

Traces of Musical Art in The History of Ancient Era Khorazm Oasis

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Abstract

The Khorezm oasis, a historically rich region of Central Asia, has long been a cradle of cultural and artistic expression, with deep roots in musical traditions. While much attention has been given to the archaeological and historical development of the region, the origins and evolution of musical art within the ancient Khorezm oasis remain underexplored in scholarly discourse. There is a limited understanding of how natural and anthropogenic landscapes influenced the emergence and refinement of musical traditions in this region from prehistoric times through the classical era. This study investigates the earliest traces of musical knowledge in the Khorezm oasis, focusing on how geographical, ecological, and cultural conditions contributed to the spiritual and artistic development of its ancient inhabitants. The findings reveal that favorable ecological conditions in the Akchadarya basin, along with the rich biodiversity and acoustic environment, laid the foundation for primitive musical expressions, which were later formalized and refined during the Eneolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages. By the 4th century BC, musical artistry reached a classical form, as evidenced by the performances of harp and ud players in the Tupraqqala palace and the development of the Quyqiriganqala musical school. The research presents an interdisciplinary perspective linking geography, archaeology, and ethnomusicology to trace the historical continuum of musical expression in ancient Khorezm. These insights enrich our understanding of Central Asian cultural history and underscore the importance of integrating musicological analysis into broader studies of ancient civilizations.

Keywords: Khorezm Oasis, South Akchadarya, Kyzylkum, Karakum, Mount Sultan Uvais, Yonbashkala

1. Introduction

Khorezm region, which has long been a center of culture and art, has a wide range of examples of unique folk music creativity (children's and ritual songs, khalfa lapars, etc.), professional music in the oral tradition (epos, art of interpreters and goyandalar, maqom, etc.) [1]. Within the framework of the Khorezm musical style, examples of melody, tone belonging to the most ancient periods of folk music are reflected. In particular, in children's ("Momom moshiydi", "Aravachi mani doym", "Tuyalar, ho tuyalar", etc.) and seasonal ritual songs ("Suyet xotin", "Ashsha daroz", etc.), the initial structure and melodic signs of the early stages of music, the foundations of the initial pitch, have been preserved [2]. In the art of khalfas, songs and chants sung in a low voice range of a compact range characteristic of the "internal", characteristic only of women, have taken root. In this case, after the gods give permission for the wedding, "Go start, let the right ones be happy," at the beginning of the wedding, "May the blessed ones be happy," or after the bride arrives, "I will turn around and hold the bride's

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waist," and other songs marked the unique development of the wedding. In particular, the lapar type, which is sung while playing the kyaraq, is very characteristic of the khalfa dancers [3].

2. Research Method

This study employs a historical-analytical method grounded in interdisciplinary approaches to investigate the origins and development of musical art in the ancient Khorezm oasis. The research relies on paleogeographic, archaeological, and ethnomusicological data to reconstruct the socio-cultural environment that influenced early musical traditions [4]. Primary sources include the works of Soviet-era archaeologists, such as Ya.G. Gulamov, A.V. Vinogradov, and B.V. Andrianov, whose findings on irrigation systems, anthropogenic landscapes, and Neolithic settlements provide context for understanding the environmental and social conditions in which music emerged. Descriptive analysis of geomorphological changes in the Amu Darya basin and the South Aral Sea region supports the identification of settlement patterns and cultural continuity [5]. The study further examines ancient textual evidence and material remains, including musical artifacts and depictions from sites like Yonbashkala and Quyqrlganqala, using comparative methods to trace the evolution of musical forms and instruments such as the harp and ud [6]. Ethnographic parallels from Khorezm's oral traditions, including khalfa songs and wedding chants, are used to establish continuity between ancient and modern expressions of musical creativity. By synthesizing ecological data with cultural history, the methodology enables a nuanced understanding of how natural landscapes, human adaptation, and artistic expression intersected to form the earliest traces of musical knowledge. The research also integrates regional mythologies and ritual practices to contextualize music's spiritual and social functions in the lives of ancient Khorezmian communities, offering insights into how music both shaped and reflected early civilization in the region [7].

3. Results

The geomorphology of the Asian continent is characterized by its distinctiveness, which is the result of underground movements that occurred in the Tertiary and Quaternary stages of the Earth's geology, and consists of several parts [8]. One of these geographical parts is Central Asia. The surface of the territory of Uzbekistan, located in the geographical latitude of the center of the Asian continent, consists of mountainous and plain parts. The plain consists of the north-western, northern, northeastern parts, and the mountainous - of the southern and eastern regions [9]. The Khorezm oasis is located in the north-western region. The Aral Sea in the north, the Karakum in the west, the Kyzylkum in the east, and the Zauengizi Karakum in the south define the territorial boundaries. According to paleogeographic data, 4-3 million years ago, the Zauengizi Karakum, the Ustyurt plateau and the Kyzylkum-Aral basin were plains. It is known from the achievements of geography that Uzbekistan is divided into natural and geographical regions according to its location: the Ustyurt Plateau, the South Aral Sea, the Kyzylkum, and the Lower Zarafshan Valley plain [10].

In the 6th-5th millennia BC, as a result of the activity of the Amu Darya, the Khorezm Plain was divided into right and left coastal regions in terms of its surface structure, where the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Khorezm region, and Tashkhavuz regions are located. This territory is distinguished from neighboring countries by its openness on all four sides. The Lower Amu Darya basin has the status of an "enclave" [11]. In his fundamental work on the history of the irrigation system of Khorezm, Ya.G. Gulamov described the irrigation structures

along the banks of the Amu Darya River, which allowed the people to live in settlements that reflected the geographical landscape of the right and left banks of the river, and the archaeological monuments along the banks, which allowed them to harmonize their lives and creativity. These structures served as a key to the study of the history of our ancestors by researchers. The works of the Khorezm expedition workers contain extensive historical information about the natural and geographical environment of the South Aral Sea, the climatic and anthropogenic landscape, the results of the activities of the Amu Darya and Syrdarya rivers, and the development of the region by humans [12].

4. Discussion

According to Ye. A. Vinogradova, the foothills of Mount Sultan Uvays were inhabited by primitive hunters from the Late Stone Age.

According to the information mentioned in the first monograph of S.P. Tolstov, in the 4th-3rd millennium BC, the area around the Yonbaskala elevation, which depicted the geographical landscape of the southern region of the Sultan Uvays Mountain, was mastered by humans. Since the Amu Darya tributary, which separated from the Shurakhon area near the river, was divided into northern and southern parts along a 25-km route towards the Kyzylkum River as a result of the flood of the Amu Darya River, the Shurakhon-Sultan Uvays Mountain was divided into the southern Akchadaryo River, and the Sultan Uvays Mountain-Aral Sea plain was divided into the southern and northern Akchadaryo basins [13]. As a result of the flood of the Akchadaryo River, the shallows between the undulating sand dunes of the Kyzylkum River turned into water bodies. These water bodies were rich in the organic world, and their coastal slopes were rich in flora and fauna [14]. The same anthropogenic landscape, favorable climatic conditions and ecology, the soft and pleasant voices of birds and animals in the process of using food products, the unique sounds of animals with a strong physical body, laid the foundation for the emergence of the first historical roots of musical knowledge in the spirituality of our ancestors, this process was further refined in the Eneolithic, Bronze, and Early Iron Ages, which was reflected in pottery. In the 4th century BC, the representatives of the Quyqrlganqala poets, who created the school of musical art, gave spiritual inspiration to the population through the magical sounds of musical instruments such as the harp and ud in the Tupraqqala palace. The process of further refinement of the Quyqrlganqala music school found its meaning in the performances of Tupraqqala musicians [15].

5. Conclusion

From the 4th-3rd millennium BC, the first roots of musical knowledge emerged in the spirituality of our ancestors, who lived in the hills surrounding the Aqcha-Darya basin and the Yonbaskala heights, connected to the foothills of the water bodies, and in the subsequent historical period it underwent a further refinement process.

- a. In the 4th century BC, the art of music was raised to a classical level by our ancestors in the historical period.
- b. The historical period, the historical roots of musical knowledge by our ancestors in its various stages were summarized.

The study of musical traces in the ancient Khorezm oasis reveals that the roots of musical knowledge among the region's early inhabitants date back to the 4th–3rd millennium BC, when favorable ecological and anthropogenic conditions in the Aqcha-Darya basin and Yonbaskala highlands supported the development of early sound-based expression. These natural

surroundings, including the melodic calls of birds and the resonant sounds of animals, contributed to the spiritual foundation upon which musical traditions were gradually formed and refined. Over time, especially by the 4th century BC, these early forms of sound expression matured into an organized and classical musical art, as demonstrated by the emergence of the Quyqrlganqala music school and its influence on the court of Tupraqqala.

6. References

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