in the creation of a new-type lyrical song, with the blend of Georgian-European expressions. Rural folklore moves from a deeply original modal structure to a major-minor one; non-tertiary chords are replaced by triads and their inversions, striking is the abundance of parallel third-sixth-octaves, the meter-rhythmic initial becomes sharp, harmonic language bases on the interplay of tonic, subdominant, dominant functions, The language of this category songs is simple, without melismatic complexity.

However, like Eastern monodic tunes, the songs of the Western branch could not “escape” polyphonization. They all adhere to the priority of three-part performance, the principle of free improvisation in upper voices, pedal point in the bass and choral performance. Georgian flavor is enhanced by Georgian refrain-calls: *odelia, ranuni, rira, orera*, etc.

The so-called Western branch of urban song was incepted mainly in two cities of West Georgia – Kutaisi and Zestaponi. Introduction of European-Russian music was facilitated by church, school and student choirs, as well as by wandering Russian amateur musicians, music salons, and later – performances of opera singers.

If monophonic songs were created and performed by *ashughs*, choral examples were created and performed by a wide mass of different social strata that sang without instrumental accompaniment or accompanied by guitar. Love and patriotic themes were leading ones. Vast majority of these songs were composed on the verses of Akaki Tsereteli, Ilia Chavchavadze and romanticist poets.

Table songs “Mravalzhamier”, are widely represented in urban polyphony under different names (long, short, choral, student, ecclesiastical, etc.), however, they differ from long Kartli-Kakhetian table songs in simple architecture and European musical expression.

Noteworthy is rare popularity of Western urban songs. The Kutaisi-Zestaponi polyphonic vocal culture later spread widely and organically permeated the musical life of East Georgia, the capital city, in particular. Such songs took a special place in the repertoire of the Ishkhneli sisters. “Tsitsinatela”, “Mkholod shen erts”, “Gazapkhuli”, “Morbis aragvi”, “Qaqacho aqvavebula” and many others as performed by them, are still very popular among Georgian and foreign listeners.

By the performance manner, interdependence principles of voices,

Foreign Performers of Georgian Folk Songs

Ensemble Chela from UK

Chela is a choral ensemble based in Cambridge, in the United Kingdom. Starting as a group of friends who had fallen under the spell of the unique choral tradition of Georgia in the Caucasus, we have been meeting in our house on Sundays for more than twenty years. Most people who join the Chela ensemble remember vividly their first thrilling encounter with Georgian singing in three-part harmony. I am particularly grateful to Helen Chadwick whom I met through the Natural Voice Network. Helen invited me to a singing workshop led by a remarkable ethnomusicologist from Georgia. His name was Edisher Garaqanidze. This was in November 1997. Many people had gathered in one of the oldest churches in Cambridge, the Round Church in Bridge Street. The church was dimly lit with candles. Edisher Garaqanidze stood in the centre of the circle under the dome. He was a tall figure with a smile that seemed to notice and include each person as they approached. Edisher spoke little English but he made up for this with expressive gestures. Helen Chadwick helped him to communicate through German.



Ensemble Chela

Western-style polyphonic urban song turned out to be closer to Georgian nature, especially viable and having the potential for renewal and development. Thanks to this it became the basis of modern Georgian lyrical composers' music.



Sisters Ishkhnelis

Non-Georgian, borrowed instruments also spread intensively in Georgia in the 17th - 18th centuries. *Tar, saz, kamāncha, zurna, duduk, garmoni*, barrel organ were very popular here along with Eastern-branch songs. Particularly popular were instrumental ensembles: *dasta* of wind instruments and *sazandari* of string instruments. From the 19th century, along with Western -branch songs, European guitar, mandolin, and later piano, became very popular.

Thus, although Georgian urban music did not grow from national roots, it gained considerable popularity in Georgia and thanks to its artistic-aesthetic value took an important place next to the rural folk music.

Fortunately, there were a few people present who were already familiar with Georgian singing. Edisher began to sing the haunting, echoing three-part harmonies that have now become such an important part of our lives. Miraculously he inspired us to put aside our misgivings and join in. He gave us confidence. For many of us it was liberating to hear Edisher saying that there is no wrong note, just a different note. His message was that, from birth, everyone can sing. It is a gift from God. The act of Giving your Voice to another person and receiving their voice in return brings great happiness. By the end of the workshop everyone was standing in a queue longing for the chance to thank Edisher for a life enhancing experience. He embraced each one of us in turn. How could we know that we would never meet Edisher again? We continue to sing the songs he taught us to keep the memory of Edisher alive.

Chela has always been an open choir of men and women, for most of the time without a leader. We rely heavily on visiting musicians from Georgia for leadership. Chela has maintained a strong link with Maspindzeli, the Georgian choir based in London. At least five members of Chela joined the trip to Georgia for the first Symposium in 2002 when Maspindzeli was led by Venice Manley. Many of us have also attended the subsequent trips to Georgia ever since.

It has been a great pleasure to host many visiting choirs from Georgia here in Cambridge, including Mtiebi under Gigi's leadership several times and Amerimeri, Sakhioba led by Malkhaz Erkvanidze, Shavnabada with Anzor Erkomaishvili, and several women's choirs including Mzetamze, Nanina, Sathanao, and Ialoni. They have all been generous in teaching us their songs. It is always a wonderful experience to be taught by Nana Mzhavanadze, and Nino Naneishvili, Levan Tsitaishvili, Gigi Garaqanidze and his wife Magda Kevlishvili, Tornike Shriereli, and Nino Razmadze. During the

lockdown period it has been so valuable to be able to keep in touch through zoom.

Miranda Armour-Brown

A New Publication

Svan Folk Art

Thanks to the joint efforts of the teachers and students of Shota Rustaveli Theater and Film State University of Georgia the book "Svan Folk Art. Song Lyrics, Audio-video Recordings, Round Dances and Dances" was published by Kentavri Publishing of the University a few months ago. The project idea belongs to Davit Tsintsadze. The book comprises verbal texts of over 100 Svan folk songs, scattered in different special folklore literature, in the collections of vocal, round-dance and dance examples. Together with the author, most of the Svan texts were edited by Vakhtang Pilpani, a Svan choir-master. This indicates authenticity and reliability of the examples. The work acquires even more importance thanks to the unique audio material of the Svan folk music revived by ensemble Riho and its choir-master Islam Pilpani; the material was recorded with the support of the Fund for Cultural Heritage Preservation in Mestia in 1999. The book also includes dozens of Svan song, dance and round-dance examples performed with authentic nuances by Latali and Mestia choirs directed by Maharbi Gurguliani and Platon Dadvani.

Significant are Davit Tsintsadze's efforts to immortalize the memory of Svan choir-master and choreographer Maharbi Gurguliani. The book includes lesser-known facts about his life and work, which are published for the first time.

It is noteworthy that the preparation of the book involved the students of Drama. Georgian Folk Music and Traditional Music Choir Conducting Directions of Shota Rustaveli Theater and Film

State University of Georgia; they made important contribution to the retrieval and formation of the texts.



Thus, the examples of Svan folk music and song lyrics presented in the new edition, with enclosed video and audio recordings, will approximate young generation to the roots of Svan culture. In addition, the examples of intangible cultural heritage collected in the book are uniquely interesting not only for Georgian folk singers and dancers, but also for choreologists and researchers of Svan folk music.

Scientific Online Conference “Woman, Tradition, Music”

The world knows many famous female musicians – composers, performers, researchers ... Also great is the role of women in the folk ethnographic tradition. Music accompanied almost every moment of daily life: woman sang when putting a child to sleep, during needlework, feast; when doing various family errands, praying, mourning... Sadly, the public is not so familiar with Georgian traditional female repertoire, which is quite rich

On 8 March, 2021 – International Women's Day, the Women's Council of Georgia and the

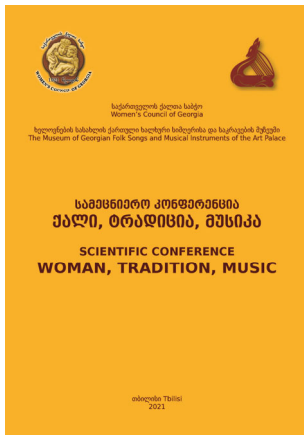
Museum of Georgian Folk Song and Instruments of the Palace of Arts held a scientific conference – “Woman, Tradition, Music”, dedicated to the 95th anniversary from the birth of merited Georgian linguist, philologist Mzekala Shanidze. The conference aimed to present the role of women in traditional and all fields of music in general. The conference was held online, on the ZOOM platform.

Diversity of conference topics led to the diversity of the presentations at the conference: these encompassed the issues of traditional and professional music, choreology and history; including the papers on traditional music. The Conference participants were the professors from higher education institutions (Georgian Technical University, Georgian Theater and Film University) and students (Georgian Theater and Film University, Giorgi Mtatsmindeli High School for Church Chanting), and music teachers of public school.

The papers presented by the students of Giorgi Mtatsmindeli University for Chanting were dedicated to renowned female choirmasters (“Maro Tarkhnishvili - the first Georgian female choirmaster”, “Mariam Arjevnishvili – a beneficient of Georgian traditional music”, “Nino Nishni-anidze – an honored choirmaster from Guria”); public school music teachers shared their experiences of teaching traditional music in school (“*Batonebi* Tradition and Teaching its Related Songs in Public School”, “The Importance of Lullabies in the Life and Development of a Modern Child”).

In their joint work Associate Professor of Theater and Film University Maka Khardziani, , and her student, Anano Khijakadze observed and analyzed the problems and tendencies of performing traditional folk music by Georgian women from an interesting angle. Nino Buchukuri’s paper in the field of professional music (“The Role of Female Composers in Georgian Music and Teaching Their Creativity in Public Schools”) and

Anano Samsonadze’s paper on Georgian female choreologists (at the crossroads of “Samtagana: Women in the 20th-century Georgian Choreography”) added more diversity to the conference.



Theses of the conference

Mrs. Mzekala Shanidze, who attended the conference, responded positively to the idea of holding women’s conference and described it as a highly topical, interesting and diverse scientific forum.

In the context of the irreversible tendency of gender equality in modern world, the study of the multifaceted and fruitful creativity of women working in various fields of art is of particular importance. Therefore, the conference organizers plan to hold similar events in the future.

Sopiko Kotrikadze

*One of the organizers of the conference
PR specialist at Museum of Georgian Folk Song
and Instruments of the Art Palace*

One Regional Ensemble

Ensemble Shemokmedi from Guria

The ensemble of singers and chanters Shemokmedi was created in 2007 on the basis of the choir at the Cathedral of Shemokmedi Diocese with the blessing of Ioseb (Kikvadze) – Metropolitan of Shemokmedi. Since 2014, several experienced singers have joined the ensemble, and the members started searching for, restoring, and studying ancient versions of Georgian folk songs. From then on, Shemokmedi continued its activity as an ensemble at Ozurgeti Municipality Culture and Youth Center. Since the day of its creation Shemokmedi has been directed by *Lasha Chkhartishvili*.



Lasha Chkhartishvili

Each member of the ensemble has learned Gurian songs since childhood. Some of them come from the family, dynasty of singers. Some were the students of renowned performers such as Mikheil Shavishvili, Karlo Urushadze, Gela Tseladze. The members of Shemokmedi have graduated from the Mikheil Shavishvili Choir master’s school in Ozurgeti, where their teacher was Tristan Sikharulidze. The consultant of the ensemble was Guri Sikharulidze – famous singer and choir master. Director of Semokmedi Lasha Chkhartishvili and his assistant Mamuka Siradze are graduates of

Giorgi Mtatsmindeli Higher School of Chanting (2013, Anzor Erkomaishvili's studio).



**Ensemble Shemokmedi on
The International Symposium of Traditional Polyphony**

It should be noted that Shemokmedi Monastery is distinguished among the chanting schools, which survived in Georgia until the 19th century. It was here that Anton Dumbadze carried out his activities, raising a whole pleiad of accomplished singers, such as: Davit Dumbadze, Melkisedek Nakashidze, Nestor and Anton Kontridze, Ivane Khavtasi, Simon Molarishvili, Konstantine Salukvadze, Ilia Khomeriki, Samson Chanuqvadze, Domenti Khintibidze, Samiel Chkhikvishvili, Dimitri Patarava, Varlam Simonishvili, Artem Erkomaishvili. Shemokmedi Monastery played a major role in the preservation of Gurian-Imeretian mode hymns. Therefore, today, young people's interest in this very most important chanting tradition of Western Georgia, particularly, learning local examples by the ensemble Shemokmedi and their return to divine service worship, is a truly patriotic affair.

As for the peasant folklore, given their regional affiliation, when selecting the repertoire they prefer the Gurian. The goal of creating the ensemble was to revive old, forgotten Gurian songs and pass them on to the next generation. However, songs from other parts of the country are also included in the repertoire of Shemokmedi.

The repertoire is mainly nourished by the archival recordings of the Erkomaishvilis, the Khukhunaishvilis, Simonishvili, Chavleshvili and others.

Current membership of the ensemble is as follows: Lasha Chkhartishvili, Mamuka Siradze, Vakhtang Vashakmadze, Davit Kavjaradze, Mamuka Chavleishvili, Giorgi Kuchukhidze, Koba Meparishvili, Valeri Kalandadze, Vazha Sikharulidze, Akaki Bilikhodze, Irakli Lomjaria. Their ages range from 30 to 45 years. Not all are musicians by profession. Someone is a lawyer, someone – an economist, someone else – a cook.

Shemokmedi actively participates in various festivals and events: successfully performs at the concerts and evenings of traditional music (evenings of chanting dedicated to St. Ekvtime Kereselidze and St. Pilimon Koridze in Ozurgeti and Tbilisi), participates in republican and international festivals (Giorgi Garakanidze International Festival of Folk and Sacred Music in Batumi, ArtGeni in Tbilisi); at the 2015-2016 Georgian National Folklore Festival Shemokmedi won the first place in the nomination “Youth Folk Ensemble”.

In 2017, Shemokmedi released an audio album which includes 9 Gurian folk songs and 4 church hymns of Shemokmedi School. The album was released with the organization and support of the charitable “Georgian Chanting Foundation”; its presentation was held in the hall of the Folklore State Center. Currently, the ensemble is preparing to record a new audio album. It is true that the pandemic hindered the concert tour, but the members of the ensemble are full of hope and are planning a solo concert in the near future.

Beneficents of Georgian Folk Song

Noko Khurtsia

(1905-1949)

The name of Noko Khurtsia, great master of Megrelian folk song, has survived like a legend for generations to come, which was conditioned by the singer's unique musical talent, incomparable voice timbre and performance manner. Along with Mingrelian, Khurtsia sang songs from different parts of Georgia with a subtle sense of style and color. He was also the author of many wonderful songs, which are still considered by many to be folk ...

Noko Khurtsia was born to a family of singers in the village of Menji, Senaki district. As a child, he lost his father. He tried to help the family by singing in *nadi*. The hardworking boy gradually became a master of song. At the age of 16 he sang in Senaki choir. His first teachers were Valerian Gegechkori and Rema Shelegia.



Noko Khurtsia

When he came to his student age (1923), he decided to study medicine. However, from the third year, he changed the decision, and transferred to the agricultural institute. Along with his

studies, he sang in Corneli Maghradze's choir, thanks to which his repertoire became quite rich. From 1925, Noko Khurtsia became the leading soloist of the Ethnographic Choir of West Georgia, directed by Kirile Pachkoria. The choir achieved significant success in Georgia and abroad (Russia, Azerbaijan, etc.) in 1926-1930.

Kirile Pachkoria wrote: "Noko Khurtsia is a phenomenon of Georgian song. Talents like him are born once a century, State Ensemble of Georgian never had a singer equal to him..."

In 1932, Noko Khurtsia returned to Senaki and started singing in Rema Shelegia's choir, it can be said, that he became its main driving force.

In 1936 he returned to Tbilisi and joined the Song and Dance Ensemble of West Georgia, with which he participated in the Days of Georgian Literature and Art in Moscow in 1937. In the preparation period, the groups to be sent to Moscow for the event were directed by the prominent Georgian conductor Evgeni Mikeladze.

At one of the rehearsals, Noko Khurtsia took such a high note that he surprised everyone. Mikeladze did not wait for the end of the song, with radiant eyes he rushed to the stage, embraced Khurtsia and said with admiration: "I have never seen such an original gold". It is noteworthy that for the success in the Days of Culture only two of the ensemble soloists - Noko Khurtsia and Elena Chubabria - were awarded the "Order of Honor".

In the summer of 1937, the East and West Georgian Song and Dance Ensembles were united into the Georgian State Ensemble of Song and Dance under the direction of Grigol Kokeladze and Sandro Kavsadze. Noko Khurtsia remained the leading soloist of the ensemble.

In 1938-41 Noko Khurtsia was engaged in choir-mastering, he traveled to different parts of Georgia and helped local choirs to improve their repertoire and performing skills.

In 1945- 1949, Khurtsia directed the choir of Agricultural Institute. Among his students were

renowned singers and choirmasters such as Jokia Meshveliani, Otar Kokosadze and others.

Noko Khurtsia paid considerable attention to the recording of folk songs, which left us with a truly priceless treasure. For this purpose he formed a trio which included him, his brother – Parmen and Valerian Svanidze. Many songs performed by the trio survived thanks to Grigol Kokeladze and Grigol Chkhikvadze. Among them are: “Utus lashkruli”, “Odoia”, “Harira”, “Aba darujan”. While working with the choir of Abasha, Khurtsia also composed several songs of his own: “ Simghera shromis gmirze”, “Simghera kol-khidaze”. “Simghera samshobloze” and others.

Great master of Georgian song was very worried about the distortion of songs. Once he met his students on the tram, who, for showing off to him, started to sing “Mgzavruli”, the following day at the rehearsal Khurstia expressed his discontent saying: “Never sing a song you do not know. Learn and then sing it. Georgian folk song is a single whole and unique as an organism, each song has its own unique feature. Ignoring this is not only a mistake, but also a crime.”

Noko Khurtsia passed away quite young, at the age of 44 in 1949. His last song was “Megruli ghighini”. He is interred in the Vake Pantheon of Public Figures.

There are many memories of famous people about Noko Khurtsia’s unique talent. Here are excerpts from some:

Jansugh Kakhidze: “Noko Khurtsia was a magician the unique phenomenon – Georgian song ... His singing and compositions can only be compared to marvel. He will be eternally immortal like the folk song itself.”

Anzor Kavsadze: ““The listeners were inspired by the temperament of Noko Khurtsia, his singing imbued with joy and happiness ..., his clear voice “Harira” sounded like a trumpet against the background of the big choir. Noko Khurtsia is an excellent example of performing technique, virtuoso voice.”

Vazha Azarashvili: “When teaching the songs from different parts of Georgia to his choirs, he carefully followed the dialectal peculiarities of the region. During his own performance, he sometimes allowed himself to add fragrance, unique charm, beauty to the song with a peculiar interpretation, Enrich it with a peculiar ornament, color so that the original embroidery is not broken ... During his own performance, he sometimes allowed himself to add fragrance, unique charm, beauty to the song with a peculiar interpretation, enrich it with a peculiar ornament, color so as not to violate the original pattern ... In his person Georgian folk musical culture had an incomparable performer, a great artist, whose name is inscribed with golden letters in the treasury of art ”.

Anzor Erkomaishvili: “His voice had amazing features: rare warmth and color, wide range, flexibility, virtuoso technique and unique singing manner ... It can crawl into your soul, shake you completely, make you forget about all the troubles, please you with the grace of a song and convey the spirit and character of your people ...As Nodar Dumbadze used to say: “The gods were carrying Noko Khurtsia in their hands and fortunately for us, they dropped him in Georgia”.

*Processed by Anano Khijakadze
from the book “Masters of Georgian folk song”.
Samegrelo (vol.2). Tbilisi, 2005*

The State of Georgian Chanting (part I)

Georgian church chanting and pleas have long diminished and in some places have completely disappeared in Georgian churches, but those who have retained the knowledge and memory of our chanting, have preserved it sacredly and untouched. In the past, Georgian chanting was widespread and many people wanted to learn it. For the most part, chanting was learned by the families of priests and nobles, of both sexes. Good and skilled chanters were highly respected at that time. In addition, they had a good income, a salary, and were presented gifts; but this honor and glory was taken away from them by the circumstances of the time. Because of this, they also fell in love with Georgian chants. Due to this, they lost interest to Georgian chanting. The number of students gradually decreased and the teaching of chanting also ceased. The number of students gradually decreased, and the teaching of chants also ceased. The Georgian clergy understood the deplorable state of this important ancestral treasure and the splendor of the church, and decided to somehow restore the Georgian church chant. For this, a committee was created in Tbilisi; they studied the scored hymns, made sure of their good quality and began to carry out their intention. But due to inconveniences, they could not fulfill the goal and gave up carrying out this case. We informed the clergy of Imereti about this, they already knew that the chanting of the whole liturgy had been transcribed to sheet music, and considered it necessary to transcribe all the church hymns. A meeting of the clergy was held in Kutaisi ... I was asked to transcribe 400 examples of various hymns which I handed over to his Holiness Bishop Gabriel. Archpriest M. Gambashidze tried

hard to get these hymns printed either in Tbilisi or in Russia. We asked the typography, it was very expensive to print these hymns: we were asked about 6000-7000 rubles; in addition, the proof-reader had to accompany the printing. Due to high price the hymns recorded on the notes failed to be published. In 1890 I moved to live in Tbilisi. There I met a small circle of artisans and hired laborers. Under my guidance this circle perfectly studied to read sheet music in a short time. They began chanting from sheet music and loved it so much that they considered the already-transcribed 400 hymns insufficient for ecclesiastical needs. They collected their contributions; some even made donations for this good purpose. I was given some money; I went to famous singer Anton Dumbadze in Guria. And during two years I transcribed the hymns for the whole year in eight voices (octochoi) and many *chreli*. So our church hymns are now fully transcribed. This little circle, which now consists of four friends, subscribed the note marks and necessary materials.



Pilimon Koridze

Valuable edition of John Crysostome liturgy for the priest and bishop was published under my guidance and proofreading. I say “valuable” because the book comprises 174 pages and contains three, four, four or five different variants of

the same hymn: these are five examples of “Romelni kerabinta”, five – “Tsmidao ghmerto”, four – “Movedit taqvani vstset”, sixteen – “Upalo shegvitsqale”, three kinds – at the entry of the high priest, etc. The book costs one ruble. We are sure, that the clergy of Imereti and Samegrelo, having shown great desire to transcribe the hymns at the beginning of this work, will be as full of desire and helpful in carrying out this work now. Here’s what this help implies: for the church they will subscribe one copy of the book, which is so cheap that no one will be bothered by its cost. Through their sermons, advice and care, they will spread teachings at schools, parish schools, among the ministers of the church and the parish, so those who wish can easily learn these notations. It was for this, that I have published a textbook, which is very simple and easy to understand in Georgian. Anyone who thoroughly masters the textbook will be able to easily read the notes, chant from the sheet music, and even teach them to the choir. The money raised from selling the books will allow to publish following books as well and thus, our chanting will spread and attract the faithful to the church, instill love in their hearts and souls and strengthen their faith.

Pilimon Koridze

*“Mtsqemsi” newspaper, 1896, May 15, # 9, pp. 7-8
taken from the book the Chronicle of Georgian
chanting in the 861-1921 periodicals; compiled by
D. Shughliashvili. Tbilisi, 2015*

One Traditional Instrument

Tar

Tar is a string instrument disseminated in Georgia. The exact origin place of tar is unknown, however, most scholars consider Persia to be its homeland.



Tar

Besides Georgia, it is disseminated in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iraq and Iran. It is especially popular in Azerbaijan. It can be said to be one of the basic instruments in the traditional music here, especially in the cyclic vocal-instrumental pieces – mughams, in which tar and soloist singer play a decisive role. Tar was also very popular in the folk professional ensemble – Sazandari, where it was often played together with bowed Kamancha. Besides, tar had a serious influence on Azerbaijani classical music. Musical works are composed specially for it. In the early 20th century, the genre of "Mugham Opera" became widespread in Azerbaijani music, in which vocal parts were accompanied by tar. Azerbaijani composers also created a number of major works, including concertos for tar and symphony orchestra. It should be noted that in 2012, the Azerbaijani mastery of tar performance was included in the list of UNESCO intangible cultural heritage.

Tar is a string lute-like instrument, with a long neck and a wooden belly (corpus). The long neck ends in an elaborate peg box with six wooden tuning pegs. The end of the neck is inserted in the belly, called *chanakh*. Gut strings stretched along the neck, have a bridge in the lower part of *chanakh*. The part of tar, to which the strings are attached, is called *kharaki*.

The body of tar has the shape of figure eight, i.e. it consists of two round parts; the upper part is smaller, and the lower one is larger and elongated. Tar is carved from mulberry wood: small-sized tars – of whole wood, large-sized ones of – two separate parts. A thin membrane (swim bladder of a fish or lamb skin) covers the top.

Often the body of tar, the neck and head are inlaid with mother-of-pearl and bone; the strings are made of metal and brass. They are played with plectrum.

Tar can have 11 to 26 frets on the neck, which are divided into three and each has its own name. The number of strings varies from 5 to 14. Basically, it has three pairs (or 3 pairs and 1 single) of main and 2 pairs of drone strings. When playing, the instrument rests on the lap of the performer, leaning against his chest; in order to vibrate the sound he shakes the instrument from time to time. Tar has fairly strong sound and rich performing abilities. Complex melodies in different registers and with different tempos are played on it; in lower register, the timbre is soft and velvety. Tar is tuned differently depending on the kind of the piece performed. The strings are tuned in pairs.

Tari or *chasta* (as it was called in our country) was introduced in Georgia in the 18th century, together with oriental instrumental ensemble *sazandar* and gained popularity especially among the Azerbaijani population.

Tar took a prominent place at the court of Muslim kings. It is known, that during this period the Georgian nobility greedily studied Oriental

culture. In addition to solo performances, Tar was often included in *dasta*, along with *diplipito*, *chianuri*, and *daira*, particularly successful at weddings and various celebrations. Thus, Tar penetrated deeply into the life of the Georgians and together with *panduri* became a part of family musicking.

There were two types of Tar in Georgia - Persian and Azerbaijani. Persian Tar had 6 strings, and Azerbaijani – up to 12-15. Currently, Azerbaijani Tar has survived in our country; however, it has become a museum exhibit.

*The material is prepared by Maka Khardziani
basing on the works of D. Alavidze
and M. Shilakadze*

The Cult of St. George in Georgia and Related Songs and Hymns

St. George is one of the most revered saints in Georgia. According to historical sources, one of the first churches of St. George was built by King Mirian on Mount Tkhotti in the 4th century. In Georgia, the bas-reliefs and the earliest frescoes of St. George date back to the 6th -7th centuries, and Georgian editions about the life of the saint – to the middle of the 6th century. It is known that Saint George was tortured under Diocletian. Therefore, it is believed that the cult of St. George; his images as a warrior and a knight were introduced to the Georgian Church from this period. From the early 9th century St. George became so important that Georgian kings were named after him. It is known that the Orthodox world celebrates St. George Day on 6 May. However, on 23 November Georgia also celebrates the day when the Holy Martyr was tortured on the wheel.

St. George is considered the patron saint of Georgia. There are so many churches of St. George in Georgia, it can be said that every day here is dedicated to him. There is no corner in Georgia where St. George is not particularly revered. His-

torical sources have it that St. George visibly fought on the side of the Georgians in many battles.



The icon of St. George of Ilori

In Georgia both ecclesiastical and secular traditions are associated with St. George. On both holidays dedicated to him, a service is held in the churches and the Troparion of St. George "Liberator of prisoners" is chanted; which has survived as the variants of three schools of chanting – Svetitskhoveli, Gelati and Shemokmedi.

As for secular tradition ritual round dances have been documented in the highland (Tusheti, Khevsureti, Khevi) and lowland (Kartli-Kakheti) regions of East Georgia; they are performed around the church, at the places of gathering or when walking door-to-door. In addition, in both East and West Georgia, St. George is asked for help during weather rituals, he is praised in table and heroic songs; hunting epos tells stories about him.

The shrines of St. George are especially numerous in East Georgian highland regions – Gudamaqari, Mtiuleti, Khevi and Khevsureti.

One of the oldest shrines in Mtiuleti is St. George Church of Lomisi (see Bulletin # 29 for Lomisoba). The song "Lomisuri" is connected with the shrine.

Mokhevian song "Dideba" glorifies St. George and Bethlehem (Holy Cave on Mount. Kazbegi) after the God.

One of the main shrines in Khevsureti is St. George of Khakhmati. On this holiday performed

is "Perkhisuli", which is sung by two soloists against the background of sustained bass. At the end of the 20th century, the Khevsuretians sang heroic-epic songs, which recounted the battle of St. George of Khakhmati against the demons. Such songs were sung on the knees, with *panduri* accompaniment, in the door of a church.

In Pshavi, Tusheti and Ertso-Tianeti, main holiday dedicated to St. George was called Lasharoba. Here St. George of Lashari was considered a warrior deity, a holy horseman; he was asked for the harvest, welfare of people, and protection from disease. In Pshavi, *khevisberi* (servant of the cult) threw barley for St. George's horse near the altar. According to legend, the sacred oak of Lashari shrine was tied to the sky with a golden chain by which St. George ascended to Heaven.

In Tusheti Lasharoba is celebrated on 19-20 July, in Erzo-Tianeti it starts on Thursday evening of the ninth week of Easter and lasts until Saturday morning (For Lasharoba see Bulletin # 27). On this holiday, the two-storey round dance "Korbeghela" and the song "Lasharis simghera" are performed.

In the village of Geri (Tskhinvali district) in Kartli, in the Liakhvi Gorge, there is one of the strongest shrines of St. George, which was asked to protect families and livestock. In addition, people with epilepsy, mental disorders and the deaf were brought here. The Ossetians also prayed together with the Georgians in Geri. Here in the 1920s Georgian composers Dimitri Arakishvili and Viktor Dolidze recorded the songs of Vastirji (Ossetian name for St. George).

In Kakheti, Muslims together with Christians prayed at St. George's Church in Alaverdi. The same happened in Kakhi district, in Kurmukhi Church of St. George the Victorious, which is still considered a powerful shrine. No less powerful was Tetri Giorgi (lit. white George) church of Atskuri near Alaverdi. People considered Alaverdi and Tetri Giorgi to be brothers.



St. George Church of Alaverdi

Among Kakhétian musical examples noteworthy is “Ghvtis karze satkmeli iavnana” recorded in the villages of Kvareli district. It was performed by women dressed in white, who slowly walked around the church and sang with lighted candles in their hands. People also participate in the ritual, they sing bass to the soloists, who alternately mention St. George, the Mother of God, Christ, St. Nino, St. Ketevan and other saints, and ask them for the peace and prosperity of the country. Each phrase ends with the word “mravalzhamier” and making the sign of the cross.

Two or three-part variants of the song “Dideba” were sung during the feasts of St. George in this region.

In spring, barefoot women walked from one family to another singing “Dideba”, went into the courtyards, performed a round dance, and asked St. George the Victorious for a rich harvest. People believed that those who did not join “Dideba” would not have abundant crops. The food donated by the hosts was collected in a basket and distributed to the poor, or the table was set and everybody threw a party together.

One of the most important religious centers in West Georgia is the Church of St. George in the village of Ilori, near Ochamchire, Abkhazia; one-meter-long metal bow of the Saint is preserved here. In Ilori St. George Day was celebrated in November. People came here from different parts of West Georgia and brought: silk cloths, candles, jewelry, money, bulls, sheep and goats for

sacrifice, etc. Each year five guards were elected here. The oldest of them was the leader, the rest were assistants. The guards alternated with each other throughout the year, they never left the church and took turns serving the pilgrims: they accepted donations, performed sacrifices, healed the sick, cursed perpetrators, etc. Mentally retarded people were often brought here, with their hands tied with a chain, they were led three times around the church, and begged the Saint to heal the sick. Then the sick person was taken into the church to kneel before the icon of St. George of Ilori and the family prayed for his recovery. Childless families and the struck by lightning also entreated Ilori for help, performing special rituals here. This church was famous for the miracles; one of them was the belief that St. George himself led the bull to the fence of the church and greeted the people who had come to the shrine. Therefore, the meat of the slaughtered bull was cut into small pieces and distributed to people. This meat was believed to have had healing properties against any disease. The nobility from Samegrelo, Svaneti and Guria sent their servants to bring sacred parts of the bull sacrificed to Ilori.

In Samegrelo, it was believed that St. George, dressed in white and sitting on a white horse, chased evil spirits and shot arrows at them during thunderstorm.

In Svaneti, St. George (Jgrag) was also considered the protector of animals. According to legends, the saint had flocks of animals and no hunter could kill anything without his permission. Even Dali, the deity of beasts, obeyed St. George. Extensive verses (“Khocha metkhviar chorla” and “Kalla”) recorded in the first half of the 20th century, tell how he frees and blesses the hunter caught and punished by Dali. In these examples, scholars observe the peculiarities of pre-Christian and Christian thinking of the Svans, the weakening of the power of the goddess and strengthening of the Christian saint - the role of St. George. It should

be noted that ritual round dances were based on these texts.

The analysis of Georgian folk music material related to the cult of St. George shows that we deal with syncretic forms of traditional music performance, namely, with ritual round dances, which aim to glorify the saint and ask for mercy. All the above examples of male and female repertoire are characterized by loud, heavy and, at the same time, solemn, hymn-like sounding. However, their performance manner can be discussed only in the light of live performance.

It is noteworthy that some of the songs dedicated to St. George (Mtiuletian “Lomisuri”, Svan “Jgrag”, Mokhevian “Dideba”) have gone beyond the cult-ritual genre and their performance has become a tradition at weddings and celebrations.

Nino Ghambashidze

Ethnologist

Nino Kalandadze-Makharadze

Ethnomusicologist

ჯგრაგიშ
Jgragish

ჯგ - ი - რა - გი - ეე - ჰა ლა - ი - გვი - უო -
 Jg - i - ra - gi - ie - ha la - i - gvi - uo -

შე - ი - ვო - და ი ha i ha i uo
 she - i - vo - da i ha i ha i uo

ი ჰო ha i ha i a vo da
 i ho ha i ha i a vo da

ი ha i ha i la - i - gvi - ui -
 i ha i ha i la - i - gvi - ui -

შე - ნ - ვო - და ი ჰა ი ჰა ი

she - i - vo - da i ha i ha i

უო ი ჰე ჰა ი ჰა ი ა

უო ი ჰე ო ჰა ი ჰა ი ა

uo i he ha i ha i a

ვო და ი ჰა ი ჰა ი უო

ვო და ი ჰა ი ჰა ი უო

vo da i ha i ha i uo

დი - დაბ აჯ - ხად ჯგ - რაგ სი ლა გვეშ - დი - უო.

დი - დაბ აჯ - ხად ჯგ - რაგ სი ლა გვეშ - დი - უო.

di - dab aj - khad jg - rag si la - gvesh - di - uo.

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