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## ON POLYPHONY IN GEORGIAN FUNERAL SONGS

The study of the development of the Georgian musical heritage is greatly helped by an analysis of the separate genres, as in each of them different stages of musical thinking are reflected. Of the existing rituals, laments are among the oldest and the most conservative. An analysis of laments will enable us to look at the earliest steps of Georgian musical thinking from the simplest homophonic samples up to developed three-part polyphony.

In the cult of the deceased, lamenting is one of the most important links between existing customs and traditional ones. Both women and men have traditionally defined functions. Ethnographic literature preserved the laments considered to be the earliest in the development of religious thinking. These are laments from Khevsureti (a mountainous region in north-eastern Georgia): "Datvli" (Lit.: "with listing"), "dzakhilit" (lit.: "with shouting"), "Khmit" (Lit.: "with voice" meaning "with singing"). The most interesting ones are "Khmit" ("with voice" or "with singing") laments. It was believed that the soul of the deceased found his or her temporary abode while this kind of lament was performed. The lamenter was to announce the desires of the deceased. A lamenter "with voice" was a poetically gifted woman whose function was to praise and eulogize the deceased using thrilling words while lamenting the loss of the deceased. People learnt the words of the most successful laments off by heart. Later men would sing these songs while making hay. This song (performed by men) was called "Gvrini". In "Gvrini" nothing was repeated. Different lamenters began lamenting differently and the words were also different. During this type of lament (lament "with voice") all the people were silent. Nobody wept aloud, but when the lamenter "with voice" wept after each phrase other mourning women would join in. In the lament "with voice", the lamenter described the past life and deeds of the deceased. The souls of ancestors were also remembered (Chitaia, 1940:71). See the examples 1, 2, 3 (Chkhikvadze, 1960:24, 26, 30), and 4 (Aslanishvili, 1956:71) in the appendix. Gradually the institution of lamenters "with voice" underwent changes. The idea of a soul finding its temporary abode was abandoned in Pshavi and Tusheti (mountainous parts of north-east Georgia) as well as in Kartli (the Plain region of central-east Georgia).

Musical examples of the lament, in their turn, indicate that the tradition has ancient roots. The musical material shows that "lamenters with voice" played an essential role in the initial basic tune formation and its development (Maisuradze, 1989:10). A comparison of Tushian, Pshavian and Khevsurian laments points to their common basis.

In Tusheti during the ceremony held a year after the person's death a special ritual called "Dalai" was performed (Giorgadze, 1987:43-49). See the example 5 (Chkhikvadze, 1960:36). Five horsemen took part in the "Dalai" performance. One of them ("Mtkmeli" - the one who says the text) recited the text and the other four ("amqolebi" - the ones who follow) accompanied him.

"Dalai" text shows that it was a mourning text but not of the form that occurs in Khevsureti. In contrast to part-lament pieces occurring in Khevsureti, where poetic improvisation was used, "Dalai" text is preliminarily created and appears as a mourning

poem. Thus, in the “Dalai” form we have a group lament where the participants are “modalave” (the leader, who recites the words of the “Dala”) and “Amqolebi” (“accompanying persons”).

In the eastern Georgia lowlands (in Kartli and Kakheti) the laments had the character of wailing. These lamenters were accompanied by a group of mourners who performed the bass part. This kind of lament is called “mourning with bass”. The term “Zarit tirili” (an especially loud and high-pitched lament) rarely occurs here and is connected with polyphonous choral lament (Ochiauri, 1947-1948:5; Nakashidze, 1983:7-8). In Kakheti along with a lament with wailing (“Motkmit tirili”) the terms “Mozareebi” (lamenters) and “Zarit tirili” are frequently used. Sources have it that a “Mozare” was a person having a knack for lamenting. “There were three women who were good at lamenting. One of them began reciting and the other two wept. They were brought to the funeral service only. They stood in front of the deceased and recited “Zari” (lit.: “bell”, lamented)”. (Giorgadze, 1984:12). See the examples 6 and 7 (Chkhikvadze, 1960:354, 182). The lament eulogizing the deceased was performed on the day of funeral in mountainous Racha and it was known by the name of “Zruni”. The ethnographic materials of Kakheti and mountainous Racha are identical.

During the ritual lament in mountainous Racha “the wailing lament” was performed. It was performed by a woman who was an expert in this type of lament. The lament had a glorifying character. The samples of “wailing lament” belong to an early stage of Georgian folk music development. A three-part lament song was performed; its name was “Zruni” or “Zrunis Shairi”. The Rachian “Zrunis Shairi” has a great deal in common with the lament ritual of eastern Georgia. The “Zruni” performers were held in great respect. Performing “Zruni” was considered an honourable occupation. It was performed in three parts. The leading part recited the words and the second part and the bass accompanied it. The lamenter created the words in the process of lamenting. The text had a praising character. “Zruni” was performed on the funeral day.

Songs with the “Zruni” texts were sung by women while reaping (“Korkali”) and by men while hay-making (“Guguni”) in Mountainous Racha. Evidently these songs were performed to gain the favour of the deceased. They were immediately connected with reaping and hay-making as a field is the image of death and marriage (Surguladze, 1978: 78-79). As it was mentioned above, in Khevsureti men while hay-making sang songs that had lament texts and they were called “Gvrini”. The individual feature of Rachians is performing a song of hay-makers during “Nadi”. “Nadi” is a social form of assistance during the agrarian labour process. But the songs were not performed directly during the labour process: they were performed by peasants only during breaks on their way home after working day. The songs had a sad character and were sung only when there was a deceased person in the village. In other cases round-dance songs were sung without dancing. In these songs the “Zruni” texts were used and they were performed by two choirs antiphonically. In Khevsureti “Gvrini” was performed by a hay-maker leaning on the scythe handle during a break. It was performed by a single person. In Racha “the hay-makers’ song” was performed during a break or at home after a working day. It was sung by a choir.

This ethnographic material shows that “Korkali”, “Guguni” and “Gvrini” are linked to an early stage of evolution of religious and mythological conceptions when a sepa-

rate deceased person is lamented by a single individual (a man or a woman). In the "hay-makers' song" the loss of the deceased is lamented by a choir i.e., by the whole community and the songs were also sung to the glory of the fertility deity. The "Wailing lament", "Korkali" and "Guguni" were intermediate forms between lament and a song. They originated in ancient times and are analysed at the level of the Georgian musical root language. In my opinion, an analysis of the musical samples of "Zruni" shows that though the upper parts tend to come close to linearity they reveal a link with the Svan "chordal unit" polyphony to a greater degree. It is well known that Racha was strongly influenced by eastern Georgian as well as western Georgian cultures, and of Svan culture in particular (Nakashidze, 1987). See the examples 8, 9, 10 (M. Jordania, 1962).

The wailing lament still exists throughout the whole of Georgia. The praising lament performed by a woman occurs in every part of Georgia. In addition I should also mention that the Georgian lament ritual finds parallels with the neighbouring Ancient West Asian world (e.g., Khetit culture) where women lamenters were important figures (Berishvili, 1982:41-44, 48).

The "lament of a Svan woman" recorded in Svaneti (Akhobadze, 1957:126) shows a close link with the music of the whole of Georgia and is especially characteristic of musical intonational examples from the mountainous regions as well as from the lowlands.

In Megrelian life a wailing lament "Tvalua" is preserved. The "Wailing lament" performers (Matvalari) were specially invited and even paid, though a member of the deceased's family could serve as a "matvalari". Megrelian laments are intonationally related to the east Georgian Khevsurian laments which points to their genetic kinship at one time (Chitanava, 1987:90-91).

During the funeral service the polyphonic lament "Zari" was performed by men in western Georgia, specifically in Svaneti, upper and lower Racha, Lechkhumi, Samegrelo, Guria and Imereti. It mainly served as a background for a wailing lament. "Zari" is a song without words, though there were versions where the presence of a text was mentioned. On my opinion Zari's origins come from Svaneti. On one hand it is attested by Svanetian ethnographic materials, and on the other hand it is best preserved in Svanetian tradition (Akhobadze, 1957:117).

A musical analysis of "Zari" recorded in different parts of Georgia shows that they should be considered to be highly developed examples of the west Georgian musical style.

Interesting examples of one-part laments come from Achara (South-west of Georgia), Lazeti (living on the adjacent territory of Turkey) and Meskheti (southern part of Central Georgia) laments (Mskhaladze, 1969:104-110; Tandilava, 1972).

The ancient laments, preserved in eastern as well as western Georgia, expose their origins in Georgian musical language roots.

The samples of Tushian "Dalae", the Kakhetian "Zari" and Kartlian "Lamentation over the King Erekle" need to be analysed to state the gradual development of polyphony. All these samples have a common basis. Thus different development stages of lamentation are represented. These songs belong to the circle of the eastern Georgia's musical culture.

Svanetian, Megrelian, Rachian and Gurian “Zari” and highland Rachian “Zruni” are typical examples of the peculiarities of the local regions of Georgia. At the same time they are representative of the circle of western Georgia’s musical culture with the polyphonic form, chordal structure and parallel movement of chordal units.

Georgian folk music has travelled a complicated and diversified path from older times till today. The stages of lament development testify that development of Georgian folk music and its polyphony is phasic.

*Translated by MARINA KUBANEISHVILI*

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მაგალითი 1. ძახილით ტირილი  
EXAMPLE 1. Dzakhlit tirili

Moderato

რათ ა - რას მი - ა - მბობ, სა - მძი - მარ ჩე - მო  
Rat a - ras mi - a - mbob, sa - mdzi - mar che - mo

მაგალითი 2. დათვლა-ტირილი  
EXAMPLE 2. Datvla-tirili

Moderato

სად წა - ხველ დე-დო, სად მის - ვალ ეხ - ლა, სა-ით-კენ მის - ვალ დე-დო;  
sad ts'a - khvel de - do, sad mikh - val ekh - la, sa - it - ken mikh - val de - do;

მაგალითი 3. ხმით ნატირალი  
EXAMPLE 3. Khmit natirali

Andantino

ჰეი თქვე-ნი ჰი - რი - მე მა - ტი-რალ - ნო იჰე ჰე ჰი - ა ჰეა  
Hei tqve - ni ch'i - ri - me ma - ti - ral - no ihe hi hi - a

მაგალითი 4. ხმით ტირილი  
EXAMPLE 4. Khmit tirili

*mf*

ა, მე, ხო ჟა - ლი ოხ რი - სა ი - ო, ჰე  
a, me, kho qa - li okh ri - sa i - o, he

მაგალითი 5. დალა  
EXAMPLE 5. Dala

Allegretto  
Solo

და - ლა სთქვიტ და - ლა მხე - დ(ა) - - - რე-ბო  
Da - la stqvit da - la mkhe - d(a) - - - re-bo

Andante  
Coro

და - ლა ჰე და - ა - ა - ლა - ა ჰე  
da - la he da - a - a - la - a he

მაგალითი 6. ზარით ტირილი  
EXAMPLE 6. Zarit tirili

Moderato  
*mf* Solo

ვაე მე შვი - ლო შენს დამ - კარ - გავ - სა.  
Coro Vai me shvi - lo shens dam - kar - gav - sa.

Coro

ა

მაგალითი 7. მეფე ერეკლეს დატირება  
EXAMPLE 7. Mepe Erekle's datireba

Moderato

ვერ შე-იტ-ყე-თა ქარ-თველ-ნო, რკი-ნის შე-გა-წყდათ  
Ver she-it-k'e-ta qar-tvel-no, rki-nis she-ga-ts'k'dat

Coro

ა

მაგალითი 8. ქორქალი  
EXAMPLE 8. Qorqali

*mf*

მაგალითი 9. ლულუნი  
EXAMPLE 9. G'ug'uni

*p*

