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**GEORGIAN MULTISTEMMED SALAMURI –
LARCHEMI /SOINARI/**

This paper studies the Georgian version of the ancient multi-stemmed pipe (Larchemi and Soinari), the so-called Panpipe in two ethnic regions of western Georgia - Guria and Samegrelo.

I was interested in Georgian traditional instruments and instrumental music from my student days. My first paper, which I presented at the students' conference, was dedicated to the multi-stemmed pipe (Shvelidze, 1982). This interest of mine was further enhanced by my supervisor K. Rosebashvili who was an ardent student of, and a great expert on, Georgian traditional instruments. He possessed a great number of ethnographic materials and unique audio-recordings in this sphere. Quite often my work was based on the materials obtained by him.

It is quite correct for Georgian folklorists to assert that the Georgian folk instrument, no matter how rich its technical qualities and musical and expressive features may be, in most cases has only accompanying functions, and seems rather humble compared with the highly developed polyphonic vocal tradition. But this fact by no means detracts from the important role of folk instruments and instrumental music in the life of Georgians. As it is known, the musical instrument is not only a monument of material culture but its construction, the material it is made from, its pitch, performing technique and musical expressive means reflect the distinctive features of the musical thinking of the people.

In our case it is a multi-stemmed pipe (Panpipe) which preserved the ancient musical features and enables us to trace the evolvement of the musical thinking of the Georgian people. The last fieldwork dedicated to the study of the Georgian multi-stemmed pipe was performed in Samegrelo and Guria in 1958 by Kakhi Rosebashvili. In those days this instrument was reaching the last days of its existence, but even what had survived by that time was very important and will be of invaluable assistance to scholars in studying ancient instruments.

The Panpipe is widespread in many countries. Its area begins in the equatorial zone of North America, goes to Oceania, Western Polynesia, Melanesia, gets to Indo-China and China and bypassing India reaches Africa. It is widespread in West Asia and Europe, Russia, Ukraine, Moldova and Latvia (Steshenko-Kuftina, 1936).

In Georgia Panpipes are spread in only two ethnographic provinces - Samegrelo and Guria, although according to the available ethnographic information these instruments existed in neighbouring Imereti and Abkhazia as well.

According to the Laz scholar Iskander Tsitashi the multi-stemmed pipe was also known in Lazeti by the name of 'Ostvinoni'. As for the other regions of Georgia the existence of this instrument has never been proved in spite of the fact that cattle-breeding was widespread in other mountainous regions of Georgia as well. T. Zhvania, a contemporary researcher in instrumental music, expresses a very interesting idea in this connection, "In Samegrelo, the region where the Panpipe is widespread, there is also Ochokochi - a goat-man, similar to the Greek mythical Pan. Nothing is known about the existence of this creature in other parts of Georgia. It is no mere chance that

Larchemi (Panpipe) and Ochokochi exist in one and the same region and there is a direct relationship between them. Here we can also recall that Iberian-Caucasian culture is considered to have strong connections with the Proto-Greek culture" (Zhvania, 1988:20).

The Panpipe, as one of the oldest instruments, has always attracted the interest of scholars such as C. Sachs, E. Hornbostel, Z. Nadell, F. Benn, I. Matsievski, V. Belyaev, V. Steshenko-Kuftina; Georgian scholars: I. Javakhishvili, D. Arakishvili, D. Janelidze, S. Makalatia, K. Rosebashvili, K. Chokhoniidze, D. Alavidze, M. Shilakadze, A. Mskhaladze, T. Zhvania. Particular attention should be paid to the outstanding work of Steshenko-Kuftina "The Ancient Instrumental Basis of Georgian Folk Music. Part 1 - Panpipe". It is the only fundamental work about the Georgian multi-stemmed pipe, and one of the best monographs dedicated to Georgian traditional musical instruments. The author tries to determine the role of this instrument in the history of the development of Georgian musical culture. One of the merits of the work lies in the rich historical-ethnographic materials it contains and its rich bibliography.

The multi-stemmed pipe Larchemi/Soinari (these are respectively Megrelian and Gurian names for the Panpipe) was closely linked with Georgia's ancient past, though archaeological materials or written monuments supporting this fact are very scarce. In this connection special attention attaches to the Hittite stone stele from Rum-Kale, which depicts a bearded man with a sword at his waist. In one hand he holds an ear of wheat and in the other he has an object resembling a six-stemmed pipe. It should be noted that it was the six-stemmed pipe that spread through Georgia. As for the terms preserved in written monuments, in Sulkhan-Saba Orbeliani's monolingual dictionary "Sitqvis Kona", there is no mention of Larchemi as a musical instrument because it is a dialectal name of the instrument and is connected with the name of the plant called Larchemi (reed) of which it was made. Sulkhan-Saba uses the term *sastvineli* ('whistling one'), which in I. Javakhishvili's opinion is analogous to the Greek *Syrinx*, and the *Syrinx* is known as a multi-stemmed pipe. Sulkhan-Saba gives the following definition of the Soinari: pipes harmoniously tuned to one another (see "Larchemi", in: Orbeliani, 1966).

It is well known that the Lerchem-Soinari is a shepherd's instrument, which is demonstrated by the melodies to be played on these instruments - *Salerchemo* (for the Lerchemi) and *Sasoinare* (for the Soinari). According to *Vitsi Pipia*, a Megrelian shepherd, there were three tunes for the Lerchemi which were obeyed by the flock. On hearing the first tune they went to the pasture, under the second tune they grazed while the third tune sent them home (material obtained by K. Rosebashvili in 1958).

The Lerchem-Soinari did not occupy an important role only in the shepherd's life. It was closely linked with other events of everyday life. Hunters never parted with it because they used it as a signal. The Larchemi was played to ward off the evil spirits when people travelled late at night. It was also played during solar and lunar eclipses. The Larchemi was considered to be the best means to summon the souls of the dead (Makalatia, 1941). The Larchemi was used for leisure as well, and the skill of some musicians was so great that they could sometimes challenge nightingales in singing.

In Guria the Soinari was used as a signalling instrument. Hunters gathered at its sound and went to shoot martens. There is a very interesting form of playing the Soinari, called the Soinari refrains by Steshenko-Kuftina. It consists of six parts and

is accompanied by a recitative declamation. The Soinari refrains were performed in the breaks during fieldwork with helpers. Steshenko-Kuftina recorded it from Varden Meparishvili, a famous performer on the Soinari. She notes that the existence of such cycle-related instruments proves that the multi-stemmed pipe has a very highly developed culture in Georgia (Steshenko-Kuftina, 1936).

Due to the specific subtle sound of the Larchem-Soinari it was very rarely a part of a group of other instruments, though there is information that there were cases when it was used with the tambourine and the wind instrument oqe (material obtained by K. Rosebashvili). Other combinations are also known: the Larchemi, the drum and the chuniri. Proceeding from the above it may be said that the Larchemi-Soinari was organically connected with the pattern of people's everyday life. It was also used for practical purposes and had a magical function (Makalatia, 1941).

The Georgian multi-stemmed pipe has a very original form achieved by means of the symmetrical arrangement of the tubes, with two long tubes in the middle and two shorter ones on either side (see the appendix, fig. 1). This form of the instrument is a must in both regions but is very rare among the multi-stemmed pipes in other countries. The only difference between the Megrelian Larchemi and Gurian Soinari is their size, the Larchemi being the larger.

As it has been said above the instrument is made of reeds, which are good for use in August and at the beginning of September. At this time they are dried out and do not crack in the process of making the instrument. It is desirable that the instrument be made of one reed. For the bass stems the bottom joints were used and for the smaller stems the top joints. It should be emphasised that the masters making the instruments were performers as well. They tried to give the instrument the pitch suitable for the sound and interval combination they wished to achieve, so the pitch of the instrument depended on the performer's auditory corrective. That is why the instruments made and used by different masters had different pitches.

Although the interval relationships between the pipes were not strictly fixed, the main principle of the pitch of the instrument was still observed. It is an elevation of the sound at definite intervals on both sides of the bass stems.

Each tube of the Larchem-Soinari has its name and function. In Samegrelo the long middle tubes are called "mubne", the two lateral ones - "gemachqepali" or "meshkvashe" (lit.: the beginner), the name of the other two is "mechipane" or the first part. In Guria, one of the longest tubes is called didi bani (big bass), the other - patara bani (small bass); the names of the others are the third, fourth, fifth and sixth parts. Besides that, there were other names too - the first was bani (bass), the second - sashualo (middle), the third - tsqeba (beginner), the fourth - gadatanili (shifted), the fifth - modzakhili (the follower) and krimanchuli (yodel). The names of the Larchem-Soinari tubes coincide with those parts of Georgian folksongs which undoubtedly refer to their interrelation. It is quite clear that from the very beginning Georgian's musical thinking was so tied to the traditional vocal polyphonic thinking that the terminology of the musical instrument clearly revealed the evolvement of the features characteristic of polyphonic singing.

The interrelationship between vocal and instrumental music is even more obvious in the so-called "nirza". It is a very interesting form of performing on the Larchemi - a competition between two players. In this case the Larchemi was divided into two

equal parts and each performer played three pipes - meubne, meshkvashe and mechipane or the bass on one side, and the middle and the first parts on the other side. During "nirza" very interesting and original intonations were created and a performer who played the longer and more varied tune won the contest.

The tunes performed on the Larchem-Soinari are polyphonic (two part), so a performer had to blow into two pipes simultaneously, which was technically very difficult. It was important to correctly distribute breathing for the sounds to be equally strong. One of the key factors of the performance time was the swiftness of movement.

The Larchem-Soinari range includes fifths or sixths, and there is no established scale, but only some rudiments of scale can be noticed. One of the features resulting from the peculiar character of this instrument is that sometimes the melody ends not on the tonic sound or on the longest tube but on the neighbouring meshkvashe. Here the notion of "tonic" is conditional and means the sound which is most often repeated.

In the Larchem-Soinari tunes (see ex. 1 and 2) the movement with a mixture of parallel seconds and thirds is quite frequent. The time is not clear at the beginning, though by the end of phrases time and the rhythm are very clear. Every phrase is ended by the shemomghereba (lit.: "singing around"), a stereotypical phrase around the main sound of the tune that creates a cadence. This is typical of Georgian folk vocal music as well. It should be noted that in Megrelian tunes the function of the seventh step (a second lower the central tone of a scale) is performed by the longest tube "meubne", and the first note of the scale is represented by the second lowest pipe - "meshkvashe".

In Gurian Panpipe tunes the central sound of a scale is the bass (the lowest pipe). The Larchemi and Soinari melodies reveal that some of the oldest vocal practices have survived on this instrument. Remnants of the oldest vocal practices are still seen in the highland folklore and the ancient Georgian vocal samples (laments, labour songs, round-dances). T. Zhvania divides the wind instruments into three steps according to the method of their making, their construction and structural and musical features. The Larchem-Soinari, which was later replaced by a more highly developed single-stemmed pipe with finger-holes, belongs to the first step (Zhvania, 2001).

Although the Larchem-Soinari is no longer used in everyday life, there is a movement towards a revival. This surmise of mine is corroborated by the fact that at the regional forum of children's art held in Zugdidi in 1986, together with many other interesting performers there was a child playing the Larchem-Soinari. The child was from the village of Chkvaleri where there was a rich tradition of performing on the Larchemi. One of the reasons for this may be the revival of various forms of traditional economy in modern life.

Audio recordings that I have heard lately of the Panpipe in different contexts and with different sounds (e.g., an antiphone with the performers shouting, and the clashing of stones together with the sounds of the Panpipe) encouraged me to look for analogous traditions in Georgia. From this point of view the study of the long flute "Acharpani", widespread in Abkhazia, seems promising. It is the subject of my further research.

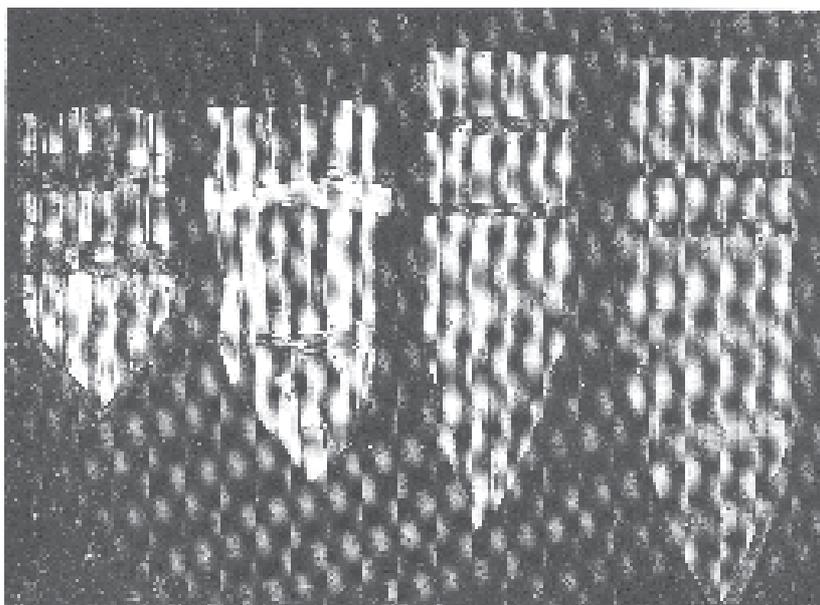
Translated by LIANA GABECHAVA.

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სურათი 1. ქართული მრავალღერძიანი სალამური – ლარჭემ-სოინარი (წიგნი აქ -
წიგნი ა, 1936:XII)

FIGURE 1. The Georgian multi-stemmed pipe – Larchem-Soinari (Steshenko-Kuftina, 1936:XII)



მაგალითი 1. მწყემსური
 EXAMPLE 1. Mts'k'emsuri

ლარჭემის ნეობა
 Mode of Larchemi

♩ = 72

მაგალითი 2. მწყემსური
 EXAMPLE 2. Mts'k'emsuri

ლარჭემის ნეობა
 Mode of Larchemi