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Pentecost Songs in the System of Traditional Musical Culture of the Belgorod Region

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Abstract. The article highlights the problem of genre attribution of tunes of the spring-and-summer period of the peasants' calendar cycle. The materials for research were comprised of folksongs about the holiday of Pentecost recorded in the Belgorod Region. Publications and archival records indicate a number of issues facing the researcher, such as the genre diversity of the set of musical texts under consideration, and the presence of different terminologies among both song collectors and performers. This phenomenon may be explained by the relatively late period of formation of the southern Russian musical culture, as well as the peculiarities of its organization (the multiplicity of local traditions). During the analysis of the melodies, it was possible to establish the presence of structural connections with the predominant genre group within each specific regional tradition. The results of the study may be used for mapping the components of regional song systems, and also make it possible for us to present the features of the formation of the traditional musical culture in the south of Russia in a new light.

Keywords: calendar-ritual songs, timed songs, Pentecost rituals, southern Russian song tradition, dominant idea for the genre and style

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Introduction

The southern Russian song tradition has evoked active interest from both song collectors and researchers. Its main features have been highlighted by Evgeny Gippius: “The centralizing component of the genre system in this type of tradition is expressed in *khorovod* (i.e., round) songs; in them the defining meaning is acquired by the synchronous form of musical rhythm with the rhythm of dance, and one of the determining genre features is expressed by the types of dances. The genre-related strains of the wedding songs are typologically related to each other in this areal not by the songs of the matching calendar cycle, but by the strains of the *khorovod* songs.” [1, p. 9] Somewhat later, Vyacheslav Shchurov determined the geographical boundaries of the southern Russian song traditions, highlighted the main ethnocultural zones (the Kursk, Belgorod, Voronezh Regions, etc.), and provided characterization for the local performing styles and the peculiarities of functioning of the folk music genres. [2, p. 35] Subsequent research works have been connected more with the study of concrete regional traditions. The works of Ekaterina Dorokhova, [3] Ivan Karacharov, [4] Galina Sysoyeva, [5] and Natalia Kuznetsova [6] are carried out in this vein. These publications have brought into scholarly use a significant selection of musical-ethnographical material in the field of ethnomusicology, the generalization of which at the present time makes it possible to disclose the inner organization of the southern Russian song structure, and also to carry out the mapping of its components. [7]

The chants associated with the Pentecost period of the peasant calendar cycle can serve as fertile material for research in this direction. An evidential basis of research has been comprised by archival recordings of the Folk Singing Art Department of the Belgorod State

Institute of the Arts and Culture, as well as publications of works by music scholars.

The calendar song cycle of the south of Russia is presented in a fragmentary manner, primarily by conglomerates of musical rites devoted to Christmas and Pentecost. This fact is confirmed by the materials of the aforementioned studies. In the territory of the Belgorod Region, the Christmas period is represented by a fairly integral musical-ethnographic complex; this is indicated by the widespread performance of New Year’s majestic-congratulatory songs, differing from each other in the refrain words (“shchedryi vecher” [generous evening], “vinograd’e krasno-zelen’e” [red and green grapes], “kaleda”, and “bausen”), which have a regional affixture. The organization of the sound space of the week of Pentecost presents a complex conglomeration. During this period, melodies of various genres created for the occasion of the holiday are sung. Notably, each regional tradition possesses its own principles of “selection” of musical texts. One of them involves the application of melodies endowed with peculiarities of rhythmical structure. An understanding of the logic of such a phenomenon provides results of comparative analysis of the rhythmic musical organization of the examined framework of songs, as well as the application of a systemic approach making it possible to reveal the hierarchical connections of the components.

The Organization of Musical Rhythm of the Fast Khorovod Songs of the Pentecost Period

The main musical selection of the Pentecost period is comprised of *khorovod* songs. Within the category of *khorovod* songs, two subgroups distinguish themselves, based on the tempos of performance and on the types of correlation between the respective rhythm of the dance and the rhythm of the strain (to use Evgeny Gippius’ terminology). They are comprised by the fast

songs endowed with a synchronous connection of the rhythm of dance and the rhythm of the strain (the *karagod* songs) and the slow songs, characterized by an asynchronous connection between the dance rhythm and the rhythm of the melody (the *tanok* songs). It is important to note that we are referring here not to the *tanok* songs from Kursk described by Anna Rudneva, [8] but the slow *tanok* songs of the border area of the Voronezh and the Belgorod Regions. In its turn, the group of fast *khorovod* songs is assembled from two subgroups according to the principle of correspondence vs. non-correspondence to the principles of genre.¹

The fast Pentecost *khorovod* songs endowed with the typical set of components of rhythmic organization comprise the most multitudinous group of melodies. The titular structure of this group is formed by eight-temporal rhythmic periods with an “alilyosh” refrain and a form based on the combination of pairs of periodicities: $KE=ab/rr$. The timeliness of the melodies of this subgroup is determined by the presence of imagery characterizing Pentecostal festive rites in the poetic figurativeness. They are the songs *V nas na pole, polyane* [On the Fields, on the Meadows] (from the Nizhnyaya Pokrovka village of the Krasnogvardeyskiy District), *Trava moya, travushka* [My Grass, My Grass] (from the Verkhososna village of the Krasnogvardeyskiy District), *Oi, kustik moi, kustovatyi* [Oh, my Shrub-like Bush] (from the Luchki village

of the Prokhorov District), etc. It is important to note that these same songs may have been performed at other calendar times, as well.

The regional tradition of the area near the Psyol River in the Kursk Region is characterized by the predominance of a rhythmic structure of the “kamarinskaya” type, which also holds true for the melodies that accompany the texts narrating about the Pentecostal rite of “kshchenie kukushki” [“christening the cuckoo”]. For example, in the Nizhnie Peny village of the Rakyatinsky (Rakitnoye) District the singers add to the text of the *karagod* song *Oi, cheryoma, ty, cheryomushka kustok* [Oh, you Bird Cherry, Bird Cherry Bush] the opening sequence *Khoshchem, khoshchem kykyshashchku perekstit'* [We Wish, We Wish to Christen the Cuckoo] and perform it during the course of the ritual (Example No. 1).

In the perspective of the present research, it is important to note the predominating position of the genre of the *khorovod* songs in the tradition of the bordering area between the Belgorod and the Kursk Regions, highlighted by Ivan Karacharov: “An original system of musical genres has been formed within the tradition of the Psyol River area, at the center of which lie the calendar-based *khorovod* songs possessing brilliant dance attributes manifesting themselves in active motor rhythms with numerous acute rhythmic figures...” [4, p. 16]

Two melodies stand out of the entire mass of the fast *khorovod* songs recorded and notated

¹ The ascertainment of the typical features of the *khorovod* song genre took place based on the results of the research works of Anna Rudneva (*Kurskie tanki i karagody* [The Kursk Tanok and Karagod Songs], [8] Nina Bachinskaya (*Muzykal'nyi stil' russkikh khorovodnykh pesen* [The Musical Style of the Russian Khorovod Songs]), [9] Galina Sysoyeva (*Tipologiya ritmicheskikh form khorovodnykh i plyasovykh pesen v voronezhsko-belgorodskom pogranič'e* [The Typology of Rhythmic Forms of Khorovod and Dance Songs on the Border Between the Voronezh and Belgorod Regions]), [10] Olga Tokmakova (*Kurskie tanki i karagody: komponenty teksta i zhanrovaya distributsiya* [Tanok and Karagod in the Kursk Region: Text Component and Definition of Genres]), [11] and Larisa Vinarchik (*Yuzhnorusskie khorovody: perekrestok kalendarya i svad'by* [Southern Russian Khorovod Songs: the Crossing Between Calendar and Wedding Songs]), [12]

Example No. 1

Oi, cheryoma, ty, cheryomushka kustok
[Oh, you Bird Cherry, Bird Cherry Bush].

Belgorod Region, Rakityansky (Rakitnoye) District, Nizhnie Peny village²

$\text{♩} = 160$

1. Ой, че - рё - ма, че - рё - му - шки, ку - сто - к(ы),
на че - рё - му - шке ла - зу - ре - вай цве - то - к(ы).
на - че - рё - му - шке ла - зу - ре - вай цве - ток.
Ой, лё, о - ли, да лё - ли, а - ли, лей,
Ой, лё, о - ли, да лё - ли, а - ли, лей,
ли - ли, лей, ля - ли лей, ля - ли.
ля - ли, лей, ля - ли лей, ля - ли.

on the territory of the Belgorod Region, written down in the villages of Ilovka and Podseredneye of the Alexeyevsky District; they are set to a text about the Pentecostal rite of twisting wreaths. The examined melodies show a number of distinctive features on the level of rhythmic structure. The latter include:

- the presence of three rhythmic periods;
- a ternary correlation of rhythmic durations;
- the use of refrain words characteristic for the wedding rites of the studied area:

One of the signature components of this song group is the modal organization of its melodies. Its foundation is comprised of a conjugacy of two conglomerations of major thirds a minor second from each other. For example, at the Poderedneye village, such a modal structure presents a peculiar marker of sacred space, since it coordinates itself with melodies of different genres coinciding together: a lullaby “about the Tatar yoke,” a kolyadka (i.e., Christmas song), weddings songs, and springtime ludic khorovod songs (Example No. 2).

Все-ли- ствен-най мой ве - нок, ла - до, ла - до, мой ве - нок, ла-до, ла-до, мой ве - нок.

KE=ab/rb/rb

² Recorded in the Nizhnie Peny village. This song has been sung by: O. G. Zheronkina (b. 1933), N. P. Kharina (b. 1920), M. A. Chistyakova (b. 1921), E. I. Chistyakov (b. 1923), E. M. Polskaya (b. 1935), M. E. Polskoy (b. 1933), and V. K. Kharina (b. 1922). The archive of the Folk Singing Art Department of the Belgorod State Institute of Arts and Culture.

Example No. 2

Vselistvennyi venok [Many-Leaved Wreath].
Belgorod Region, Alexeyevsky District, Podseredneye village³

♩ = 134

2. Все - ли - стен - на - й(е) да.. да - ра - го - й(е), ла - до, ла - до, да - ра - го - й(е),

2. Все - ли - с(а) - те - на - й(е) да.. (а) - ра - го - й(е), ла - до, ла - до, да.. (а) - ра - го - й(е),

2. Все - ли - с(а) - тен - ны - най да.. да - ра - го - й(е), ла - до, ла - до, да - ра - го - й(е),

2. Все - ли.. те - на - й(е) да.. (а) - ра - го - й(е), ла - до, ла - до, да - ра - го - й(е),

2. Все - лис - те - ны - най да - (а) - ра - го - й(е), ла - до, ла - до, да - (о) - ра - го - й(е),

ла - (а).. до, да - (а) - ра - го - й(е).

ла - до, ла - до, да.. (а) - ра - го - й(е).

ла - до, ла - до, да.. (а) - ра - го - й(е).

ла - до, ла - до, да.. (а) - ра - го - й(е).

ла - до, ла - до, да - ра - го - й(е).

Organization of the Musical Rhythm of the Slow Khorovod Songs of the Pentecost Period

The group of slow *khorovod* songs is represented by the *tanok* songs, notated on the territory of the Krasnenskiy District, as well as on the border area of the Ostrogozhsk and Repyevsk Districts of the Voronezh Region.

The encyclopedia materials from 1996 have information about directing the figure Pentecostal *tanok* songs in the Gorki village of the Krasnensk District: “Tanki vadili na Troitsu — v ponedel'nik. Vadili — kazhdyi iz svoei

ulitsy idet. Za ruki beremsiya, paperek ulitsy, stsepleny ruki. Tagda skhadilis' i klanyalis' drug drugu, tagda sbivaemsiya umesti, zavodim tanki. Patom obshchii krug — use smeshalisya. A patom tri devachki sazhaem treugol'nikom, a patom zavodit, cheb use devochki sideli u krugu. Nu i tak vo kolesom obkhodim ikh drug za drugom. Kogda po ulitse shli — eti zhe pesni igrali. A uzhe kak ottuda vernulisya, poshli po domam, tak uzhe eti pesni ne poyut. Toka na Troitsu poyut ikh.”⁷⁴ [“The *tanok* songs were presented on Pentecost — on Monday. They were directed, each one arriving from its own street. We take each other’s hands, across

³ Recorded of Podseredneye village in 1994. Unknown performers. The archive of the Folk Singing Art Department of the Belgorod State Institute of Arts and Culture.

⁴ The archive of the Folk Singing Art Department (INP K A 16 2 No. 25).

the street, the hands are coupled. Then they approached each other and bowed to each other, then we gather together, starting the *tanok* songs. Then an overall circle — everything became mixed up together. And then we sit three girls together in a circle, and then start singing, so that all the girls would sit together in a circle. And so, we go around them in a circle one after the other. When they walked on the street — we played the same songs. And then, when they returned from there, now they are not singing these songs again. They sing them only on Pentecost.”] During the procession of the *tanok* songs, the following song was sung *Oi, da yu gorade, yu Kieve* [In the City, in Kiev] (Example No. 3), which the consultants themselves could call *Kalina* [High Cranberry].

The basis of the compositional structures of the slow *khorovod* songs of the Pentecost

period is comprised by the melody-and-refrain with special words “Len' moya, len” [My laziness, laziness] (Butyrki village, Repyevsk District, Voronezh Region), “O, vlelim, lyolim” (Murom village, Shebekinsk District, Belgorod Region), “Kayolinama” (Gorki village, Krasnensk District, Belgorod Region), etc. Sometimes such words appear only as an opening sequence, for example, in the song *Lin po Donu plyvyot* [A Lin is Floating on the River Don] from the Khmelevskoye village of the Krasnensk District. According to Ekaterina Dorokhova’s publication, in the village of Linovo of the Putivl District of the Sumy Region and in the village of Kleven of the Khomutovsk District of the Kursk Region, songs with such refrains were sung while swinging on the “reli” (seesaw) during Pentecost. [3, p. 264]

Example No. 3

Yu gorade, yu Kieve [In the City, in Kiev].
Belgorod Region, Krasnensk District, Gorki village⁵

♩ = 66

1. Ой, да ю го - ра - (о) - де лы ю... ю Ки - (е) - ве,
ю Ки - (е - е) - ве,
ю Ки - (е) - ве,
ю Ки - (е - е) - ве, //

о-х(ы), ка-(ё) - (о)-ли - на - ма, о - ё, о-х(ы), ма-ё - (о)-ли - на - ма, о - ё.
о-х(ы)-ты, ка-(ё) - (о)-ли - на - ма, о - ё, о-х(ы)-ты, ма-ё, - (о)-ли - на - ма, о - ё.
о-х(ы), ка-(ё) - (о)-ли - на - ма, о - ё, о-х(ы), ма-ё - (о) - на - ма, о - ё.
о-х(ы), ка - (ё) - (о)-ли - на - ма, о - ё, о-х(ы), ма - ё - (о) - ли - на - ма, о - ё.

⁵ Recorded of Gorki village in 1994. This song has been sung by: V. I. Sychyova (b. 1914), M. V. Mishustina (b. 1929), A. I. Tokareva (b. 1907), and E. S. Popova (b. 1917). Recorded by A. G. Grashchenko and L. N. Sushkova — faculty members of the Folk Singing Art Department of the Belgorod State Institute of Arts and Culture.

On the level of rhythmic structure, the melodies of this group demonstrate a commonality of organization, which discloses itself in the combination of a ternary and binary correlation of rhythmic durations. The pitch organization in the melodies of this group also endows them with a special significant status. The performance manner of the *tanok* songs is distinguished by an intense sound, developed melismatic singing, and “ikh” exclamations, remotely reminding of Polish “guk” sounds. These indications bring parallels with the manner of calendar intoning in the traditions of the indigenous Eastern Slavic settlements. Galina Sysoyeva in her research works highlights that such melodies carry out the calendar function, which is manifested in the sound marking of early or late spring, namely, the ritual procession on Pentecost. [5, p. 136] On the other hand, such components of the structure as the slow tempo of performance and virtuosic melodicism indicate at the obvious connections with the genre of lyrical song. It is important to note that in the tradition of the areas forming the borderlines of the Voronezh and Belgorod Regions, as is highlighted by Galina Sysoyeva, the genre of the plangent song predominates.

Wedding Songs of the Pentecostal Rites of the “Christening and Funeral of a Cuckoo”

The inclusion of wedding songs into the tone space of the Pentecost period is a rare occurrence. On the territory of the Belgorod Region, it is marked out in the tradition of the upper Oskol River area. Here the wedding songs communicate the rite of “christening and the funeral of a cuckoo.” Moreover, different songs are sung in different villages: in the village of Verkhneye Kuzkino of the Chernyansk District, they sang the wedding birth delivery song *Oi, povili kukushku* [O, they Delivered the Cuckoo];

in the village of Bryanskiye Lipyagi of the Veidelevsk District, they sang the wedding “girls’ night” song *Po-za lesikom kukushechka kykyet* [The Cuckoo is Cuckooing in the Forest]. According to Natalia Kuznetsova’s research works, wedding songs comprise the central genre group in the traditional culture of the Upper Oskol River area. [6]

In this connection, there arises the question of the genre attribution of the song *Kukushechki-lyubushechki* [Lovely Cuckoos] from the village Foshchevatovo of the Volokonovsk District performed during the rite of the “christening and funeral of the cuckoo” (Example No. 4). It was recorded and notated for the first time by Vyacheslav Shchurov. [13, p. 55] The scholar attributed the song as a calendar *semitskaya* song for the seventh Thursday after Easter. Let us note that the ritual in the village coincided with the holiday of Ascension, labeled *Zvesyanyo* in the local dialect, while the Pentecost week here was called *kleshchal'naya* and not *semitskaya*. It is possible that the scholar provided a generalized connection to the calendar cycle.

Of considerable interest is the poetic text, consisting of two repeated melodic stanzas organized by the poetic verse and the refrain words:

*Kukushechki-lyubushechki,
Prinimaite mene vo zelenyi sad, rodnye!
Kumitesya, lyubitesya,
Prinimaite mene vo zelenyi sad, rodnye!*
[Lovely cuckoos,
Accept me into your green garden, my dears!
Become acquainted, love each other,
Accept me into your green garden, my dears!]

It may be presumed that a fragment of the broadly known lyrical song *Vesyolaya besedushka* [Merry Conversation], ubiquitously performed on Pentecost, is used at the basis of the poetics of the short refrain:

Example No. 4

Kukushechki-lyubushechki [Lovely Cuckoos].
Belgorod Region, Volokonovsk District, Foshchevatovo village⁶

$\text{♩} = 125$

1. Ку - ку - шеч - ка лю - бу - шеч - ка п(ы) -
ри - ма - те ме не во зе лё - най сад од - ны - е.
ри - ма - те ме-не во зе-лё - най сад од - ны - е.
ри - ма - те ме-не во зе-лё - най сад од - ны - е.

...Vy, kumushki golubushki,
Podrzhki moi!
Kumitesya, lyubitesya,
Lyubite menya.
Vy poidete vo zelenyi sad,
Voz'mite menya
[...You, good women, my dears,
My friends!
Become acquainted, love each other,
Love me.
You shall go to the green garden,
Take me]. [14, p. 262]

The pitch organization of the melody is characterized by traits of intonating melodies set for an appropriate time (for the calendar cycler or for a wedding rite) — a female performing ensemble, a confined range, an intense sound, the presence of a lengthy unison with the subsequent resolution of the final pitch upwards, and the presence of harmonics. In the context of the traditional culture of the Upper Oskol River Region, this melody presents itself as part of the Upper

Oskol melodic type, which demonstrates itself, first of all, as a marker of the local wedding rites and spans a large poly-genre group of musical texts. In the village of Foshchevatovo, the Upper Oskol melodic type is realized within the main group of wedding melodies of the contacting line.

Conclusion

It follows that during the process of analysis of the melodies of the Pentecost week on the territory of the Belgorod Region and the adjacent areas, it has been possible to reveal the following characteristic features:

1. The affiliation of the melodies to the genre of the *khorovod* song, or the use of wedding songs or melodies proper.
2. The genre fixture behind the predominating genre group of a concrete local tradition.
3. The structural organization revealing the typological connections with wedding or lyrical songs on the level of pitch or rhythmic organization.

⁶ Recorded of Foshchevatovo village in 1995. This song has been sung by: M. S. Skuridina (b. 1915), N. S. Sotnikova (b. 1931), E. S. Starodubtseva (b. 1933), E. L. Starodubtseva (b. 1912), M. D. Popova (b. 1913), and D. I. Tsurupa (b. 1917). Recorded by A. G. Grashchenko and Yu. A. Lomakina — faculty members of the Folk Singing Art Department of the Belgorod State Institute of Arts and Culture.

The indicated conglomeration of features reflects the essential phenomena examined by traditional culture and sheds light on the specificity of its formation in the historical-cultural continuum. In this context, it is most fitting to speak of the “dominant idea in the genre and style of a local tradition.” This term was brought into scholarly use by Victor Lapin. In his work *Ocherki istoricheskoi problematiki russkogo muzykal'nogo fol'klora* [Sketches of the Historical Problem Range of Russian Folk Music], the scholar wrote: “The dominant idea in the genre and style of a local tradition is the genre (or group of genres, or genera) that becomes ‘the centralizing element’ of a musical-song system (according to Evgeny Gippius), i.e., exerts an influence on other song genres or their texts and forms out of them larger musical-stylistic unities or folk music-ritual complexes within the local tradition; this is the characteristic feature of tradition stipulated by the inner development and historically changing, corresponding to the productive

period of the development of any particular genre or type of song; this is always an *inter-genre* and, most frequently, an *areal* phenomenon.” [15, p. 94]

In conclusion, it must be noted that particularly the songs of the Pentecost period have taken upon themselves the function of the dominant idea in the style and genre of a concrete local tradition and manifested the significant models of the local song system. The reason for this is the special veneration of the feast of Pentecost in the south of Russia. The semantics of the sound space of the Pentecost period is overburdened with cultural codes, such as: the unity of the entire community in the round *khorovod* songs; the establishment of a new social status for the youth — for bride girls in the rite of “christening and funeral of the cuckoo”; the sacred quality of time and space in the tradition of leading the *tanok* songs. The Pentecost songs, reflecting the language of the local song system and demonstrating themselves as its stylistic marker, pertain to this category, as well.

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