

## Introduction:

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*Georgian Chant, the Gelati Monastery Chant School, Liturgical Chant for the Twelve Immovable Feasts and the Twelve Celebrations of Our Lord,*

*[Ts'inasit'qvaoba: Kartuli Galoba, Gelatis skola, Tormet' Sauplo da Udzrav Dghesasts'aula Sagaloblebi, Meore T'omi, Tbilisi, 2006]*

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This volume continues a series of Georgian chant publications intended to revitalize the medieval chant tradition. The first in the series was published in 2000 and includes the basic required chants for the All-Night Vigil and Divine Liturgy. This second collection contains the basic chants of the Twelve Great Feasts and the Immovable Feast Days, but unfortunately does not include the full breadth of chants from the Feast Days of other saints. The chants in both of these publications are in the *Sada Kilo* ('Plain Mode') and *Namdvili Kilo* ('True-Simple Mode'),<sup>1</sup> and originate from the medieval school of chant at the Gelati Monastery.<sup>2</sup> In our opinion, the *Sada Kilo* chant from the Gelati and Martvili Monastery schools is the most suitable for church services, as it combines a masterful balance of text and melody.

Georgian chant is believed to have originated in the Tao-Klarjeti region between the seventh and tenth centuries (present day NE Turkey)<sup>3</sup> from where it spread to the major monastery-academies throughout Georgia. Chant flourished at the academy of Iqalto in far eastern Georgia, the Gelati academy in the Kutaisi region, and Martvili (Chqondidi) Monastery. During the eleventh and twelfth centuries, chant was unified in the school of hymnography at the Gelati Monastery, which was among the leading spiritual and educational centers of the world at that time.

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<sup>1</sup> *Sada Kilo* (Plain Mode) chant is also referred to as 'Children's Mode' (*bavshvebis kilo*) and consists of the basic structure of the chant in three-part harmony without ornamentation or elaboration. *Namdvili Kilo* (Simple-True Mode) is a further development of *Sada Kilo* in which the original melody and harmonies are elaborated. *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* (Colorful Mode) is the furthest development of chant elaboration, and is characterized by strong ornamentations that vary in harmonic structure according to region.

<sup>2</sup> The Gelati Monastery is located outside the city of Kutaisi, and was constructed by King David the Builder in the twelfth century.

<sup>3</sup> Famous tenth century hymnographers Grigol Khandzeteli and Michael Modrekili collected and composed chants in illustrated manuscripts at monasteries in the Tao-Klarjeti region, see Magda Sukhishvili, 2002.

Due to the intervention of Russian Tsarism in the early nineteenth century, church services in Georgia were discouraged and in many cases forbidden in place of Russian style services. Dependent on the church for support, traditions such as Georgian chant suffered as a result of the church disintegration. Thankfully, chant was safeguarded from complete loss by the singing tradition in several aristocratic families. Today, in reference to the chant styles passed down by these families sometimes bear their name, such as the *Dumbadze mode*, the *Chalaganidze mode*, and the *Karbelaant mode*.<sup>4</sup> It must be noted that the difference between these family modes is relative because all chant traditions in Georgia come from the same common source, as this essay will discuss.

During the nineteenth century, when canonical chant tradition was not in the control of the churches and monasteries, the influence of secular singing became stronger. For example, in the *Karbelaant mode* chant from eastern Georgia, one can find ornamented cadences typical of secular songs from the eastern regions of Kartli-Kakhetian. Another quality found in eastern style chant that is considered to be the influence of secular music is the overdevelopment of the middle voice, which is so prominent that it often subordinates the melody and bass harmonies. *Dumbadze mode* chant from Western Georgia is also influenced by secular music. This is seen in abrupt rhythmic movements and interval leaps larger than a 3<sup>rd</sup>, characteristics inconsistent with the *Sada Kilo* from the Gelati Monastery. Though the many surviving chant modes seem quite diverse, they in fact illustrate the preservation of a single canonical chant rule, which is expressed in the melody and structure of the *Sada Kilo*. This remarkable observation needs special attention and future research.<sup>5</sup> With God's help, these precious

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<sup>4</sup> The Dumbadze family came from the village of Ozurgeti in the Gurian region and for generations sang in the Shemokmedi Monastery. The Chalaganidze family came from the Martvili Monastery area, and the Karbelashvili family came from the village of Chala in the Kakhetian region. These three areas developed different manners of regional *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* (Colorful Mode) chant.

<sup>5</sup> Comparison between the Gelati Mode, Dumbadze Family Mode, and Karbelaant Family Mode versions of a single chant, for example *Shen Gigalobt* (We Bless You), reveal a striking similarity in their nearly identical melodies. The bass and middle voices vary according to regional style but follow the same harmonic structure. *Karbelaant mode* bass lines are very simple while the middle voice ornaments with stepwise, melismatic phrases. *Dumbadze mode* has a highly active bass, while the melody is often ornamented with secular variations from Gurian region folksongs.

family-mode chants will soon be published, but for now, the Gelati *Sada Kilo* takes precedence in bringing the Georgian tradition back into common practice.<sup>6</sup>

The Gelati Monastery *Sada Kilo* is not mentioned in written sources from the Middle Ages, but we can bring together the words of several famous chanters and musicologists of the modern era to make the case for a common source of chant.

Pilimon Koridze<sup>7</sup> wrote: “Chanting was distributed throughout Georgia from the Gelati and Martvili Monasteries... several centuries ago *Sada Kilo* was in practice in Guria, but now *Varjishi Galoba* (‘Colorful Mode’ chant, synonymous with *Gamshvenebuli Kilo*) is common. Mamia IV, Governor of Guria (17<sup>th</sup> century), was not satisfied with the *Sada Kilo*, so he invited singing members of the Tskvitishvili noble family from Gelati Monastery to come and teach more complicated chant. These singers brought the tradition of *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* chant with them to Guria...”<sup>8</sup>

Deacon Razhden Khundadze<sup>9</sup> wrote, “In bygone times, Gelati was the nesting ground (*deda-bude*) for church chant, and in modern times some of our most famous and renowned chanters have been trained at Gelati including Anton Dumbadze, Sino Kandelaki, Davit Chkhareli (Shotadze), and others.”<sup>10</sup>

“How is it possible that we call this chant Imeretian mode?”<sup>11</sup> Exclaimed one author in the Iveria newspaper. “This is the original chant mode of our Georgian church, begun in the times of Davit Aghmeshenebeli.<sup>12</sup> The Gelati Monastery was the nesting grounds for church chant; it was the site of the main school and chant spread from there

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<sup>6</sup> A book of one hundred *Dumbadze mode* chants from the Shemokmedi Monastery chant school has been collected and transcribed by scholar Davit Shughliashvili from the Artem Erkomaishvili audio archive (published 2003). A separate collection of Karbelaant mode chant has also been prepared (published 2005).

<sup>7</sup> Pilimon Koridze (1835-1911), a famous opera singer, spent the last thirty years of his life transcribing nearly five thousand chants into western notation. He worked with famous master chanters including Anton Dumbadze, Razhden Khundadze, Ivliane Tsereteli, Dimitri Chalaganidze, and others.

<sup>8</sup> See Historical Archive of Georgia, P. Karbelashvili's personal archive #1461-126; P. Koridze's article "A Few Remarks on the Historical Review of Chants and Songs by Fr. Polievktos Karbelashvili." Polievktos Karbelashvili (1855-1936) was the eldest son of famous master chanter Grigol Karbelashvili from the village Chala in Kakheti. Together with his brother Vasili Karbelashvili, he worked to save the Eastern Georgian chant mode and wrote a book on the history of chanters and singers from the region.

<sup>9</sup> Razhden Khundadze (1858-1929), a famous master chanter of the Gelati, Martvili, and Shemokmedi chant schools, was also a priest in Kutaisi.

<sup>10</sup> Deacon Razhden Khundadze, *Shinauri Sakmeebi* newspaper, #18, 1910

<sup>11</sup> Imereti is the name of the region straddling the north-south mountains in central Georgia between the Kartl-Kakhetian regions to the east and the Gurian-Megrelian regions to the west. The Gelati Monastery stands outside the Imeretian regional capital of Kutaisi.

<sup>12</sup> ‘David the Builder’ was a famous king who joined three regions to create the first unified Sakartvelo ‘Land of the Karts’ (Georgia) in the 12<sup>th</sup> century.

not only throughout the Imeretian region, but to all corners of Georgia. The so-called *Karbelaant Kilo* is nothing but Gelati Monastery mode in its basic structure....”<sup>13</sup>

The chant schools of Western Georgia were closely linked with one another, as demonstrated by the fact that chanters were able to easily match their various styles of chant when singing together. One remarkable story illustrates this interesting fact. Artem Erkomaishvili, a renowned Gurian chanter and singer once said, “In the old times there was one common style of church chant. At the Martvili Monastery in Samegrelo, Dito Chalaganidze’s group still sings in this common style. Chalaganidze was Davit Dumbadze’s friend. One day there was a funeral of an important man, so a special service was organized in his honor at the Martvili Monastery. One of Chalaganidze’s singers was ill, so I offered to help... and sang every hymn that was in the service with their choir. Afterwards, Dito took me into his room, thanked me and asked, ‘How did you manage to learn all those hymns at such an early age?’”<sup>14</sup>

Another interesting point illustrates the common origin of chant. Though Anton Dumbadze was a master of the Shemokmedi Monastery mode, he sang the *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* from Gelati when working with transcriber Pilimon Koridze. Presumably, this is the same style of chant that Dumbadze taught to Artem Erkomaishvili who, years later, was able to sing at the funeral with Chalaganidze’s Martvili Monastery choir.

From these various sources we conclude that church chant melodies and structures were the same throughout Georgia, which can also be said for the Georgian literary language. Folksongs, on the other hand, vary widely between regions. The chants included in the present collection were selected from Abbot Ekvtime Kereselidze’s

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<sup>13</sup> *Iveria* newspaper, *About Pilimon Koridze and Church Chanting*, article #259, 1890. The author points out that all varieties of chant stem from the so-called ‘Imeretian mode,’ which should be more clearly termed the ‘Gelati Monastery Mode.’

<sup>14</sup> Anzor Erkomaishvili, *Grandfather*, p 31. Remarkable about this story is that Artem Erkomaishvili (1887-1967), who studied chant with Melkisedek Nakashidze and grew up singing Shemokmedi Monastery chant (Gurian region) could easily sing in the chant mode of the Megrelian choir. Shemokmedi mode sounds distinctly unique from Gelati mode. The fact that Artem Erkomaishvili also knew a basic structure of church chant which was compatible with the mode sung by the Martvili Monastery choir implies a pedagogy (now lost) whereby students learned a common *Sada Kilo* before learning regional variation. At age twenty-two, Artem Erkomaishvili already knew both Gelati mode and Shemokmedi mode.

manuscripts<sup>15</sup> and are, to the best of our knowledge, examples of a common school of chant.<sup>16</sup> We examine the evidence:

1. The chant mode in the manuscripts is Western Georgian. It is known that in Western Georgia chant spread from the Gelati and Martvili Monasteries.

2. Pilimon Koridze transcribed chant from representatives of three regions: From the Guria region were Anton Dumbadze and his students Melkisedek Nakashidze and priest Nestor Kontridze; representing the Samegrelo region was Dimitri Chalaganidze; from the Imereti region came Ivliane Tsereteli, Aristovle Kutateladze, and Deacon Razhden Khundadze (who was born in Guria but worked in Kutaisi).<sup>17</sup> Other chanters were also present. The transcriptions from these master chanters show the similarity of their collective chant education even though they represented such a diverse area in Western Georgia.<sup>18</sup> From an article in the *Iveria* newspaper, we read a similar observation. “It is an interesting fact that at the auditions for the transcription project, all of the chanters sang together similarly as if they had studied with the same teacher. Dumbadze from Guria, Chalaganidze from Samegrelo, Kandelaki from the village of Gelati, Medzmariashvili from Lower Imereti, Ioseb Tsereteli from Upper Imereti, V. Kutateladze from the town of Khoni... they all chanted in the same mode. They inspected Koridze’s transcriptions and agreed upon the correct mode together.”<sup>19</sup>

3. *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* (‘Colorful Mode’) chant has clear links with *Sada Kilo* (‘Plain Mode’) chant. Ekvtime Kereselidze copied examples of chants in all three modes in the manuscript Q674, where it is easy to see the development from *Sada Kilo* to *Namdvili Kilo* to *Gamshvenebuli Kilo*. When transcribing, Pilimon Koridze sourced the

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<sup>15</sup> Ekvtime Kereselidze (1865-1944), now a saint of the Georgian Orthodox Church. Between 1912 and 1936 Kereselidze organized and recopied the approximately 5500 rough-draft transcriptions inherited from Pilimon Koridze and Maxime Sharadze’s Tbilisi Press. During this time his life was threatened repeatedly, but he was able to continue safeguarding himself and the chant manuscripts by moving between the Gelati, Tsvetitskhoveli, and Zedazani Monasteries. In 1936 the chants were safely delivered to friends in the State Manuscript Archive, where they were kept safe but largely unseen until 1988.

<sup>16</sup> Nowhere in the Kereselidze manuscripts are the chants referred to as ‘Gelati school’ or ‘Gelati Mode,’ therefore this essay examines the basis for stating that one common school of *Sada Kilo* chant existed, and that this chant was developed at the Gelati Monastery.

<sup>17</sup> In the first major transcription effort (1884-1885), Dumbadze, Chalaganidze, Tsereteli, and Khundadze worked together from 1885-1887 to figure out the most important chants to transcribe with Pilimon Koridze, and in what mode they should be sung.

<sup>18</sup> See Pilimon Koridze, Score #1, Tbilisi, 1895

<sup>19</sup> *Iveria* newspaper, author unknown, 1890, #259

*Gamshvenebuli Kilo* chants as originating from the Gelati school, therefore it follows that the *Sada Kilo* also comes from Gelati.

Modern studies on the pre-western notational systems (neumes) in Georgian manuscripts reveal a close relationship between examples from the nineteenth century and from the Middle Ages.<sup>20</sup> From the eleventh to the eighteenth century there was a natural development of chant that closely followed rules of canonical chant melody, but in the nineteenth century the tradition was almost lost. In the twentieth century, any chance of chant preservation or revival was frozen (in an atheist regime). The history of chant can be divided into three periods: the era of *Sada Kilo*, the era of *Namdvili Kilo* chant, and the era of *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* chant.

The era of *Sada Kilo* (approximately 7<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries) was characterized by the composition, unification, and eventual distribution of chant to various schools throughout Georgia. *Sada Kilo* is homophonic and follows a strict canonical rule with simple harmonic and melodic movements.<sup>21</sup> In *Sada Kilo* the verbal text is stronger than the music. We believe that medieval neume notation most likely depicts chant in *Sada Kilo*, and in neither the written nor the oral record is there any indication that chant has radically transformed or changed from that time.

Furthermore, we presume that in the eighteenth to nineteenth centuries, the transmission of the chant tradition was similar to the Middle Ages. In reference to the earliest known Georgian hymnographers, twentieth century scholar Ivane Javakhishvili translated a reference to Giorgi Mtatsmindeli (George of Mount Athos) from old Georgian to modern Georgian, "...young Giorgi easily and quickly memorized the harmonization of the voices to the chant melodies."<sup>22</sup> This quote seems to indicate that students first studied the canonical first-voice melodies, as passed down through the line of master chanters, then learned the theory of harmonizing these melodies in the second and third voices.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Doctoral Dissertation by Manana Andriadze, Ph.D., "Genres of Chant and the Tradition of Neumatic Notation According to 19<sup>th</sup> Century Georgian Manuscripts," 1998

<sup>21</sup> See Manuscript Q674, *Sabavshvo Tsirvis Tsesi*, 'Children's Service Mode'

<sup>22</sup> Ivane Javakhishvili, *Basic Aspects of Georgian Music History*, 1938, quote as written down by scribe, Priest-Monk Giorgi. Of note is that the word for 'harmonization' has been translated from Old Georgian 'shets'qobileba galobata' to Modern Georgian 'hangebis shebaneba.'

<sup>23</sup> Ioane Petritsi, 11<sup>th</sup> century philosopher and theologian, named the three voices of Georgian chant: *mzakhr*, meaning 'to call', first voice; *zhir*, meaning 'second' (in Mingrelian dialect), second voice; *bam*,

The underlying structure of *Sada Kilo* among the varieties of chant in the modern era is just one more example of the nation's cultural unity and musical heritage despite centuries of invasion and conquest. *Sada Kilo* expresses the qualities of simplicity, humility, and prayerful willingness. It is not intended to be performed for emotional effect. The text and music balance one another and the melodic phrases are balanced with in three-voiced harmony.

The era of *Namdvili Kilo* chant (approximately 11<sup>th</sup> –16<sup>th</sup> centuries) begins as the voice parts begin to be slightly ornamented, though text and music are still equal in function. Most of the chants in the present collection are in *Namdvili Kilo*, combining elements of both *Sada Kilo* and *Gamshvenebuli Kilo*.

The era of *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* chant (approximately 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> centuries) is distinguished by the relative development of the music over the text. One can note that the tempo of the chant is decreased so that voice movements can be more active, allowing voices to cross over one another, increase range, and develop complicated harmonic structures.<sup>24</sup> The lengthening of the melody especially enables voices to move actively in the final cadences, thus creating brilliant musical textures.<sup>25</sup> During this period, a particular form of ornamentation called '*Chreli*' was developed (see p. 55 of this collection, phrase 'Gabriel'). In this case, the *Chreli* is an inserted phrase of music to highlight and elongate an important word within the text.

Examples of *Sada Kilo*, *Namdvili Kilo*, and *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* occur side by side in the Manuscript Q674, clearly showing a gradual development between them. In order to have a better understanding of the inner nature of Georgian chant, it will be necessary to carry out both theoretical and practical research to facilitate the further study of this important subject.

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possible ancestor to current '*ban*' which means bass, third voice (*ertbamad* in Mingrelian dialect means to collect, to blend, to remain together).

<sup>24</sup> For examples of *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* chant see, 1) Gelati chant in Pilimon Koridze's Edition #1; 2) Shemokmedi chant i.e. Dumbadze mode in two collections of scores compiled by Kakhi Rosebashvili (1968); 3) Kakhetian chant i.e. Karbelaant mode, published 2005.

<sup>25</sup> See the Kontakion *Zesta Mbrdzolisa* on page 127 of this volume for a classic example of *Gamshvenebuli Kilo* ornamentation.

The practical revival of Orthodox Church chant in Georgia has been led by members of the Anchiskhati Church Choir. This choir actively researches the chant transcriptions from the beginning of the twentieth century and first brought these hymns back into practice in 1988 when they began singing in the Anchiskhati Church. Because of their daily experience singing the chants from this volume, discrepancies between normal practice and the transcriptions have been corrected. Taking this experience seriously, the editors of this volume believe it to be error free.

However, we would like to discuss the process of editing the chant transcriptions because of the important and difficult nature of this work. The scale of medieval Georgian chant does not correspond to the tempered scale or to the five-line notational system that represents it.<sup>26</sup> But without a uniquely fitted notational system to work with, nineteenth and twentieth century musicologists were forced to transcribe onto the five-line staff. As a result of this necessity, the natural sound of Georgian chant and the unique Georgian tuning systems have been lost. Unfortunately, this publication cannot make up for this drawback, and must likewise publish in western staff notation.<sup>27</sup>

The process of preparing original manuscripts for publication for common practice in Georgia today has required a small degree of informed guesswork. Following are three examples of the types of editing we have found necessary. The first example illustrates the inaccuracy of the original material itself, the second example shows a change we have made in the voice movements which we consider more appropriate for the tempered scale, and the third example shows not just separate incorrect parts, but a whole stanza that is incorrect. Let's discuss each example:

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<sup>26</sup> See article in *Khelovneba* Journal, #7, 1992. Original Georgian scales varied by region, but in general Georgian scale steps are somewhat larger than tempered scale half steps and smaller than whole steps. The strongest interval in Georgian harmony is the perfect fifth. Other intervals within chords tune according to their placement within the mode. Refer to Anchiskhati Choir recordings for audio examples of modern experimentation with former tuning models.

<sup>27</sup> Attempts to discover the ancient tuning method have several sources. One or two recordings of sacred chant survive from the 1907-1914 recording projects of the English Gramophone Company. In 1949 eleven recordings were made of three famous Gurian singers, and in 1966 Artem Erkomaishvili recorded all three voices to one hundred *Dumbadze Kilo* chants. Coupled with knowledge of Georgian folk tuning, scholars compare these archival recordings with the thousands of five-line notation transcriptions in efforts to understand the former tuning methods.



Example 1. *Daplulni Shentana*. Palm Sunday Troparion, Tone 4 (see Manuscript Q674, pp. – 525-527). In the original this example is as follows:

In this case, it should be considered that in most all variants of Troparia in Tone 4, in both manuscript and audio recordings, the chant does not modulate more than one whole step up or down from the initial mode. At the end of the chant, as a rule, it moves down one whole step and remains there. In the manuscript for the Troparion for Palm Sunday (Ex. 1), the chant modulates two whole tones lower than the original mode, but in our opinion this chant is not an exception to the general rule and is in fact an example of an error on the part of the transcriber. Therefore, when the phrase *Aghdgomita Shenita* begins, instead of the notes *do, la, do* in the first, second, and third voices respectively (C, A, C), there must be the notes *re, ti, re* (D, B, D) with the rest of the chant being sung in the corresponding tonality (see edited version, p 136 of this collection).

Example 2. Fragment from the IX Irmos of The Entrance into the Temple of Our Most Holy Lady, Birth-Giver of God (see Manuscript Q674, p. 418):

In the original version the three phrases end in the interval of a fifth. We have edited them to end in unison (see pp.54-55 of this collection).<sup>28</sup>

Example 3. Final stanza of the Troparion of the Circumcision of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in Tone 1 (see Manuscript Q674, pp. 462-463):

The melodic line of this stanza is unclear and seems to indicate that the transcriber made a mistake. According to Razhden Khundadze's manuscripts there is another chant, *Upalo Ghaghadvqav*, which is sung in the same Tone. We solved the issue of the uncharacteristic and vague melody in the phrase in Example 3 by using the melody from Khundadze's manuscript (see p. 81 of this collection).<sup>29</sup> The present chant collection is accompanied by a compact disc recording made by the Anchiskhati Choir in 1995. It is

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<sup>28</sup> Final chord of the original is equivalent to the end of the second stanza on p. 55

<sup>29</sup> Fourth measure of the original corresponds to the first stanza, first measure of p. 81

the philosophy of the Anchiskhati Choir that the singing of sacred chant must be accompanied by an attitude and manner consistent with the canonical teachings of the church.

In closing we would like to acknowledge the professional advice of Nodar Mamisashvili, the editor of this collection, Ekvtime Kochlamazashvili for his help in editing the text, and Lamara Kajaia, who assisted by delivering many photocopied manuscripts to the Georgian Patriarchate. While preparing this book, the blessings of our spiritual fathers have guided us to continue with our work. We gladly welcome all remarks concerning the insufficiencies of this edition.

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