

Modern Russian Islamic music traditions: history relationships with Islamic regions

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The relationships of Islamic music traditions in Russia and Islamic regions: Near and Middle East, Central Asia, have started from the 7th century. Since this time in the territory of Northern Caucasus has lived Arabian people, whose culture has rendered influence on local traditions. Derbent city in Dagestan has played the important role in spreading of Islamic traditions. This city was situated on the single road along Caspian Sea from Iran, Near and Middle East. It was called *al-abvab* (the gate of gates) (Шихсаидов, 1969; P. 29). A lot of people from Damascus, Palestine, Mosul, Jazzer and other places lived there. The reciting masters of the Holy Qur'an – *kurra (karri)* – propagated Islam, Arabian language and new ideas. Arabian language was popular in Dagestan right up to the middle of the 19th century. After that time Arabian population was turned to local languages and cultural traditions, which were Islamic with ancient local coloring to that time. The heritage of the great Arabian and Persian cultures was adopted in Derbent in North Caucasus.

Volga-Ural region and North Caucasus are two main regions of the spreading of Islam in Russia, with different types of music-religious traditions. If to North Caucasus Islam came through Dagestan from Arabian regions and Iran, then Volga-Ural region had a history contacts with Baghdad and with Iran, Middle (Central) Asia and Turkey later. The spreading of Islam and religion culture in this region took place during 9-14th centuries. After capture of Kazan khanate in 1552 and Astrakhan khanate in 1556, Russian tsar Ivan IV (Ivan the Terrible) prohibited Islam from big cities. But in the middle of the 19th century there were 57 *madrasahs* and 430 *mektebs* (Muslims pre-schools) in Volga-Ural region, including the famous “Muhammadiya” *madrasah* and “Kasymiya” *madrasah* in Kazan, “Galiya” *madrasah* in Ufa and others.

Islam in Russian Federation has some specific peculiarities, which is possible to select only in compare with the other Islamic regions. Some of them are descended from Russia geographical situation in Europe and Asia, and cultural situation between East and West. The others are characterized by ethnocultural particularities, and present different directions of the Islam with various orientations: Sunnism (Mazhab Hanafi) and Sufism in Volga-Ural region, and Sunnism and Sufism-Muridism in North Caucasus. Mazhab Hanafi is predominated in Russia. Today, several music traditions ‘Diasporas of nations’ of the former USSR: Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, as well as Afghanistan, Kurdish and some other diasporas, develop in Russia too. But their Islamic music traditions aren't studied in Russia yet.

The system of Islam music-cultural traditions in Russia, in my opinion, comprises three layers from itself: religious; ceremonial; the nowadays religion music culture, including folk music: songs on spiritual poetry and others. It involves three types of ceremonies and genres: religion (*rac'at*, *at-tajwid*, *azan*); ritual (*zikr*) and folk (*bait*, *munadzhat*, *turky* etc.).

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Inflexion side of the Holy Qur'an reciting serves the sound standard (ideal) and defines the inflexion side of Islamic music-cultural tradition. Here wide-spread different traditions, first of all the Syrian style of the Holy Qur'an reciting at the average rate, so-called *tadvir*, have for a long time saved early styles of reciting; the spoken tradition of the text of the Holy Qur'an has appeared. Sunnite *azan*, wide-spread, in North Caucasus, comprises of itself repeated seven obligatory molds and has a traditional structure. The style of the North-Caucasian *azan* is close to Iranian and Azerbaijan. In the same time local styles of the Holy Qur'an reciting are based on musical modes (for example, pentatonic scale), local languages and music inflexions.



Figure 1. Holy Qur'an reciting from Tatarstan (Сайфуллина, 1999; p.192)

In Soviet time professional masters of the Qur'an reciting (*hafez*) were found very rarely. Many old men and women in villages studied Qur'an reciting from their *mullah* or their relatives. They saved Islamic heritage and handed down it to their children. Sometimes they didn't know Arabian and studied Qur'an like a folk song. In fact, the folk style was very popular in Russian regions. In Soviet period I met the similar facts in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, too. Nowadays the famous religious figures from Arabian countries, Iran and Turkey are invited to Moscow mosques for religious service.

The main Islamic folk music genres in Volga-Ural region are *bait* and *munadzhata* (*munadjat*). They appeared in the 7-10th centuries under the Islam influence. *Bait* [ba'i:t] (from arab. *bait*) – epic poetry and musical genre which Islamic poetry form with ancient local tradition – associated with ceremony of weeping for dead. Text was often written in special books with Arabian letters but music was always in existence in oral tradition. There weren't tight melodies for them and famous religious songs were often used. Sometimes new music was composed. The themes of *bait*s were different and historical theme was popular. Music of these *bait*s looked like *munadzhata*. In the beginning of *bait* quotation of the Holy Qur'an (*takbir* or *shahada*) were put.

Munadzhata – is known as religious-didactic songs. In Volga-Ural cities it was arisen from the similar Near East poetic genre under the Sufi influence. In the Middle Ages *munadzhata* was part of classic music, but this type of music disappeared later. Today *munadzhata* is the folk genre. One of the first notations of *munadzhata*s can be found in the book of a famous Russian ethnomusicologist, Sergey Gavrilovich Rybakov (1867-

1922): *Music and songs of Russian Muslims with studies of their way of life* (S-Pb., 1897) in which examples of the end of the 19th century were written.

Munadzhat is performed in death ceremony, on religious holidays, wedding ceremony. They can be divided into religious and secular. The last ones are divided into historical, tragic, about important doings of life. The small part of religious *munadzhat*s is performed on Arabian language the others – on local Tatar and Bashkiria languages. In religious *munadzhat*s, surats of the Holy Qur'an are often used. Some of them are devoted to Prophet Muhammad, his mother and Islam religion.

Ихлас, уртаса



Мин һә йәм ис лам дп нси, ис лам ме нән мин мак та нам.
Әл дә мөб мин и се мен ал ган мын ә ле тшп шат ла нам.

Figure 2. *Munadzhat* “About Islam religion”. Bashkortostan (Галина, 2006; p. 135)

Munadzhat was considered as the keeper of religious ideas. Its music style sounded like folk as well as the Holy Qur'an reciting. The practice of reading (singing) didactic-religious book “Muhammadiya” influenced on *munadzhat* style. This book was written in Arabic by the Turkish poet Muhammad Cheleby in 1449. Text has been often written in system of classic Arabian poetry – *arud*.

Р.А.Исхакова-Вамба приводит пример мунаджата, в котором использован полный ритмический рисунок этой книги:

**МӨНӘЖӘТ
МУНАДЖАТ**

Скоро ♩=58



Са - быр и - тим(е), са-быр и - тим, са-быр ит - ми
ни хәл и тим? Са - бы-р(ы)-лык(ы)-ның дә - рә - жә - сен(е)
бер хо - дай - дан ө - мид и - тим.
Са - быр - лык - ның дә - рә - жә - сен
бер хо - дай - дан ө - мид и тим.

Figure 3. *Munadzhat* (Исхакова-Вамба, 1997; p. 147)

Specific characteristic of *munadzhath* music was enlarged cadence and the name of Allah has been always sung on the fundamental tone. The same fact in *azan* was described by M. Gettat (1980). The same phenomenon can be found in some *munadzhath* Тоже явление можно увидеть в следующем мунаджате, где имя Аллах в начале поётся на основном тоне:



И-ла - хи, са-гы - намын сэнгати дүрт(е) нэр-сө
нирермен - га Бе ри төү - фик(ы), бе ри дөү - лө те,
бе - ри ди - лө - ры, бе - ри и - ман.

Figure 4. *Munadzhath* (Сайфуллина, 1999; p. 196)



Кушылта:
Эл би зэг, эл би зэг, хуш кил ден шэх ри рэх мэт
эл би зэг! Лә и лә һә ил лә л ла һү,
Куплет(тизэрәк):
лә и лә һә ил лә л ла. Ош бу ай за
һи гез ож мах и шек тә ре а сы лыр,
сә хәр тор ган бән дә ләр гә нур зан рэх мэт сә се лер.

Figure 5. *Munadzhath* "Albidag" (leave-taking with Ramadan month).
Bashkortostan (Галина, 2006; P.146)

Modal system of *munadzhath* and *bait* is based on pentatonic scale, but in *munadzhath* some Arabian *maqam* elements can be found. Tatar ethnomusicologist Rosa Ishakova-Vamba was the first who wrote about this fact (as well as about Arabian influence in

Tatar music at all) in the soviet period in 1978. It wasn't easy in that communist time. She has opened the way to investigation of this question in Russian music science.

Musical style of *bait* and *munadzhat* has had an influence on the main Volga-Ural folklore genre *ozon key* (long song). In the end of the 1980s *munadzhats* and *baits* began to disappear. Old performers refused to sing the religious songs for researchers. When Russia took independent statehood in 1992 and religion was permitted these genres began to rise.

Nowadays *bait* and *munadzhat* can be heard on the stage in folklore ensembles' programs too. Members of these ensembles in expeditions recorded ancient Islamic music from old masters and performed these genres on the stage. For example "Ak Kalfak" ensemble (chief – Gennady Makarov) from Kazan city used maqam style.



Figure 6. "Ak Kalfak" ensemble

Since the end of last century *munadzhat* performers competitions in Russia have been organized. One of them was put into practice in 2002 by Tatarstan TV, the others – in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan in 2005.

Religious music inspires modern composers from this region and is used in their musical compositions: concert for chorus a capella *Munadzhat* by Shamil Shrifullin, oratorio *Maulid an-Nabi* by Masguda Shamsutdinova, *Elvidag* for chorus a capella by Rashid Kalimullin etc. These compositions are often performed on religious holydays.

Sufi practice, which was actively developed in Volga-Ural region in the Middle Ages, has disappeared now. But it continues their life in Northern Caucasus.

The music culture of Islam in Northern Caucasus wasn't studied in modern music science. The first and, unfortunately, the last special work is my book about Islam and

music in Russia published in 1997. In Russia, Islam comes out, on one hand, as a universal principle, and on the other hand, as various orientations: sunnism, sufism etc. which often differ in their attitude towards musical activity and its concrete form. Music is a very important part of the national culture of Russian Muslims'.

Music is the important phenomenon of *muridism* – specific type of Sufi brotherhood's *Nakshbandiya* and *Kadiriya* mystically practiced in Northern Caucasus, where Abu Hamid al-Gazali's traditions are developed.

The main ritual tradition in this region is *zikr*. Musical practice of *zikr* is based on the Holy Qur'an reciting, ritual songs and dances, including the local folk music, as death weeping *kyuj*, *bozlau* or magic medical songs – *chapsh*, historical songs etc. Relationship between pre-Islamic (heathen), Christian and Islamic cultural traditions in local folk genres determine specific quality of religious ceremony and its music, including the Holy Qur'an reciting. In the same time the influence of Islamic cultural tradition on folk music can be mentioned. For example, it is necessary to emphasize specific character of musical thinking, connecting with Qur'an reciting as ideal of sound.

Circular *zikr* dances (called *dzhagr*) are performed with accompaniment of Caucasian drums (*dhal*, *nagora*), tambourine (*daf*) and hand clapping. Sometimes local flute *kamyl* is also used. (Гасаряев, 1998; P.75) The famous Sufi Kunt Hajji (d. 1837) introduced that type of *zikr* with musical instruments to Shamil, who was the famous political leader in the 19th century. But he didn't like it. Holy Qur'an reciting with ritual dances in small *zikr* ritual were included. (Дайров, 1971; P.35)

In my opinion, religious songs – *mavlid*, *qasydah*, *marsiya* in Northern Caucasus, especially in Dagestan, sounds like Azerbaijan religious music. They are based on local *maqam* scales – *mugams*. This is the special theme for the future investigation. Region music-cultural tradition can be presented by religious songs *turky* (*tulky*). In modern Dagestan it is investigated only by philologists. They called these songs "poetry for singing" or reciting. In the beginning of the last century the first book has been published in Turkey by Abusufyan Akaev. But the first example of *turky* about night *namaz* was written in the 15th century, by Idris from Akysh village. Unfortunately, we don't know anything about its music, especially in the past. We only know that music of popular classic songs has been used for *turky* songs. It looks like *bait* music in Volga-Ural region. But using of classic music reminds of *munadzhat*.

There are some local types of Northern Caucasus religious songs and *zikr*, but nobody has researched them yet. Study of the Russian Muslims cultural traditions has only begun, and it is represented very perspective.

Today Russian musicology shows great interest in world of Islam music research. In new Russia, this kind of schools have remained in central part of the country (Moscow, St-Petersburg), Siberia (Novosibirsk) and Far East (Vladivostok). Many scientists switched over from Soviet Asia to foreign Asian music: Arabian, Iranian, etc. Part of them continue their investigations in theory of Asian music, modern practice of classic music, ethnoorganology, Asian music history, composers school's evolution and other directions and aspects. But Islamic music research in Russia is the new way of our science. In formed USSR this material has been investigated only like folklore genres without religion culture context. Many traditions of Islamic music in Russia are very old and they must be recorded and catalogued. Qur'an reciting in Tatarstan and Bashkortostan (Bashkiria) regions is studied by Zilya Imamutdinova from Moscow,

Guzel Saifullina (who lives in Netherlands) and some others young ethnomusicologists. They and some other researchers, including beginners, were united by my conference "World Music: research problems" which took place in Moscow Tchaikovsky conservatory in 2004, 2005 and 2007.

The important trend of oriental studies is application of the oriental music as a subject to conservatory education, creation of the training aids for students. The first special training aid "History of Non European music cultures" has been published last year, by a group of scientists of Moscow and Kazan conservatories.

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Special thanks for Bashkirian ethnomusicologist Zilya Imamutdinova, who has given to me some Audio examples.