

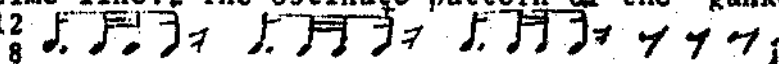
A PROFILE ON MUSIC AND MOVEMENT IN THE
VOLTA REGION PART II

As part one was concerned with movement, part two will pertain to music as observed in the area. To continue with the village of Anloga-Lashibi, the movement mentioned above in part one was exercised to the accompaniment of improvised instruments, which are used by some groups in this district, during the seasonal ban on instrumental music, due to a festival of the gods. One might think that such a taboo would preclude all sound as is commonly associated with the instruments, but this is not the case. The ban applies to all drums, the boat shaped bell, and double bell, but not to the rattle.⁶ Improvised instruments were bottles and wooden boxes; women handclapped throughout, while men drummed. The clapping technique was of right palm under the left palm, palms at an angle to form an X.⁷ At one point in a song, a bell player lent additional rhythm by effecting noises with his tongue.

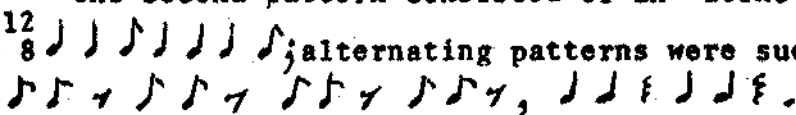
The Lashibi clan usually performs on the genuine instruments in August, before harvest, for they are farmers. An especially staged performance for us in April was indoors, because of the prohibition, although the group normally functions outside, in the evening, and in a semi-circle. Participation in this drumming group is limited to clan members.

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6. Every man must have a rattle. There may be as many as 60.
 7. Handclapping in the Volta Region is quite varied, and may change frequently during a single song, both in rhythm and tempo. Another technique is the division of clapping into rows, whereby one row claps a single rhythm, and a second row claps another, and so on. This was observed at Baika, and elsewhere.

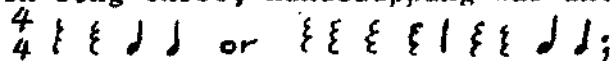
Song cycles formed the typical Ewe pattern of introduction (without full range of instrumentation) consisting of a number of songs, and followed by dance - which is the main function. The five introductory songs were of the same style⁸: instrumentation for them consisted of two improvised bells ("gankongi" and "atoke"), gourd rattles and handclapping. Songs were strophic; each had as many as three verses. The "gankongi" bell pattern established a continuation between verses and between each song. The bell established the tempo and the time line. The ostinate pattern of the "gankongi" was 12



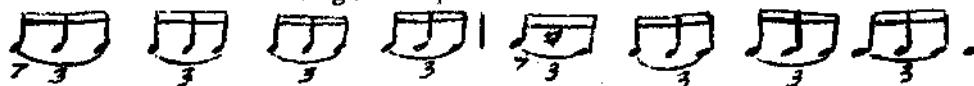
the second pattern consisted of an "atoke" rhythm of 12



In song three, handclapping was introduced as



the gourd pattern entered here as



ANALYSIS

The introductory group of songs has considerable unifying structure: the order of appearance is the bell (or rattle); cantor, female or male second voice in harmony and octaves with the cantor; and mixed chorus in octaves (sometimes with handclapping).

Not every verse of each song is identical melodically or rhythmically either in soli or chorus parts, but differences are usually minor, lend variety, and fit into the time span of the first verse. Song one, which is typical and may be used for further examples, repeats itself melodically on the second verse until B1 and resumes on B2 until the end; on the third verse, there is slight melodic alteration throughout until the chorus, at C.

Each song may be fitted into a key or mode; song one is in natural minor, but transcribed into "g" to facilitate reading. It is obvious that "g" serves as tonic because of its great frequency (25:100), length, and final position at cadence points, etc. "C" functions as dominant, but at B1, "c" becomes the tonal center until the second phrase of B2.

Characteristic melodic intervals are the major second (67%); the skip of a perfect fourth (23%) on g, c, or f (which is very apparent because it is usually preceded and followed by seconds); and also the minor third (6%),⁹ which are significant. None other occurs, except the minor seventh, which appears at section B with the female voice, and so distinguishes the section as to label it B.

The descending fourth (except for one instance) resolves either by ascending back to the previous note (d, s, d) or descending a step to the fifth (which functions here as a grace note) and returning (d s f s d). In section C, the note "a", next to the final, appears here singularly, and as a "passing tone" which leads to the fifth, which is in final position. The ascending fourth either is accounted for in this definition, or as

9. The major third occurs once; in Section A.

irregular notes which climax their sections, as the "f" in B1 or the "g" in B2. The interval of a fourth is more frequently descending than ascending, and the entire melodic contour is gradually descending, although individual sections are undulating.

The range of the independent lines is a major ninth; the low "f", which is always an eighth note, extends the octave. The entire range is two octaves and a second.

There is homophonous singing, note against note, except one instance when the bass progresses as it descends on a sixteenth note (B2). Homophony is found in sevenths, fifths, fourths, thirds, and octaves. Intervals are consonant in octaves, on both sections B1 and C, the mixed chorus.

Parts are heterophonous; both vocal lines may stand independently, although they are similar. I analysed the top line as the melodic merely because the strident voice of the female singer overrides the soft, open, and relaxed voice of the male, so that the intervals are not easily discernible. The contrasting timbre of these two voices combined with the mixed chorus, and the ring of a bottle for the bell pattern provide the texture.

The tempo is seventy-five oscillations per minute per dotted quarter note. Durational values are 

(one definite grace note) and equivocal rests. Rests are not counted in the analyses for they may be interpreted as pauses for breath, thereby lengthening the value of the notes. Rests contribute to phrasing, for every larger phrase is marked off by a rest.

The most frequent rhythmic value is the eighth note which usually is found in pairs, the second being followed by a longer value. At B, eighth notes are in groups of five or six in succession.¹⁰ Rhythmic values are at least two tied dotted half notes at cadence points, and eighth notes at sectional ends.

The cadence formula is composed of descending melodic progressions with notes of short duration followed by long ones at 'perfect cadences' ending B2 and C, or the 'semi-cadence' ending A. Sectional endings and large phrases progress either upward a fourth or downward a third or fourth.

The climax of the verse occurs on the high "g" of B2, and gradually descends to the cadence. The more important tones of the entire melody are discernible here in frequency and length, lesser tones are absent or very short.

To digress from Anloga-Lashibi, to a broader view of the Volta Region, music with texts concerning Christianity sung in the vernacular in one instance at least, seems not to differ in style from secular music. A Catholic influenced group in the Kpandu sang two such songs as well as other texts. The cantor of this group is the same who danced in a similar style to a cult priestess, and also sang in a mode resembling a woman's group in this town.

Basically, the vocal idiom consists of a leader and chorus, and responsorial technique, both soloistic and choral. The director of a group at old Baika reads from a printed sheet, and there is much alternating.

10. In another song of the prelude, the chorus chants notes of small intervals (major seconds), and static rhythms, whereby eighth notes are repeated in succession 13 times or more. This style of recitative, found in short segments of songs, is characteristic of the Volta Region.

among leaders, who also have regular assistants who sing and dance. Some conduct with a baton, and sometimes cowtail switches function as a baton when they also are to be used in dancing.

Homophonic singing over the entire region was found in thirds, fourths, fifths, sixths, and sevenths, often in paralld movement, but sometimes contrary motion or contrasting independent movement.

Song texts in foreign languages also may be encountered frequently. In the dance "Kpatsa", which comes from an area of non Anlo, i.e., Ada speakers, the text was in Ada, and understood by most singers, but not all. People of Gakpevi, also Anlo speakers, often sing in Twi, just as a group in Old Baika sings a number of songs in their own Lapan language, as well as Ewe. The Oleke in Avalavi who sang one song in Yoruba but do not understand the words, simply like the song.

Instrumentation in the Volta Region was seen as follows: Both single and double membranophones of all sizes, from 23 to 72 inches high, with both straight wooden or bamboo, and curved sticks; hand technique and armpit control; held between the knees while sitting (tilted), placed directly on ground, or held with supporters while standing; both open and closed ends; with skins of alligator, deer, antelope, cow and horsehide; from 5 to 16 pegs; cylindrical, round, conical (hour-glass) shaped; natural color (they all claim the same wood, "twene") or painted green with red horizontal stripes which are standard colors of the area. A friction drum was noticed in a procession in Hohoe, which was welcoming a destooled chief, a political refugee from Togo.

Idiophones were gourd rattles with internal

strickers of beans, beads, and pebbles, and external strikers of cowrie, bamboo, and even the backbone of a python was used in Avalavi. There also were wicker rattles (in Old Baika); one and two toned iron gongs; a bell rang during the dance at Avalavi for incitement; and tongue clicking, handclapping, and foot-stomping.¹¹

One aerophone, a brass bugle (two-toned intervallic fourth) was used in Avalavi also to impart excitement. In Nyoko, a small boy was heading a funeral procession playing a short wooden flute, to announce the arrival of the queen mother.

In summary, music and dance style changes radically within a small geographical distance. Southern Ewe dance is characterized by shoulder contraction - release; middle region by rolled shoulders and alternating hand movement directed out-in, in contrary motion, and Northern region by stamping. Music and movement, religion, even dramatic action are thought of as a whole, not separate entities.

Performers are farmers, fishermen, weavers, and perform in their leisure for both religious and secular purposes.

Groups are divided by sex, age, religious beliefs, and common interest. Membership may be exclusive to a clan (Anloga-Lashibi), household (Gakpevi), or club (Keta).

Both traditional and recently composed music is used, and some musicians, such as Akpalu in Nyoko, who are well known and highly esteemed for their composition, are asked to travel from town to town to perform and teach. There also is a problem of tradition: Akpalu constantly reprimands his singers for improper recitation

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11. Footstomping was used in Gakpevi, on a wardance song, by both men and women in seated position, which lent a dramatic orientation.

of the text. Only the best are allowed to sing in public, and roles change frequently. Members are admonished publicly for attempting to sing with insufficient practice.

Not only is foreign language introduced into song texts, but an entirely foreign song, textually, melodically, and harmonically may be utilized, as well as imported styles of drumming (from Dahomey, for example as used by Gakpevi). Non-Ewe speaking peoples also sing in Ewe.

Improvised instruments may be played in place of some genuine instruments during a periodic religious ban on the instruments themselves and on formal performances. However, the ban does not apply to singing and rhythms played by, and textures produced by these improvised instruments.

Depth study on some of these surveyed topics such as relationships of the music and dance, involving varied subtleties of movement from one area to another, might prove fruitful for research in the future, and answer some pertinent questions in musicology.

Sylvia Kinney.

original pitch: /#

VOLTA REGION ANLOGA-LASHIBI CLAN

 $\text{♩} = 75$

ADZOANI

marcato

Bell pattern simile
legato
Male Voice A)

B2)

c) CHORUS-8va.

Scale
n:25

A) B) c)

T D T T+D T D