

## ASHOOGH LOVE ROMANCE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEAR EAST MUSICAL INTERRELATIONS

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### ABSTRACT

Armenian traditional art music, namely goosan-ashoogh works, mughamat and sazandar music developed in the realm of Near East culture. As different from the characteristics typical for the Armenian spiritual monody and folk-music, Armenian art music has developed distinct characteristics, which relate it to the so-called all-eastern art music. Similarities can be traced both in structural peculiarities, prosody of poetry and in the model system of the musical component. The common character is also vividly expressed in musical-narrative genre inherent in the mytho-poetical thought of different nations.

Wide is the area the tale like lyric genre encompasses – from Iran, Türkiye to the Caucasus and as wide is the range of elucidation of the most common types of the genre. Love stories of Shahsenem and Gharib, Asli and Kyaram are in different ways manifested in the works of Iranian, Armenian and Turkish authors and in many other works of unknown authors.

It is noteworthy that short love story compositions were very common in medieval Armenian literature. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, due to the Armenian ashooghs the genre of the ancient eastern love romance was retained and proved to be vital. Their compositions are closely related to the Armenian traditional reality, world outlook and religious beliefs.

The study of the musical-poetic romances in the context of Muslim and Christian cultural traditions provides new perspectives to reveal still many interwoven archetypical elements in musical discourses in the Near East.

Historical data testify to an important contribution of Armenian ashooghs, as well as instrumentalists, mugham-players in the development of Middle and Near Eastern traditional music. Their works promoted increasing cultural interaction between Iran, Türkiye and Caucasus.

**Key Words:** Iran, Türkiye, Caucasus.

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Within an impressive cross-cultural “crater” of the Near East, the investigation of any branch of traditional art music is anchored upon the issues of national-conceptual orientation, which requires a careful scientific approach.

Today the role and the value of different genres of traditional art music differ from the standards in place in medieval art. Different are the territorial-political, ethnic-cultural borders, as well as national-aesthetic criteria.

Being situated on the crossroads of East and West, Armenian culture has passed a unique path in combining western and eastern roots. Some European researchers who turned to the organic integrity of the western and eastern bases of Armenian culture, have highly evaluated Armenian spiritual music considering it as the most outstanding phenomenon of East Christian song-art (Tahmizyan, 1987; 3) after Byzantine. The historical mission of Armenian people dictated by the course of the history is “the synthesis of East and West”, “peace-maker of the two cultures”, “spiritual beacon of East and West”. These are several literary definitions of the role of Armenian culture from the very beginning of its formation (Bryusov, 1963; 48).

The basis of national historical-cultural conceptions in Armenian musicology is the provision according to which Armenian traditional art music (i.e. goosan-ashoogh works, mughamat, sazandar music) has developed in the realm of Near East culture. Undoubtedly, as compared with the century-old Armenian spiritual monody and genuine genres of folk-music this sphere is characterized by a number of distinct features, which bridge it to the so-called all-eastern traditional art music. Principal similarities are apparent in the structural peculiarities, the prosody of poetry and in the modal system of musical component whose terminology is of foreign origin. The common character is also vividly expressed in musical narrative genre system inherent in the mytho-creative thought of different nations. To perform this specific genre musicians needed systemized professional knowledge, ability of improvisation depending on the venue, ethnic structure of the audience and the situation.

Ashoogh love romance genre (story, tale, poem, dastan) is one of them; it has strong rooted traditions and is widely spread in the Near and Middle East nations' culture. Reflecting cultural notions and the taste of certain layers of the society it is distinguished by not only a very specific musical-poetic and artistic figurative thinking, but is also notable for its peculiar choice of creative principles.

The tale-like lyric genre covers a wide range of geography – Iran, Türkiye, Trans-Caucasus, and also wide is the range of elucidation of the most common types of the genre. The stories of mutual love of Shahsenem and Gharib, Leyli and Mejnun, Khosrov and Shirin, Asli and Kyaram were expressed differently in the compositions, the headings of which define the modelling of the genre, which is commonly traced in the works of Persian, Arabic, Armenian and Turkish-speaking nations. The love story is a vital genre, a very simplified, vulgar profanation of it is expressed by a formulae  $A+B=\text{love}$ .

It is interesting that the plot compositions and particularly, the short stories used to be very popular in medieval Armenian literature. The story about a priest's son and mullah's daughter (Hovhannes and Aysha) by H. Yerznkatsi (XIII c.), as well as the verses by A. Baghishetsi (XIV-XV c.), G. Akhtamartsi (XV-XVI c.) and others dedicated to eternal love of the nightingale and the rose are well known, the brief structures and the base of which directly relate to the eastern love narration topical theme.

However, the similarity doesn't assume a one-sided influence. Musical-poetry and narrative tradition is not likely to be borrowed or imitated automatically unless there is a cultural base. Our point is that we view the Armenian ashoogh art that has a history of centuries, both from the prospective of its national origin base (folk, spiritual and old goosan music) and in the context of the relations with Near East traditional art music, the active component of which it used to be.

Reflecting on musical sections of ashoogh dastans, K. Kushnarian expounds that they have common characteristics with Armenian national songs, even with the peasant ones (Kushnarev, 1958; 11). The vast amount of materials recorded during the field trip research done in various regions of Armenia come to prove that the song like poem genre is deeply rooted in the life of the Armenian nation.

In the classic period of ashoogh art the national pathos was not its characteristic feature. Ashoogh's professional skills and reputation were determined by universal criteria. Though, today the ability to go beyond the national borders of music culture is a cultural value itself.

As a result of historical-political developments in different historical periods a great number of Armenians had to leave their homeland and immigrate to other countries. That is why many representatives of Armenian culture had to live and create in different multi-national cultural centres like Tehran, Isfahan, Constantinople (İstanbul) and Tiflis (Yernjakyan, 1990; 67).

Armenian musicians composing in the sphere of national art music historically were in ongoing relationships with the neighbouring Islamic environment, so they tried to make their art be understood in foreign setting. It was this tendency that made the Armenian musicians correlate theoretically Armenian oktoechos (Medieval Church Modes' System) with Persian and Arabic modal systems, apply foreign terminology, create Armenian lettered Turkish songs as well as melodies having eastern melismatic style and shading.

If the Armenian Church longed to preserve the pure national spiritual songs *sharakan* (Armenian sacred hymn), *saghmos* (psalms) and *tagh* (spiritual and secular songs) and the pureness of performance style to sustain Armenian spirit and ideology, the public role of ashoogh art, as well as the audience and perceptions were quite different. So ashoogh art had a mission to serve the

“two- or three language” wider layers of the urban population, as well as to satisfy their artistic taste.

Having originated in a foreign environment and sustained its unique performative tradition in the classic period of the formation of the genre, Armenian ashoogh art resulted in Armenian-Persian (17<sup>th</sup> century), Armenian-Turkish (the beginning of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, İstanbul) Armenian-Georgian (the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Tiflis) institutional formations; besides it gave birth to artists having epochal significance such as ashoogh Sayat-Nova (Harutyun Sayadian; 1712-1795) and ashoogh Jivani (1846-1909).

The genius-poet Sayat-Nova’s role in the development and sustainability of literature and music relationships of Trans-Caucasus and Iranian nations in late medieval period was great (Seyidov, 1963; 25). Being a court musician of Georgian king Irakli II, Sayat-Nova was the first who voiced Iranian high-quality melodies in Georgian, making them popular in Tiflis, a multi-national cultural centre of Trans-Caucasus in his own way (Sayat-Nova; 1963; 71). Composing in three languages (Armenian, Georgian, Azerbaijani) and personifying the ideals of neighbouring nations in musical poetical characters, Sayat-Nova, first of all, was the successor of goosan art of ancient Armenia and medieval poet melods.

Disappearing from historical-cultural arena naturally and thus, giving way to national-Armenian ashoogh school, the founder of which was Jivani, the representatives of the above-mentioned schools made valuable contribution to the development of the oriental melody core, musical-expressive ways of ashoogh art and structural principles. They particularly played a great role in intermediating the instrumental improvisations with metrically organized parts (tasnif and rang), called gyaph, which belong to the field of the traditional art music that relates mooghamat to ashugh art. We strongly believe that this factor is very important while considering the national origin of different ashoogh melodies (Yernjakyan, 1991; 55; Yernjakyan, 1998; 28).

The process of “Armenianization” of ashoogh art in the context of Near East culture can be characterized as the one to have specificities of national unique issues conditioned by the language, religion and national musical thinking. Armenian ashooghs who sang about earthly emotions and love were unique advocators of Christianity due to the moral in their religious-philosophical songs. The representatives of Armenian ashoogh schools took the topics for their works from the Armenian reality though they were guided by general rules of Eastern metrics and often wrote in Persian and Turkish under foreign names. Armenian ashooghs in the colonies along with the songs in Armenian, composed in Persian, Georgian and Turkish too, which were equally enjoyed and understood by the Armenian audience. Their songs expressed Christian outlook and symbolism, and glorified the Virgin. The protector of Armenian

ashooghs was St.Karapet of Mush who endowed them with talent and skills; his monastery became a pilgrimage site.

Like the old goosans, Armenian ashooghs united in professional guilds, they used to have their Charter and the so-called Department, which was led by ustabashi. In 1891 the well-known Jivani (Serovbe Stepanian-Levonian) was elected as ustabashi of Alexandropole (Gyumri) ashooghs (Levonian, 1944; 34)

The formation of ashoogh schools in 19<sup>th</sup> century was a unique phenomenon with its special requirements and certificates to prove the professional skills of Armenian ashooghs and the standards in the given area.

According to documental materials, the tradition of ashoogh contest originated and developed in Kars and Erzurum provinces. Musical-poetic traditions of the mentioned areas, inhabited by Armenians, as well as of Ani and Igdır were disseminated in the wide mosaic of near-eastern professional art music. Among the regional ashoogh art creators in 19-20 centuries the most outstanding ashooghs were Virani (from Ani), Zulali and Sazayi (Aslan, 1975).

Armenian ashooghs also created new metrical forms, for example, *jivana*, the author of which was Jivani. The main requirement of this form is the lack of ashoogh's initials in the poem text. Among the types which require high technical and professional skills are *zinjillama* (poems having chain structure), *aliflama* (alphabetical), *dil tapramaz* (without moving the tongue), *dodakdekmez* (without touching the lips); all these are widely used in Armenian medieval music.

The description of the last two types without foreign names are given in the work of the 13<sup>th</sup> century Armenian musician-scientist Hovhannes Erznkatsi entitled "Grammar interpretation" (Tahmizyan, 1983; 11).

Furthering on the Armenian musicians' contributions to the development of Near East musical culture we consider appropriate to refer to the Ukrainian musicologist K. Kvitka who said that Turkish urban music was greatly influenced by the art of other nations, particularly, by Armenian art. Besides, Armenians came to be authors of a number of Turkish songs (*sharki*) during the 19<sup>th</sup> and at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Kvitka, 1971; 336).

In respect of the above mentioned the famous Turkologist V. Gordlevski's considerations are of special interest. He claims that the existence of "ozans" as a specific professional groups of dastan-performers during the period of Seljuks is a phenomenon borrowed from Armenians (Gordlevski, 1930; 21)

We can find the exact explanation of the name of the first epic singers, i.e. goosan in Armenian. The word govasan (which means praiser) has been transcribed in Persian and became *goosan* whose etymology cannot be found in Persian. The same can be said about the word *vardzak*, which refers to women

musicians in pagan period; the phenomenon later penetrated into Turkish speaking cultural environment to denote either the songs of varsaghi tribes or ashoogh musical-poetic varsagh form (Khorenatsi, 1940; 301, Amirian, 1996; 61).

In modern ethnomusicological studies (W. Eberhard, Ch. Albright, J. During, W. Feldman) the objective assessments of the role and significance ascribed to the Armenian ashooghs and instrumentalists in Iranian and Turkish professional art music can be found. The names of Armenian musicians are mentioned as composers-performers of some genres of Turkish urban music, like sharkie, peshref, semayi. It is also mentioned that such genres became popular due to the notation system created by an Ottoman citizen Hambardzum Limonjyan from İstanbul who was originally an Armenian (Feldman, 1990). Armenian musicians from İstanbul have actually solved the problem of recording professional art repertoire through composing, noting and publishing the samples of Eastern monodic music.

In the research devoted to Iranian Azerbaijan ashoogh art, we can see melodies named “Hava armani”, as well as statements of Turk ashooghs referring to the songs they received from Gyumri and Erivan (Albright, 1976; 274, Erdener, 1995; 32).

The number of the facts may still be extended, but it should be noted that, for some reasons the Armenian ashoogh art problem has somehow not appeared in the realm of foreign ethnomusicologists’ interests yet, and thus it needs further profound research.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries the materials recorded in Armenia are rich in love romances like Kyoroghli, Ashoogh Gharib, Shah Ismayil, Asli-Kyaram, Aghvan-Osan and others.

It is worth mentioning that the founder of Armenian professional music Komitas recorded the most famous song of the Armenian version of “Kyoroghli” dastan entitled “Aj Kyoroghli, jan Kyoroghli”, the melody model of which having stable rhythmical intonational basis, has been maintained in the art of different generations of ashooghs since its first appearance. Interestingly this very recording of high amplitude interval base is not peculiar to ashoogh songs. Kyoroghli version with its seventh descending flights and the exposed relevant register sectors can be explained by archetypical way of thinking, which reminds the musical-stylistic features and rhetoric pathos of Armenian epic melos, particularly “Sasuntsi Davit” (David from Sasun) epos.

At the same time it is distinguished from recitative songs, which are peculiar to the works of Turkish and Azerbaijani ashooghs by its emphasized melodic nature (Mamedov, 1984). The schematic variant of the mentioned song was

written down from ashoog Avag's (Avag Azatian) performance in 1938 in Azerbaijan (Eldarova, 1984; 62).

Due to Komitas a precious work had survived, which he recorded in his native town (Kutina, 1892) and entitled it "Eastern Turkish melodies". This manuscript collection containing 69 songs recorded in the notation system by H. Limonjian is a unique representation of eastern music, including Turkish, Armenian national ashoogh melodies, as well as melodies peculiar to Turkish urban music with the relevant names of various makams (ushaq, hijaz, shahnaz, rast, segyah, etc.). Interestingly from the 22 informants of Komitas, 20 were Armenians. In this respect the songs can be considered as reflections of mutual penetrations of provincial urban music in the life of Turkish-speaking Armenians living in Türkiye. We think that such musical pieces are likely to serve valuable sources for the Turkish music investigations (Komitas, 2006; 29).

The best works created by Armenian ashooghs have become leitmotifs for Kyoroghli-performers. Armenian composers have also developed and published Kyoroghli songs, which were used in the Armenian films, particularly in "Pepo", the music of which was composed by the world-known composer Aram Khachatrian.

Another classic exmple of Eastern love romance Ashoogh Gharib has a special status in Armenia. The meaning of the word *Gharib* (foreigner), itself has a special connotation in Armenian reality. No surprise that the motive of roving has greatly contributed to perceptions of national origin of the romance and its popularisation<sup>1</sup>.

The existence of ashoogh romance, which is widely spread in the Near and Middle East is conditioned by a number of components having religious-ritual function included in the structure of the genre. We think that its further assimilation by Islamic and Christian cultures may not exclude the similarities of their archaic types.

The importance of musical component of syncretic genre, as one of the major standards of ashoogh love narration allows us to define the national originality of it. We emphasise this factor as in the field of investigation of eastern dastans the least investigated is music, so there is no common viewpoint in the special literature about the role and the place of the musical component in the structure of the genre, whether it is of a primary or a secondary importance. The musical poetic portions interrupting the narration appear in all those situations where social and religious obstacles for communication, acquaintance at a distance, love confession, farewell, beginning of a trip, return, etc are available. The classification of the songs with the above-mentioned motifs

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<sup>1</sup> The creation of the film having the same name by famous Armenian film director S. Paradjanov is conditioned by this perception (Kalantar, 1998).

reflects the dynamics of the melody model of the tale and not its illustrative function. One of the interesting elements of architectonics of epic text is the momentary spatial movement as structural linking parts are almost always expressed by songs and thus, the fragmented nature of the genre is being overcome. For example, in Armenian versions of Ashoogh Gharib, to prevent the wedding ceremony of his bride, the hero sings a situational farewell song every time he moves from one city to another with the help of St. Sargis. With the purpose of overcoming different obstacles, request-songs dedicated to different natural phenomena, as well as odes to the cities are performed. The roots of these songs go back to the period of the formation of Armenian mundane professional song art with the strict identification of the praiser, epic singer and the goosan.

So, the narration is interrupted by songs at the places whenever a miracle is expected to happen. This is also evidenced by the formula peculiar to the main heroes, which sound while passing from the narration to the song part, like “I can’t express it in words, give me my saz and I will sing it”. Besides, a characteristic structure principle, which tends to have the status of an aesthetic rule in the Middle Asia should also be mentioned. Each time passing from the narration to the song part the ashoogh tunes his instrument one or half tone higher, as the next song should be performed in a higher register, gradually increasing the tension, and creating the illusion of culmination growth moments; this reminds *auj* one of the canonized elements of makamat art, a unique structural principle of high-point cadence phrases (Abdullayev, 1989; 116).

The observation of musical and narrative components separately distorts the internal logics of the genre, and makes both of them not understandable. The special endowment of the heroes is in singing and not in telling, and so without the gift from the Heaven there will be no miracle and reason for moving in space, as the talent of singing is the first proof of being a phenomenal person. Only after the initiation dream the future ashoogh obtains popularity and fame, learns to speak a new language and play the musical instrument, and only then he becomes invincible. The perception of this indissoluble integrity allows us to assess musical-narrative text from the prospective of mytho-poetic thinking because the religious and ritualistic expression as well as the manifestation of the link between the music and charming forces are available.

And finally the most important factor is that the scenes of ashoogh competition are expressed through the above-mentioned episodes which are the most wide-spread structural units formed long ago and retained up until now. Different ways of expressions (mimics, gesture, exclamations, instrument usage, questions and answers, puzzles) characteristic to syncretic genre obtain their sense during the competitions, and they are the means to show the ashoogh’s impromptu skills and professional knowledge.

The legend-making essence of love stories starts with the performer's name and the perception of his role and abilities. It should be reminded that the Middle Asian equivalent for ashoogh is *bakhshi*, which also means healer, wonderer, magician, who removes the wicked souls from the sick people through the magic force of their songs and playing (Chadwick, 1969: 81).

Traditionally, if the future ashoogh spent the night on a legendary mountain Muraddagh (Mountain of Lust, a counterpart of the Greek Parnassus), drank spring water and entered into the cave, a supernatural creature or a saint would make a gift instrument for him to reveal the secrets of singing, endowed him with musical-poetical talent; so when the hero woke up he started his musical Odyssey as a new man. In some other version the hero gets a cup of love drink in his dreams from the hands of a saint (St. Sargis or St. Gevorg – in Armenian tradition, Hızir İlyas - in Islamic tradition) and only then he falls in love with the girl he saw in his dreams. It is quite natural that in Turkish tradition, as stated by I. Basgoz the "wonder drink" is often replaced by bread baked in tonir, by an apple or Mevlut juice. Here the transformation of traditional motive is conditioned by the national environment (Basgoz, 1952; 331, Basgoz, 1967; 1). The "wonder drink" endows him with musical-poetry talent and with the skills of playing any instrument. At the same time the beloved of the hero falls in love with him in her dreams. But there are various obstacles between the lovers, like distance, social gap, economic and religious differences, and to overcome them the hero goes through a lot of trials. Due to his supernatural talent and transformation ability with the help of the saint the loving ashoogh overcomes all the difficulties successfully, so the story ends with the happy marriage of the couple. This topical pattern having this or some other details, different characters, events and colours lies in the base of almost all the love stories.

The tragic end of the love story is conditioned by religious obstacles that are sometimes impossible to overcome. For example, in "Asli and Kyaram" the hero burns mystically as a result of his strong love, singing the well-known song "I am burning, Asli, I am burning". It can be associated with the Armenian version of Adam and Lilit biblical legend, where Lilit full of devilish pagan passion and not fitting in religious-moral norms of Christian legend burns and turns to ashes. In both cases the religious ban is expressed implicitly, in other words the two religions are opposed to each other like binary oppositions of kindness and evil, good and bad etc. This mystical struggle results in the destruction of one of the heroes.

Not going deep into the principles of mytho-creative thinking peculiar to the different levels of the musical-poetical text, it is worth mentioning that the topical elements of Ashugh Gharib, Kyoroghli and other dastans may have their analogy in the catalogues of typical motifs of Aarne-Thomson (Thompson, 1955; 58) or be considered as expressions of narrative archetypes according to Propp's functional theory (Propp, 1969). The initiation levels, symbolic images,

the time and figures, dreams, communication with saints etc, Ashoogh Gharib and other heroes meet on the way to their destination to find love, aim at proclamation of the birth of an independent personality (sometimes Middle Asian Goroghli raising out from the other world or the grave), as well as the heroes' legendary strength and knowledge. The interpretation of these motifs and tales in the relevant religious-cultural setting is rather challenging and capacious issue to highlight the deeper layers of the love story structure and loving ashoogh behaviour norms.

The loving couples in traditional cultures based on ritual and beliefs are often compared with the sun and the moon, reflecting the worship of celestial bodies at ethnic-cultural level. It should be reminded that love and knowledge occur at the last station of spiritual-holy way; they are interpreted by Sufi poets as impetus of Space. The carriers of the holy knowledge and love are ashooghs, who are interlaced with the social culture environment. The songs of all the heroes mad with love (Mejnun, Kyaram, Gharib) and their behaviour come to prove this fact. It is also confirmed by the name of Ashik Kerib's lover, Mahul-Mehri (which means the sun and the moon in Persian), written down by M. Lermontov<sup>2</sup>.

The usage of mystical-ritual and religious knowledge gives an extra-ordinary expressiveness and strength to the ashooghs' speech. The interpretation of ashooghs' knowledge helps to understand the essence of traditional contests. Such archaic syncretism would have no place in the system of ethnic culture ritual, if it weren't consistent with the local culture regardless of any foreign borrowings and influences it undergoes.

In Islamic and Christian traditions the investigation of canonized musical epic dastans and the cultural realities available in their base opens new perspectives to the archetypical elements and spiritual substrates study in eastern professional art music. It spreads light on common everyday life plots and motifs typical to the region .

Taking into consideration the eastern love story development changes in the religious motives it could be stated that the musical-poetical segments are the main models of the traditional structure of love lyrics and their implicit formula expressions. Having preserved the pragmatic and semantic markers in different

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<sup>2</sup> M. Lermontov wrote the tale "Ashik Kerib" in Tiflis in 1837(published in 1846),which further was translated into Armenian in 1857 by Stepanos Nazaryan.But along with Lermontov,Kh.Abovyan wrote romantic love stories of "Ashoogh Gharib" and "Asli-Kyaram" in 1840 and included them in the article titled "Armenian Spiritual and National Music" written in German.They remained out of the attention of Lermontov specialists and were not circulated in the scientific field.

historical-cultural contexts the mentioned models are changed and adjusted to the given ethnic society.

No doubt the transformations in the process of centuries have resulted in radical changes of the narrative tradition, which allows us to assess the phenomenon at length. Interestingly today the ashooghs who play and sing in the cafes or tea-houses are considered anachronical even in Islamic society. This is a problem which is in close links with cultural issues and needs to be seen either in accordance or not in maintaining any traditional values in modern society.

Today ashoogh music doesn't have the same sounding as before. Neither does it enjoy the same popularity, particularly in the case of the urban population. Besides, it is very difficult to "persuade" the present day ashooghs to move from place to place, to overcome the time and space obstacles in the society with quite different social-artistic values beyond the scope of mythological thinking. Some people who devoted themselves to the solution of the problems of preserving the performance environment of epic tale, have tried to open special cafes where ashoogh music and particularly dastans were envisaged to be performed. Whether it would contribute to preservation of the tradition in the cultural context of modern life, the future will show.

Although ashoogh love story was labelled as temporary, it is everlasting, so further manifestations and new interpretations may still occur. The modern performances of love stories prove that they are different from the traditional ones available in the classical period of the genre formation to a great extent. The gradual deviation of the scope of the genre may be conditioned by either mitigation of religious-aesthetic notions or by the reduction of the ashoogh art function in society.

Alienation of Armenian ashoogh art from the Near Eastern tradition brought to degradation of the classical model of love-lyrics in Armenian reality. After Jivani's and his contemporaries' works the genre was not developed any more. But the outstanding examples of its musical component as independent songs rooted in the life of Armenian people still exist in the folklore. "Kyoroghli" is mainly performed within the boundaries of the recitative style whereas "Ashough Gharib" is characterised by national song art features. Nevertheless it can be said both types occur in musical poetic portions of the love-story, i.e. we distinguish between the "hero ashoogh" and "ashoogh hero" conceptual differences of dastans, which are characterised either by archetypical perception peculiar to epic poems or by the melodic thinking prevailing in love-story genre of professional art music. The song-style prevalence in the late Armenian tradition could be also explained by the virtual loss of spiritual layer which is enriched with new structural elements - national songs.

The general basis of the origin and religious-ritual content of different types of Eastern love story is revealed through comparison. Here the creative nature of the genre is of great importance. Such approach allows us to compare it with other spiritual genres such as the sacred hymns, psalms, as well as Armenian Liturgy (Patarag), all symbolizing the original initiation rites, sacrifices, gift exchange etc in various traditions. In both cases the quintessence of the ritual is performed in a canonized way and the texts may be rendered without any music; but their main function is the initiation ceremony, the creative symbolism of which is emphasised through passing from narration to song. No wonder that for skilful story-tellers introductory wishes, blessings, prayer phrases and the formulaic speech of religious content were of utmost importance (Atayan, 1989).

We hope that the inclusion of the facts and scientific provisions related to Armenian professional art music will lay down the ways in the modern ethnomusicology to evaluate the historical role of Armenian musical tradition, as well as the contribution of Armenian musicians in the eastern traditional art music.

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MUSICAL ILLUSTRATIONS

**Քյորողլի** (Ձայնագր.՝ Սպ. Մելիքյան)  
**Kyorghli** (Recorded by Sp. Melikyan)

**Allegro**

Ով որ համ - բն - րանք ու - ննի - նա,  
 Համ - բն - րու - թյուն շատ լավ բան է,  
 Աշ - խար - հր պա - տիվ կրս - տա - նա,  
 Համ - բն - րու - թյուն պս - պնս բան է - հայ:

**Քյորողլի** (Ձայնագր.՝ Կոմիտաս)  
**Kyorghli** (Recorded by Komitas)

**Moderato**

Ու-ջա տաղ-լա - րն բա - շրն տա, ու-ջա տաղ-լա - րն բա - շրն-տա,  
 ննմ-լու, ննմ - լու, գար գնո - բյու - նյոր և-յի, և - յի,  
 հայ և - յի, և - յի, մն - նրմ բու - սր ջըբ գնոզ - լու-մն,  
 ա - լա - գնոզ - լու յար գնո - բյու - նյոր, հայ,  
 յար գնո - բյու - նյոր: հայ, յար գնո - բյու - նյոր: