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ABSTRACT

of the dissertation for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

**THE MUSICAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE LEZGI
ETHNIC GROUP IN AZERBAIJANI CULTURE**

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GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE WORK

Relevance and Degree of Elaboration of the Topic. For centuries, representatives of various minority peoples and ethnic groups have lived in Azerbaijan in an atmosphere of mutual understanding and dialogue. As a land where different civilizations intersect, Azerbaijan has always shown great respect and reverence for the history, customs, and traditions of every nation living within its borders. The establishment of the Baku International Multiculturalism Center in 2014, and the declaration of 2016 as the "Year of Multiculturalism" in Azerbaijan by President İlham Aliyev, have significantly contributed to the preservation and development of multicultural traditions, the promotion of new directions of progress, and the implementation of extensive awareness campaigns. As stated in President İlham Aliyev's decree dated January 11, 2016, "*Multiculturalism in our country has already become a way of life with no alternative.*"¹.

Today, representatives of minority peoples living in various regions of Azerbaijan continue to preserve their native languages and develop their cultural and artistic heritage. The study of the national cultural values and musical ethnography of minority groups residing in Azerbaijan – such as Tats, Talysh, Kurds, Avars, Tsakhurs, Lezgins, and others – is of scientific-theoretical and historical relevance. At the same time, the study and preservation of the culture, folklore, ethnography, and other characteristic features of minority peoples and various ethnic groups residing in our country underscores the relevance of the topic addressed in this research within the framework of contemporary ethnomusicology.

The Lezgins, who predominantly inhabit the regions of Quba, Qusar, İsmayilli, Gabala, Oghuz, Shaki, Gakh, and Zagatala, possess a centuries-old cultural heritage. Within the broader context of valuing the music folklore of minority groups as an integral part of Azerbaijani culture today, the study of Lezgin culture and art, and the

¹ Beynəlxalq Humanitar Forumunun açılışında İlham Əliyevin nitqi / [Elektron resurs] / [URL:https://president.az/articles/3310/print](https://president.az/articles/3310/print)

identification of their distinctive features, constitutes a key dimension of the research's topical relevance.

The direction of this study is primarily focused on the regions inhabited by Lezgins, aiming to explore and uncover the historical and theoretical aspects of their folk music across specific geographical areas.

The music folklore of the Lezgin minority is distinguished by its unique genres and performance characteristics. Investigating and analyzing the ethnography of the Lezgins living in Azerbaijan, as well as the distinctive features of their folklore, holds significant importance in contemporary ethnomusicological studies.

In general, since the 1990s, there has been growing interest within Azerbaijani musicology in the regional study of folklore, resulting in numerous scholarly investigations. From this perspective, the examination of the ethnography and cultural development dynamics of the Lezgin ethnic group in Azerbaijan, and the study of Lezgin folklore as a component of national culture, provide substantial insight into the subject matter of this research.

The study of Lezgin folklore, characterized by its distinctive artistic-ethnographic and regional features, represents a continuation of the collection of musical folklore across different regions. In the contemporary era, under new socio-economic conditions, this area requires renewed scholarly investigation within the framework of multiculturalism traditions.

The folklore of every nation is a manifestation of its spiritual creativity – a treasury of values accumulated and preserved throughout its historical existence. The research and analysis of the folklore of Lezgins living in Azerbaijan, particularly the study of their folk songs and dances from the perspective of melody, mode-modal structures, and intonation, is of significant academic relevance and necessitates specialized scholarly inquiry.

The folklore and culture of the Lezgins are rooted in ancient historical traditions. In this regard, a comprehensive examination of the lifestyle, customs, ancient rituals, and folk music of the Lezgins – who constitute one of the largest ethnic groups residing in various regions of Azerbaijan – renders the study of this topic particularly

important. Consequently, the research of Lezgin musical folklore calls for the investigation of certain written sources and academic references. By compiling and synthesizing data and facts from various historical sources, it is possible to construct a broader understanding of the folklore of this ethnic group settled in Azerbaijan.

The national culture of the Lezgins, one of the ethnic groups living in Azerbaijan, has been explored in numerous academic studies and publications dedicated to the history of minority peoples. The Lezgins also reside in the Republic of Dagestan of the Russian Federation, and a portion of them migrated to the territory of the Republic of Azerbaijan in the early 19th century. Taking this into account, the historical background of the Lezgins living in Russia is also addressed within the scope of the research.

In the book “The Peoples of the Lezgin Group”² (“Народности лезгинской группы”) by Russian historian M.I.Ikhlilov, an ethnographic study of the history and present-day condition of the Lezgin ethnic group is presented.

In the multi-volume series “Folklore of Minority Peoples”^{3, 4, 5} (“Azsaylı xalqların folkloru”) acompiled by the Institute of Folklore of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences, the folk creativity of the Lezgin people has also been studied, and their ancient customs and traditions have been documented.

The book “Qusar – The Folklore Capital of Azerbaijan: A Recommended Bibliography”⁶ (“Azərbaycanın folklor paytaxtı Qusar: tövsiyə bibliografiyası”) compiled by the Firudin Bey Kocharli Republican Children's Library, is intended as a

² Икхилов, М.М. Народности лезгинской группы / М.М.Илихов. – Махачкала: – 1967. – с. 262.

³ Azsaylı xalqların folkloru. Birinci cild. / tərt. ed., filologiya elmləri üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru Mətanət Yaqubqızı. – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, 2014. – 20 s.

⁴ Azsaylı xalqların folkloru. İkinci cild. / tərt. ed. A.Əhmədli, D.Əliyev. – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, – 2017, – 196 s.

⁵ Azsaylı xalqların folkloru. Üçüncü cild. / tərt. ed. S.Kərimova. – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, – 2017. – 400 s.

⁶ Azərbaycanın folklor paytaxtı Qusar: tövsiyə bibliografiyası / tərt. ed. N.Tahirova. – Bakı: F.Köçərli adına Respublika Uşaq Kitabxanasının nəşriyyatı, – 2016. – 48 s.

recommended resource for the promotion and dissemination of the cultural heritage of the Lezgins.

The history and ethnography of the Lezgins are highlighted in Q.C.Javadov's book titled "The Ethnic Minorities and National Minorities of Azerbaijan (History and Modernity)" ("Azərbaycanın azsaylı xalqları və milli azlıqları (tarix və müasirlik)"⁷).

The history of the Lezgins living in our country is explored in S.A.Bədirkhanov's book titled "Azerbaijani Lezgin Literature: Problems and Development Prospects" ("Литература азербайджанских лезгин: проблемы и перспективы развития")⁸.

One of the most comprehensive research works on the history, culture, ethnography, and folklore of Qusar – a region frequently mentioned in ancient historical sources and one of the areas with the highest Lezgin population – is the encyclopedic collection "Qusar, the People of Qusar"⁹ ("Qusar, Qusarlılar") by writer and journalist Sadaqat Karimova. In this rich collection, S.Q.Karimova approaches the subject both as a writer-publicist and as a researcher, thoroughly highlighting the ethnography, culture, traditions, arts, and folklore of Qusar. Written in two languages – Azerbaijani and Lezgin – this fundamental compilation offers fascinating information about Qusar's history, nature, education, prominent scholars and writers, arts and ethnography, folklore, and the folk customs of the Lezgins.

The folklore of the Lezgin people has attracted the interest of several philologists and historians. Various festive ceremonies of the Qusar Lezgins are explored in the article by researcher K.Hajiyev titled "On Some Elements of the National-Cultural Worldview of the Lezgin People"¹⁰ ("О некоторых элементах национально-культурного мировидения лезгинского народа"). The article

⁷ Cavadov, Q.C. Azərbaycanın azsaylı xalqları və milli azlıqları. Tarix və müasirlik. / Q.Cavadov. – Bakı: Elm, – 2000. – 264 s.

⁸ Бедирханов, С.А. Литература азербайджанских лезгин: проблемы и перспективы развития / С.А.Бедирханов. – Махачкала: ИЯЛИ им. Г.Цадасы ДНЦ РАН, – 2014. – 224 с.

⁹ Kərimova, S.Q. Qusar, qusarlılar (ensiklopedik toplu). – Bakı: Ziya, – 2011. – 703 s.

¹⁰ Гаджиев, К.А. О некоторых элементах национально-культурного мировидения лезгинского народа / К.А.Гаджиев. – Баку: Мутарджим, – 2005. – 245 с.

provides detailed descriptions of ancient folk ceremonies such as Peshapay, Guni, Alapekh, and Vatspakar. These scholarly articles also discuss other important aspects of Lezgin culture, including the traditional art of carpet weaving and ashig epics.

In the scholarly article by researcher S.S.Hasanov titled “The Main Directions in the Study of Lezgin Epic Tales about the Hero Sharvili”¹¹ (“Лезгинские эпические сказания о богатыре Шарвили – основные направления изучения”), philological research has been conducted on the Lezgin epic composed entirely in prose, as well as on the songs about Sharvili.

Researcher D.A.Aliyev has studied the folklore traditions of the Lezgins living in İsmayilli as part of his research on the folk creativity of ethnic minorities living in Azerbaijan¹².

Musicians from the Lezgin community have played a significant role in the collection and transcription of Lezgin folklore into musical notation. They gathered and transcribed several traditional Lezgin melodies and also collected various pieces of information about the musical instruments used during ceremonies.

The collection “Lezgin Folk Songs and Dances” (“Ləzgi xalq mahnıları və rəqsləri”)¹³ by composer F.İ.Rahimxanov, who is of Lezgin origin, should be noted as an important source in the transcription of Lezgin folklore into musical notation. The folk samples transcribed in this collection play a significant role in the preservation of Lezgin folk songs and dances.

Another source in the field of notation is the textbook titled "50 Songs of the Peoples Living in Azerbaijan" (“Azərbaycanda yaşayan xalqların 50 mahnısı”)¹⁴ led by the project director, People's Artist of the USSR and the Republic of Azerbaijan, Professor

¹¹ Гасанов, С.С. Лезгинские эпические сказания о богатыре Шарвили - основные направления изучения // Азербайджанские известия. – 2008. 15 ноября, – с.8.

¹² Əliyev, D.A. İsmayilli etnomühitindəki azsaylı xalqların folkloru: / fəlsəfə üzrə fəlsəfə doktoru dissertasiyası. / – Bakı, 2021. – 166 s.

¹³ Rəhimxanov, F.İ. Ləzgi xalq mahnıları və rəqsləri (Лезги халкъдин - маниярни кьублер) [Notlar]: – Bakı: Azərbaycan nəşriyyatı, – 2008. – 168 s.

¹⁴ Azərbaycanca yaşayan xalqların 50 mahnısı [Notlar]: – Bakı: Apostrof, – 2011. – 167 s.

F.Sh.Badalbaylii, and created by the idea originator, compiler, and scientific editor, Doctor of Philosophy in Art Studies, professor T.A.Məmmədov. In this textbook, alongside songs from other ethnic minorities, several Lezgin folk songs have also been collected and transcribed into musical notation.

In his book “Musical Instruments of the Lezgins”¹⁵ («Музыкальные инструменты лезгин»), F.R.Naghiyev provides information about the characteristics of Lezgin traditional musical instruments, including their structure, sound, timbre, and more.

In general, it has been established that there are studies related to the history and national culture of the Lezgin people within the research on the folklore culture of ethnic minorities in Azerbaijan. However, these studies mostly focus on the history, origin, ethnography, folk creativity, and customs and traditions of the Lezgin people. Only certain aspects of Lezgin folk creativity have been highlighted in these studies.

Thus, it has been determined that Lezgin folk music has not been studied in a scientifically theoretical manner. Likewise, their ceremonies, other genres of folk creativity, including the poetic text features of bayatis, as well as the melody, modal (lad-makam), and intonation characteristics of Lezgin songs and dances, have not been analyzed in a comparative and systematic way.

Object and Subject of the Research: The object of the research is the musical folklore of the Lezgins living in Azerbaijan, while the subject is the study and analysis of folklore samples.

Aim and Objectives of the Research: The main aim of the presented research is to investigate the ethnography and the dynamics of cultural development of the Lezgin ethnic group and to determine the significance of Lezgin musical folklore as an integral part of Azerbaijani national culture. Based on this aim, the following objectives have been set:

– To investigate the historical development of Lezgin musical folklore in the context of the development of multiculturalism traditions in the Republic of Azerbaijan;

¹⁵ Нагиев, Ф.Р. Музыкальные инструменты лезгин / Ф.Нагиев. – Баку: Шур, – 2021. – 92 с.

- To shed light on the natural-geographical location and history of the Azerbaijani territories where Lezgins predominantly reside;
- To study the ethnography and dynamics of cultural development of the Lezgins as an ethnic group;
- To clarify the historical roots of folk ceremonies based on ancient traditions;
- To identify the distinctive features of the Lezgin ethnic group's folk music;
- To determine the genre characteristics within the overall panorama of the development of musical folklore;
- To research the history and etymology of Lezgin folk songs and dances;
- To demonstrate the musical-poetic text features of bayatis;
- To analyze the specific melodic, modal (lad-makam), and intonation characteristics of folk songs and dances in Lezgin folklore;
- To clarify the similarities and differences between Azerbaijani folk creativity and Lezgin folk songs and dances;
- To determine the significance of Lezgin folk music in Azerbaijani national culture.

Research Methods: The research methods used in this study to define Lezgin folk music as an integral part of Azerbaijani national culture are based on systematic, historical, comparative, and contrastive analysis methods. Folklore samples are examined and analyzed from the perspective of historical and theoretical methods derived from the fields of ethnography and ethnomusicology. For this purpose, the research relies on the works of prominent Russian musicologists B.V.Asafyev¹⁶, V.V.Vinogradov¹⁷ and I.I.Zemskovsky¹⁸,¹⁹ whose studies are of great importance in the

¹⁶ Асафьев, Б.В. О народной музыке / Б.В.Асафьев. – Ленинград: Музыка, – 1987 – 248 с.

¹⁷ Виноградов, В.С. Классические традиции иранской музыки. / В.С.Виноградов. – Москва: Советский композитор, – 1982. – 183 с.

¹⁸ Земцовский, И.И. Народная музыка: история и типология / И.И.Земцовский. – Ленинград: ЛГИТМК, – 1989. – 187 с.

investigation of musical folklore. The diverse scientific and theoretical studies and analyses conducted by Azerbaijani musicologist-researchers U.A.Hacıbəyli²⁰, M.J.İsmayılov²¹, A.A.Abdullazadə²², R.F.Zöhrabov²³, F.Sh.Aliyeva²⁴,²⁵, E.A.Babayev²⁶, T.A.Məmmədov²⁷, A.I.Nəcəfzadə²⁸,²⁹, A.İ.İsazadə³⁰ və J.E.Mahmudova³¹,³² form the methodological foundation of the research. Additionally, in the field of ethnomusicology, the scientific and theoretical principles of L.Sh.Hüseynova³³, F.Kh.Khaligzadə³⁴,

¹⁹ Земцовский, И.И. Семасиология музыкального фольклора (методологические предпосылки). – Москва: Проблемы музыкального мышления, Музыка, – 1974, – с.177-206.

²⁰ Hacıbəyli, Ü.Ə. Azərbaycan xalq musiqisinin əsasları / Ü.Ə.Hacıbəyli. – Bakı: Apostrof, – 2010. – 176 s.

²¹ İsmayılov, M.C. Azərbaycan xalq musiqisinin janrları / M.C.İsmayılov. – Bakı: İşıq, – 1984. – 100 s.

²² Abdullazadə, G.A. Qədim və orta əsrlərin musiqi mədəniyyəti / G.A.Abdullazadə. – Bakı: Qartal, – 1996. – 290 s.

²³ Zöhrabova, L.R. Azərbaycan xalq rəqslərinin lad-məqam xüsusiyyətləri. Dərs vəsaiti. / L.R.Zöhrabova. – Bakı, Mars-Print, – 2013. – 124 s.

²⁴ Əliyeva, F.Ş. XX əsr Azərbaycan musiqi mədəniyyəti tarixinin qaynaqları / F.Ş.Əliyeva. – Bakı: Nurlan, – c.2. – 2005. – 420 s.

²⁵ Əliyeva, F.Ş. XX əsr Azərbaycan musiqisi: tarix və zamanla üz-üzə / F.Ş.Əliyeva. – Bakı: Elm, – 2007. – 314 s.

²⁶ Babayev, E.Ə. Ənənəvi musiqimiz. Müşahidələr və mülahizələr / E.Ə.Babayev. – Bakı: Elm, – 2000. – 116 s.

²⁷ Məmmədov, T.A. Azərbaycan aşıq sənəti. Dərslik. / T.A.Məmmədov. – Bakı: Apostrof, – 2011. – 648 s.

²⁸ Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Azərbaycan çalğı alətlərinin izahlı lüğəti / A.İ.Nəcəfzadə. – Bakı: MBM, – 2004. – 224 s.

²⁹ Nəcəfzadə, A.İ. Etnoorqanologiya / A.İ.Nəcəfzadə. – Bakı: Ecoprint, – 2016. – 304 s.

³⁰ İsazadə, Ə.İ. Musiqi folkloru. Müasir Azərbaycan incəsənəti və memarlığı. – Bakı: Elm, – 1992. – 224 s.

³¹ Mahmudova, C.E. Azərbaycan xalq və bəstəkar mahnılarının mətn xüsusiyyətləri / C.E.Mahmudova. – Bakı: ADPU, – 2014. – 122 s.

³² Mahmudova, C.E. Mahnının qoşa qanadı-poeziya və musiqi / C.E.Mahmudova. Bakı: Mars-Print, – 2013. – 244 s.

³³ Hüseynova, L.Ş. Mahni diqqət mərkəzindədir // – Bakı: Musiqi dünyası, – 2000. №2 (3), – s. 3-9.

³⁴ Xaligzadə, F.X. Üzeyir Hacıbəyli və folklor / F.X.Xaligzadə. – Bakı: Şərq-Qərb, – 2014. – 276 s.

S.Y.Bagirova³⁵, I.T.Kocharli³⁶, A.N.Guliyev³⁷, Ü.S.Aliyeva³⁸, K.Kh.Dadashzade³⁹ and J.E.Gulamova⁴⁰ in the area of folk music and folklore have been referenced and utilized. The analytical methods presented in these scholarly works have been systematically applied in the dissertation.

Main Statements Presented for Defense: The main statements given in the research work are as follows:

- In the context of the development of Azerbaijani national culture, the folk music of the Lezgins is studied and its distinctive characteristics are identified;
- The ethnography and the dynamics of cultural development of the Lezgin ethnic group are clarified;
- The influence of the natural and geographical location of the regions in the Republic of Azerbaijan where Lezgins predominantly reside on the formation of their national culture is identified;
- The main directions of the folk music of the Lezgin ethnic group are highlighted;
- The characteristics of ancient folk ceremonies are revealed;
- The reflection of the Lezgins' lifestyle and daily life in bayatis is traced;

³⁵ Багирова, С.Ю. Проблемы мугамного формообразования: / автореферат дис. доктора философии по искусствоведению. / – Ташкент, 1984. – 20 с.

³⁶ Kõçərli, İ.F. Azərbaycan etnomusiqişünəşliđi üzrə oçerklər / İ.F.Kõçərli. – Bakı: Elm və təhsil, – 2017. – 375 s.

³⁷ Quliyev, A.N. Azərbaycan Respublikasının mədəniyyət və incəsənətinin inkişafında Heydər Əliyev mərhələsi // “Azərbaycanşünəşliđin aktual problemləri” mövzusunda III Belnəlxalq elmi konfransın materialları, – Bakı: – 26 aprel, – 2012, – s.1-5.

³⁸ Алиева, У.С. Картиность в творчестве азербайджанских композиторов в контексте мировой музыкальной культуры: / автореферат дис. доктора искусствоведения./ – Баку, 2011. – 50 с.

³⁹ Дадашзаде, К.Г. Знаковая система дастана / К.Г.Дадашзаде. – Баку: Нурлан, – 2004. – 292 с.

⁴⁰ Quliyev, A.N. Azərbaycan Respublikasının mədəniyyət və incəsənətinin inkişafında Heydər Əliyev mərhələsi // “Azərbaycanşünəşliđin aktual problemləri” mövzusunda III Belnəlxalq elmi konfransın materialları, – Bakı: – 26 aprel, – 2012, – s.1-5.

– The melodic, modal (lad-makam), and intonational characteristics of Lezgin folk songs and dances are analyzed;

Based on the traditions of multiculturalism in the Republic of Azerbaijan and the preservation of national values of ethnic minorities, the characteristics of the Lezgin ethnic group's folk music are examined and its significance is determined.

The scientific novelty of the research lies in the fact that, for the first time, the folk music of the Lezgin ethnic minority has been treated as a distinct object of study and examined at the dissertation level as an integral part of Azerbaijani national culture. For the first time, the folklore, ethnography, and the melodic, modal, and intonational features of the folk songs and dances of the Lezgin ethnic group have been subjected to detailed analysis. The research identifies the impact of multiculturalism traditions on the dynamics of the ethnography and cultural development of the Lezgins in Azerbaijan. In addition to the study of musical folklore, historical aspects are also addressed, highlighting the natural-geographical location and historical development of the Azerbaijani regions where Lezgins predominantly reside.

For the first time in this research, the ancient customs, mythological beliefs, festive ceremonies, and ethnography that reflect the centuries-old culture of the Lezgins are analyzed from the perspective of musicology. Alongside the study of musical folklore, attention is also given to historical aspects. Since the main focus of the dissertation is the exploration of the folk music of the Lezgin ethnic group, their folk songs and dances are examined in detail and subjected to theoretical analysis.

In the research, Lezgin folk songs and dances are classified and thoroughly analyzed. Notably, for the first time, Lezgin folklore and musical samples are analyzed in a comparative context with Azerbaijani folk creativity, and their unique features are identified and brought to light. The comparative analyses carried out in this study represent the first such attempt in the history of research on Lezgin musical folklore.

The theoretical and practical significance of the dissertation lies in the fact that the findings and conclusions are

based on a range of scientific, theoretical, and historical data related to the Lezgin ethnic group, making the work a valuable scientific source for researchers in the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology, and musical folklore.

Certain conclusions and analyses presented in the dissertation contribute to forming a comprehensive picture of the cultural history and folk creativity of the Lezgin ethnic group. They are also significant for the broader study of folklore among ethnic groups.

Moreover, the research materials can be used in higher education institutions in the teaching of subjects related to musical folklore, folk creativity, and ethnography.

Approval and Application. The main statements and results of the research have been presented at international and national scientific conferences, and have been reflected in articles and abstracts published in peer-reviewed scientific journals included in international abstracting and indexing systems.

Name of the institution where the dissertation was conducted. The dissertation was carried out at the Department of “History and Theory of Music” of the Azerbaijan National Conservatory.

The volume of the structural sections of the dissertation is indicated separately, along with the total volume of the dissertation. The dissertation consists of the following sections: “Table of Contents,” “Introduction,” two “Chapters,” five paragraphs, “Conclusion,” “References,” and “Appendices.” Regarding the volume of the structural sections of the dissertation, the “Introduction” comprises 12 pages (17 172 characters), Chapter I includes 26 pages (46 177 characters), Chapter II contains 97 pages (136 663 characters), and the “Conclusion” consists of 9 pages (14 075 characters). The total volume of the research work, excluding the “References” and “Appendices” sections, amounts to 144 pages and 214 087 characters.

MAIN CONTENT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Introduction of the dissertation provides information on the relevance and level of study of the topic, the object and subject of the research, its aims and objectives, methods, main statements for

defense, scientific novelty, theoretical and practical significance, approval and application, as well as the structure of the work.

Chapter I of the dissertation is titled “An Overview of the Development of the Lezgi People’s Culture in the Context of Multiculturalism Traditions in Azerbaijan” and consists of two paragraphs.

Paragraph 1.1, titled **“The Natural-Geographical Location and Historical Development of the Territories in Azerbaijan Where Lezgis Are Mostly Settled”** discusses the preservation of multiculturalism and tolerance traditions in the Republic of Azerbaijan, the peaceful coexistence of various ethnic groups based on friendly and neighborly relations, the crucial state support in this area, and the implementation of humanistic policies that ensure the protection of the cultural values of the ethnic minorities living in our country. In this regard, the establishment of the International Multiculturalism Center in Baku by the Decree of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, esteemed Ilham Aliyev, dated May 15, 2014, can be regarded as an important step towards the preservation of the cultures, customs, and traditions of the various peoples living in our country.

As a result of the sincere attitude towards ethnic minorities, many ethnic groups living compactly in Azerbaijan coexist in a friendly environment, preserving their ancient customs, music, and other folklore traditions.

In this context, compared to other ethnic minorities and groups residing in the country, the Lezgis represent the largest population. Lezgis living in various regions of Azerbaijan are mainly found in the districts of Quba, Qusar, Ismayilli, Gabala, Oghuz, Shaki, Gakh, and Zaqatala. The natural-geographical location and lifestyle of these areas have also influenced the way of life of the Lezgis and have been a significant factor in shaping their rich folklore and folk creativity. Over many years, Lezgis have had close contact with Azerbaijanis, with ethnocultural ties binding them together.

Lezgis are deeply attached to their spiritual values. They have succeeded in preserving their customs, traditions, and various festive ceremonies. In villages such as Qəmərvan and Əmirvan in the

Gabala district, and Əvəcuq and Hil in the Qusar district, where Lezgis live alongside Azerbaijanis, they have maintained their ancient customs and folk creativity.

Lezgis are an ethnic group living in the northeast of our country and the southeast of Dagestan. According to the 2019 statistics from the State Statistics Committee of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Lezgis make up 1.7 percent of Azerbaijan's population. According to data from 2022, their number in Azerbaijan is 178,000⁴¹. Lezgis, an ethnic group in Azerbaijan, belong to the Caucasian language family, and their language is Lezgi, written in the Cyrillic alphabet. In Azerbaijan, two dialects of the Lezgi language are widespread – the Quba-Kusar dialect and the Kuzun dialect. Alongside the Lezgis, several other Caucasian-speaking peoples – Avars, Shakhurs, Udins, Budugs, Kryzs, Khinalugs, and Yengiloys – mainly inhabit the northeastern and northwestern regions of Azerbaijan⁴².

According to the hypothesis of some historians, Lezgis belong anthropologically to the Caucasian race and their origin is connected with the Caucasian Albanians. The Legs, considered the ancestors of the Lezgis, were a Daghestani-speaking Albanian tribe living in regions bordering Dagestan. This is because part of the Albanian tribes spoke Turkic languages, while the other part spoke Daghestani languages.

1.2. “Ethnography and Dynamics of Cultural Development of the Lezgi Ethnic Group” paragraph provides information about the ethnography and characteristics of the cultural development of the Lezgis. The rich and multifaceted folklore of the Lezgi people necessitates the study of the national cultural heritage of this small ethnic group. The ethnography of the Lezgi people is quite distinct compared to other ethnic groups. Among the North Caucasian peoples living in Azerbaijan, the Lezgi language is the most widely spoken.

⁴¹Beynəlxalq Humanitar Forumunun açılışında İlham Əliyevin nitqi / [Elektron resurs] / [URL:https://president.az/articles/3310/print](https://president.az/articles/3310/print)

⁴²Etnik qrup / [Elektron resurs] / URL: https://az.wikipedia.org/wiki/Etnik_qrup

The Lezgi language belongs to the Lezgi subgroup of the Dagestan group within the North Caucasian language family. Until the early 20th century, Russian sources referred to the Lezgi language as the "Küre language." Depending on the region where the Lezgis live, their language is divided into the Küre, Akhty, and the Quba dialect spoken in Azerbaijan. In short, Lezgis living in Dagestan speak the Küre and Akhty dialects, while those living in Azerbaijan speak the Quba dialect. It should be noted that the Küre dialect forms the literary basis of the Lezgi language. Another important characteristic of the Lezgis is their preference for living compactly in concentrated settlements.

Lezgi folklore primarily consists of ceremonial, epic, and lyrical genres. Their ceremonial folklore includes seasonal and domestic ceremonies. It should also be noted that during expeditions to regions such as Zaqatala, Quba, Gabala, Ismayilli, Oghuz, Sheki, and others, many Lezgis had intermingled with Azerbaijanis, which led to much of their culture being assimilated. Because of this, they performed Lezgi songs in Azerbaijani or Azerbaijani national songs in the Lezgi language at events. However, Lezgis living in the villages of Avəcug and Hil in the Qusar district have preserved their culture and folklore music, performing exclusively in the Lezgi language.

The main attributes of a Lezgi home include carpets, sumakh (a type of rug), and woven items. Beautifully patterned ancient vessels decorate the house. Swords, daggers, and various weapons hang on the walls.

One of the widespread crafts among the Lezgis is carpet weaving, which has a very ancient history. Archaeological excavations in Qusar revealed that Lezgis were engaged in carpet weaving as early as the 5th to 1st centuries BCE and the 1st to 2nd centuries CE. The Lezgi people have historically developed their own distinctive clothing culture.

At Lezgi weddings, musical instruments such as the kfil, daldam, and zurna play a central role. Later, the chagan (drum) and synthesizer were also added. Additionally, Azerbaijani folk

instruments like tutek, balaban, tar, and kamancha are used. It is also possible to encounter instruments like the lahut and lira.

In 2016, within the framework of the "Capitals of Folk Art" program by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the city of Qusar was chosen as the "Folklore Capital of Azerbaijan." This program naturally aimed at preserving, promoting, and encouraging the national cultural values, customs, and traditions of the Azerbaijani people.

Chapter II of the dissertation is titled "**The Folklore Music of the Lezgi Minority as an Integral Part of Azerbaijani National Culture**" and consists of three paragraphs.

2.1. "The folklore music of the Lezgi minority" paragraph explores various ceremonies, folk songs, and dance examples included in the folklore creativity of the Lezgi people. Like every nation, the Lezgi folklore contains important sources, among which the epic "Sharvili" holds a significant place. Based on statements collected during expeditions and meetings with narrators, it is believed that this epic was created between the 3rd and 6th centuries BCE. The main theme of the epic is to praise unity and freedom, and it is a true heroic epic.

The content of the "Sharvili" epic resembles the Azerbaijani national epic "Dede Korkut." For instance, the characteristics typical of the figure of Dede Korkut are also observed in the main hero of "Sharvili," Ashig Kasda. It should also be noted that Lezgi epics, unlike Azerbaijani epics, are composed strictly in prose form.

National holidays are among the most important traditions of the Lezgi people, and they have always preserved them. The ancient ceremony called "Dem" embodies the Lezgi people's traditions, cultural values, and folklore. The "Dem" ceremony combines folk music with choreographic features and reflects the Lezgi people's deep cultural roots.

One of the Lezgi ceremonies is "Mani," which has preserved the purest form of the Lezgi language better than any other folklore example. Written in syllabic meter, "Mani" consists of four lines. "Mani" is divided into different parts, each known by various names in the Lezgi language such as bayadar, bender, lirliyar, qudar, etc.

The themes of the Lezgi mani are diverse and include historical-heroic, love, patriotism, and praise of labor.

“Peshapay,” one of the ancient Lezgi ceremonies, is a ritual for calling rain and is widespread in many regions where they live. “Peshapay” is one of the ancient festivals that incorporate theatrical elements and was traditionally performed as a show mainly by men.

Another ceremony is called “Quni.” The etymology of the word “Quni” is unclear, but it is often associated with the name of a divine being. Unlike “Peshapay,” “Quni” mainly involves women and young boys. The custom of “carrying Quni” is widespread in villages predominantly inhabited by Lezgi people.

The “Mel” ceremony is a labor festival, which functions as a voluntary communal work event and also expresses the unity of the people.

The Lezgi spring festival, called “Yaran Suvar,” is also among the ancient holiday ceremonies. “Yar” is one of the months in the Lezgi agricultural calendar and covers the period from March 21 to April 4. The specific dates make “Yaran Suvar” a kind of seasonal festival. This holiday is analogous to the Azerbaijani “Novruz Bayram.”

Most Lezgi ceremonies include theatrical elements. One such festival is “Vatsrakar,” which is based on beliefs and praises of the Moon and the Sun, thus expressing ancient religious beliefs. Collective singing is a central part of this ceremony, demonstrating the Lezgi tradition of communal vocal performance.

The Lezgis’ “Chichek” (Flower) festival is primarily celebrated by the rural population. The gathering of various healing flowers and plants from the mountains and meadows is the main characteristic feature of this festival. The festival’s essence is reflected in the organization of singing and dance competitions.

When there was excessive rain, the “Alapex” ceremony was held. The “Alapex” ceremony was the opposite of the “Peshapay” ceremony, meaning that instead of calling for rain, the Sun was called upon. This ceremony was most commonly performed during the summer months and is associated with the warm season.

In general, sun-calling ceremonies hold a significant place in Azerbaijani folklore as well. According to ancient beliefs, the sun brings fertility to the earth. Songs such as “Gün çıx” and “Qodu-qodu” related to calling the sun are widespread in Azerbaijani folklore.

One of the Lezgis’ agricultural festivals is “Sifte rqał (Сифте ргал),” meaning the “First Plowing” festival. This ceremony is related to the arrival of spring and is usually held in the spring season. Since the festival is connected to farming and plowing, farmers sing special songs called havar.

The first folklore genre that draws attention in Lezgi culture is the bayati. This folklore form is found both in Azerbaijani and Lezgi folklore. In the Lezgi language, bayati is called “bayadr.” In terms of content, bayadr is similar to Azerbaijani bayatis and mostly focus on themes of nature and love.

The rich folklore heritage of the Lezgi people also includes proverbs and riddles, which are common among many peoples. In daily life, Lezgis prefer concise and laconic speech, and they have many wise and interesting proverbs. Riddles, called “miskalar (мискълар),” hold an important place in Lezgi folklore. The riddles found in Lezgi folklore were created to help develop children’s speech.

Fairy tales also have a special place in Lezgi folklore, and, as in other cultures, mythology and legend elements prevail in them.

2.2. “The Modal-Scale and Intonation Characteristics of Lezgi Folk Songs” paragraph discusses the characteristics of Lezgi folk songs. Songs are one of the most important and ancient genres within the folk creativity of the Lezgi ethnic group. It is precisely in songs that the worldview, psychology, inner world, desires, and historical development process of the people are reflected. The thematic diversity of Lezgi folk songs is close to that of similar genre examples found in Azerbaijani folklore. From this perspective, Lezgi folk songs can be conditionally classified as follows:

- Labor songs;
- Ceremonial songs;
- Household (domestic) songs;

– Historical-heroic songs⁴³.

Labor songs hold a significant place in Lezgi folklore as one of the oldest genres of folk song creativity. These work songs are characterized by precise metro-rhythmic unity and the completeness of their recitative introductions. As a genre, the group of work songs maintains a very stable position, encompassing both very ancient examples as well as those that appeared relatively later, thus occupying an important place throughout the entire folk music tradition.

Other songs related to the labor process are called “havazi”. These are predominantly sung by women working in gardening and horticulture, who perform them in separate groups. Often, the singing of these songs resembled a form of competition. Included among the work songs are also the havars – seasonal songs performed during the “Sifte rqał (Сифте ргал)” festival, which marks the beginning of the first plowing season. The term “hav” in the Lezgi language means “four plowings.”

In Lezgi folklore, the alternation between solo and choral singing in work songs symbolizes the concept of unity.

Ceremonial songs related to nature, seasons, and the calendar exhibit a wide thematic diversity. Similar to Azerbaijani folk creativity, Lezgi folklore preserves some of the oldest layers of folk songs, including wedding songs and mourning laments. Wedding ceremonial songs hold a special place among the Lezgi people. The songs performed during wedding ceremonies reflect the life, lifestyle, and especially the high respect accorded to women in Lezgi society. These songs have existed from ancient times and are performed from the moment the bride leaves her home up until the “dem” ceremonies. Some of the wedding songs carry advisory or didactic content, while others are sung to bestow blessings upon the bride. In Lezgi folklore, wedding ceremonies have evolved into a genre that combines poetic speech, music, and dance arts. The main component of Lezgi wedding songs consists of praises dedicated to the groom and especially to the bride.

⁴³ İsmayılov, M.C. Azərbaycan xalq musiqisinin janrları / M.C.İsmayılov. – Bakı: İşıq, – 1984. – 100 s.

Among ceremonial songs, those performed during mourning and funeral rituals occupy a unique place. The character of these songs varies depending on the age and social status of the deceased. Lezgi mourning ceremonies bear resemblance to those of the Azerbaijani people. It is common to observe the recitation of sorrowful, melancholic poems and laments during Lezgi funerals.

Lyrical songs, which are widespread and numerous, constitute the core of Lezgi folklore. In Lezgi folklore, love songs are referred to as “lirli” (лирли). The similarity between Lezgi and Azerbaijani folk songs is primarily manifested in stylistic features. Rich ornamentation (melisma) and improvisation during performance, as well as tempo and rhythmic variation within a single melody, contribute to this resemblance. The poetic content of Lezgi lyrical songs is rich and diverse. These songs express a range of emotions including love, sorrow, longing, melancholy, and joy, alongside the people’s key social motifs, pains, and hopes. Among lyrical songs, those with a theme of love are most prevalent.

The Lezgi people's strong attachment to national values and traditions has shaped their collective character and led to a relatively limited number of humorous songs. Nevertheless, humorous songs do exist in Lezgi folklore, primarily addressing everyday life topics with a light-hearted spirit.

Analysis of the modal and intonational features of Lezgi folk songs reveals that diatonic modes are characteristic of their musical tradition. Most of the songs analyzed are composed in ancient diatonic modes such as Lydian, Phrygian, Ionian, and Aeolian. Among ceremonial songs, wedding songs predominate and some of these songs have maintained their relevance over time. Historical-heroic songs are relatively few in number. Due to the national character of the Lezgi people, humorous and playful songs are also limited in quantity. Additionally, some Lezgi folk songs demonstrate intonational affinity with Azerbaijani folk songs. A notable example is the folk song “Muleyli”, which exists among both peoples and exhibits similarities in metro-rhythmic characteristics and musical language.

2.3. Melodic, Modal, and Intonational Characteristics of Lezgi Folk Dances paragraph discusses the distinctive features of

Lezgi folk dances. Dances constitute one of the primary folklore expressions characterizing the Lezgi people. Lezgi folk dances are rich and diverse both in terms of genre and their thematic-emotional content. Unlike folk songs, the artistic and stylistic characteristics of Lezgi dances are often influenced by multiple factors, including the age and gender of the performer. Each Lezgi dance can be considered a unique work of art, typically marked by a narrative introduction that is characteristic of traditional folk choreography. In the Lezgi language, dances are referred to as “kuler (къуълер).”

The Lezgi people are known for their agility and dynamism, qualities vividly reflected in their music, which embodies their energy and bravery. The Lezgi have a profound affection for the art of dance; the rhythms and melodies of their folk dances serve as an expressive outlet of their collective spirit. It is no coincidence that upon hearing the sounds of “Lezginka,” individuals instinctively begin to dance, moving in harmony with the music. The lively rhythms of Lezgi dances appear to emerge organically from within the community, symbolizing an innate impulse to move.

Dance occupies a central place in Lezgi folklore. Historically, Lezgi festivals and public celebrations have been accompanied by theatrical musical performances. In the past, Lezgi folk holidays and communal festivities were typically complemented by theatrical elements. For instance, during celebrations such as “Yaran suvar” (Spring Festival), “Tsukverin suvar” (Flower Festival), “Karu” (Cherry Festival), “Sifte rqał” (First Plowing), and other ceremonial events, the program often included singing, horse racing competitions, performances by wrestlers, acrobatics, and most notably, dance, which played a crucial role in completing these events.

Given this context, it is hardly surprising that the study of Lezgi folklore traditionally began with the investigation of their dance art, which occupies a foundational position in their cultural expression. Even ancient Lezgi beliefs incorporated elements of dance. The Lezgi ancestors, known as the Legs, believed in the continued existence of the human soul after death, often envisioning the soul as an eagle. The dance called “Lekyer” (Eagles) embodies this ancient belief. Notably, many movements within Lezgi dances resemble the flight of an eagle

in the sky. Particularly, the repeated utterance of the word “assa” at the climax of certain dances is interpreted as symbolizing the soul’s ascent from the earth to the heavens.

The Lezgi’s enduring faith in these ancient religious notions continues to influence contemporary practices. In Lezgi folklore, the eagle is regarded as a sacred creature, and accordingly, many of their dances are choreographed to mimic the flight patterns of the eagle.

Based on their character and performance features, Lezgi folk dances are classified into several groups:

- Women’s Dances;
- Men’s Dances;
- Number-Related Dances;
- Ceremonial Dances;
- Heroic Dances;
- Lyrical Dances;
- Pair Dances.

Many of the dances (primarily the male dances) are characterized by a fast tempo and high energy. The dances of the Lezgi people vividly reflect the character, emotions, and feelings of the nation. Female dances are delicate, restrained, and expressive in terms of body movements, while male dances are distinguished by liveliness and strength. The majority of Lezgi folk dances, including both female and male dances, are performed solo. However, paired and especially group performances are also encountered. Lyric female dances and fast-tempo male dances predominate among the Lezgins. This reflects the fact that the Lezgi people mostly live in mountainous areas, possess a warrior spirit, and are strongly connected to their mental and cultural values, which is manifested in the character of their dances.

Lezgi dances are most often performed collectively during ceremonial occasions. The melodic range typically covers the upper registers, and the melodic movement is generally directed from higher to lower tones. Variable meter and mode are fundamental characteristics of Lezgi dances. Similar to their songs, Lezgi folk dances are based on diatonic modes. The majority of the dances analyzed are composed in ancient diatonic modes such as Lydian,

Phrygian, Ionian, Aeolian, and Mixolydian. In terms of range, dances frequently span intervals of a perfect fourth to a ninth.

From a performance perspective, Lezgi dances are distinguished by their dynamism. Even dances that begin at a slow, calm tempo tend to gradually accelerate. The fast and lively tempo of Lezgi dances is a key feature that distinguishes them from the dances of both Azerbaijani and other ethnic groups residing in the region.

The connection between Lezgi folk dances and Azerbaijani folk dances is primarily noticeable in their classification, the titles and character of the dances, as well as the use of variable meter.

The Conclusion section of the dissertation summarizes significant findings regarding the comprehensive study of the folklore music of the Lezgi minority people as an integral part of Azerbaijani national culture, as well as the dynamics of their cultural development. Specifically, the development of the Lezgi people's national culture is examined within the framework of multiculturalism traditions, revealing their unique and original characteristics. During this process, the natural-geographical location, historical development, ethnography, and musical folklore of the Azerbaijani regions predominantly inhabited by the Lezgis are thoroughly analyzed.

It has been established that in the folklore music of the Lezgi ethnic group, song and dance genres predominate, and these can be regarded as key indicators of the people's national identity.

Simultaneously, the study of the Lezgi people's folklore music confirms the importance of researching ethnic groups' national cultures within Azerbaijani ethnomusicology and clarifies the direction of the dissertation. Historical research shows that the Lezgis, a hardworking people, have predominantly settled in areas surrounded by natural landscapes. The folklore and folk creativity of Lezgis living mainly in the Quba, Qusar, Ismayilli, Gabala, Oghuz, Shaki, Gakh, and Zagatala regions of Azerbaijan have been influenced by the natural-geographical relief. At the same time, long-term close contact with Azerbaijanis has fostered ethnocultural ties between the two peoples.

Analysis of historical sources reveals that the Lezgis belong anthropologically to the Caucasian race and are historically

connected to the Caucasian Albanians. The roots of the Lezgis, currently living in the northeast of Azerbaijan and in the southeastern part of Dagestan within the Russian Federation, date back to the period from the 4th century BCE to the first half of the 5th century CE, when they were part of various ethnos groups known by different names. These groups were known in Caucasian Albania as “lekl (лекл),” a fact thoroughly illuminated in the research.

Despite being an ethnic group, the Lezgis possess a rich and diverse folklore and national cultural heritage, as determined during the study. Furthermore, an intensity in the dynamics of the Lezgi ethnographic profile and cultural development has been observed. During the research process, specific areas of the Lezgis’ life were highlighted. For instance, aspects of their household, lifestyle, and various fields of their national culture – such as carpet weaving, textile production, cuisine, clothing, and others—were examined, shedding light on the distinctive features that characterize them as a unique people.

In the course of researching musical folklore, the musical instruments used by the Lezgis have also been examined and systematized. It has been determined that the musical instruments of the Lezgis are mainly divided into two groups:

1. Ancient musical instruments – “çunqur (чуьнгур)” (a musical instrument similar to the saz used by the Lezgis) and “kfil (кфил)” (a wind musical instrument);

2. Modern musical instruments – taft (meaning “to strike hard”), çaqan (чагъан) (resembling the accordion), and daldam (далдам) (a type of drum similar to the nagara) are musical instruments that emerged in more recent times.

During the research, it was determined that traditional Lezgi folk ceremonies reflecting ancient customs can be divided into two main categories:

1. Seasonal ceremonies;
2. Ceremonies associated with labor festivals.

The main common feature of the Lezgi ceremonies is their theatrical nature, accompanied by music and dance. These events typically integrate performative elements that enrich their cultural significance and convey communal values and traditions.

Additionally, it has been noted that during Lezgi events, performers often make use of traditional Azerbaijani musical instruments such as the tütək, balaban, tar, and kamancha, highlighting the cultural interactions and mutual influence between the Lezgi and Azerbaijani peoples.

The research concludes that various ceremonies, folk songs, and dances constitute the primary genres of Lezgi folk art. Special emphasis is placed on the “Sharvili” epic, believed to have originated during the pre-Islamic period. This epic occupies a significant place in Lezgi folklore and, in terms of content, bears resemblance to the Azerbaijani “Dede Qorqud” epic. However, its main distinction lies in its prose narrative form. The Sharvili epic celebrates the worldview, bravery, and heroism of the ancient Lezgis and shares parallels with the Azerbaijani legend of the “White Horseman” (“Ağ atlı oğlan haqqında əfsanə”), further underlining the interconnectedness of regional folk traditions.

During the research, it was revealed that the Lezgis have preserved their traditional customs, characteristic of their national holidays and ceremonies, up to the present day. The study of ancient Lezgi rituals enabled the identification and systematic classification of their defining features.

The central focus of the dissertation—the investigation of the melodic, modal, and intonational characteristics of Lezgi folk songs and dances—resulted in theoretical conclusions that demonstrate the distinctive nature of Lezgi folk music. These findings underscore the uniqueness of Lezgi musical folklore within the broader cultural framework.

The study of Lezgi musical folklore, as an integral part of Azerbaijani national culture, highlights the value placed on multiculturalism in the country. Furthermore, the research established that Lezgi customs and traditions, like those of the Azerbaijani people and other ethnic groups residing in the country, have developed on the basis of shared humanistic values.

Despite the influence of close and continuous contact with the local population and a longstanding atmosphere of friendly coexistence, Lezgi folk music has retained its distinctive features. It

has continued to evolve as a dynamic component of Azerbaijan's national culture.

It is therefore impossible to imagine the folk traditions of the Lezgis living in Azerbaijan as separate from the national culture of the country. In this sense, the development of the folklore music of this minority group, grounded in ancient traditions, stands as a vivid example of the preservation of multicultural and tolerant values within the context of Azerbaijani culture.

Based on the content of the dissertation, the author has published the following scientific works:

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