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MUSICAL-CHOREOGRAPHIC CULTURE OF FEREYDAN

Shah Abbas I of Iran raided Kartli-Kakheti several times, but the largest campaign was in 1616. Prisoners from East Georgia (mainly from Tianeti, Kakheti and Hereti) were sent to Iran. Most of them settled in Fereydan. This is probably why Fereydanians have mostly retained Georgian language. Central city of Fereydanians is Martqopi (officially Fereydunshahr). The Georgian-speaking Fereydan includes the cities of Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) and Buin Miandashti (Toreli), and several villages. In addition to Fereydan, the Georgians were also settled in Shiraz, Mazandaran and other regions, as well as in Afghanistan, although Georgian language has been retained only in Fereydan. Later part of the Georgians resettled from Iran to Afghanistan, although detailed information about them is still difficult to find.

Although the Georgians of Fereydan officially have Iranian surnames (Batavani/Batuani, Qalani, Muliani, Gugunani, Khutsiani, Rahimi, etc.) their domestic family names are: Batuashvili, Gugunashvili, Onikashvili, Davitashvili, Khutsishvili, Moliashvili, Kaplanishvili/Kavlashvili etc. The only surname that is the same in Iranian is Ioseliani.

From the day of their exile Fereydanians dreamed of returning to their homeland. There is a well-known narration that if children succeeded to pass under the rainbow, they would definitely return to their motherland. This may be what film director Irakli Kandelaki implied when he said that every year in April Fereydanians play the game “Who will be the first to go to great Georgia?” (Unknown author, 1963:4). The patriotism of Fereydanians is still exemplary. There is not a single Fereydanian who doesn’t think about Georgia day and night and doesn’t speak Georgian at home, including with young children. Thanks to Qolamreza Khutsishvili’s private school, majority of children and young people, as well as a significant portion of older generation, can read and write in Georgian.

Sadly, the first Fereydanian - Atham Onikashvili came to Georgia only in the 1870s. Lado Agniashvili visited Fereydan in 1896. Ambako and Sara Chelidze visited Fereydan in 1927, and Iranologist Zurab Sharashenidze - in the 1960s. Following all this, several families moved to Kakheti in 1972.

I recorded Fereydanians’ singing in Tbilisi in 2012 and 2018 at a small extent, but we managed to conduct the expedition only in 2024 as funded by the Rustaveli Foundation. The expedition included Giorgi Kraveishvili – the leader, and members Khatuna Damchidze a choreologist, and Tamaz Kraveishvili, mostly in charge of photo-video shooting. The expedition was supported by the Rustaveli Foundation (FR-21-1362).

Fereydanian songs are single-part. This was pointed out by Nodar Kochlashvili (as early as 1969) and Rusudan Tsurtsumia in 2004. Our expedition, as well, recorded only single-part songs (audio appendix, ##1-3). Moreover, authorial songs are popular in Fereydan (audio appendix, ##4-5). Old folk songs have survived in a small number. Most common are lullabies, women's and men's dirges and humorous songs. Some of the texts documented by the representatives of various fields in the past century are unknown to young Fereydanians.

Since we mentioned dirges, I must say that mostly women weep both separately and in groups. A man weeps with words when the pain is immeasurably great and mourner has a special closeness to the deceased (video appendix, #1).

Although today's ethnophors sang in Persian in cornfield (at threshing floor), when knitting and at weddings, they remembered older generation who did not speak Persian language, and in their opinion they would probably sing in Georgian.

Today Fereydanians mostly sing in Persian language, but their melodies are Georgian as much as when singing in Fereydanian dialect (audio appendix, ##6-7). They contain hidden polyphony, as do the songs sung in Fereydanian dialect. In short, Georgian and Persian songs of Fereydanians differ from each other only in verbal text.

Instrumental music is common in Fereydan. The instrumentalists are mainly the Fereydanian Kurds and Armenians. Georgians play the instruments lesser, and those who do, have learned playing from the Kurds and Armenians. Looking at the data from the 1920s-1960s, we will see that *stiri* (*stviri*), *naghara*, *saz*, *doli*, *tar*, *chianuri*, *santuri* were in common use (Chelidze, 2011:155; Sharashenidze, 1969:32-35; Sharashenidze, 1979:177; Tsagareishvili, 1981:25; Todua, 1975:51, 82; Chkhubianishvili, 1998:#902; Beridze, Bakuradze, 2012: #4084; Chikobava, 2010:230). The instrument referred to as *chianuri* is *kemenche*, which the author identified with *chianuri* due to their outer similarities. Fereydanians sometimes refer to *stviri* as *istiri* (Beridze, Bakuradze, 2012:#4081), and *doli* – as *doholi* (Chkhubianishvili, 1998:#902). Georgians played the *stiri* and *naghara*, and *ney* more often, among those playing other instruments there were only few Georgians, since Georgians considered playing an instrument as entertainment and shameful. The *stiri* and *naghara* ensemble included only a *stviri* and a *naghara*, which essentially excluded polyphony. We managed to record this ensemble only once, and that was with *tombak* replacing *naghara* (video appendix, #2-3).

Stiri and *naghara* were played at weddings and other celebrations; these also accompanied dancing, including several-storey round dances. But, pastoral melodies (video appendix, #4) and melancholic songs were played on *Ney* (video appendix, #5).

Another instrument that is currently being disseminated in Fereydan, but is very common in the Caspian area of Iran, including Mazandaran region, is *hambouleh*/*hanbuneh* (video appendix, #6). It reveals close similarity with Georgian *chiboni* only with one difference that each pipe of *hanbuneh* has five finger holes, due to which the melody is monophonic. We should not be surprised by the similarity between *hambuleh* and Geor-

gian *chiboni*, considering the existence of a large Georgian settlement in Mazandaran. Although they no longer know Georgian language, they are proud of their Georgian roots and are trying to get closer to both Fereydan and Georgia.

For many decades now, due to living conditions, people from Fereyden have moved to big cities, either temporarily or permanently, but they do not forget Georgian language there either. During migration, people come into contact with music and dances from different countries (mostly Iranian), but at the same time they actively study Georgian songs and dances. This responsible mission of teaching songs was taken upon by Ambako and Sara Chelidze (Chelidze, 1958:95). They are known to be the first to teach Georgian songs to Fereydanians (ibid.:95). Later Kandelaki continued this. As the renowned film director notes, he taught two songs, “Suliko” and “Izarde, mtsvane jejilo” to Fereydanians. Along with other items he brought 200 LPs of Georgian folk songs to them (unknown author, 1963:9-11). Currently, many people in Fereydan are learning Georgian songs. I think that the New Year song “Alatasa, balatasa” (audio appendix, #8) disseminated in Fereydan has been introduced from Georgia. This is evidenced by both the lyrics of the song and the area of its dissemination. The song is mainly encountered in Martqopi, where in the 1920s-1960s a number of different-field scholars from Georgia used to visit and disseminate Georgian LPs. It should also be noted that we once heard “Alatasa, balatasa” in Chughruti, and in Hereti as well, namely in the village of Eliseni, Zakatala district.

As I have already mentioned our expedition was both musicological and choreographic. The locals refer to dancing as *shushproba*. We mainly documented Chopi, which is danced with woman’s scarves in a circle or semi-circle, or entirely in a circle to the accompaniment of *stiri* and *naghara* (video appendix, #7). We also filmed “Chubbazi” (lit. with sticks. Geo.), danced by two men, one a defender, the other a striker. When the attacker manages to hit the defender, they switch the roles (video appendix, #8). With similar movements and the same music, both examples are also common among the Kurds of Fereydan and Khuzestan. In Fereydan alongside these dances there is a dance “Halalai, adek dajek” performed by one woman (video appendix, #9), which is close to “Gandagana” and is sometimes accompanied by *doli*, sometimes *stviri* and *naghara*. Verbal text of the song dictates the dancer which movement to make and when. The elderly remember several-storey round dances and men dressed as women and women dressed as men at weddings, but we failed to film these.

The fact is that the musical creativity of Fereydanians is very different from that of Kakheti, but is close to Heretian i.e. Ingiloyan, in single-part singing, abundance of children’s repertoire and Oriental instruments. Monophonization of songs and dissemination of Oriental-style instruments do not indicate common Georgian past in Hereti and Fereydan, but rather in both cases we deal with external influences, the abundance of children’s repertoire, including the existence of tunes related to birds, truly reflects close connection between Fereydanians and Heretians.

While in Fereydan there is only one *stviri* and one *naghara*, which excludes polyphony, in Hereti they play two *zurnas* and two *nagharas*. Wind instrument Ney is also disseminated in Fereydan. As for *chungur* (i.e. saz) it was very common in Hereti, but not in Fereydan. *Chonguri*, tar and kamanche were lesser used in Fereydan, and we failed to record them. In addition, while in Hereti, unlike *chungur*, we have Georgian-style polyphony in the form of the music for *panduri* and *garmoni*, this has also disappeared in Fereydan. As for dancing, Heretian dancing is closer to that of Dagestan, although, of course, it has some common features with Fereydanian, in terms of both movement and clothing.

Audio Examples

“Charshambae suri” (sung on New Year’s eve). Performed by Abolqasem Akhmad and Mohtarama Ebrahim. Recoded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in Bueen district of Bueen Miyandasht in 2024.

“Ghmerto, mogve balakhi” (weather monitoring song). Performed by Abolqasem Akhmad and Mohtarama Rafi. Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in Miyandashti (Toreli) district of Bueen Miyandasht in 2024.

“Gadian, gamodian chitebi”. Performed by Hossein Khutsiani (Khutsiashvili), Sapar Moqadasi (Zupitashvili) and Askar Moqadasi (Zupitashvili). Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in the village of Nevzahabad Fereydunshahr district (the village of Jaqjaqi, Martqopi district) in 2024.

“Kartveli var, kartveli”. Performed by the author - Qolamreza Khutsishvili. Recorded by Marina Beridze in the city of Najahabad in 2008-2012.

“Chemo sopelo”. Kartveli”. Performed by the author - Ali Hossein Rahim (Aleksandre Davitashvili). Recorded by Marina Beridze in the city of Najahabad in 2008-2012.

Song in Persian with the final part in Georgian. Performed by Janmahmada Rahim Ramishvili. Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in the city of Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) in 2024.

Song in Persian. Performed by Massume Pashaiy. Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in the village of Sibak Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) district in 2024.

“Alatasa, balatasa” (New Year song). Performed by Parviza and Massume Aslani (Aslanishvili). Recorded in the city of Fereydunshahr (Martqopi).

Video Examples

Male lament over a deceased. Performed by Tajimahmada Khutsiani (Khutsiashvili). Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

Melody on *stvir* and *naghara* when taking the bride from the parents' house. Performed by Mohammad Tavazohi (Tavadze) - *stvir* and Amin Khotsiani (Khutsishvili) - tombak. Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in Isfahan in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

“Halalai, ade, daje” (wedding song). Performed by Mohammad Tavazohi (Tavadze) - *stvir* and singing, and Amin Khotsiani (Khutsishvili) - tombak. Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in Isfahan in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

Shepherd's tune on Ney when driving cows. Performed by Bahman Gugunani (Gugunashvili). Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in the city of Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

“Shechamandi shavken”. With Nay accompaniment. Performed by Bahman (Nay) and Omid Gugunani (Gugunashvili). Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in the city of Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

Instruemntal piece on hanbunch. Performed by Mohammad Tavazohi (Tavadze). Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili in Isfahan in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

Chopi and jokhuri Chopshi. Farzad Rahim Davitashvili's wedding. Filmed in the city of Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) in 2002.

“Jokhuri”. Alternately performed by Notfola Manzari (Manzarashvili), Kolamreza Khosravi (Khosroshvili), unknown performer and Aria Khosravi (Khosroshvili). Recorded by Khatuna Damchidze in the village of Dashkesan, Bueen Miyandasht district in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

“Halalai, ade, daje” (Wedding song). Performed by Shahnaz Aziman Khutsiashvili. Recorded by Giorgi Kraveishvili and Khatuna Damchidze in Fereydunshahr (Martqopi) in 2024. Filmed by Tamaz Kraveishvili.

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