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THE ESSENCE OF “FORMULAE” MODE IN GEORGIAN CHANTING AND ITS REALIZATION IN MULTIPART CONTEXT

In the tradition of church chanting, the centonic principle of melody construction and formulae mnemonic thought originates from the distant, pre-Christian past. At the initial stage of the formation of Christian chanting as a professional art, the only way to systematize melodies was only listening, musical memory, and hearing. At this stage, the modal structures of hymn tunes are still in their early stages of development – such essential attributes of the MODE as pitch, intonational range, and harmonic basis are not yet differentiated. This form of functioning of the mode is also confirmed by medieval music-theoretical treatises (the earliest source (9th century) of mentioning melodic formulas – *Musica Disciplina* by Aureliano di Reomo). As this treatise says, Emperor Charlemagne and his palace door paid particular attention to the Unchanged use of established melodic formulas (*ananno, noeane, nonannoene, noeane*) (Bailey, 1974).

As history informs us, over time in Eastern and Western Christianity, under the conditions of the need to theorize practical knowledge, such attributes of the mode as *finalis*, *ambitus*, and *repercusa* appeared in the eight-tone chant melodies; in several traditions, trichord and tetrachord segments were distinguished, which led the music theory of that time to the definition of scales.

The definition of the mentioned elements of the mode, and the formation of the theory chant’s musical system, which started in the sphere of monodic culture, deserves special attention. All the ideas and discussions attested in the theoretical treatises of the Middle Ages about the harmonic structure of melodic formulas, the structure of the mode, theory of the scales are based on the monophonic chants culture. Accordingly, the defining attributes¹ of the mode at this stage were aligned with the monodic nature of the tune. The tone system, octave modality, ambitus, repercussa, finalis (in the West-European tradition), and the tetrachord system arose from the “perfect musical system” of ancient theory in the Byzantine tradition.

With the development of polyphony in European music, profound contradictions appear between mode theory and live practice. Subsequently, the history of mode theory in Western Christianity and “dealing” with polyphony showed that a rationally organized system of horizontal connections could no longer function when vertical dimensions were included.

Before adopting the innovations mentioned above (before the formation of musical-theoretical systems), the essence of mode in the Christian world was melodic and formulaic. “Formulae modality,” “formulae mode,” and “melodic mode” are used by the well-known musicologist Yulia Efimova in her monograph dedicated to early Christian European chant (Efimova, 1999), when discussing the results of the total “editing” of the Gregorian chorale according to the modal sounds developed by theorists in the 9th-10th centuries.

It should be mentioned that Shalva Aslanishvili, the famous Georgian musicologist, and the founder of the methodology of studying the harmony of Georgian traditional music, while discuss-

¹ The tone system, octave modality, ambitus, repercussa, finalis (in the West-European tradition), and the tetrachord system arose from the “perfect musical system” of ancient theory in the Byzantine tradition.

ing the essence of mode, focuses on the process of gradual crystallization of the main parameters of the mode.² He emphasizes the mode feature revealed in the “historically constant development.” The author rightly points out that understanding the mode’s essence is possible only by considering the correlation between the elements of mode (such as scale, functional interdependence of tones, i.e., the intonation ratio of tones and the harmonic foundation (Aslanishvili, 1956:172). Based on the mentioned methodology, the author presents the reflection of the earliest stage of development of mode in samples of Georgian folk songs (in Khevsuretian songs – “*Gvari Song*,” “*Nana*,” and also “*Yav Nana*”). The author concludes that in these versions of the songs, mode represents a melody, a tune (“*kilo-hangi*” – mode-melody). He notes that “the scale, intonational sphere, and harmonic foundation are still not differentiated at this stage of mode development. “All three elements of the mode are still mutually combined” (Aslanishvili, 1956: 174). Practically, Aslanishvili discusses the “formulae” type of mode and refers to it as “mode-melody.”

“Formulae” is the mode where the “mode-melody” is inseparable and does not yet have differentiated harmonical basic and scale. With this meaning, the concept of “formulae mode” in the paper introduces a new conception of the role of “formulae” mode and the correlation of mode parameters in the process of polyphonic formation in Georgian chants.

The question arises, is it possible to discuss the existence of a “formulae mode” – typical for a monodic culture, in the conditions of polyphony?

Before discussing this issue, **one significant feature of the chant’s texture should be noted. Without considering this feature, the analysis of the mode-harmonic system of the hymn is unjustified³.** The **internal organization of chant polyphony, different from a folk song**, is obtained by duplication a preliminary determined monophonic tune. The chant’s polyphony is resultative and model oriented. What is no less important, the musical texture of the Georgian chants, at all stages of their development, and maintains this principle – the main tune always carries the organizing function in polyphony. It is this peculiarity that should be determined, on the one hand, the individuality of the polyphonic arrangement of the hymn and on the other hand, the peculiarities of its mode organization.

Therefore, the analysis of the modal parameters of the main tune is fundamental to be carried out separately, independently, and in a polyphonic context⁴. The established methodology of analysis of Georgian traditional music (according to Shalva Aslanishvili’s theory), since there is no other generalized methodology, was used with some inertia in studying the harmonical features of Georgian church hymns. However, due to not considering the main regularity of the organization of the polyphonic texture of chanting, the traditional method of analysis does not

² With the monograph “Essays on Georgian Folk Songs,” Aslanishvili established the theoretical study of the harmonical language and other general issues of Georgian traditional music (Aslanishvili, 1954-1956)

³ The established methodology of analysis of Georgian traditional music (according to Shalva Aslanishvili’s theory), since there is no other generalized methodology, was used with some inertia in studying the harmonical features of Georgian church hymns. However, due to not considering the main regularity of the organization of the polyphonic texture of chanting, the traditional method of analysis does not always bring the desired results. It leads to incorrect assessment of harmonic events. First, it is meant to search for diatonic modal structures in Georgian church hymns. Those cases where the explanation of harmonic events becomes difficult with these regularities are explained with mode uncertainty.

⁴ Such an analytical approach revealed that in the main tune and the vertical structures of the hymn, predominantly melodic connections are leading and driving and that the harmonical functions of vertical complexes are neutral.

always bring the desired results. It leads to incorrect assessment of harmonic events. First, it meant the search for diatonic modal structures in Georgian church hymns and those cases where the explanation of harmonic events becomes complicated – to solve the problem by belonging analytical fragment to the “uncertain mode.”

In our previous studies, we noted that the melody of the main tune of the chants belongs to the coordinated type, and the harmonic function has not yet been identified in the tones of melodic formulas. Therefore, coordination between tones produces harmonical-neutral segments / melodic formulas. From the theoretical analysis of chants, the main tune of the hymn preserves the feature of “formulae mode” even in conditions of polyphony (ex.: 1a, 1b).

Let me ask the second question and find the answer to it:

Is it possible for chant melodies to retain their “formulaic” essence over the centuries?

In the monodic culture itself, the formulae mode was transformed by the gradual separation of its elements.

Let us consider what processes took place in Eastern and Western Christianity in the development of modality and **how these processes could influence the formation of the Georgian chant music system.**

It is essential to consider that the attempts at music-theoretical generalization of chanting practice in Eastern and Western Christianity have been active, especially since the 9th century. The creation of the tone-theory belongs to the 10th century. This time Georgian chanting art was at a high level of development. Collections of liturgical chants developed in Georgian ecclesiastical practice, original and translated hymnography material; authentic unpitched notation confirms this. There is a solid basis for the assumption that, at this time in Georgia, the process of assimilation of Eastern Christian chanting culture has already been completed, and monophonic tunes are polyphonized, in other words, **“edited” in the context of Georgian polyphonic musical thought.**

We think that the entry of Byzantine Melos into the Georgian tradition was expressed by the multi-part realization of the same tune, which became an additional factor for avoiding the re-intoning of the main tune in the process of assimilation.⁵ The local folklore tradition of polyphonic singing in Georgia likely prevented the development of the main melody in the horizontal aspect and the formation of typical mode structures for the monodic melody.

It is worth noting that the chants’ main monophonic melody continued in an autonomous form even after polyphonization. The reason for that can be found in the chanting practice in Georgia. The practice was of binary type (oral-written) and meant the oral transmission of these mode-models unchanged. The arrangement of two separate voices to the main tune was made improvisationally. The analysis of the Georgian unpitched notations samples also confirms that the mnemonic, formulaic thinking is characteristic of the chanting tradition continuously until the 20th century.

Besides that, the polyphonic realization of monodic tunes in Georgia probably preceded the theoretical generalization of early medieval choral practice and the “editing” of tunes (especially, Gregorian chant melodies) according to elaborated theory. Thus, if we admit that the monophonic tunes became polyphonic as soon as they spread in Georgia, in the realm of polyphonic functioning, the abstraction of musical practice into tetrachord, trichord, or another polychord system could no longer happen.

⁵ By the way, the idea of preserving the main melody unchanged is visible at all stages of the history of Georgian chanting: in the Middle Ages and at the end of the 19th century.

From the history of medieval church music, it is known that the spread of new musical practices in any local church does not imply the same assimilation of the contemporary theory (Lozovaya: 2011). Thus, even if the poliphonization of the tune was delayed in Georgia, the theory of scale could not be adopted in the local tradition⁶ after the 10th century.

The theory of tetrachords is incompatible with polyphony, and the existence of polyphony in Georgia in the 11th century is evident. (Pirtskhalava, 2018: 221-236). **Thus, the formulaic essence of the main tune of the Georgian chant is preserved as an immanent feature despite the development of polyphonic forms. This idea is the starting point for My research.**

Now let us discuss the issue of the formation of chanting polyphony and its mode-harmonic features. Do we wonder what harmonic relationship is established between the main melody and the accompanying voices in three-part chants? What processes were taking place in the way of the transformation of monophonic formulas into a three-part texture? On the one hand, the concepts presented in the mentioned work of Shalva Aslanishvili allowed me to imagine this process. On the other hand, the research was conducted by me in the past years where the statements about the relation of hymns to Georgian folk songs were given. These provisions were presented at the sessions of our previous symposiums, but they should be pointed out once again to present the processes of polyphonic development in chants (Chkheidze, 2017, 2018, 2022).

Now let me turn to Shalva Aslanishvili's theory. He discusses two different principles of the development of polyphony in Georgian folk songs. Despite the difference in the way the transition from a two-voice to a three-voice texture, similar technological processes can be observed. The author separates:⁷

- a) Complex two-part polyphony (in which the parallel movement of voices prevails);
- b) two-part polyphony based on the Drone bass.

“These two types of polyphony are presented in Georgian folk singing through their original, as well as developed forms,” – he notes. Shalva Aslanishvili also refers to the process of forming the polyphony of the Georgian church hymn. He points out a particular form of polyphony when the bass and the first voice move in parallel octaves and fifths. However, the scholar does not explain what this specialness is. In our mind, this particular form is manifested in the process of formation of polyphony in chanting art that differs from folk singing tradition. In contrast to the folk tradition, Bas's voice was not doubled up an octave in the chant and the main tune was placed between the two opposite parts, but rather the opposite; the main tune was doubling down an octave and fifth. As a result, we got a complex polyphony, where the main melody of the chant, unlike the folk song, is placed not in the middle but in the texture's upper part.

We often find the opinion – “Georgian hymns from this time should be established on national

⁶ The history of the *Znamenny* chant can be used as proof of this. Although *Znamenny* chant originates from the Byzantine eight-tone system (and at the stage when the Byzantine tetrachord theory was already established), its theoretical generalization differs from the Byzantine mode system. The *Obikhodian* mode differs in its structure from the “Greek perfect system.”

⁷ In the first case – a) The two-part polyphony was turned into a three-part one by constructing a perfect fifth on the bass tone, and the melody appeared in the middle part of the three-part texture, bounded by perfect fifths. i.e., The middle voice leads the melody, while the bass and the upper voice represent a harmonic accompaniment (Aslanishvili, 1965:47). Similar to the described process, in the other case: b) the complication of the relationship between the melody and the Bourdon bass in Bourdon two-part music led us to three-part polyphony. Here, too, a three-voice texture was created by doubling the bass in the first voice, embellishing the upper part tune at the next stage, and turning it into an independent melody.

soil,” “the process of Georgianization should begin,” and “it should be translated into Georgian” (in this case, concerning music).” In the research dedicated to the history of Georgian music, the history of church music, and the history of hymnography, an explanation, in particular, does not accompany these opinions; how do the authors imagine this process of adaptation in Georgian reality?

In my opinion, when we are talking about the processes of developing the tune, we should mean transferring **the models and principles experienced during the formation of Georgian folk polyphony** into liturgical music. It is worth noting that it did not stop on the way to the formation of various chanting schools. Furthermore, the proof is the musical material of the hymn itself.

The musical material shows that the Georgian hymns are the original synthesis of Eastern Christian and local musical cultures. The processes of the mode-harmonic development of Georgian hymns should be considered in close connection with local folk musical traditions.

Here we must pause on the two different principles of polyphonic development in Georgian folk singing examined by S. Aslanishvili: “The formation of multifaceted polyphony of the Georgian folk singing was expressed through two primaries, historically stipulated forms: complex and incipient polyphony” – notes the author. These two types of polyphony are presented in Georgian folk singing through their own original and developed forms,” he notes. This path of polyphony’s genesis is reflected in these two primary branches of Georgian chanting⁸. These influences are evident not only in the polyphonic forms and the similarities of the voices’ textural functions but also at various levels of the development of the modal systems.

For example, the archaic layers of complex polyphony of chants are also seen in embellished polyphonic samples. The chants with heterophonic texture are proof of that. In the conditions of complex polyphony, the mode is variable, which is significantly facilitated by the parallel movement of fifths and octaves characteristic of this arrangement (ex.: 2a, 2b, 2g).

Due to the homogeneity of the complexes (quintal octachords, tertian quintal chords, quintal nonachords, or quartal sextachords), the mode is neutralized by a parallel second movement. Every quintal chord can easily be transformed into the center only with the metric rhythm principle. The rhythmic retention of a fifth on an emphasized support point, the secundal correlation of individual voices obtained as a result of parallel movement, and the lack of thirds in a three-voice texture – all of these facilitate the transformation of the fifth as the center of attraction. Therefore, decisive importance is given to the metric rhythmic principle when defining the modal center within complex polyphony⁹.

Such polyphonic forms are primarily found in chant school examples (Shemokmedi, Gelati) in the Western Georgian region. It is not by chance that the so-called ornamented style is manifested in the chant school examples of this same region; there, under the influence of the regional trends of polyphonic development, the emancipation of voices in chordal complexes proceeded to the formation of complex polyphonic textures. Like folk songs with polyphonic textures, the extant methodology for defining the mode within them is ineffective.

⁸ The Eastern Georgian chant tradition is implied – presented in the form of the so-called Karbelashvili chant and the Gelati and Shemokmedi schools of Western Georgia.

⁹ In this case, the modal center is only distinguished at the end of a structure. A parallel quintal or particular movement might continue in a melody following the existing contour and pause on another pitch because the melody itself is not constructed with a subordinated principle; instead, it presents the whole without a differentiation of the modal tone functions.

A remarkable thought is expressed by Aslanishvili that the demand for unique, stable formulas¹⁰ creating a song's cadential ending was brought about by the fluctuating character of the mode in Western Georgia's folk songs (ex.: 3a, 3b). Likewise, typical cadential structures are also formed in the chants -cadential formulas characteristic of codas in the bass voice. The overriding of modal fluctuations is implemented only through the metric rhythmic emphasis of the final pitch (ex.: 4a, 4b, 4g).

In the chant school traditions (ex. in Karbelashvili school chants) of the regions where drone polyphony is dominant (Kartli-Kakheti) despite the existence of modal fluctuations (through the influence of drone polyphonic forms¹¹) distinguishing the harmonic functions in a mode is strengthened by the bass voice's predilection to having drone-like qualities. In the end, "there is no longer any difficulty in determining the mode" (Aslanishvili, 1954: 180). This explains the partiality of the polyphonic texture for the Mixolydian and Dorian modes. However, there is still no evidence of completely crystallized harmonic relationships and scale projections.

In the multipart realization process of a monophonic formulaic mode/melody, and the two types of polyphony having formed from complex polyphony through the influences of a regional style – a) with a developed middle voice inclined towards drone polyphony and b) in a developed form going from complexity to polyphony – the **main melody continues an autonomous existence**. It has not been mixed into the polyphony's harmonic texture in contrast to folk singing. Thus, when analyzing a chant's modal system, the essence of the main melody's formulaic mode, the modal nature of the monophonic melody, where the formulaic essence of the mode/melody invariably continues to exist without being abstracted into scales, as well as the polyphonic form that turned out to be decisive in the mode's formation process must be considered.

All the mentioned peculiarities play a decisive role in the process of the formation of the mode.

Finally, to summarize the essence of the term "formulae" mode: for our foreign guest scientists, I would like to point out that the concept "mode" has many meanings in the Georgian tradition. The issue is deeply studied in Georgian musicology. In addition to the non-musical meaning, as a term related to music, in various sources, the content of mode can refer to intonation formula, style, character, chant school, and dialect. There is an opinion Among Georgian musicologists that the term "mode" should be used only as an established theoretical concept. My point of view is different, and today's paper reinforces its basis. The identity of mode, the main tune of the Georgian chant, lies in its formulaic, melodic essence. Despite its polyphonic releases, Mode-melody continues to exist in a syncretic form. Thus, the features revealed in the Georgian singing tradition enrich and expand the importance of mode as a theoretical concept. "Formularity"- the substance of the mode from the birth of Christian chant, is preserved in Georgian tradition even in a polyphonic context. It was not diluted in polyphony but kept the priority of organizing the musical texture and, therefore, the "formulae" profile.

The "formulae" essence of the tune gives a particular color to the whole polyphonic texture. The melody receives a new character in a new harmonic context created by the lower parts. It creates harmonic structures, sometimes neutral, sometimes stable. The melodic nature of the "formulae" mode gives additional Versicolor to polyphonic tissue and the possibility of various forms of harmonization. Therefore, the "melodic" nature and power guide the polyphony of Georgian chant.

¹⁰ The scholar calls this specific stylistic feature an Ionian cadence due to the ascending movement on the Ionian mode's upper tetrachord pitches.

¹¹ Where more refined, crystallized forms of the mode have taken shape

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მაგალითი 1 ა. ფრაგმენტი ძლისპირიდან „მოელოდა ვითარცა რა“. ქართული გალობა. ანთოლოგია. ტომი 8. თბილისი 2016.

Example 1 a. The fragment from the Canticle “They Waited Upon the”. Georgian chanting. Anthology. Volume VIII. Tbilisi 2016

მო - ე - ლო - და ვი - თარ - ცა რა

მო - ე - ლო - და ვი - თარ - ცა რა

ცით, უ - ფა - ლო, მო - სე ეგ - ვიპ - ტეს ში - ნა,

მაგალითი 1 ბ. ფრაგმენტი ძლისპირიდან “მოელოდა ვითარცა რა“. ქართული გალობა. ანთოლოგია. ტომი 8. თბილისი 2016.

Example 1 b. The fragment from the Canticle “They Waited Upon the”. Georgian chanting. Anthology. Volume VIII. Tbilisi 2016

They Waited Upon the Words Like Dew

Heirmos. Canticle II. tone I

1)

მო - ე - ლო - და ვი - თარ - ცა რა

მო - ე - ლო - და ვი - თარ - ცა რა

mo - e - lo - da vi - tar - tsa ra

ცვარ - თა, სიტ - ყვა - თა მათ შენ - თა ზე -

ცვარ - თა, სიტ - ყვა - თა მათ შენ - თა ზე -

tsvar - ta, sit' - q'va - ta mat shen - ta ze -

მაგალითი 2 ა. კვერთხი იესეს ძირისაგან (შემოქმედის სკოლა). ქართული გალობა. ტომი I. საქართველოს საპატრიარქოს საეკლესიო გალობის ცენტრი. შემდგენელი და რედაქტორი მალხაზ ერეკვანიძე. თბილისი, 2001.

Example 2 a. The Rod of the Root of Jesse (Shemokmedi School). Georgian ecclesiastical chanting. Shemokmedi school. Georgian chanting. Vol. I. Compiler and editor Erkvanidze Malkhaz. Church Chanting Centre at the Georgian Patriarchate. Tbilisi, 2001 (in Georgian).

♩ = 140

კვერ - თხი ი - ესე - ს ძი - რი - სა - გან
kver - tkhi i - e - se - s dzi - ri - sa - gan

მაგალითი 2 ბ. მღვდელთმთავრის მიგებების საგალობელი (გელათის სკოლა) ქართული გალობა. ტომი VI. საქართველოს საპატრიარქოს საეკლესიო გალობის ცენტრი. რედაქტორი მალხაზ ერეკვანიძე. თბილისი, 2001.

Example 2 b. The Meeting-Chant of the Bishop (Gelati school). Georgian chanting. Vol.V. Compiler and editor Erkvanidze Malkhaz. Church Chanting Centre at the Georgian Patriarchate. Tbilisi, 2001 (in Georgian).

მღვდელ - თა ან ბრწყი - ნ - ვა - ლე
mghvdel - ta an brts'qi - n - va - le

მაგალითი 2 გ. ფრაგმენტი ძლისპირიდან „გალობითა ძღვევისათა“. ქართული გალობა. ანთოლოგია. ტომი 8. თბილისი 2016.

Example 2 g. The fragment from the Canticle “Sing to God with a Hymn of Victory”. Georgian chanting. Anthology. Volume VIII. Tbilisi 2016.

გა - ლო - ბი - - - - - თა ძღვე - - - - - ვი - სა - თა
გა - ლო - ბი - - - - - თა ძღვე - - - - - ვი - სა - თა
ga - lo - bi - - - - - ta dzle - - - - - vi - sa - ta

უ - გა - ლობ - დეთ ღმერთ - სა ყო - ველ - ნი,
უ - გა - ლობ - დეთ ღმერთ - სა ყო - ველ - ნი,
u - ga - lob - det ghmert - sa q'o - vel - - - - - ni,

რო - მელ - მან ქმნა სას - წა - უ - ლი - თა
რო - მელ - მან ქმნა სას - წა - უ - ლი - თა
ro - mel - man qmna sas - ts'a - - - - - u - li - ta

მაგალითი 3 ა. ასლანიშვილი შალვა. (1956-1954).ნარკვევები ქართული ხალხური სიმღერების შესახებ. I და II ტომები. თბილისი: ხელოვნება.

Example 3 a. Based on: Aslanishvili Shalva. (1954). *Narkvevebi kartuli khalkhuri simgherebis shesakheb* [Essays on Georgian folk songs]. Tbilisi: Khelovneba. (in Georgian)

Moderato

რა კაი რი რა დე ვაი რა რი რა რა რი ეაი აი ე

მაგალითი 3 ბ. ასლანიშვილი შალვა. (1954-1956).ნარკვევები ქართული ხალხური სიმღერების შესახებ. I და II ტომები. თბილისი: ხელოვნება.

Example 3 b. Aslanishvili Shalva. (1954). *Narkvevebi kartuli khalkhuri simgherebis shesakheb* [Essays on Georgian folk songs]. Tbilisi: Khelovneba. (in Georgian)

მაგალითი 4 ა. ფრაგმენტი საგალობლიდან “მხოლოდშობილი ძე”. ხუნდაძე, რაჟდენ. (1911).

Example 4 a. The fragment from the chant “Only-Begotten Son”. Khundadze, Rajden (1911).

მამისა და ყოვლად წმიდი - სა სუ - ლი - საი გვა - ცხოვ - ნენ ჩვენს

mamisa da qovlad ts'midi - sa su - li - sai gva - tskhov - nen chveni

მაგალითი 4 ბ. ფრაგმენტი ძლისპირიდან “ისრაილნი განვიდეს დაულტოვებლად”. ქართული გალობა. ანთოლოგია. ტომი 8. თბილისი 2016.

Example 4 b. The fragment from the Canticle “The Israelites departed”. Georgian chanting. Anthology. Volume VIII. Tbilisi 2016

ე - რი თვი - სი იხ - სნა,
 ე - რი თვი - სი იხ - სნა,
 e - ri tvi - si ikh - sna,

მაგალითი 4 გ. ფრაგმენტი ძლისპირიდან “ისრაილნი განვიდეს დაულტოვებლად”. ქართული გალობა. ანთოლოგია. ტომი 8. თბილისი 2016.

Example 4 g. The fragment from the Canticle “The Israelites departed”. Georgian chanting. Anthology. Volume VIII. Tbilisi 2016

ღმერთ - სა უ - გა - ლობ - დეს!
 ღმერთ - სა უ - გა - ლობ - დეს!
 ghmert - sa u - ga - lob - des!