

Shota Rustaveli Theatre and Film Georgia State University

Faculty of Art Sciences, Media and Management

Khatuna Damchidze

Tbilisi 0108 Georgia

**Dance Dialects of West Georgia (Abkhazian, Acharian, Laz-Shavshetian, Megrelian,
Rachan) and Main Ethnocoreological Aspects of Their Interrelation**

Abstract of the thesis work
for the Academic degree Dr. of Arts (Phd)

Scientific supervisor:

Dr. of Arts

Ana Samsonadze

Tbilisi

2019

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF THE WORK

Actuality of the themes: Today, when the world is overwhelmed by the irreversible process of globalization, when the difference between the nations is being eliminated, the problem of maintaining originality is fairly acute. This problem is more obvious on the example of little countries such as Georgia. Had it not been the cultural heritage (material and intangible) from ancient times to this day, Georgia would not have occupied the place it holds now, in the world culture.

As an object of cultural heritage, Georgian national choreography holds a special place and is of particular importance. Originality of Georgian folk dance is manifested in its ethnic variety which, on the one hand, exists as absolutely different dance tradition and on the other hand, as part of common Georgian folklore.

Although certain number of dialects, from the standpoint of dance lexicon has disappeared (Imeretian, Lechkhumian); diversity of dance dialects is observed on a geographically small territory of West Georgia West Georgian circle of dialects comprises Svan, Rachan, Abkhazian, Megrelian, Gurian and Laz folk choreography¹.

One of the most important issues of choreology to be researched today is ascertainment and classification of separate dance dialects and elucidation of their interrelations. Present work is actually the history of the Georgian dance dialects and will be interesting for the professionals, as well as for the readers interested in this subject. It is intended for a wide circle of choreologists and choreographers, and representatives of adjacent fields. It will help theoreticians to get perfect knowledge of choreographic examples, and will allow practitioner choreographers to use authentic material and create correctly thought-out, from historical viewpoint, new examples. Inaccuracies revealed in the history of Georgian Choreography, set the necessity for re-checking and ascertainment of their typological, terminological and semantic meaning.

The term **dialect** was introduced in linguistics and ethnomusicology long time ago. Greek **dialektos** stands for speaking, saying and mode. It is relevant to apply and introduce this term in relation to the varieties of Georgian folk choreography. Thus, more correct definition of regional choreography will be “Georgian dance dialect”.

Topicality of the research theme is determined by the main goal of the work to reveal the **interrelation** between dance dialects.

The Subject of Research: The issue of research is choreographic dialects of West Georgia: Acharan, Laz, Megrelian, Rachan, Abkhazian and their interrelation. Naturally, in textual material, spoken language of a dialect is defined by vocabulary and correspondingly, dialect will also be defined by linguistic dialect. Musicologists

¹ I've purposefully refrained from discussing Svan dance proceeding from its volume and existing important information on it; the information about Lechkhumian dance is not available even on theoretical level, whilst Imeretian and Gurian dialects have been excluded in order to avoid violation of the norms established for Doctoral work. When talking about the dialects, with lost lexicon, we apply to adjacent disciplines, even though it is impossible to reveal full-fledged dialectal interrelation, from musical and textual standpoint. A. Chikobava notes that, dialect appears only in live language. Dead, obsolete language no longer develops; accordingly we cannot ascertain dialectal links and relations.

accentuate dialectal interrelation of musical text; in choreography – chief motive elements – dance movement, plasticity, gesture, character – will be main criteria for defining their dialectal division and interrelation. Thus, the attention will be drawn to logical connection and relation in the stratification of dance language and where the choreographic lexicon has disappeared, the attention will be paid to textual and musical, functional and contextual aspects of the work. All the afore-mentioned is discussed in the context of common root-language – Georgian. However, we cannot ignore the existence of the influences which Georgian culture had under the geographical-regional or political-economic conditions on different stages of its development. Migration of cultures determines artistic and stylistic trend both inside and outside the country.

Goal of the research: Goal of the research is to introduce a new, innovative term “**Dance dialect**” in Georgian folk choreography. The term implies unification of the examples or collection of examples imprinted with similar or identical dance-spoken language and means of expression into common aesthetic space.

In recent years, seeking for, collecting, documenting, preservation and system classification of authentic dialectal folk art is of utmost importance. Basing on this, the work aims to present West Georgian choreographic dialects, authentic examples, example variants, descriptive documents; define each dialect and interrelation between the dialects by using historical, ethnographic, ethnologic, literary, musical, art scientific literature and expressive fields of interdisciplinary relations as much as possible, to define **inter- dialectal relations** basing on the language of dance dialect.

Besides, the author of the work also aims to analyze ancient examples with the consideration of their traversed path. Today, a large number of works revived by certain author’s are performed on the stage. Authentic dances are united under one ethnic and geographical name and are referred to under a collective name. E.g. Acharan, Svan dance, recently Rachan dance was added to them. They have suite character and comprise several independent pieces. Diverse and numerous Georgian art of dance is as if is placed in the frame and impoverished. Each dance, which creates a suite and is united in one dance can and deserves to exist independently. One of the goals of the research is revealing and documentation of unknown dance examples of (“Abkhazian dance dialect”, “Megrelian dance dialect”, “Rachan dance dialect”, “Acharan dance dialect”, “Laz dance dialect”). Current choreographic space includes not only authentic pieces, but also those created by author choreographers. In my opinion, joint creative skills and work of ethnomusicologists, costume designers, choreologists and choreographers may result in the revival of ancient dance examples. Some pieces have lost their dance meaning; however their musical pattern, combination of tempo and rhythm, nature of meter speak about its origin.

Methods of research: Proceeding from the synthetic nature of choreography, when researching art of dance in general, we don’t base only on the material, directly containing dance examples. The sources we use are: literature, music, choreography. Syncretism of dance allows applying to adjacent fields, as more material is available in

music and oral folklore. The reason for this is the fact that more extensive material has been collected as a result of research in these fields. Thus there emerged the necessity for **interdisciplinary** study. The work bases on the **historical-comparative method**. History of any branch of art, as a mirror, reflects the path traversed by the ethnos, historical folk studies, unlike descriptive folk studies which characterizes an epoch statically, without the traversed path, isn't satisfied only with its description and frontal representation in one space and aims to discuss the origin and development stages of a folk example, genre in general. However, we consider static data very important, as the principal methodology of the work, historical-comparative method bases on the **static material**. Having collected the static material, the necessity of applying **inductive** and **deductive** methods came on the agenda. **Empirical** method allowed showing the unity and interrelation of separate research components. In fact, inductive and deductive methods are closely connected, because the existence of a sample and its characteristics in one genre is the basis for researching its analogue in another dialect; conversely, the combination of the examples with similar parameters, basing on **historical-comparative method**, indicates to the presumable character of the lost dialectal example.

Novelty and practical purpose of the work:

Novelty of the presented work:

1. Introduction of the term "**dance dialect**" in Georgian folk dance as denoting a dance example or collection of examples, characterized in homogeneous artistic aesthetics with the consideration of the language, ethnic and geographical parameters;
2. Revealed has been the interrelation between of West Georgian dance dialects, including those between) South – West Georgian dialects – Achara – Guria – Lazeti, b) Abkhazia – Samegrelo – Guria – Lazeti, located on the Kolkheti Lowlands; c) part of West Georgian Mountainous region, Racha and Svaneti with part of East Georgia;
3. Ascertained were some inaccuracies from typological, affiliation, terminological, and semantic standpoint. mn

In recent years, Georgian folk dance underwent significant modernization. Stage folk art, referred to as "secondary" – a term introduced by ethnomusicologists, bases on folk art. "Secondary" creation violates main principles of folklore – appears the creator of the folk example – author and his birth data. With time the artifact of stage performance – folk dance, loses authenticity. Time and civilization do not have positive impact on folk art. **Practical purpose** of the work implies creating choreographic examples basing on the authentic material as much as possible, with the help and application of the discovered, documental materials.

Volume and structure of the work: Main theses of the work, interrelation of choreographic dialects, required preparation of relevant grounds, resulting in the necessity of finding and gathering dialects. Thus, on the first stage, new term "**dialect**"

was introduced in Georgian choreology. Followed by the retrospective of separate West Georgian dance dialects and finally, the problem of their interrelation was formed.

The work of 200 pages consists of the following parts: Introduction, Chapter I – definition of dance dialect; Chapter II – dance dialects of West Georgia: Acharan, Laz, Megrelian, Abkhazian, Rachan dance dialects, Chapter III – interrelation of dialects, interrelation of Laz and Acharan dance dialects, interrelation of Abkhazian and Megrelian dance dialects, Rachan dance dialect; Conclusion; the work is enclosed by a list of reference literature (149 units), internet source, the work is enclosed with the page of signatures, copyright page; and abstract in Georgian and foreign languages. In nonprincipal part includes an Appendix, for all the dance dialects (24 units) and Round-dance texts.

Contents of the work:

Essential problematic of the research subject is presented in two directions: **documentation of dance dialects and interrelation between the dialects.** Each epoch, each stage of human development is characterized in the formation of a united system of artistic language, images and specific means of expression. The artifacts of pre-Christian epoch – choreo-language, attitude of the society to it, its relation with other fields of art, stylistic peculiarities of separate examples allow to ascertain its epochal affiliation and its place in common cultural space; aesthetics of collective influence, polyhedral nature, specific character of expression means, is defined by the specific language of the choreographic construction of each dialect. Reconstruction method for the artistic language and its semiotic functional analysis of each epoch, heredity plays significant role, as this process bases on the ascertainment-classification of the lost dialects and particular dance examples, restoration of their general aesthetics and most importantly, presumable spoken language.

Chapter I entitled **Issues of Dialect Definition** touches upon the issue of introducing new term, dialect, in choreo space. It discusses the essence of the term dialect basing on linguistic and musical dialectology. “Dialect” is new term in the history and theory of choreography and its introduction is expedient. In Georgian choreography the definition issue of this term became topical much later than in linguistics and ethnomusicology. In Dance Art the idea of introducing dialect as a term – researching separate dialects and peculiarities of their interrelation belongs to choreologist and choreographer Prof. Rezo Chanishvili.² In folk choreography dialect is defined by the language of dance. Movement, mode, combination of modes, performance character, style, create characteristics of dialect. Dance dialect can be defined as follows: **dance dialect is folk art isolated from the common root-language of an ethnic group in specific territorial location, equipped with individual artistic features which maintains connection with national roots.**

² Chanishvili R. Letters about Choreography, Book I “Tani” . Tbilisi, 2002, p.32

The process of division into and formation of dialects took place in remote past. Separation based on the differentiation of one whole. As a result, each independent dialect united common Georgian ethnic features, because no powerful polarization of the prehistoric ethnos was observed and the process of division of the common choreo-language into dialects had not gone as far as it had in spoken language. Despite maintaining uniformity, each dialect formed its own character. A colourful intonation gamma was formed in Georgian folk dance under the influence of different factors – historical, geographic, ethnic or political.

It is impossible to define and classify the peculiarities of each dialect on the basis of historical and authentic materials, homogeneously, considering one certain structural principle, as Georgian choreographic dialects originating from the common root turned out to be the bearers of absolutely different genre features, contents and means of expression.

Linguists and on their basis ethnomusicologists, ascertained three main reasons of dialect formation: 1) **Lingual, or musical factor**; 2) **Ethnical factor**; 3) **Historical and geographic and political factors**. We can easily use the same criteria for defining choreographic dialects and put them as follow: 1. **Choreographic factor per se, with the definition of the diverse content of dance vocabulary**; 2. **Historical and geographical factor**, 3) **Ethnic factor**.

Georgian choreographic root-language, on its part, proceeding from Georgia's ethnical variety is expressed in as many dialects, as the regions in Georgia. In Georgian choreographic art, distinguished can be: Khevsuretian, Pshavian, Mokhevian, Tushetian, Mtiuletian, Kartlian, Kakhetian, Meskhetian, Rachan, Abkhazian, Svan, Imeretian, Gurian, Acharan, Megrelian, Laz dialects and urban folklore. Division and sorting out of dialects expresses the formation of the dialectic circles of two **large families, West and East**. Also defined are the peculiarities of the highland **and lowland** dialects. As for Abkhazia, here we encounter relatively specific events determined by historical upheavals, namely: middle and south parts of Abkhazia are more closely related with the Georgia, north part – to adjacent neighbor in the North.

When ascertaining the issues of interrelation between dance dialects, ethnic parameters do not obey the norms established in historiography in general and dominate via the parameters of **geographical proximity**. For instance, Laz-Acharan and adjacent Gurian (Gurian expressed only with “Khorumi”, conditionally) are united in one dialect, Megrelian and Acharan show more proximity on the basis of authentic material; the intersection quality of Rachan and Svan dance dialects is much higher regarding round-dance example; the grouping distinguished in **ethnic** feature was more expressed in Rachan and Eastern Georgian dance lexicon, which was grounded by historical upheavals (Great migration from Eastern Georgian mountains to mountainous Racha), took place in ancient time. In addition, we cannot ignore the existence of the influences which affected Georgian culture under the geographic-regional and political-economic conditions Georgia had been on various

stages of its development. Migration of cultures conditions the direction of artistic and stylistic manner both inside and outside the country. Our neighboring countries were influenced by Georgian culture and Georgia also adopted their features.

Chapter II of the work, **Dance Dialects of West Georgia**, encompasses several dialects. Western part of Georgia boasts particular dialectal diversity. The topic is presented on the example of Abkhazian, Rachan, Megrelian, Acharan and Laz choreography.

Dance Dialects of West Georgia

Laz – Shavshatian dance dialect. In the historiographic sources of this Region, We will discuss the results of the expeditions conducted in past centuries: 1) Notes made by scientists K. Kokh and E. Spencer regarding professional dance actors and musical instruments. 2) Nicholas Marr’s description of the spectacle “Obiru“ and other dance examples. 3) Information notes by the artist E. Lanceray and his assistant about the dances of fighting character performed by the Laz with swords and pantomime performances. The work also discusses the researches of the Georgian scientists on the dance culture of the afore-mentioned region.

The work presents Laz-Shavshat folk choreography, the spectacles and dance examples found and ascertained by us. Obviously, this territory is imprinted by great ethnic variety. Turkish, Kurdish, Greek, Armenian, and Georgian eclectics was the ground for the art, which we refer to as Laz art. Despite this, Georgian art of dance managed to survive in traditional folk shows, also as pure dances. As we see from the work, enough number of dance examples have been documented, however on this stage it was impossible to find the dance lexicon of each one in full form. These are: “Berobana”, “Lazaroba”, “Shuamtoba”, “Aklemkatsoba”, “Pateh”, “Vakhakhaia”, “Lititi”, “Vahaha i nana”, “Toli noni kulani” (“Beady-eyed Woman”), “Ucha bichi” (“Swarthy Boy”), “Tsule Bozi” (“Virgin”), “Lazuri khoronishi birapa” (“Laz Dance Song”), “Tiri Mola”, “Chuta Nusa” (“A Little Bride”), “Patkali do ibiri”, “Laloini”, “Khorumi”, “Kurtkhorumi”, “Otirtinoni”, “Menjelishi”, “Mkhujishi” (“Mkharuli”), “Lazepesh okhoronu” (“Laz Khoroni”), “Obiru”, “Kochari”, “Horon to be danced on the table”, “Shemorbenilai”, “Dartulai”, “Khelgashlilai”, “Bazgirulai”, “Gazromilai”, “Qarshiberi”, “Deli khoromi”, “Qolsarma”, “Alapranka”, “Qolskhapua” (“Locust’s dance”), “Zvinebis tsekva”, “Kulani chichqu-chichqu”, “Ela komokhdi, ela”, “Peluka Yekeloni”, “Rakanis mot gelakhe”, “Titrama”, “Varda”, “Sarma”, “Patkala”, “Khertlis nadi”.

Acharan dance dialect is a fairly diverse and colorful part of Georgian folk dance. Many artistic details from the common Georgian ethnic space have survived in Achara. It’s also characterized in the artistic style peculiar for this geographic area, which has resulted from historical processes.

This sub-chapter discusses folk holiday Shuamtoba, which was common for Achara and its neighbouring Guria-Meskheti-Lazeti. Various ritual acts and folk performances with plenty of dances were held here. Also discussed is the ritual

related to son's birth called "Dzioba" with round, which in Achara is encountered in men's, women's and mixed performance: "Aklemis shekazmva" is an Acharan version of "Tskhenkatsoba" and "Aklemkatsoba", well-known in Georgia, which is the show with similar structure and is a part of "Berikaoba-Qeenoba", its functional and contextual aspects are similar too; it is related to ancient agrarian holiday. Also reviewed is Padiko-Kecheguri and Khertlis Nadi, in the artistic images of which Georgian roots can be seen. The same part of the work analyzes wedding choreographic repertoire.

On the basis of dance samples Acharan dance dialect is represented by only two samples: "Achruli suite" and "Khorumi". Each example comprises various dances and is a sort of collection.

Today "Khorumi" is localized and is regarded only as a combat example. Stage version has shared only combative character of "Khorumi". "Khorumi" is encountered only in three dialects – Gurian, Acharan, Laz. "Gurian Khorumi" is the same as "Acharan Khorumi". Its name has been defined only for purely geographical reason, as part of the present day Achara was considered territory of Guria in the past.

"Khorumi" wasn't only a combat dance. It was performed as a round dance under the name "Khoroni" during agricultural activities. There existed women's, men's and mixed round dances. In Kroroni the unity of men and women can be explained by the influence of Christianity, as Muslim rule doesn't permit this.

"Acharuli suite"/Acharan suite or "Gandagana" is composed of several examples. It's the stage variant, with the known author and time of creation. "Gandagana" is created by the artistic unity of authentic "Qolsama", "Jaqdanana", "Oho i nana", "Mkaruli". The work discusses the fundamentals of "Gandagana" basing on the authentic sources.

Megrelian Dance Dialect –discussed is the rite-ritual act "Atlechoba", known as "Atlarchoba" in Abkhazia. "Terdoba" – ritual dedicated to horse breeding, which has preserved the plasticity of horse's movement, "Dzidzava" – act for bidding farewell to rain, which was performed by women; a dramatized show full of dances – "Qeenoba", "Tughvinte" the dance which may be the variety of Dato-Berikuli cycle; "Chveniereba" –folk holiday in the village of Bandza, which has preserved kept very important information about Megrelian folk dance.

In general, Megrelian folk choreography surviving to this day has humorous, lyrical, light character: "Chaguna", "Voisa", "Arira" / "Tsartmevia" (although the term "tsartmevia" is encountered only in the L.Gvaramadze's work) "Jansulo", "Dzabra". "Chaguna", "Jansulo" and "Dzabra" are characterized in the dancer inside the circle and is a sort of choreographic performance. "Arira" (Skhapva, Abkhazian Lekuri) is a Megrelian variant of "Kartuli" dance.

Typology of round dance "Dzabrale" has been ascertained in Megrelian dance dialect. Three variants of this folk example are known, these are: Perkhisuli, round dance and round dance with a dancer inside the circle. Currently accepted and widely spread is the last variant, where the kind wins the struggle with the evil, performed in

comic-humorous way. However, the roots of this piece may have been incepted in remote past and it could be the bearer of absolutely different contextual and functional meaning.

The work, discusses round dance “Oskhapue” and its semantics, as well as “Khujishi oskhapue”, “Mkharuli”, defined are the aspects of their separation and analogues. Also discussed is Megrelian “Mze Shina”.

It turned out, that “Oskhapue” is an initial form of Megrelian round dance, the variations of which “Dzabrale”, “Okhokhoia” and “Mkharuli” existed in folk dance of this region. The name “Oskhapue” is generally related to the place of gathering and feast.

“Mkharuli” is a part of “Oskhapue”, which is performed after “Dzabrale” and adding tempo and dynamics to it. This dance is performed only by men tightly bound to one another with shoulders. Reasoning from the description of the dance, its roots are lost in remote past; it contains the strata of fertilization ritual.

In the round dance “Mze Shina” no particular ethnic features are observed, as the structure of “Mze Shina” disseminated throughout Georgia is almost similar everywhere. In addition, it’s well known that the round dance moving in the circle rightwards uttered Georgian text instead of Megrelian.

As for the term “Ggtsoghala”, encountered in Iv. Javakhishvili’s³ work, there is a technical error. I. Teptsov’s work writes “гыцогала”,⁴ Russian hard ‘ы~’ with an arc above. In the Georgian version there should be letter “i” instead of second “g”. The same letter is also found in another word. E.g. on page 4 of the same work, the word ‘цкырва’ - “Tskirva”, in which letter “i” has meaning. It should be noted that ‘гыцогала’,⁵ in I. Teptsov’s text it is translated as “gitsogala” due to the absence of letter “ts” in Russian. It should supposedly be “Gitsogala”, as here as well, letter ‘ц’ in the word ‘цкырва’ has the meaning of “ts”. In the second part of the word “Gala”, we can assert that the letter denoting “g” has been transformed to “gh”, as “g” has a specific symbol non-existent in Russian – lower arc, which stood for “gh”. In the work, “K” with “belly” denotes Georgian “Kan” and “T” with ‘belly’ – Georgian “Tan”.

Abkhazian dance dialect. Invaluable works of travelers, figures sent with special mission, ethnographers and historians, as well as historical-ethnographic data scattered in journals and newspapers provide significant information about Abkhazian culture. Dubois de Montpereux describes uncompromised competition between men and women, K.Machavariani – two-sided Perkhuli of men and women, which upon completion segued into the competition of two poets and a dance duel of

³ Javakhishvili Iv., *Issues of Georgian Music History, “Khelovneba”, Tbilisi 1990, p. 78.*

⁴ Teptsov Ia. *From the life and beliefs of the Megrelians*, Collection of materials of the area and tribes of the Caucasus. Issue XVIII, Part 2. Tbilisi, 1894, p. 1.

⁵ Teptsov Ia. *From the life and beliefs of the Megrelians*, Collection of materials of the area and tribes of the Caucasus. Issue XVIII, Part 2. Tbilisi, 1894, p. 1

a man and woman. Dzuku Lolua tells about Perkhisa in two lines accompanied by soloist dancers. N. Dubrovin – “Jigitka” of combat character. Also noteworthy is Jakob Rainegs’ and Polina Uvarova’s documentation of historical character.

It should be said, that historians describe not generally Abkhazian folklore, but that of the Abazins. N. Dubrovin notes that poor art in Abkhazia was conditioned by the closeness with Northern neighborhood. Frederic Dubois de Montpereux documented the afore-mentioned “competition” between men and women in the Northern part of Abkhazia. It is known the Abazins lived in the farthest North of Abkhazia. Difference between the ethnic layers of South and North Abkhazia conditioned such irrelevant “diversity”. However, in the period of description by N. Dubrovin, integration of migrants and aborigines had counted several centuries and accordingly, culturization process of the migrants shouldn’t have been new.

From combat dances the Abazda “Ashatskhirtra” was disseminated

Our attention was drawn to the word “Abazda”. It is much like to the term “Abazta”, incalculated in Georgia folk dance, which is considered to be a combat dance, as Sul Khan-Saba Orbeliani explains the dance “Basti” – is “dancing with stomping feet”.⁶ The terms are almost identical. Here is a question – whether the dance was named after the ethnic tribe, who performed the dance. N. Dubrovin refers to the dance he describes as “Jigitka” which in Russian implies riding a horse race, but in may have had local name “Abazda” like the Abazins – Abazda.

The dance “Ashatskhirtra” was a theatrical show, describing military, combative past and heroic character of Abkhazian ethnos. Though, in my opinion this dance is not old, and should have been supposedly created in the 19th century.

Ancient example of hunting epos “Bear’s dance” or “Ameshikuashara” has survived in Abkhazian folklore.

In Abkhazia there existed the dance of a lonely shepherd – “Akhcha zatsv ikuashara” – a theatrical choreographic show, the analogy of which is part of Tushetian shepherds’ folklore in East Georgian mountains.

From round dances, the most popular in Abkhazia are “Auraasha”, “Aibarkra” and “Sharatin”. Some dances considered wedding examples (“Aibarkra”, “Sharatin”) were related to agricultural magic and later became wedding dances. The parallel can be drawn with the folk example disseminated all over Georgia “Avtandil Gadinadira”, which later also became a wedding round dance.

From the wedding songs, noted should be wedding dance (“Arira” or “Arkuashara”).⁷ In Samegrelo the dance of a man and a woman is called “Abkhazuri lekuri”. Supposedly, referring the name, this dance sample should have survived in Abkhazia too.

“Aibarkra” means “hand in hand” in Georgian. Abkhazian-Georgian dictionary writes “Aibarkaara” and explains it as “betrothal”.⁸ Choreologist L. Gvaramadze thinks

⁶ Orbeliani Sul Khan-Saba, *Works*, volume IV, “Sabchota Sakartvelo”, Tbilisi, 1965, 101.

⁷ Anshba A., *Abkhazian Folklore and Reality*, “Metsniereba”, Tbilisi, 1982, p. 49.

⁸ Gvantseladze T., *Abkhazian-Georgian Dictionary*, “Intelecti”. Tbilisi, 2012, p. 236.

that “Aibarkra” is a domestic dance to be performed upon completing agricultural works. He refers to it as the “Dance with shoulders” and relates it to the movement for relaxing the shoulders tired with work. In Samegrelo this was called “Oskhapue” or “Khujishi oskhapuri”. Accordingly, “Aibarkra” and “Oskhapue” were the same. If both “Aibarkra” and “Oskhapue” are dances of shoulders, why are not they similar to Dzuku Lolua’s description of “Mkharuli” surviving to this day. We have no other substantial description of “Aibarkra”, except the afore-mentioned one. The description of “Oskhapue” is far from the movement for relaxing tired arms.⁹

In their works Abkhazian ethnographers write about powerful modernization of Abkhazian folk choreography. What is nowadays presented as stage variant of Abkhazian folk dance is very far from authenticity. Hence, it is valuable to document historical-ethnographic material, which contains authentic documentary information about Abkhazian dance dialect.

Rachan dance dialect is fairly extensive, because, as an intermediate dialect, it has maintained not only Rachan examples, but also those of adjacent dialects. Rachan dance dialect with rich choreo-culture is thoroughly presented in both historical and literary works. Basing on the documented information, main forms of round dance have been revealed. It’s been confirmed that in Racha there existed three kinds of *perkhuli*/round dance **Circular** round dance Perkhuli or Perkhisa, unbound mobile – *Tsinamszghola*/leading and *Shairi*/humorous with a participant inside the circle.

Rachan dance dialect is distinguished in multi-layer structure; accordingly it is a diverse-genre folk creation. Choreography is a strong mechanism to organize traditional spectacles in everyday life. Rachan ethno culture - in the centre of cultural space intersection, reflects the chronology of historical regularities. Mythical, cult-religious, historical artistic phenomenon has sagged in its syncretic art. Hence, Rachan dialect known for the abundance of round dances comprises the examples on hunting, historical, heroic-patriotic, religious-ritual, domestic, love and class-struggle themes.

Types of hunting poetry are especially characteristics of one of the most archaic work songs “Mtibluri”. In mountainous Racha, women’s “Korkali” and Men’s “Ghughuni” are considered work songs. These texts were created for weeping over the deceased/*zruni* and further on were repeated as accompanying the afore-mentioned working process. Hence, they were of melancholic character and were also performed for round dance. They were also called “*shairi*”(humorous verse). From the hunting round dances: “Amirani”, “Avtandil gadinadira”, “Chemo qurshao”, “Kalsa visme”, “Ia mtazeda”, dance lexics has survived only in two: “Amirani” and “Kalsa visme”.

⁹ Teptsov Ia. *From the Life and Beliefs of the Megrelians*, Collection of materials of the area and tribes of the Caucasus. Issue XVIII, Part 2. Tbilisi, 1894, p. 1.

In Rachan folklore historical and combative round dances create a significant layer, “Digori and Basiani” and “Maghla mtas modga” are characterized in identical dance character. Round dances “Shavlego”, “Tamar kali”, “Tseretelma dagvibara”, “Osie” or “Aidzra did sultani”, “Jamata” are presented with complete syncretism. “Didgori and Basiani”, and “Aidzra didi Sultani” have homogeneous dance composition. “Kalsa visme”, “Amiranis perkhuli”, “Magla mtas modga” have identical dance technologies according to A.Tataradze’s work “Georgian Folk Dance”.

“Zhuzhuna tsvima” and “Maghlidan gadmomdgariqo” were closely related with spring rituals, Shrovetide ritual performances: the rituals of “Shrushana” and “Zhuzhuna” are in fact identical. Rachan Easter “Madli makharobelsa”, related to spring is the only round dance with dance lexics. The round dance “Raeo” (related to the deity of the Sun), though its text is of love-domestic content, “Kartlis mindorsa vakesa”, “Kvedrula modidebula”, “Shen patara mdade ano”, “Ertkhel tsiskvils tsasvlisatvis”, “Da;ie chemo batono”, “Odila and odelia” belong to domestic genre. From the standpoint of dance lexics, round dances “Kalsa visme” and “Ertkhel tsiskvils tsasvlisatvis” are similar to each other.

In addition to round dances, duet dances, which were formed as a characteristic feature of Rachan dance dialect, are dialectal varieties of “Kartuli” dance and are performed on dance and playing musical compositions: “Rado-rado” or “Gastakuni”, or “Oghro-chogro”, “Oridili dili dili”, “Sakaos rom chamotova”, “Lertsamisa khesao”.

“Berkaluri” is encountered in the village of Glola, Zemo Racha; as the name shows the dance is performed by elderly women. .

Chapter III

The issue of inter action of dialects

The root-language of Georgian dance dialects is common for all dialects, even after the process of decomposition into dialects. At the same time each dialect is characterized in ancient common Georgian creative thinking. Thus, their culture is defined by structural, artistic and stylistic characteristics grown from the same syncretic basis. Historical regulations of art development grown from Georgian folk root are globally following one path. Nevertheless, each part of united syncretism develops the line characteristic to it.

Relics and rudiments reflect long, chronologically distanced and scattered in time facts and events, in remote past, basic artifact documented in one location is reflected in the cultural space of another location, due to historical upheavals (impact, influence). E.g. Dialectic interrelation between Racha and East Georgia (lowland and highland) was based on great migration from East to mountainous Racha.¹⁰ This detail originated as a result of the impact of ethnical factor of

¹⁰ Excerpt from the work: N.Maisuradze, Georgian Folk Music and its Historical and Ethnographic Aspects, “Metsniereba”, Tbilisi, 1989, p. 14.

interrelation. As a result of the impact of ethnical and religious factors discussed are the peculiarities of Acharan and Laz folk art. .

The research of the interrelation between dialects revealed two dialectal unities: East and West Georgian. West Georgia is special for dialectal diversity. Like ethnomusicology lingual, ethnic and geographical parameters play significant role in ethno choreology as well. But as the research has shown geographical-area factor is the most important in the formation and definition of dialectal choreo language in the process of mutual influence.

The development level of separate dialects is defined by different marks. Dance examples have been preserved in the mountains, for the purpose of isolation and conservation of culture, whilst their reduction and disappearance, in some cases, is observed towards lowlands. Thus, definition of the development level and certain trends, during the research, is practically impossible. Besides, visible individuality of existing dialects does not allow conducting such research.

Documentation the beginning and ascending line in the development of dialects, on the example of the Georgian choreography, is very difficult because of lost dance examples. It is practically impossible to determine the vector in the absence of folk examples with dance lexics, in the case of a missing dialect in some cases. For example: Lechkhumian dance dialect, the examples of which are not available, or Imeretian dance dialect, sometimes we have such stage-adjusted examples, that author's dance examples won't be useful as support as it is very distanced from authenticity.

Interrelation between dance dialects is expressed in the contents. In Svaneti and Racha there are round dances with the same names but with variation differences. The round dances documented in Racha are also encountered in East Georgian lowlands on textual level, as the dance lexics of round dances with the same name is lost in Kartli-Kakheti.

Dialectal interrelation in Georgian Choreography acquires interesting character in terms of performers as well. Men's and women's repertoires differ from each other, but not as much as in folk music, as both men and women participate in most round dances. Whilst, according to the ancient customs and traditions of East Georgian Mountains it was forbidden for a woman and man to appear together in public, to say nothing of dancing together. In West Georgian Mountains - Racha and Svaneti, there is a large number of dances performed by both women and men; they perform the round dance holding each other's hands. Megrelian round dance is also characterized in mixed, male-female performance. Duet dance is also a paired dance. The duet dances with standard female-male performance of men and women, such as Rachan "Oghro-choghro", Megrelian "Arira", Kakhetian "Tsangala and gogona" shows interrelation between the dialects.

The processes inside the dialect turned out to be very interesting, as they revealed transitional zones, e.g. Imereti was related to Racha with one dance example, round dance "Madli makharobelsa".

Proceeding from the intermediate status of dialect, there are two directions in Racha dance dialect: towards lowlands –Kartli-Kakheti and towards East Georgian mountains –Tusheti, Pshav-Khevsureti, Khevi, Mtiuleti. Racha maintained close links with East Georgia. Significant number of folk examples from everyday life have also been documented in Racha. With its geographic location and correspondingly, facilities of intermediate dialect status, Racha reveals more closeness with East than with West Georgia (except for Svaneti). Immediate proximity with Kartli obviously, explains preservation of such examples and their dissemination among people. Supposedly, the folk examples and themes preserved in the everyday life of Racha and East Georgia found their way to Svaneti via Racha.

Interrelation between dance dialects:

1. Dialectal group of Racha-Svaneti, connected with East Georgian highland and lowland regions;
2. Dialectal group of Abkhazia and Samegrelo, which expanded to the South towards Guria and Lazeti;
3. Dialectal group of Guria - Achara – Lazeti.

Interrelation issue of Laz-Shavshat and Acharan dance dialects

Lazeti, Shavshat and Achara are ethnographic regions in South West Georgia; their geographic area has largely defined the originality of their cultural and social features. Due to historical upheavals they underwent strong foreign influence, which was particularly manifested in the art of choreography.

Significant parallels can be drawn between Laz, Shavshat and Acharan choreographic dialects. This is based on geographic neighborhood and existence in similar historical conditions. Exactly for these reasons, a number of theatrical and choreographic performances of these two regions are identical: the tradition of celebrating Shuamtoba, in both Lazeti and Acharaa (as well as in Guria and Meskheta), unity with “Khorumi” examples (in both regions, the term “Perkhuli” was replaced by “Khoroni”). “Vahaha i nano” in Lazeti and “Oho i nana” is Achara, “Qolsama-Mkharuli” and women’s “Mkharuli-khertlis nadi” in both regions, “Padiko” in Achara and “Pateh” in Lazeti “Qolsama-qarshiberi” in both dialects and the others. In choreography the analogues are defined from dialectal standpoint and not only by the similar titles of the examples, but the unity of dance lexicon, means of expression, structural composition of dance (draft) and function of its content.

The issue of interrelation between Megrelian, Abkhazian and Gurian dance dialects

Interrelation of Megrelian dance dialect is not homogeneous. The vectors of interrelation spread from its epicenter position, appear as dialectal varieties as Abkhazian “Atlarchoba”, Megrelian “Atlechoba” and East Georgian “Tetri giorgis mona kalebi”, the dance “Kartuli”, Megrelian “Arira”, “Abkhazuri lekuri” and Rachian

“Oghro-choghro”, Laz “Vakhakhaia”, “Obiru” and Megrelian “Okhokhoi”, Abkhazian “Abasta”, Megrelian “Khintkiria” and Laz-Gurian “Khmlebit tsekva”.

Ancient ritual tradition, Atlarchopa, performed in Abkhazia when mourning over the thunderstruck person or animal, for the person with infectious disease and as a young girl suffering from convulsions is similar to “Tsminda giorgis mona kalis tsekva”, documented in East Georgia. Dancing women dressed in white with chain around the neck “guilty” sacrifices move with psycho-neurologic movements from right to the left, purification ritual, the movement of the parish and the sacrificed from right to the left, antiphonal “Ap-rashva” and “Dideba” contradiction of the Moon and its substitute St. George with “Api” the deity of Thunder. In Samegrelo walking of the “dancing ill” under the chain and crawling around the church three times at the celebrations of St. George Ilori Church, Sujuni, Alerti indicates to the genetic connection between these ancient rituals.

Abkhazian dance dialect is a part of common Georgian space. “Datvis tsekva” and “Mtsqemsis tsekva” – organic for Abkhazian dance dialect is the tradition sagged in the folklore of Georgia’s other parts. These examples can be considered as dialects.

To summarize interrelations in Georgian dance dialects here is the totality of their features according to the following specificity: 1. common Georgian, revealed as a support of the root-language; 2. is characteristic of separate dialects; 3. typical for intermediate dialect and transitional zone.

Specificity of dialectical interrelation, detected in the details of various determining parameters, is manifested in common stylistics and creates the characteristics of entire Georgian phenomenon.

Interrelation of Rachan dialect with the dance dialects of Svaneti and East Georgian Highland and Lowland regions

1. Function of the content

Rachian is considered transitive (intermediate) between East and West Georgian dance dialects. The relation of Rachan dance expanded rectilinearly like a star. Lower, upper and mountainous Racha West Georgian mountains reveals dialectal interrelation with the other parts of West Georgia and some highland and lowland regions of east Georgia. From West Georgian regions Rachan folk dance is most closely related with Svaneti, especially with regard to round dance. It’s related with Svaneti in terms of dance lexicon, where the movements, motions, arm positions differ only in movement combinations. Also frequent are thematic and content similarities of round dances. In East Georgia, there are plenty of examples with lost dance lexicon. It should be noticed that some of these round dances have survived in Racha, supplying them with the structure of ancient archetypes typical for the region. It has been revealed that dance is most related with East Georgian mountains, which is confirmed by the similarity of dance movements: sideward and intertwined movement of feet, as well as moving on the knees, difficult movement, etc.

Rachan dialect was a path from East Georgia to Svaneti, at the same time, first the examples were processed here with differences, later Svan variants were created. This is only about the Georgian-language examples preserved in Svaneti and their analogues have also been documented in Kartli, Kakheti, and east Georgian mountains. Rachian dialect, located in the very centre of Georgia, reveals strong configuration of the interrelation between East Georgia, Kartli and Kakheti and East Georgian mountains.

Decisive role in the interrelation between Upper Rachan and Svan dance is attributed to the territorial proximity and this very factor explains the existence of thematically identical round dances in these adjacent regions, e.g. “Amiranis perkhuli” and “Sanadiro”, “Tamar kali” and “Tamar dedpal” and “Tamar dedpal” (ravkensia). These round dances have maintained dance lexicon.

The triad of hunting epos round dances – two-sided dialectical extension of Rachian dialect is especially noticeable in this genre. The cycle of deceased hunter was comprised of a triangle: Rachan “Ivane Kvatsikhiseli” (in the third week after Easter in the village of Ghebi, people would perform round dance and tell the verse about of Ivane Kvatsikhiseli. This was the celebration of the Lobjanidzes¹¹), Mokhevian “Jarji” (fragmentarily surviving Mokhevian, Tushetian, Mtiuletian-Gudamaqarian and Khevsuretian variants, practically analogues of Rachan variant¹²) and Svan “Bail betkil”. As far as this dance lexicon has survived in a few Svan examples, it is impossible to fully ascertain the dialectal interrelation and we will limit ourselves to the content only. From the afore-mentioned the histories of Rachan “Ivane Kvatsikhiseli” and Mokheve “Jarji” are practically identical. All three examples end with the hunter’s death. The most accepted form to glorify Mtiuletian hunter Jarji, Rachan Ivane Kvatsikhiseli and Svan Betkil was *shairi* (humorous verse).

Proximity of Racha with Kartli may explain the survival of folklore examples such as: “Shavlego”, “Sakhlo salkhinod dadgmulo”, “Qursha”, “Avtandil gadinadira”, but here we face the contradiction, reflected in the disappearance of the dance lexicon of some round dances surviving in the lowland regions and we have to assess dialectical interrelation basing only on the thematic and content factor. The reason for losing round dance in lowland regions may be either complexity or simplification of dance lexicon.

2. According to the forms and dance lexicon

Typical for Rachan round dance is a protagonist and storey-type forms inside the circle. Diversity of the afore-mentioned round dance forms is characteristic not only of Rachan, but of all Georgian dance dialects, however not homogeneously, but with the domination of one or several forms. When discussing the interrelation on the basis of round dances, the identity of dance lexicon and form is regarded to be a

¹¹ Virsaladze E. *Georgian Hunting Epos*, “Metsniereba”, Tbilisi, 1964, p.93

¹² Virsaladze E. *Georgian Hunting Epos*, “Metsniereba”, Tbilisi, 1964, p.45

decisive factor. As it has already been mentioned form and dance lexicon of Rachan round dances show more proximity with Svan examples.

Complex of movements and composition pattern of “Amiranis perkhuli” is characteristic of the round dances “Kalsa vinme”, “Maghla mtas modga”, “Ertkhel tsiskvils tsasvlisatvis”, “Kvedrula modidebula” and “Shavlego”. In these examples only the text and music changes, the dance part remains the same. Here, it is impossible to differentiate the genres from the standpoint of dance lexicon, because as we see, homogeneous round dance movement has united round dances of various genres.

From structural viewpoint “Amiranis perkhuli” and “Sanadiro” are characterized in homogeneous structure, composition and movements, however, more complexity is observed in Svan example. Noteworthy is not so simple correlation between music and dance phrases. Musical phrase doesn’t practically coincide with movement phrase. Despite the homogeneity, Svan dance lexicon is more complex and dynamic than the Rachan one.

Rachan round dance “Tamar kali” dedicated to Tamar and Svan round dances “Tamar dedpal” - “Ravkensia” and “Saierisho”, are quite different from each other in terms of to composition, but less different from the viewpoint of dance lexicon. Complex of movements is similar. Both express similarity to Rachan example. Their choreographic language bases on the same dance lexicon. .

when the tradition analogous to *mtibluri* was documented in the villages of mountainous Racha and Khevsureti, second branch of Rachan dance dialect was related with East Georgia.

Visible is the similarity detected in the lexicon of solo and coupled dances, not by in round dances. From this standpoint, East Georgian mountains and outer Kakhetian “Tsangala da gogona”, are considered a basis region (as Kartli-Kakhetian dances have practically been lost, and only one sample is available). Significant part of these dance movements are repeated in the examples of East Georgian mountains, West Georgian province of Racha. For revealing dialectal interrelation the movements do not necessarily have to be absolutely identical. In spite of different performance manner, style and character. When looking for the common basis, general configuration of a movement is of utmost significance, instead of absolute identity.

In Racha, dialectal variety of “Kartuli” is the dance “Oghro-choghro”. This is why so much identity is found in dance lexicon. In non round-dance segment Rachan dance expresses more similarity with East Georgia, than with Svaneti, with which the similarity with the round-dance lexicon is observed. Centuries-old identity is observed in the diversity of dance movements.

Of all West Georgian Regions Racha is related with Imereti by Easter round dance “Madli makharobelsa”, the dance lexicon of which has survived in Racha.

Resume

In conclusion, we can say that the present work, composed of three perspectives, is gradually and consistently demonstrated several important findings by presenting relevant illustrative material: First, the definition of the term "dance dialect" in Georgian ethnographical space was defined; Secondly, the history of several dance dialects of western Georgia (Acharian, Laz-Shavshetian, Megrelian, Abkhazian and Rachan) were presented as illustrations of the first stage of the study of dance dialects; Third, ethno-theoretical aspects of the relationship between dance groups of certain groups were formed to show the general and specific characteristic symbols of a dance dialect.

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