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**GENRE SYSTEM OF CIRCASSIAN (ADYGHE) SONG
TRADITION**

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Abstract

The paper is concerned with the most relevant issues of genre classification of the Circassian (Adyghe) musical folklore as a whole, the differentiation of song genres of the Circassians. The study is also relevant due to the fact that the entire layers of traditional music culture are increasingly vanishing including religious ceremonies and respective recitations, etc. Particularly acute now is the issue of preservation and reinvention, the study and thorough understanding of musical tradition, which stems from the fact that the last connoisseurs and bearers of traditional culture are passing away. With a view to the achievements of domestic researchers in the field of folklore studies, the authors analyze the main publications, and propose their insight based on some modern methods of denoting a song. The authors give an overview of most of the genres and types of the Circassian (Adyghe) song tradition, starting with some authentic samples. The first stage of genre and subject-matter classification of a song is characterized through the breakdown of songs by a verbal text (Khan-Girey, A. Keshev, Dubrovin). The second stage in the study and classification of song genres of traditional Circassian (Adyghe) music culture is associated with Z.M. Naloyev who defined the systems of elements responsible for the backbone levels of the genre-related classification of a song. The relevance and specific character of the topic determined its peculiar style that implies the introduction of a significant number of author's song titles, which led to the further use of their accepted names.

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Keywords: Ethnomusicology, Circassian (Adyghe) musical folklore, genre classification, song.



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1. Introduction

Nowadays, in order to avoid the complete unification of the traditional music culture of the Circassians and to chart the way forward, there is a pressing issue as to how to preserve and revive the layers of musical folklore. In this regard, new challenges arise in the study of the main layers of Circassian (Adyghe) folk music including further exploration of the most original phenomena of the music culture of the Circassians (Adyghe), such as ‘song’ and ‘instrumental folk melody’, and local traditions, as well.

In the framework of music genres, a special place is occupied by a song. It contains the rudiments of fading away and even irretrievably lost music texts. The song is determined by a special technique, specific musical language and expressive means. Therefore, it is important to avoid addressing it as being conditioned by the Circassian everyday life or in the context of rituals and rites but rather for the attempt to ascertain the evolution of musical thinking with a novel interpretation of accepted traditions.

2. Problem Statement

The issue of genre classification is one of the most complicated problems of ethnomusicology and folklore studies. According to the existing theory of classification of genres established by Gippius (1933), the authors acknowledge the fact that the genre is shaped under the influence of a social function, thereby revealing the stability of the musical-poetic structure of folk patterns.

A comprehensive study and systematization of a song is of interest not only for ethnomusicologists and folklorists, but also for those who deal with general issues related to the evolution of Circassian (Adyghe) culture. In this context, the issue of genre classification is particularly relevant. However, up to now there are few systemic research papers that provide a scientific definition or description of the backbone levels of the genre classification of a song, identity and difference, given the internal hierarchy of genres that confirm or justify the legitimacy of historical aggregation.

3. Research Questions

The paper is aimed at song classification as a cultural phenomenon.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is the establishment of a typology and classification of Circassian (Adyghe) song genres, as well as identification of genre and subject-matter diversity as a phenomenon.

5. Research Methods

The main methodological basis of the study involves the ideas that reveal the essence of the topic under consideration. Genre typology of Circassian (Adyghe) song tradition relies on the vision of the great 20th century ethnomusicologist Gippius (1933) as per the genre viewed as a means to realize a function in the structure and the process of genre-formation viewed as a way of typing a structure under the influence of social function.

The structural and typological method, thought to be the most adequate in ethnomusicology, allows for the object of research to be addressed as a whole in relation to the concept of ‘song’.

6. Findings

At the present stage of the studies into the genre classification of the Adyghe song, the works of the chroniclers of the 18th and 19th centuries are particularly valuable (Gardanov, 1974). They provide important and detailed information on the character and manner of performing songs and dances, give an accurate description of musical instruments, etc.

The works of Russian historians – specialists in Caucasian studies – A. Shegren, S.D. Nechaev, A. Berge, P. Uslar, L. Lyulie, N. Trubetskoy, K. Stal, N. Dubrovin, L.G. Lopatinsky et al. are in the forefront in the research of Circassian music culture.

Nogmov (1994) was the one to make a significant contribution to the study of the Adyghe song in the first half of the 19th century. His work “The History of the Adyghe” included the lyrics of Kabardian songs and folk legends.

The classification of “song” was designated for the first time by one of the most outstanding figures of the Adyghe culture and science, Sultan Khan-Girey (1808–1842). He was one of the first to collect information on the Adyghe folklore, and mostly on the Western Adyghe. In his “Notes on Circassia” (Khan, 1836) he offered a classification of the song and identified nine groups of songs. The first group includes one of the oldest genres of musical folklore in honor of the gods and patrons of the Adyghe pantheon – ‘*khapsho ored*’¹ (Adyghe: тхъа уэрэд; *txa u^wraed*). The second group includes the lullabies – ‘*kusheko ored*’ (Adyghe: гушэ уэрэд; *guşæ u^wraed*) that, at the request of an educator, were composed for an educatee and referred to the nobility and exploits of his/her ancestors. ‘*Zeiko ored*’, the riders’ songs were performed during the raids to ask for success and protection on the road. Historical songs and songs of ‘many men’ (*zeo ored ored/lbe pschnal*) (Adyghe: зэуэ уэрэд, лЫбэ пшыналь; *ze^wæ u^wraed, llibæ pşinal*) describe feats, military and historical events. In a life-story song ‘*tlzekka-pşnal*’ (Adyghe: лЫзэккэ пшыналь; *lizekjo pşinal*), after the death of a glorious warrior, his actions were set forth, glorified and memorialized. The mourning songs, ‘*khgbze*’ (Adyghe: гъыбзэ; *gibzæ*), were composed by the friends of a warrior who was slain in battle. The songs marked ‘*dchepshe ored*’ (Adyghe: кІэпшэ уэрэд; *klepşæ u^wraed*) were sung at the bedside of a wounded person or a woman after childbirth during her illness. The songs that were performed at the body of a deceased person are marked ‘*sakhgesh*’ (Adyghe: сагыш; *sagış*). The classification finishes with the dance songs ‘*uj ored*’ that were performed at celebrations and festivals.

The attempted systematization of songs by Khan-Girey did not follow the scheme. It was based on their actual content. This classification of songs is still used by researchers. It is not refuted but supplemented by new factual material. Regrettably, since then it has not progressed beyond the systematization of certain genre groups or typological strata (Gucheva, 2009).

Khan-Girey described in detail all the varieties of songs, for the translation of which he used word-for-word translation of the song, accompanied by detailed reference material.

¹ Hereinafter, the author’s terminology is used.

He raised issues pertaining to the authors and performers of songs – jaguaco. It is important that in an attempt to examine the instrumentation, he described in detail the musical instruments of Circassians and, importantly, revealed their use in everyday life² (Gucheva, 2009, 2012). There were also proposed the recordings of four Adyghe songs³, which appeared to be the first time in the Adyghe ethnomusicology.

In 1861, Nogmov (1994), in his book “The History of the Adyghe”, first attempted to streamline information about Circassians, and in this context considered the issues related to the creation and authorship of a song, in particular, drew attention to the works of jaguaco singers and story-tellers.

In 1869, Terek Gazette published an article by Keshev (1869) (Kalambiy) “The Character of Adyghe Songs” eclectically outlining the specific interpretation of Adyghe songs.

Dubrovin (1871) in his work “The History of War and Russian Dominion in the Caucasus. The Caucasus” (1871) proposed a new approach to classifying songs and distinguished three groups: 1) songs; 2) old tales (tkhdezen) and 3) old fictions (tkhdesezen). He considered *lullabies*, *historical or military songs* (tlbepshnal – ‘the song of many men’), *biopic* (tlsekopshnatl – ‘songs of one person’), *mourning* (gbze), *equestrian* (zeyko-orod), *religious* (performed during holidays in honor of pagan gods), songs in honor of the *wounded* (tdchepsheko-ored), *dancing* (utch-ored). In this classification, Dubrovin identified the same groups of songs as Khan-Girei did, and the breakdown is based on the actual content and functional feature.

80s of the 19th century marked a new stage in the study of songs and this is due to the cooperation of Adyghe and Russian researchers who jointly produced Collection of Materials for Describing Places and Tribes of the Caucasus (1881-1913).

The early 20th century is intrinsically linked to the names of the Adyghe enlighteners – P. Tambiev, T. Kashezhev, N. Tsagov, A. Dymov, and others. They were actively involved in the collection, publication and classification of folk materials. One of them was Lopatinsky (1904) generally recognized for initiating and organizing the collection, publication, and research of the oral Circassian folklore. Together with P.I. Tambiev he recorded 28 songs that were further published in SMOMPK. In the preface Lopatinsky (1904) gives some information and characteristics of the songs, deals with poetic techniques, images, poetic size, dialectal differences of texts, legends, notes, etc.

In 1936, in “Kabardian folklore” (Kabardian folklore, 1936) provided a description of the Adyghe songs of the 18th – 19th centuries, where in the comments he gave his own interpretation of the folklore. The collection includes texts recorded and compiled by the Kabardino-Balkar Research Institute of National Culture jointly with the Union of Soviet Writers of the Kabardino-Balkar Autonomous Oblast, as well as conference proceedings of folk singers and narrators (1934), organized by the Regional Executive Committee of Kabardino-Balkaria. It consists of five parts, each of which falls into several subsections: 1) the Nart sagas (Sosruko (11 texts), Badyonoko (3 texts), Ashamez (4 texts), Batraz (6 texts), Kianjoko Shaoy and Lashin (4 texts)); 2) myths, cults, mythical tales (mythological views (7 texts) and Oshkha-Maho (9 texts)); 3) folklore of the 16th – 17th centuries (epic songs (46 texts), Andemyrkan (7 texts)); 4) folklore of the 18th – 19th centuries and before the October Revolution (Common songs (94 texts), Khoje (18 texts),

² Khan-Girey described Circassian violin, a struck string instrument, Circassian harp, Circassian flute and ratchet.

³ Khan-Girey in his Notes on Cherkessia for the first time transcribes four Adyghe songs including Solokh’s Life-story Song, Song on the Devastation of Keremzae Mountain Village by the Tsar’s Squad, Bakhgersok’s Lullaby and Kemlyal Dancing Song.

Antimulskiye (15 texts)); 5) folklore emerged after the Russian revolution of October 1917 (20 texts). A total of 144 units of songs, antique slogans, legends, etc. are presented here. Such breakdown of songs can be considered as classification.

The first volume of the anthological edition “Folk Songs and Instrumental Melodies of the Circassians” in 1980 became a new reference point in the study of oral, and most importantly, the musical folklore of Circassians (Adyghe). In the introductory article “At the Origins of the Song craft of the Circassians” Naloev (1980) considers song tradition from archaic genres and Nart epic songs. The presented genre differentiation is associated with the everyday function of the song. He identifies the following genres in *the first group*: 1) songs directly related to labor; 2) songs indirectly associated with labor; 3) family ritual songs; 4) healing songs and magic spells (Naloev, 1980).

The genres of songs directly related to labor include: 1) songs of plowmen (Adyghe: вакIуэ уэрэд; *wakIwæ u^wræd*); 2) corn weeding songs (Adyghe: нартыф джахь орэд; *nartif jax ored*); 3) corn on the cob peeling songs (Adyghe: нартыф упкIэпкI орэд; *nartif upklæpkI ored*); 4) songs of an oxen driver during threshing (Adyghe: шхьэIуо уэрэд; *şxieIwo u^wræd*); 5) songs of mowers (Adyghe: мэкьюауэ уэрэд; *mekiuwaw u^wræd*); 6) songs related to horse-drawn carts (Adyghe: гублащхьэ уэрэд; *gublaşxie u^wræd*); 7) shepherd’s songs and melodies (Adyghe: мэлыхъуэ уэрэдхэмрэ макъамэхэмрэ; *mælix^wæ u^wrædxæmre makiamæxæmre*); 8) songs of a beekeeper (Adyghe: бжыхъуэ уэрэд; *bzaxiwæ u^wræd*); 9) songs of wool combers (Adyghe: цюыхынэ уэрэд; *cioxine u^wræd*); 10) corn miller’s songs (Adyghe: шхьэл уэрэд; *şxiel u^wræd*); 11) blacksmith’s songs (Adyghe: гьукIэ уэрэд; *giwkIæ u^wræd*); 12) grain grinding songs (Adyghe: гухъу уэрэд; *gwxiu u^wræd*); 13) millet scouring songs (Adyghe: ужыгъэ узрэд; *ujigæ u^wræd*) (Naloev, 1980).

The second group of songs indirectly related to labor includes: 1) hunting songs (Adyghe: щакIуэ уэрэд; *şakIwæ u^wræd*), addressed to the mythological patron of the forest and wild animals, Pshimazitkhe, and the mythological patron of hunters – Daushjerji; 2) songs to trigger rain (Xwencægwaşæ, Elæ); 3) New Year’s solemn-congratulatory songs performed when walking around home-folks for congratulations (Adyghe: хьуромэ; *xiurome*); 4) ritual flute melody that helps to search for the body of a drowned man (Adyghe: псыхэгъэ; *psyxegæ*).

Family ritual songs are divided into: 1) wedding songs (Adyghe: фызышэ уэрэд; *fyzysæ u^wræd*); 2) lullabies (Adyghe: гушэ уэрэд; *guşæ u^wræd*); 3) songs that encourage children to toddle (Adyghe: сабий зегъакIуэхэр; *sabiy zegiakIweher*); 4) songs for rocking decrepit old men to sleep (Adyghe: гушэм хапхэжа лъыжьхэм я уэрэд; *guşem xapxæza llyzyxem ja u^wræd*); 5) lamentations (Adyghe: бжэ; *bzæ*) (Naloev, 1980).

And finally, he singled out a genre of healing songs – magic spells to cure of smallpox (Adyghe: фэрэкI уэрэд; *færækI u^wræd*) and magic spells to heal wounds and injuries (Adyghe: щIапщэ уэрэд; *şIapşæ u^wræd*).

Pshinatli, Nart epic songs, (heroic tales about Nart warriors) have been preserved in everyday life in two traditional genres: in the song tradition ‘Nart pshynalie’ (Nart pshinatli) and the prose form ‘Nart xubar’ (Nart khabar).

The studies of canticles and mourning songs showed that the flowering of these genres dates back to the early 16th century. The bearers of traditional folklore unite these genres under the term ‘u^wrædiz’

(“old magnificent song”) (Naloev, 2017). ‘U^wrædiz are divided into six groups of songs: 1) marching songs (Adyghe: зекIуэ уэрэд; *zekIwe u^wræd*); 2) mourning songs (Adyghe: гъыбзэ; *gibzæ*); 3) songs about heroes (Adyghe: лыхъужь уэрэд; *lixiuz u^wræd*); 4) songs of those moving to Istanbul (Adyghe: ИстамбылакIуэ уэрэд; *IstambylakIwe u^wræd*); 5) funeral songs (Adyghe: сагъыш; *sagysh*); 6) love songs-laments (Adyghe: лъагъуныгъэ гъыбзэ; *lagunigie gibzæ*) (Naloev, 2017).

The above classification and systematization is based not only on functional but also on thematic principles.

In vol. IV, part I of “Folk Songs and Instrumental Melodies of the Circassians” there are some samples of non-occasioned lyrics of the Circassians, where Naloev (2017) systematized the songs of this group and identified five styles of song thinking: *mournful* (which is genetically related to crying), *praising* (which is akin to heroic and ritual magnificence), *laughter-related* (which goes back to ritual laughter), *allegoric* and *philosophical-contemplative*.

Household (non-occasioned) lyrics is divided into two groups – family and commonwealth songs. The next level highlights the songs of *complaint* and songs of *glory*. Love-lament songs fall into the complaints of the *single* and those of the *married*.

It is clear that besides theoretical issues related to the classification, function, poetics and form of the song, the issue of its notation is still open. Analytical transcriptions of Gippius (1933) are particularly valuable in addressing this challenge. Thanks to his cooperation with the Kabardino-Balkar Research Institute, many samples of the Circassian (Adyghe) song and instrumental tradition were recorded and subsequently included in the multi-volume anthology “Folk Songs and Instrumental Melodies of the Circassians” (Folk Songs, 1980–2017). This edition still continues to be of “special scientific and artistic value, as these are the first analytical transcriptions of songs and instrumental melodies of the Circassians (Adyghe). This work contains the first scientific description and interpretation of not only the song and instrumental music of the Circassians, but almost all forms and genres of melodic recitations that were accompanying cattle rituals, folk games, lullabies, weddings and funeral rites, etc. (Gucheva, 2009, 2012, 2018a, 2018b).

7. Conclusion

At present, the idea of creating a multi-stage, universal, coherent and systematic framework embracing the genres of oral folk-poetry creativity is becoming increasingly relevant. This can only be caused by a versatile and in-depth systemic study of folk process and folk material collected in its entirety and scientific integrity through modern stereophonic and synchronous methods of phono- and video recordings (Gatsak, 1982).

Given the actual musical folk material, one can determine the genre classification of the Adyghe song. The classification of Circassian song tradition relied on the internal hierarchy that was accompanied by the systematization of songs and melodies based on certain essential features, namely, on the signs of identity and differences in the folk intonations and metricitms, shaping, timbre, function of the song, as well as the following criteria – practical function, content, lineup, instruments, etc.

Looking forward, the authors can note that all the highlighted genres of songs require independent research. Moreover, the study of a musical text will call on new approaches to the existing principles of systematization, since it demonstrates its own, inherent patterns.

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