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## ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

## GENRE AND STYLE CHARACTERISTICS OF SHIRVAN ASHIQ SONGS

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## GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK

**Relevance and processing degree of the topic.** Azerbaijani ashig art is a syncretic and synthetic form of art that serves as a national-spiritual treasure and tangible cultural value of the people, encompassing centuries-old creative traditions and historical stages of development. Combining various directions of culture, ashig creativity has long served as an interesting research subject for multiple academic disciplines, particularly in the studies of philologists, folklorists, and musicologists, who have addressed a wide range of related issues. Since the first half of the XX century, the study of ashig art by musicologists has led to the emergence of a significant body of scientific work.

Despite this, ashig art continues to evolve, expand and modernize and many issues still remain unresolved, offering broad prospects for further research. Historically transmitted orally, ashig art has managed to survive to the present day, preserving its authenticity despite facing numerous pressures and changes. It has spread across a wide geographic area, forming distinct regional traditions and schools within those environments. Each of these regions stands out with its rich repertoire, performance traditions, and specific dialectological features, continuing to pose new research questions today. In the field of ashig studies, the investigation of regional traditions has become a specific direction since the second half of the XX century. In this regard, the study of the Shirvan ashig environment-where tradition and modernity are intertwined-along with its rich repertoire of dastans (epic narratives), musical forms, and performance characteristics, makes the topic of this dissertation highly relevant.

Although numerous studies carried out by philologists and musicologists have yielded positive results, a comprehensive exploration of this field, particularly the study of musical dialectology, still necessitates further investigation of certain issues. Each scholarly work not only attempts to resolve a specific problem but also opens new perspectives for future research. In this context, the study of ashig art in terms of regional environments and schools

has become increasingly prevalent in recent times and serves as one of the indicators that underscores the relevance of the present dissertation topic.

The Congresses of Azerbaijani ashıqs, held intermittently since 1928 including the 5th Congress in 2008 and the inclusion of ashıq art in 2009 in UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity as a national artistic expression of the Azerbaijani people, have further intensified scholarly interest in this field. These significant events in the cultural life of the country once again drew attention to ashıq art, contributing to the formation of its contemporary artistic and aesthetic standards.

The preservation of the ashıq repertoire and performance traditions, the safeguarding of regional characteristics, and their transmission to future generations have become priorities of modern cultural policy. In this regard, the study of the Shirvan ashıq environment is of great importance in terms of sustaining regional traditions and passing them on to the younger generation. The topic of the dissertation, which involves the examination of the genre and stylistic features of this environment, contributes to the enrichment of regional studies and presents several new perspectives for future research.

Although the musicological study of ashıq art began somewhat later, researchers have nonetheless achieved numerous scientifically significant results. The eminent composer and scholar Uzeyir Hajibeyli, who made exceptional contributions to the development of Azerbaijani musicology, was the first to address the position of ashıq art within national music.

He also examined ensemble composition and proposed a classification of melodies based on their structure-such as metrical vs. non-metrical, and lyrical vs. epic<sup>1</sup>. Subsequently, Bulbul explored the general characteristics of ashıq creativity, including its repertoire and classification principles<sup>2</sup>. Afrasiyab Badalbeyli clarified the etymology of the word ashıq and addressed several terminological

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<sup>1</sup> Hacıbəyov, Ü.Ə. Seçilmiş əsərləri / Ü.Ə.Hacıbəyov. – Bakı: Yazıçı, – 1985. – 653 s.

<sup>2</sup> Bülbül. Seçilmiş məqalə və məruzələri / tərt., komentari və qeydlər ed. Ə.İ.İsazadə, Q.A.Qasımov – Bakı: Azərbaycan SSR Elmlər Akademiyası, – 1968. – 138 s.

issues related to ashiq art<sup>3</sup>. M.İsmayilov further developed these topics in his research by categorizing ashiq creativity according to thematic content, identifying the characteristic features of melodies, and grouping them based on performance techniques<sup>4</sup>.

The first comprehensive study of ashiq art in Azerbaijani musicology was carried out by A.Eldarova. She examined ashiq art from literary-historical and theoretical perspectives, and-most notably-classified ashiqs into regional traditions based on their performance practices. Alongside the ashiq environments of Goycha, Nakhchivan, Borchali, Tovuz, Ganja, and Gazakh, the Shirvan ashiq tradition also became an object of her scholarly inquiry<sup>5</sup>. The researcher shared her personal insights regarding the Shirvan environment, which is distinguished by its unique performance style, epic narratives (dastans), musical repertoire, and deep-rooted traditions. She also provided a detailed analysis of the modal and formal characteristics of the melodies and offered extensive information about the saz instrument and its tunings. Her scholarly work also reflects numerous and diverse explanations of terms related to the ashiq (folk minstrel) art<sup>6</sup>.

When discussing the study of Azerbaijani ashiq art in the research of musicologists, the name of Professor T.Mammadov deserves particular mention. His scholarly investigations in this field represent an invaluable contribution to contemporary musicology. She expanded on A.Eldarova's classification by regions, approaching Azerbaijani ashiq creativity from a broader perspective (including Tabriz, Karadag, Daralayaz, and others). Additionally, she investigated the environments and schools of ashiq music, its historical, poetic, and melodic aspects, and transcribed traditional

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<sup>3</sup> Bədəlbəyli, Ə.B. İzahlı monoqrafik musiqi lüğəti / Ə.B.Bədəlbəyli. – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2017. – 511 s.

<sup>4</sup> İsmayilov, H.Ə. Aşıq yaradıcılığı: mənşəyi və inkişaf mərhələləri / H.Ə.İsmayilov. – Bakı: Elm, – 2006, – 310 s.

<sup>5</sup> Eldarova, Ə.M. Azərbaycan aşıq sənəti / Ə.M.Eldarova. – Bakı: Elm, – 1986. – 165 s.

<sup>6</sup> Eldarova, Ə.M. Azərbaycan aşıq sənəti və ədəbi musiqi terminləri lüğəti / Ə.M.Eldarova. – Bakı: Elm, – 1985.– 86s.

ashiq melodies as well as the “Koroglu” melodies into musical notation<sup>7</sup>.

The study of ashiq art has also been reflected in the research of Professor K.Dadash-zadeh. In his works, the musicologist investigated a number of theoretical aspects of ashiq art, including the analysis of the epic (dastan) as an artistic-musical-poetic system<sup>8</sup>. She has investigated the issues of musical synergy in the Azerbaijani heroic epic, as well as comprehensively analyzed the traditions and criteria of ashiq creativity in various regions<sup>9</sup>, including music dialectology and related problems<sup>10</sup>. In a methodological guide dedicated to master ashiq Shamil Piriyeu, a prominent figure of the Shirvan ashiq tradition, the scholar not only highlighted the artist's life and artistic activity but also transcribed melodies from his repertoire into musical notation<sup>11</sup>.

Professor I.Kocherli has made significant contributions to the inclusion of melodies belonging to the Shirvan ashiq tradition into academic research. In his PhD dissertation in Art Studies, she investigated the “Shikeste” genre, analyzed various examples-including those from the Shirvan region and provided a music-theoretical evaluation<sup>12</sup>.

Her doctoral dissertation in Art Studies has also made valuable contributions to the field by addressing the issues of syncretism and synthesis in ashiq art<sup>13</sup>. Additionally, PhD in Art Studies and Associate Professor K.Atakishiyeva studied the interrelations between

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<sup>7</sup> Məmmədov, T.A. Azərbaycan xalq professional musiqisi: aşiq sənəti // – Bakı: Musiqi dünyası. – 2001. № 1-2, – s. 122-129.

<sup>8</sup> Дадаш-заде, К.Г. Знаковая система дастана / К. Г.Дадаш-заде. –Бакы: Нурлан, –2004. –292 с.

<sup>9</sup> Dadaş-zadə, K.H. Azərbaycan qəhrəmanlıq eposunun musiqi sinergetikası: / sənəşünaslıq elmlər doktoru dis.avtoreferatı. / - Bakı, 2024. – 46s.

<sup>10</sup> Dadaş-zadə, K.H. Aşıqşünaslığın tarixi və nəzəriyyəsi (Ali musiqi məktəbləri üçün dərslik) / K.H.Dadaşzadə. – Bakı:ADMİU-nun mətbəəsi– 2019. – 153 s.

<sup>11</sup> Axundova, K.H. Aşıq Şamil Piriyeu. Metodiki material / K.H.Axundova. – Bakı: Azərnəşr, – 1988. –18 s.

<sup>12</sup> Köçərli, İ.T. Azərbaycan xalq musiqi yaradıcılığında “Şikəstə” / İ.T.Köçərli. – Bakı: Tural, – 2003. – 124 s.

<sup>13</sup> Köçərli, İ.T. Aşıq sənəti: sinkretizm və sintez problemlərinin tədqiqi: / sənəşünaslıq üzrə elmlər doktoru dis.avtoreferatı. / - Bakı, 2012. – 50s.

khananda (mugham singer) and ashig performance traditions, and included several Shirvan ashig melodies in her research<sup>14</sup>.

The study of ashig art within a regional context has gained broader momentum since the second half of the 20th century, characterized by a number of significant research works. Notably, the first dissertation dedicated to the Shirvan ashig milieu was produced by PhD in Art Studies, Kh.Aliyeva. By synthesizing information obtained from musicological field research and written sources, she identified the traditional features of the milieu and, in the theoretical section of her dissertation, grouped and analyzed certain melodies in terms of their modal characteristics<sup>15</sup>. In the monograph titled “Khizi ashigs”<sup>16</sup>, co-authored by Professor A.Najafzadeh and musicologist S.Najafzadeh, the lives and artistic activities of 30 ashigs from the region were examined. Musicologists H.Mammadli<sup>17</sup>, <sup>18</sup> and I.Israfilova<sup>19</sup> transcribed several Shirvan peshrovs into musical notation and provided their modal and melodic analysis.

Imamverdiyev has examined the characteristic features of Azerbaijani ashig performance through the lens of the Western region, focusing on the modal structures, metrorhythmic patterns, and variants of melodies specific to this area, as well as the fretting and tuning of the saz, instrumental performance techniques, lyrical exchanges (deyishme), and epic recitation practices<sup>20</sup>. In his dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Science in Art Studies, he investigated the interrelations between the performance

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<sup>14</sup> Atakişiyeva, K.Ə. Şifahi ənənəli Azərbaycan professional musiqisi: aşiq və xanəndə yaradıcılığı / K.Ə.Atakişiyeva. – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, – 2020. – 136 s.

<sup>15</sup> Əliyeva, X.A. Şirvan aşiq havalarının məqam və melodiya xüsusiyyətləri: / sənətsünashlıq üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis./ – Bakı, 2014, – 160 s.

<sup>16</sup> Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Xızı aşıqları / A.İ.Nəcəfzadə, S.C.Nəcəfzadə.– Bakı: Xəzər universiteti, – 2020. 208 s.

<sup>17</sup> Məmmədli, H.H. “Çoban yaylağı” peşrovu // – Bakı: Konservatoriya, – 2017. №2, s. 47-51.

<sup>18</sup> Məmmədli, H.H. “Telli sazım” peşrovu // – Bakı: Konservatoriya, – 2018. №2, – s. 47-50.

<sup>19</sup> İsrailova, İ.Q. “Əlicadı” (Əli icadı) peşrov // – Bakı: Elmi əsərlər, – 2021.№2, s.148-154.

<sup>20</sup> İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Azərbaycan aşiq sənətinin səciyyəvi xüsusiyyətləri (Qərb bölgəsi üzrə) / İ.C.İmamverdiyev. – Bakı: Şirvanşəsr, – 2004, – 137 s.

practices of ashıqs from Azerbaijan and those of the Turkic ashıqs of Iran (Southern Azerbaijan)<sup>21</sup>. Additionally, he transcribed into notation various melodies from different regional traditions, among which are examples belonging to the Shirvan ashıqs<sup>22</sup>.

Among regional studies, the research conducted by musicologist scholar Azad Ozan Karimli<sup>23</sup> on the Tovuz region, H.Karimov<sup>24</sup> on Borchali, and M.Aliyev<sup>25</sup> on the Gadabay environment represent significant contributions in this field. Following his dissertation dedicated to the study of the saz melodies of the Tovuz ashıq school, A.Karimli also included the Childır<sup>26</sup> and Goycha<sup>27, 28, 29</sup> ashıq schools in his research. PhD in Art Studies, M.Aliyev, in addition to his dissertation dedicated to the Gadabay ashıq school-focusing on the region's traditional features, melodic repertoire, and other specific characteristics-is also a co-author, along with S.Karimi and A.Guliyev, of the textbook "Saz School"<sup>30</sup>, which stands as one of the first educational resources on the teaching of ashıq art. H.Karimov identified the role of the Borchali school in the

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<sup>21</sup> İmamverdiyev, M.C. Azərbaycan və İran türklərinin aşiq-ifaçılıq sənətinin qarşılıqlı əlaqələri. / sənətsünaslıq üzrə elmlər doktoru dis. avtoreferatı / - Bakı, 2008. – 56 s.

<sup>22</sup> İmamverdiyev, İ.C. Saz havaları antologiyası / İ.C.İmamverdiyev. – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, – 2013. – 1112 s.

<sup>23</sup> Керимов, А.К. (Азад Озан Керимли). Таузская школа ашыгов Азербайджана. Дисс.насоис.уч.степ.кан.искусствоведения / – Баку: 1995, -190 с.

<sup>24</sup> Kərimov, H.V. Borçalı aşıqlarının musiqi yaradıcılığı / H.V.Kərimov. – Bakı: ADMİU, – 2019.– 280 s.

<sup>25</sup> Əliyev, M.F. Gədəbəy aşıq mühiti və onun ifaçılıq ənənələri. / Sənətsünaslıq üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru elmi dərəcəsi almaq üçün təqdim edilmiş dissertasiya / Bakı:2018, 156 s.

<sup>26</sup> Kərimli A.K. Çıldır aşıq məktəbi haqqında bilgiler // – Bakı: Azərbaycan musiqisi:tarix və müasir dövr toplusu, – 1994, – s. 128-131.

<sup>27</sup> Kərimli A.O. Göyçə aşıq məktəbi // – Bakı: Musiqi dünyası, – 2000. № 1 (2). – s. 66-72.

<sup>28</sup> Kərimli, A. O. Göyçə Aşiq məktəbi (ardı) // – Bakı: Musiqi dünyası, – 2000 . № 2(3) – s. 81-85.

<sup>29</sup> Kərimli, A. O. Göyçə Aşiq məktəbi // – Bakı: Musiqi dünyası, – 2001 . № 3-4 (9) – s. 132-141.

<sup>30</sup> Kərimi, S.Ə, Saz məktəbi. Dərslük. / S.Ə.Kərimi, A.N.Quliyev, M.F.Əliyev. – Bakı: Qarabağ, – 2007. – 229 s.



development of Azerbaijani ashig art and clarified issues related to the melodic repertoire and traditional performance practices.

Professor E.Babayev (1948–2003), in his discussion of the rhythm and intonation aspects of mugham dastgahs, also analyzed ashig songs (melodies) within this framework<sup>31</sup>. The rhythmic characteristics of ashig melodies have likewise been addressed in the research of Professor F.Khaligzadeh, who investigated the rhythmic formulas of musical phrases<sup>32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38</sup>. Ethnoorganologist S.Abdullayeva has documented the dimensions, tuning methods, and names of the frets of the saz instrument from various regional traditions, including the Shirvan saz<sup>39</sup>. N.Rahimbayli has conducted a theoretical analysis of the ashig Garib dastan, examining not only its poetic text but also its modal-intonational structure, melody, rhythm, and formal characteristics<sup>40</sup>.

Since its inception, Azerbaijani ashig art has undergone a broad and dynamic development up to the present day. As early as the beginning of the 20th century, it began to be studied within the field of

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<sup>31</sup> Babayev, E.Ə. Şifahi ənənəli Azərbaycan musiqisində intonasiya problemləri / E.Ə.Babayev. – Bakı: Elm, – 1998. – 146 s.

<sup>32</sup> Xalıqzadə, F.X. Aşıq musiqisində musiqili-poetik formullar // – Bakı: Elm və həyat, 198. – s 26-27

<sup>33</sup> Xalıqzadə, F.X. Aşıq ritminin bəzi xüsusiyyətləri haqqında // Bakı: Qobustan – 1983. №1, – s 70.

<sup>34</sup> Xalıqzadə, F.X. Azərbaycan xalq musiqisində “bəhrsiz” ritm anlayışına dair // – Bakı: Azərbaycan milli musiqisinin tədqiqi problemləri, I buraxılış, – 1992. – s. 54-59.

<sup>35</sup> Xalıqzadə, F.X. Layla və oxşamaların ritmikasına dair // – Bakı: Azərbaycan milli musiqisinin tədqiqi problemləri, II buraxılış, – 1996. – s. 8-13.

<sup>36</sup> Xalıqzadə, F.X. Üzeyir Hacıbəyli və folklor / F.X.Xalıqzadə. – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2014, – 276 s.

<sup>37</sup> Халыгзаде, Ф.Х. Изучение хромых размеров аксак и перспективы музыкальной тюркологии // International Society for Music Education. 33rd World Conference, – Баку: Елм, – 15-20 ияль, – 2018, – с. 482-488.

<sup>38</sup> Халыгзаде, Ф.Х. Ритмика Азербайджанской народной музыки: автореф. диссерт. на соиск. научной степени кандидата искусств. / – Москва, 1985. – 22 с.

<sup>39</sup> Abdullayeva, S.A. Azərbaycan xalq çalğı alətləri / S.A.Abdullayeva. – Bakı: Adiloğlu, –2002. – 454 s.

<sup>40</sup> Rəhimbəyli, N.R. “Aşıq Qərib” dastanı əsasında Azərbaycan dastanlarının melo-poetikası / N.R.Rəhimbəyli. – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2009. – 535 s.

philology, with comprehensive research conducted on the activities of ashiqs, as well as their epic and poetic creativity, yielding significant results. The works of G.Namazov<sup>41</sup>, H.Arasli<sup>42</sup>, A.Jafarzadeh<sup>43</sup>, M.Gasimli<sup>44</sup>, S.Ganiyev<sup>45</sup>, and others in this field are highly commendable. In this context, the contributions of S.Ganiyev deserve special mention. He was the first scholar in literary folklore studies to examine ashiq art from a regional perspective, and his numerous books on the Shirvan cultural environment have been published. Alongside his monographs on the creative work of master ashiqs of Shirvan, his books dedicated to the history and cultural heritage of the region are of great significance. Among the philologist scholars studying ashiq art in the context of regional environments, aside from M.Gasimli, the names of A.Nabiyev<sup>46</sup>, H.Ismayilov<sup>47</sup> and others can also be mentioned. All the aforementioned works have made important contributions to the study of ashiq art and have served as scholarly sources in the preparation of this dissertation.

**Object and subject of the research.** The object of the research is the Shirvan ashiq environment, while the subject comprises the melodies specific to this environment, including their genre and stylistic characteristics, as well as their modal, melodic, and rhythmic features.

**Purpose and objectives of the research.** The primary aim of this dissertation is to study the genre and stylistic characteristics of the Shirvan ashiq songs (havalər). The musical creativity of Shirvan ashiqs holds a distinctive place among the various regional traditions

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<sup>41</sup> Namazov, Q.M. Azərbaycan aşığı sənəti / Q.M.Namazov. – Bakı: Yazıçı, – 1984, – 189 s.

<sup>42</sup> Araslı, H.M. Aşığı yaradıcılığı / H.M.Araslı. – Bakı: Birləşmiş Nəşriyyat, – 1960. – 136 s.

<sup>43</sup> Cəfərzadə, Ə.M. Şirvanın 350 şairi / Ə.M.Cəfərzadə, S.H.Qəniyev. – Bakı: Ünsiyyat, – 1999. 224 s.

<sup>44</sup> Qasımlı M.P. Ozan aşığı sənəti / M.P.Qasımlı. – Bakı: Uğur, – 2011, II redaksiya. – 304 s.

<sup>45</sup> Qəniyev, S.H. Şirvan aşığıları / S.H.Qəniyev. – Bakı: Nurlan– 2007. – 736s.

<sup>46</sup> Nəbiyev, A.M. Azərbaycan aşığı məktəbləri / A.M.Nəbiyev. – Bakı: Nurlan, – 2004. – 310 s.

<sup>47</sup> İsmayilov, H.Ə. Aşığı yaradıcılığı: mənşəyi və inkişaf mərhələləri / H.Ə.İsmayilov. – Bakı: Elm, – 2006, – 310 s.

of Azerbaijan due to its unique repertoire, style, genre structure, performance practices, and developmental dynamics. These original qualities distinguish the Shirvan tradition and constitute the central focus of this research. To classify the melodic repertoire of the Shirvan environment into genres, both master performers and younger musicians have recognized the existence of melody cycles. However, the internal structure of these cycles has not yet been fully defined. Therefore, to address this issue thoroughly, it has become necessary to study as much musical material from the region as possible, to collect genre-specific examples through interviews with Shirvan ashiks, to refine them through theoretical analysis, and to distinguish melodic variants from independent melodies.

Accordingly, the following objectives have been set in order to achieve the main aim of the research:

- To trace the formation, development, and geographical spread of the Shirvan ashik tradition and identify its performance practices;
- To conduct a systematic analysis of the musical repertoire of the Shirvan environment, clarifying the issue of variation in both traditional and later-formed ashik melodies;
- To explore the poetic texts of Shirvan ashik melodies, particularly their place within epic narratives (dastans);
- To categorize the melodies according to series and determine their genre characteristics based on style.

**Research Methods.** In studying the historical development of the Shirvan ashik tradition, the historical-ethnomusicological method was employed, while the examination of historical sources relied on the historical-genetic approach. The role of prominent representatives of this environment in the development of ashik art, their participation in congresses and concerts, and their engagement with other cultural events were analyzed using the sociocultural method. The traditional characteristics of the environment and the genre-specific features of the melodies were identified through typological analysis. Furthermore, the melodies were classified into series using the structural-typological method, and further categorized by their metrical structure (regular meter and mixed meter genres), with the overall corpus analyzed through a structural

approach. A comparative analysis method was applied to examine the relationship between serial melodies of the Shirvan tradition-such as Mukhammasses, Gozellemes, Shikestess, and Geraylis-and similar examples from other regional traditions.

The theoretical section of the dissertation is grounded in the scientific findings of researchers such as U.Hajibeyli, A.Eldarova, T.Mammadov, F.Khaligzadeh, A.Karimov, I.Imamverdiyev, K.Dadash-zadeh, I.Kocherli, K.Atakishiyeva, Kh.Aliyeva, M.Aliyev, H.Karimov, among others, whose works have addressed various aspects of ashig art.

In preparing the dissertation, scholarly works on ashig art-especially those concerning the Shirvan tradition-have been referenced, incorporating both historical and theoretical principles. In the theoretical section, melodies performed by master ashigs of the Shirvan school were analyzed, including sound and tape recordings, as well as transcriptions made by the author during personal fieldwork. These included Gozellemes, Shashangis, Mukhammasses, Peshrovs, Shikestes, Geraylis, Ordubadis, Qafiyas, and other melodies.

Additionally, several examples referenced in the study were transcribed by K.Akhundova (Dadash-zadeh) from the performances of master ashig Shamil Piriyeu of Shirvan. The musical notation of “Shirvan Shikestessi” is attributed to H.Adigozalzadeh. For comparative purposes, notations by T.Mammadov and I. Imamverdiyev were also consulted in this section.

**Key provisions submitted for defense.** The research and analysis conducted in order to achieve the stated objective of the dissertation, along with the resulting scientific findings, necessitate the formulation of several key propositions which constitute the core direction of this study:

-The Shirvan ashig environment constitutes a significant branch of Azerbaijani ashig art, characterized by its repertoire (nearly 80 pieces), diverse performance traditions, and other distinctive regional features.

-In this region, the parallel development of ashig and mugham art led to their mutual influence, with the naming of the frets on the Shirvan ashig saz being directly connected to mugham.

-The ashig melodies of the Shirvan environment are distinguished by a considerable number of traditional and newly emerged examples, making it necessary to conduct a thorough genre classification.

-The epic storytelling traditions of Shirvan ashigs differ from those of other regions, reflecting unique performance characteristics.

-To identify the stylistic features of Shirvan ashig melodies, key elements such as melody, mode, rhythm, poetic content, and the local performance traditions of the environment play a fundamental role.

**The scientific novelty of the research.** Although certain melodies from the Shirvan ashig environment have been analyzed in some previous studies, this dissertation is the first to comprehensively examine their corpus in terms of genre classification and stylistic characteristics. This constitutes the main scientific novelty of the presented work. In earlier research, the focus was primarily on the genre aspects of Shirvan ashig songs (melodies), while their stylistic features were not systematically studied for scholarly purposes. From this perspective, the present dissertation can be regarded as the first theoretical and scientific work dedicated to this topic.

In particular, the following contributions are presented for the first time in this research:

-The performance traditions of the Shirvan ashig environment have been illuminated, and the role of each performer within the ensemble has been defined;

-For the first time in Azerbaijani ethnomusicology, an attempt has been made to comprehensively cover the musical creativity of Shirvan ashigs;

-In the dissertation, Shirvan ashig melodies have been classified according to their characteristics as traditional melody collections and ashig songs;

-For the first time, a series of melodies including Peshrov, Gozelleme, Shashangi, Mukhammas, Shikestes, Ordubadi, Gerayli, and others have been collected, their number determined, and systematized;

-For the first time, Shirvan ashig songs, their origins, and their place in the repertoire have been identified; in addition, both

traditional ashik melodies and ashik songs that have influenced the repertoire of khananda (mugham singers) have been studied;

-For the first time, Shirvan ashik songs have been classified according to their metrorhythmic characteristics;

-For the first time, the modal, melodic, and other stylistic features of the Shirvan ashik songs have been subjected to theoretical analysis in a comprehensive manner.

-In order to define the stylistic features of Shirvan ashik melodies (songs), key factors such as melodic structure, modal characteristics (magam), rhythmic patterns, poetic content, and local performance traditions play a decisive role.

**Theoretical and Practical Significance of the Research.** The main findings of the dissertation may serve as scholarly sources for ethnomusicologists and researchers of ashik music. The information presented in the dissertation can be utilized in the teaching of subjects related to folk music and ashik creativity at institutions such as specialized secondary music schools, music-oriented vocational colleges, the Azerbaijan National Conservatory, the Uzeyir Hajibeyli Baku Music Academy, the Azerbaijan State University of Culture and Arts, as well as other higher education institutions offering music education. Relevant courses may include “Creative Traditions of Azerbaijani Folk Music,” “Notation of Azerbaijani Folk Music”, “Music of Turkic Peoples” and “Music of regional ashik schools” among others. Furthermore, the research findings may serve as a scientific resource for specialists engaged in the study of the Shirvan ashik milieu.

**Approbation and application.** The main findings and theses of the dissertation have been reflected in 8 articles published in peer-reviewed academic journals included in international abstracting and indexing systems of countries such as Azerbaijan and Turkey, as well as in 9 conference presentations. Papers related to the topic have been presented at various national and international scientific-theoretical conferences.

**Name of the organization where the dissertation work is carried out.** The dissertation was completed at the Department of Ethnomusicology of the Azerbaijan National Conservatory.

**The total volume of the dissertation with a sign, indicating the volume of the structural units of the dissertation separately.** The dissertation consists of an Introduction, 3 Chapters (comprising 6 paragraphs), a Conclusion, a List of References, Musical Notations, Electronic Resources, and Appendices. The Introduction is 10 pages long and contains 17092 characters; Chapter I consists of 46 pages and 70173 characters; Chapter II comprises 38 pages and 70607 characters; Chapter III contains 45 pages and 58038 characters; and the Conclusion spans 5 pages with 8507 characters. Excluding the “List of References,” musical notations, electronic resources, and appendices, the total length of the dissertation is 146 pages and 224417 characters.

## **MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION**

In the **Introduction** of the dissertation, the relevance and degree of development of the topic are substantiated; the object, subject, purpose, and objectives of the research are defined; the main propositions submitted for defense, the scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance, approbation, application, and the structure of the work are presented.

**Chapter I** of the dissertation is titled “**The role and significance of ashiq art in the historical and socio-cultural environment of Shirvan**” and consists of three subsections. The first subsection, **1.1.** is entitled “**The historical formation and main stages of development of the Shirvan ashiq art**”. This section provides information on the history, social, cultural, and societal landscape of Shamakhi, the center of the Shirvan environment, as well as the formation of various art forms. The paragraph examines historical data on the Shirvan environment based on scholarly sources, exploring its roots, including Sufi and tekke (dervish lodge) orders. It also presents information about the saz instrument performed by ashiks living and creating in the region, their musical repertoire, and epics. Furthermore, the masters of the Shirvan ashik environment and the traditions of their schools are reviewed.

## **1.2. titled “Performance traditions of Shirvan ashiks”**

focuses on the investigation of performance practices specific to the Shirvan milieu. Unlike other regional traditions, melodies in the Shirvan ashik environment are performed with ensemble accompaniment. The ensemble, led by the ashik, typically includes two balaban players, a percussion instrument (qosha naghara), and a vocalist known as the ashik khananda. One of the distinctive features of Shirvan ashiks is their practice of performing a mugham mode at the beginning of the havas (ashik melosies), and sometimes between the second and third stanzas, in accordance with the magam. Another characteristic specific to performers from the Shirvan milieu is the inclusion of mugham at the beginning of a melody or, in some cases, between the second and third verses-performed in a manner appropriate to the mode (magam). When performed at the beginning, mugham is rendered instrumentally; when performed between verses, it is presented vocally. The balaban plays a significant role within the Shirvan ashik ensemble. While one balaban player performs the main melodic line, the second serves a supporting role, sustaining tones on pitches that correspond to the melody and mode. Balaban players are regarded as the second most important performers in the ensemble, immediately following the ashik.

The second paragraph also provides information on the structural features of the balaban as performed in Shirvan, the role of percussion instruments, the unique characteristics of ensemble performance, the term “ashik-khananda”, epic storytelling traditions, and the shared aspects of the ashik-khananda repertoire.

The third paragraph is entitled **1.3. “Investigation of the musical repertoire of Shirvan ashiks”**. The main objective here is to examine the musical repertoire of Shirvan ashiks and conduct a genre classification, as well as to determine the number, variants, and both classical and regional musical examples. In this section, based on samples obtained during field expeditions and written sources, the types and variants of series-based melodies specific to the Shirvan region-such as Peshrov, Qafiya, Shashangi, Mukhammas, Gozelleme, Ordubadi, Geraylı, and Shikestes-have been compared, and their total number has been identified. Special attention has been



given to pieces performed under different titles but essentially representing the same variant (e.g., “Chobanyaylaglı Peshrov” = “Telli Sazim Peshrov”), as well as to melodies previously considered identical (e.g., “Alicadı Peshrov” and “Hicazi Peshrov”), thereby addressing certain issues of variation. The list also takes into account ashik songs whose inclusion in the total count had previously raised questions.

Thus, through the investigation of traditional musical pieces based on the performances of local ashiks and various written sources, we have identified 11 variants of Peshrov, 7 of Shashangi, 6 of Mukhammas, 2 of Ordubadı, 3 of Gozelleme, 2 of Qafiya, 2 of Karami, 4 of Geraylı, 8 of Shikestes, and 2 of the Koroghlu tunes. Naturally, this classification excludes forgotten, obsolete, or repetitive variants of the same pieces. Taking into account the compositions already known to us for instance, 18 by Ashiq Panah (e.g., “Panah Gozelleme”), 20 by Ashiq Xanmusa (e.g., “Khazarim”, “Shen Bahar”, “Kokhozchu gızlar”), and numerous others by Ashiq Bilal (e.g., “Bilal Peshrovu”, “Bilal Shashangi”) it is reasonable to propose that the overall musical repertoire of the Shirvan ashik tradition comprises close to, if not more than, 80 distinct pieces.

Chapter II of the dissertation of the dissertation is titled “**The genre characteristics of Shirvan ashiks**”. This chapter comprises three subsections. The first subsection, **2.1. “Issues of genre classification of Shirvan ashik songs”** aims to clarify the genre categorization of ashik melodies (songs) specific to the Shirvan region based on their stylistic features namely melodic structure, modal (magam) system, and rhythmic patterns and to propose a classification framework. Relying on these characteristics, attempts have been made to classify the melodies in several variants by drawing upon the genre classifications previously developed by prominent musicologists such as Ü.Hajibeyli, M.Ismayilov, A.Eldarova, I.Kocharli, and T.Mammadov.

Thus, considering that the previously proposed classification models do not fully encompass the entire repertoire when applied to the Shirvan ashik songs (melodies), we find it more appropriate to classify them according to melodic cycles. It should be noted that the

notion of cyclicity in the Shirvan ashik tradition bears a unique significance in the first place, each melody retains its independence. The melodies that belong to a given cycle are performed autonomously in various gatherings and concerts, without any dependence on the other elements of the cycle. Based on the stylistic features of Shirvan ashik melodies, they can be grouped into genre categories according to the following melodic types (cycles): 1. Peshrovs; 2. Qafiyas; 3. Shashangis; 4. Mukhammasses; 5. Gozellemes; 6. Geraylis; 7. Shikestes; 8. Karamis; 9. Ordubadis; 10. Koroghlu songs; ashik songs.

The second paragraph of Chapter Two is titled **2.2. “The Genre Specificity of Shirvan ashik songs”**. This section highlights the core aspects that shape the genre specificity of the melodies characteristic of the Shirvan region. The cyclic melodies, which dominate the repertoire, are also recognized as such by the ashik performers themselves. Interestingly, in addition to features such as rhythm, mode (magam), melody, and other musical elements, these melodies also exhibit distinctive traits that signify their specific genre identity. It is precisely due to these features that newly composed pieces can be classified into appropriate genre categories. In particular, the local characteristics of the melodies are closely tied to their genre specificity.

The Peshrov genre, widely prevalent in the Shirvan ashik tradition, also appears in Turkish, Arabic, and Azerbaijani folk music traditions. In all contexts, Peshrov functions as an introductory form, with its name meaning “introduction,” “beginning,” or “that which goes ahead, in front.” In Azerbaijan, Peshrovs are uniquely attributed to the Shirvan ashik repertoire. In fact, within this tradition, a performer who is unable to play Peshrov melodies is not considered a true ashik. In Shirvan, Peshrovs are typically performed to mark the opening of an ashik gathering or a wedding ceremony.

Among the melodies performed within the Shirvan ashik tradition, Gafiya holds a special place. As a musical-poetic genre, Gafiya represents a form of qoshma (a classical Azerbaijani poetic structure) within ashik literature and embodies its distinctive characteristics. In the Shirvan ashik milieu, both versions of the

Gafiya melodies - “Gullu Gafiya” and “Gara Gafiya” - are based on qoshma texts. According to information provided by master ashiks, “Gara Gafiya” is considered part of the Peshrov cycle and is sometimes referred to as “Gafiya Peshrovu”. “Gullu Gafiya” on the other hand, is a poetic text composed of 11-syllable lines written in a question answer style known in literature as “dedim-dedi” or “dedim-soyladi”. Interestingly, in the Western ashik tradition, the poetic content of “Gullu Gafiya” melodies is typically based on this stylistic form. However, in the Shirvan ashik tradition, the “flower” (gul) motif manifests not only in the lyrics but also melodically.

Among the series of melodies characterizing the environment, the Shashangis are also widely represented in the repertoire of Shirvan ashiks. No type of Shashangi-neither in name nor melody-has been encountered in other regions, making them a distinct feature of this particular area.

In the Shirvan ashik tradition, a significant portion of the repertoire is composed of lyrical melodies, or in other words, musical-poetic genres, in which the expressive characteristics of the poetic text and melody play a crucial role. The naming of a melody after a specific poetic form is not coincidental; rather, it directly reflects the genre's specificity. The poetic text transfers its genre-defining features to the melody, shaping its expressive means. This can be clearly observed in the melodic and textual structure of cycle-based melodies such as Mukhammas, Gafiya, Geraylı, and Gozelleme.

Mukhammas melodies are included in the repertoires of both the Western and Shirvan ashik environments. While the poetic texts of this series of melodies performed in other regions are composed in the mukhammas poetic form, in Shirvan they are sung in the geraylı poetic form. The mukhammas melodies begin with melismatic phrases featuring paused syncopation, which can be considered a genre-specific characteristic.

Gozelleme melodies are among the widely performed pieces in ashik creativity and are often sung in the geraylı poetic form in the Shirvan region. The poetic texts of Ordubadi melodies, on the other hand, are based on either geraylı or qoshma verse structures. One of the well-developed musical-poetic genres in Azerbaijani ashik art is

the Geraylı, which has also found its place in the repertoire of Shirvan ashıqs. In the Shirvan ashıq tradition, the Karami genre includes melodies such as “Doyma Karami” and “Guba Karami”. Of these, the former is a traditional melody bearing distinct local characteristics. Shikestes melodies hold a central place in Azerbaijani national music and are widespread in both mugham and ashıq art. As noted by I.Kocharli, ‘...a new branch of the Shikestes genre emerged in connection with the Shirvan ashıq school traditions’<sup>48</sup>. Within this context, the following Shikestes melodies are performed in Shirvan: “Shirvan Shikestes”, “Karam Shikestes”, “Sarıtorpaq Shikestes”, “Yekma Shikestes” (also referred to as “Yekba Shikestes”), “Bayatı Shikestes”, “Zarncı Shikestes”, “Valicani Shikestes” and “Gobustani Shikestes” among others.

Thus, the name assigned to a hava (melodic piece) is closely connected to its poetic text and melodic style, both of which play a crucial role in shaping its genre-related expressive features. The specific characteristics that define melodic series are also reflected in the various stylistic attributes of the hava, serving as a basis for its classification within a particular group. Additionally, the use of descriptors such as “bash” (main), “ayaq” (closing), “orta” (middle), “zil” (high), “aghir” (slow), or “yeyin” (fast) preceding the name of a hava, based on the tuning in which it is performed, further indicates its genre specificity. The liveliness, ornamental richness, and “flowery” (gullu) phrasing observed in Shirvan ashıq songs (havas) are also key elements that reflect the melodic features characteristic of this musical environment. Accordingly, ashıqs named their havas by taking these criteria into account.

The final subsection of **Chapter II**, titled **2.3. “The connection of Shirvan ashıq songs (havas) with poetry, epics, and gatherings”**, explores the tradition of dastan (epic) performance within the Shirvan region. In this cultural environment, epic storytelling has been met with great interest and affection. According to master ashıqs, approximately 32 dastans have been performed in the Shirvan milieu. While some of these overlap with those found in

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<sup>48</sup> Köçərli, İ.T. Azərbaycan xalq musiqi yaradıcılığında “Şikəstə”: / sənətsünaslıq üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dis. /- Bakı, 1994. – 173s.

the Western ashik tradition, there also exist dastans unique to the Shirvan school. Examples include: “Koroghlu’s Journey to Shirvan”, “Kuchan Rza”, “Gahraman shah of Shirvan”, “Adigozal and Aslan shah”, “Yasef Khazri and Sahar Tabrizi”, “Canbakhish”, “Arif and Garanfil”, “Gaynana”, “Farmail and Khuraman” “Giyafat”, “Zanjani Qurban”, “Karam’s Journey to Beshdash”, “Ashiq Aghamammad and Maryam”, “Mustafa and Sanam Khanim”, “Seydi and Pari Khanim”, “Yetim Aydin” as well as those performed by ashik Asgar” (also known as Bala Alaskar), such as “Celali Mammad”, “Bikas”, “Prince Bahram”, “The Tale of Najaf”, “Seyf al-Mulk”, “Young Gulshan” and “Karam of Ordubad”. Furthermore, events from the lives of notable Shirvan ashiks have also been transformed into epic narratives and performed as dastans, such as “Ashiq Mirza Bilal”, “Ashiq Bilal and Badam Khanim”, “Ashiq Shakir’s Journey to Tovuz” and “Ashiq Ahmad and the Fortune Teller”.

In the Shirvan ashik milieu, depending on the region, the term dastan is also referred to as a tale (naghil). In some localities particularly in Gobustan and the surrounding areas-it is known as the “afternoon tale” (gunorta naghili). Historically, dastans were performed at specially organized gatherings attended by at least 100-150 men, the participation of women in such assemblies was not permitted. According to the performance traditions of the region, the gathering typically begins with the performance of one of the Peshrov (songs) melodies. This introductory piece is followed by the recitation of an ustadnameh (a master’s didactic poem). Tradition holds that three ustadnamehs must be performed at the beginning of a dastan, with the third being delivered to the melody of Shikestes. The Shikestes melodies also hold a distinct and significant role within the body of the dastan itself.

One of the most essential responsibilities of the ashik during the performance of a dastan is the appropriate selection of music. The musical material must be chosen to reflect the emotional essence of the unfolding events, enhance the artistic and aesthetic development of the narrative, and correspond to the meter of the poetic text. Shirvan ashiks have performed dastans using various melodies within a framework of established performance rules. Of primary importance is the structural

compatibility between the melodic form and the poetic form to be sung. More significantly, master ashigs of the Shirvan milieu recognized the artistic power of melody in revealing the ideological and emotional content of the dastan, and skillfully applied this understanding in their performances.

**Chapter III** of the dissertation is titled “**Stylistic features of Shirvan ashig songs (melodies)**”. This chapter consists of two subsections. The first subsection, **3.1. is titled “Modal and melodic characteristics of Shirvan ashig melodies”**. It analyzes the modal features of the following havas: “Chobanyaylaghi Peshrov”, “Obakochdu Peshrov”, “Telli Sazim Peshrov”, “Elicadi Peshrov”, “Ibrahimi Peshrov”, “Shamsi-Qamar Peshrov”, “Ayagh Shashangi”, “Orta Shashangi”, “Aghir Shashangi”, “Bilal Shashangisi” (also known as “Oynaq Shashangi”), “Zil Shashangi”, “Gullu Shashangi”, “Orta Mukhammas”, “Oynaq Mukhammas”, “Aghir Mukhammas”, “Yeyin Ordubadi”, “Zarindji Shikestes”, “Shirvan Shikestes”, “Bayati-Shikestes”, and “Gobustani Shikestes”.

Based on previous analyses of mode and melody, it was traditionally claimed that Shirvan havas were primarily built on the rast, shur, segah, and shahnaz modes. However, as a result of a comprehensive examination of a larger corpus of melodies, this research has identified new examples based on the bayati-Shiraz mode as well. Analysis of the selected samples reveals that the modes manifest both diatonically and chromatically-particularly in melodies based on the Shur mode. The intonational characteristics, tonic pitches, and high-register sub-modes of each mode are clearly perceptible in the melodic development of the hava.

Moreover, the dynamic development of the underlying mugham-such as cadential pauses on tonic tones and modulation to higher-register submodes-is reflected in the melodic contour of the hava. This aspect of modal progression, highlighted for the first time in this study, is particularly distinctive in Shirvan ashig melodies (songs).

In terms of melodic development, and in accordance with A.Eldarova’s classification, the melodies can be grouped as follows:

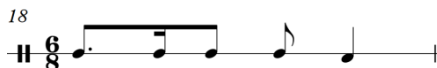
- Shikestes, Karami, and other mixed-prosody melodies – recitative-declamatory in style;

- Peshrovs, Qafiyas, Mukhammas pieces, and some Shashangis – recitative-declamatory with song-like elements;
- Shashangis, Gozellemes, Ordubadis, and ashik songs – characterized by distinctly song-like melodic traits

The final subsection of the third chapter, titled **3.2. “Metrorhythmic characteristics of Shirvan ashik songs”** focuses on identifying the rhythmic formulas that emerge from the synthesis of poetic text and melody-formulas that are instrumental in defining the types of havas. It is now well established that in the Shirvan ashik milieu, many havas share common stylistic traits and form distinct melodic series. One of the stylistic features that enables these melodies to coalesce into such series is their rhythmic structure. Indeed, among the main distinguishing features of Gozelleme, Shashangi, Mukhammas, Peshrov, Gerayli, Shikestes and Karami type havas are their specific rhythmic formulas. Melodies with consistent rhythmic meter (known as bahrlis) are primarily based on a 6/8 meter, with a few in 4/4, while those with mixed rhythmic meters (mix bahrlis) are performed in 4/4 or occasionally 2/4 time. Among the most frequently encountered examples are those performed in 6/8 meter, which, despite sharing the same meter, differ in their rhythmic patterns-allowing them to be grouped according to series.

For instance, all Peshrovs follow the same fundamental rhythmic formula, but depending on the syllabic structure of the poetic text, various versions of this base pattern emerge-something also observed in other melodic series. The inclusion of monosyllabic interjections and certain formulaic expressions enriches these melobands (melodic-verse units), refining and enhancing the basic rhythmic structure. This core rhythmic formula also manifests in the accompaniment of percussion instruments within the ashik ensemble. One of the most commonly encountered patterns in Shirvan ashik music is exemplified by the following variant example omitted in text.

Example 3.2.1.



This rhythmic accompaniment is employed in the performance of Ordubadi, Gozelleme, Shashangi, and Mukhammas melodies

within the Shirvan ashig milieu. In the vocal sections, the gosha-naghara (double drum) performer plays the standard rhythmic formula characteristic of the melodic series. In the instrumental passages, however, the performer demonstrates both the capabilities of the instrument and their own technical skill by presenting various modifications of the basic rhythmic pattern. During these sections, longer rhythmic values are typically performed on the larger bowl of the gosha-naghara, while the main rhythmic formula is broken down into smaller subdivisions, dotted figures, and intricate embellishments on the smaller, higher-pitched bowl. This contributes to the overall liveliness and agility of the hava.

In melodies with mixed rhythmic meters, the vocal parts are delivered in a more freely improvised manner, meaning that the melos-lines do not adhere to a fixed rhythmic template as in bahrli melodies. Nonetheless, even in such cases, the performance does not deviate from the core structure. The rhythmic formula that typifies the melodic series continues to manifest through the accompaniment of the percussion instruments.

The **Conclusion** section of the dissertation summarizes the analyses conducted and the findings obtained. The results related to the repertoire, epic storytelling traditions, genre, stylistic, modal, and rhythmic features of the melodies characteristic of the Shirvan ashig milieu are outlined and systematized in the following points:

1. The Shirvan ashig milieu constitutes a significant branch of Azerbaijani ashig art. Alongside other regional traditions, it has established its own distinctive repertoire, genre and stylistic features, and performance practices. This tradition has developed and evolved over centuries. According to researchers, it has been represented from the creative work of Dostu Shirvani to that of Ashiq Ibrahim, Ashiq Bilal, Ashiq Panah, Ashiq Shakir, Ashiq Khanmusa, Ashiq Vugar, and others-and continues to live on in the contemporary performances of artists such as Ashiq Aghamurad, Ashiq Ahliman, Ashiq Ali among others. Many of these artists have distinguished themselves by their unique performance styles, leading to the formation of individual performance “schools”.



2. Shirvan ashiks have always been inclined towards creativity, and their repertoire has been enriched with epics and melodies of various themes, possessing strong artistic impact. The region has preserved a unique tradition of dastan narration. Notably, in the 1970s, a particularly active period for ashik art in Shirvan, multi-day dastan evenings contributed to the further development of this tradition. One of the distinctive features of these dastan gatherings is that they typically began with Peshrov melodies. According to the tradition, the three introductory ustadname recitations preceding the dastan were performed in a specific sequence: the first over a Peshrov melody, the second recited without music, and the third sung to a Shikestes melody. In addition to heroic and domestic-themed dastans, the Shirvan milieu also gave rise to epics unique to the region.

3. In the dissertation, the stylistic elements that define the genre characteristics of the Shirvan ashik tradition and its musical repertoire have been identified. In addition to the investigation of the genre and stylistic features of Shirvan ashik melodies, the research has also yielded significant results in other directions, such as the historical formation of the tradition, issues related to repertoire, classification, and more. The musical repertoire of Shirvan ashiks is notably rich. Based on the field research and the information obtained from Ashiq Khanmusa Musayev, Ashiq Yanvar Badalov, Ashiq Vugar Mahmudoghlu, Ashiq Ahliman Rahimov, Ashiq Aghamurad İsrafilov, Ashiq Samira and others as well as the analysis of approximately 200 collected samples, it was concluded that there are more than 80 distinct melodies in this tradition. Following a melodic comparison of these melodies and their variants, it was determined that those which are simply alternate versions of existing melodies-despite being named differently based on the poetic text-were not included in the final count. For example, “Chobanyaylaghi Peshrovu” and “Telli Sazim Peshrovu” demonstrate identical melodic movement. While rhythmic grouping differs to some extent due to the arrangement of long and short syllables in the poetic text, their melodic similarity justifies classifying them as variants. Moreover, the tempo and other features of “Chobanyaylaghi Peshrovu” suggest that it is the original form, while the other is a

later variation. Additionally, clarification was provided regarding the notion that “Hicazi Peshrov” and “Alicadi Peshrovu” are the same melody. Although their names are similar and they share certain stylistic features, the study confirmed that they are performed with distinct melodies. As a result of this analysis, it was ultimately determined that the number of unique melodies in the Shirvan repertoire slightly exceeds 80.

4. An attempt was made to classify the Shirvan melodies using previously established methods of genre categorization including metrorhythmic features, fret structure of the saz, tempo, modal foundation, and other musical aspects. However, the study concluded that organizing the melodies into “series” based on shared stylistic features is a more accurate and appropriate approach. The stylistic characteristics of these melodies naturally support their grouping into such series.

- Peshrovs
- Qafiyas
- Shashangis
- Gozellemes
- Ordubadis
- Garaylis
- Muhkammesses
- Karamis
- Shikestes
- Ashiq songs

5. One of the fundamental characteristics of Shirvan ashik tradition is its creativity. Since its inception, the art of ashik has continuously produced new pieces. These compositions, based on genre characteristics, have been classified into specific cycles. For instance, the “İbrahimi peshrov” is associated with ashik İbrahim, while the “Bilal shashangi” is linked to ashik Bilal, both being recognized as traditional pieces. Even the relatively recent “Shirvan peshrov” was composed by Ashiq Yanvar and incorporated into the peshrov cycle. However, some pieces, primarily within the “Gozellemelar” cycle, are products of the past half-century, such as “Panah gozellemesi” and “Shakir gozellemesi”. Additionally, the piece “Nar aghaci nar chicayi”,

composed by Hacıalı Hacıyev, is sometimes referred to as “Bash mukhammas” in Shirvan. Nevertheless, since Shirvan mukhammas are predominantly performed in the geraylı style, this piece does not fully embody the typical characteristics of the mukhammas genre. Esteemed ashiks distinguish such pieces from traditional ones, categorizing them separately as “ashiq songs”.

6. In the Shirvan ashik milieu, the tradition of ensemble performance is prevalent. The saz tuning in Shirvan ashik music differs from other regions, being named after mugham, reflecting the region's unique traditions. This area has witnessed the parallel development of ashik and mugham arts, leading to their mutual influence. The path to becoming a Shirvan ashik is intrinsically linked to the art of khanandalik (traditional vocal performance). Aspiring ashiks typically begin their training under a khananda's tutelage. In the Shirvan tradition, the ensemble includes both the ashik and the khananda, a practice not commonly observed in other regions. In contemporary times, even if the ensemble lacks a designated khananda, the ashik assumes the role, performing segments of mugham at the beginning, occasionally in the middle, or after the second line of a stanza. The inclusion of the balaban instrument in the ensemble serves not only as a rhythmic accompaniment but also as a melodic counterpart, echoing the ashik's saz melodies. In instrumental sections, the balaban often mirrors the primary melodic line. The balaban's significant role in the ensemble has enriched both ashik performance and solo balaban artistry. The incorporation of percussion instruments has further influenced the style of Shirvan ashik music, leading to the emergence of rhythmically driven pieces like “Doyma Karami” and “Yekba shikestes” and enhancing the rhythmic complexity of melodies. Unlike other traditions where the ashik performs solo, in Shirvan, multiple performers share vocal, instrumental and rhythmic duties, reflecting the collaborative nature of their performance style. Compared to regions like Borchali, Tovuz, and Urmia, where the ashik predominantly carries the performance, in Shirvan, the division of roles among ensemble members has led to a more collective approach, with the ashik's instrumental role being somewhat secondary.

7. The stylistic characteristics of the melodies in the Shirvan ashiq environment allow for their classification into series. In this regard, the metrorhythmic formulas of the melodies should be particularly noted. The common features of the melodies grouped into series enable their division into types. Some series of melodies have typological features where the form of the poetic text also plays an important role in their determination. For instance, peshrovs are always associated with gerayli (except for the “Shamsi-Gamar peshrov”), mukhammasses are associated with either mukhammeses or gerayli, and shikestes are performed in the goshma poetic form. A significant factor in the classification of Shirvan ashiq melodies into series is their rhythmic characteristics. This is reflected both in the accompaniment of percussion instruments and in the metrorhythmic formulas of the melomusical lines. For example, peshrovs, geraylis, mukhammeses and shashengis, as well as other series melodies, are differentiated by the metrorhythmic formulas that are clearly distinguishable in their melomusical lines. In the dissertation, a melodic formula characteristic for each type has been identified, and the influence of poetic text characteristics, additions to the melodic line, and exclamatory additions on the creation of its variant have been noted.

8. Shirvan ashiq melodies each have modal characteristics that reflect our national music. The deep mastery of mugham art by the representatives of this environment has had a positive influence on their performance and the formation of modal characteristics in the melodies. In each melody, based on the mughams rast, shur, segah, bayati-Shiraz, and shahnaz, the main intonation features are audible according to their pitch order. The melodies exhibit both diatonic and chromatic pitch sequences. In recitative-declamation style melodies (Peshrovs, Shikestes, Mukhammasses), melodic development takes place in a smaller range, whereas in song-like melodies (Shashengis, Gozellemes, Ordubadis), it rises up to the interval of a seventh.

9. The modal modulations within the melodies also enhance their melodic dynamics. In melodies based on the rast mode, the transition to the “Shikesteyi-Fars” section predominantly occurs in the high register. In the shur mode, transitions to the “Shur-Shahnaz” and “Hicaz” sections occur, and in the segah mode, transitions to the

“Manendi-Mukhalif” section are observed. In melodies based on the bayati-Shiraz mode, transitions to the “Nishibi-Faraz” and “Zil Bayati-Shiraz” sections are noted, reflecting modal-intonation development. Additionally, the ashiks of this environment, with their deep knowledge of mugham, have enriched the intonational features of the melodies by completing the melomusical lines at various reference pitches during the repetition of the melomusical phrases.

Thus, the Shirvan ashik environment, which has undergone a long historical development, has established its regional traditions and repertoire, beginning with Dostu Shirvani and continuing to the present day. This environment has managed to occupy a distinctive place in Azerbaijani ashik creativity. The dialectological features of this environment have distinguished it from others, laying the groundwork for its recognition as a distinct milieu.

**In accordance with the content of the dissertation, the following works of the author were published:**

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