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Russian Traditional Music in Georgia (Based on the materials from Dedoplistsqaro 2013-2014)¹

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Resume: *Two centuries ago Russians settled in Georgia joining other ethnic group (Jewish, Greek, Assyrians, Armenians etc.) living here from old ages. From the beginning of 19th century battalions of Russian Army was permanently based in Dedoplistsqaro. Most of Russian soldiers and officers after the end of their service stayed to live in Georgia. Until now no interest was expressed to study the music traditions of these settlers.*

The expedition of the ethnomusical department of Ilia State University collected Orthodox Hymns and folk music of Russian population. The study showed that the music plays an important part in identity of these people.

The problem of a dialogue between cultures is presented with historical, ethnographic facts and it is based on a sociological research.

Key words: *Migrations, Identity, Traditional music, Orthodox Hymns, Georgian folk music, Russian folk music.*

In Contemporary world migration processes and identity are the topic of attention of different branch scholars. Among identity markers historians, anthropologists, sociologists, culturologists particularly point out attitudes to language, homeland and faith. In the complex study of identity distinguished is the role of oral traditional music, which is also confirms different peoples' living together, dialogue between their cultures (Frith, 1996; Morrison, 2004).

The Caucasus, particularly Georgia is a very interesting region from the standpoint of ethnic diversity. Its geographical location (at the crossroads between Europe and Asia) determined the mode of life, activity, viewpoints and artistic thinking of the peoples residing here. Peaceful coexistence of different ethnicities (the Jews, Greeks, Assyrians, Armenians....) provided best conditions for preserving their originality, at the same time, forming new styles and tributaries. Best example of this is Georgian urban folk music (both of its branches), which emerged in the result of the synthesis of different traditions and reconsideration of foreign intonations (Mshvelidze, 1970; Meskhi, 2013).

One of the directions of today's Georgian school of ethnology is objective exposure of ethno-cultural peculiarities, description of the daily round of religious groups, their comparison and observation of different and similar elements of traditional cultures of Georgian population. The

¹ Materials of the 2013-2014 Dedoplistsqaro expedition; see the archive of ethnomusical laboratory of Iia State University.

scholars' think, that centuries-old experience of living together, research of the Georgian mode, may allow to correctly direct civil integration of the society (Janiashvili, 2014).

Parallel to national heritage Georgian musicologist-folklorists (or composers) also paid attention to other peoples' music, which was recorded both in and outside Georgia. For instance at the turn of the 19th-20th centuries Dimitri Araqishvili recorded Circassian, Kumukh, Ossetian, Armenian, Turkish, Kurdish, Kirgiz, Ukrainian examples, Russian instrumental melodies.² In the 1920s Viktor Dolidze collected Ossetian folklore; in the 1930s Shalva Mshvelidze collected the songs of the Jews from Akhaltsikhe district; in the 1950s Vladimer Akhobadze, later Manana Shilakadze, Nino Maisuradze, Ketevan Baiashvili, Edisher Garaqanidze recorded the musical heritage of Some North Caucasian ethnic groups. It is known, that Grigol Chkhikvadze recorded Jewish, Kurdish and Assyrian examples in Tbilisi.

We still continue documenting, as far as possible, traditional music examples of the peoples residing in Georgia. To this testify expedition recordings (Russian, Armenian, Gypsy examples collected in 2013-2014) of the ethnomusicological research group of Ilia State University, the expedition of the International Research Centre for Traditional Polyphony recorded the Kist folklore in Pankisi Gorge, 2013.

The paper touches upon one of the stages of the documentation and study of the musical traditions of Russian Diaspora (planned for the near future is to montage the film about the ritual folklore of the Russian Doukhobors from the village of Gorelovka shot by Tamaz Gabisonia and Ketevan Baiashvili in the spring, 2013 and preparation of a work).

The Russians joined the ethnicities compactly residing in Georgia two centuries ago. Although their country expressed particular interest to South Caucasus earlier. Intensive research-study of the region's ethnographic, geological, botanical and geographical started by the expeditions in the 18th century. The analysis of the material, creation of considerable scientific basis and domination in Georgia was followed by the publication of regulations, according to which the migrants (religious groups opposed to the church and rebels, Cossaks sent here for military service, etc) were given particular privileges. Discharged soldiers were given pieces of land, financial assistance, privileges, and exempt from taxes.

Development of railway transport (the 1910s-1920s) also contributed to the increase of Russian-speaking settlements. Second wave of migrations is connected to WWII, even after the war many Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians found shelter in Georgia. it should also be noted that Slavs- ethnic Russians, Ukrainians, Byelorussians prevailed in the migration processes from the country, during the process for the restoration of the country's independence in the late 1900s (most of them being military personnel).

Dynamics of the Russian population number in Georgia

1926	1939	1959	1970	1979	1989	2002
96 085	308 684	407 886	396 694	371 608	341 172	67 671

Dedoplistsqaro was a place of permanent stationing of Russian military forces. First military fort was built here by the battalion sent to Kakheti by general Tsitsianov in 1803, named *Tsarskie*

² He was first to record and discuss folk examples of his compatriots exiled to Mozdok and Kizlyar

kolodtsi (*Krasnie kolodtsi* – in Soviet epoch). After completing military service most officers and soldiers stayed here for permanent residence. Historical *Kambechovani*³ was of strategic importance in the 19th century as well in the battles against Dagestan-Lezgin and Char-Belakang raiders (Jalabadze, 2010; Komakhia, 2010).

It is noteworthy that the traditional music of the Russians from this part of Kakheti has never been documented before and there is no special work on this theme. However, Georgian scholars (Dimitri Araqishvili, Archil Mshvelidze, Vladimer Akhobadze, Tamar Meskhi and others) mentioned the facts of the influence of Russian musical culture on Georgian, Abkhazian music manifested in cadence phrases, different meter and rhythmic initials, harmonic functions and sometimes in adjusting Georgian texts to Russian soldiers' songs. Influences are especially obvious in the regions neighbouring with Georgian military highway (Khevi, Mtiuleti) and urban music.

We collected the examples of Russian traditional music basically in the village of Khornabuji. Here the elements of traditional culture are preserved in compactly populated Russian districts. Painted houses, pointed roofs, typical windows and shutters, wallpaper, curtained payer corners, *samovars*, etc – in the interior, are completely different from traditional Georgian. In some courtyards Georgian way of organizing country estate and buildings have obviously been used.

According to (female) respondents, currently big majority of the population is elderly, young people leave for historical homeland with the hope to find job. Most consider themselves as local, because they are descendants of the Tsarist Russian soldiers, post-WWII settlers or visiting relatives who stayed here.

Firstly I would like to focus on the material related to Russian chant.⁴ According to the ethnofors from Khornabuji and Dedoplistsqaro, 5-6 chanters chanted in three-voices at Russian church. Women also chanted at newly-constructed Georgian church under the direction of Anisia Vasilenko (b.1927), who studied chants orally from his father (reader) and who has preserved to this day notated and neume collections written by her. During years Georgian parish also attended their chanting. Someone specially recorded the canon of Andrew of Crete (we made a copy of this recording for the University archive). According to Lena Zhukovskaya (b. 1930), Russian parish likes Georgian chant very much.

³ Discovered here are the ruins of cities dating back to the II millennium B.C. In historical sources Khornabuji fortress is first mentioned in the 5th century.

⁴ Let us remember, that after the abolition of the autocephaly of Georgian Apostolic Church, the language for divine service (both lingual and musical) was replaced forcibly. Original Georgian chants were replaced by Russian, more precisely by its 18th century – the so-called Kliros-style. Kliros chant created under the influence of European 'cants' and based on third parallelism of top voices, directed by 'educated' precentors, was particularly popular among soldiers and in Russian cities (for this information, thanks to Izaliy Zemtsovsky).

The replacement of Georgian centuries-old and highly artistic church music by such chants contributed to the creation of Georgian urban – the so-called Sionic chant, performed by mixed (non-traditional) choirs with different articulation and manner (later on in post-Soviet epoch this style was partly replaced by traditional examples revived from handwritten notations).

throwing by congratulating children, serving sweets). In Christmas and Easter rituals church hymns (“*Rozhdestvo tvoe, Khriste Bozhe nash*”, “*Khristos Voskrese*”) are chanted.

Russian population of the region pays particular attention to the participation in local festivals (naturally, religious unity plays crucial role in this). The 19th century Russian military figures are known to have contributed in the revival of the 5th-6th-century St. Elijah’s monastery. Today’s multifunctional festival *Eliaoba* – formerly festival of weather and fertility is celebrated together by the Russians and Georgians (we would climb the mountain with flags and icons, offer animal sacrifice to rain – Maria Strakhova (78-year-old).

Despite the political contradistinction between the countries, there has never been antagonistic attitude to the Russians in the region. After Georgia’s declaration of independence Russian language lost its position, but remained the communication language between ethnic groups. Russian Orthodox chants and examples of vocal folklore obtained by the University expedition testify to the significant role of music in the preservation of identity. It can also be said that in typologically similar environment (I mean religious unity, multi-part thinking) and under the conditions of peaceful dialogue mostly women seem to preserve musical traditions. I stress this fact because in the memory of generation chanting at Orthodox churches in Tbilisi of Soviet epoch is associated with Russian elderly women.

The collected material may become a part of extensive, joint complex study of the Russian migrants’ traditional culture, which is one of the ways of collaboration of scholars under the present conditions between the two countries.

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