

**25th Annual (2015) Koizumi Fumio Prize**

**PRIZE LECTURE (FULL TEXT)**

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**ON SOME ASPECTS OF  
MY ETHOMUSICOLOGY ACTIVITIES**

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Ethnomusicology studies of Central Asia have been dominated for a length of time by the incorrect assumption that its traditional music has a strictly oral character and existence. Basing on this a priori assumption, even music of the sublime classical style of the entire East, including the Uzbek, has been called an “oral tradition”.

Having studied Arabic, Persian and Turkic sources, starting from the treatises of Abu Nasra Farabi (873-950), I came to realize that various forms of recording music have existed in the East, which, for the main part, had ancillary functions - numerical, mnemonic, fingering, tablature and others – which served to restore the memory of an established canonical text (as a sort of mental note).

The so-called “tanbur notation”, created in the last quarter of XIX century in Khiva, occupies a special role among these records. Its uniqueness lies in that it is a sort of scientific treatise written by the carriers of classical music in the region of Makomata, as it contains the main conceptual construct used by music analysts and practicing musicians of that time.

It is also one of the earliest and likely the most accurate of the makom cycles notation texts, which includes a multitude of concepts, terms and symbols signifying modal and rhythmic modes as well as structural syntagmas.

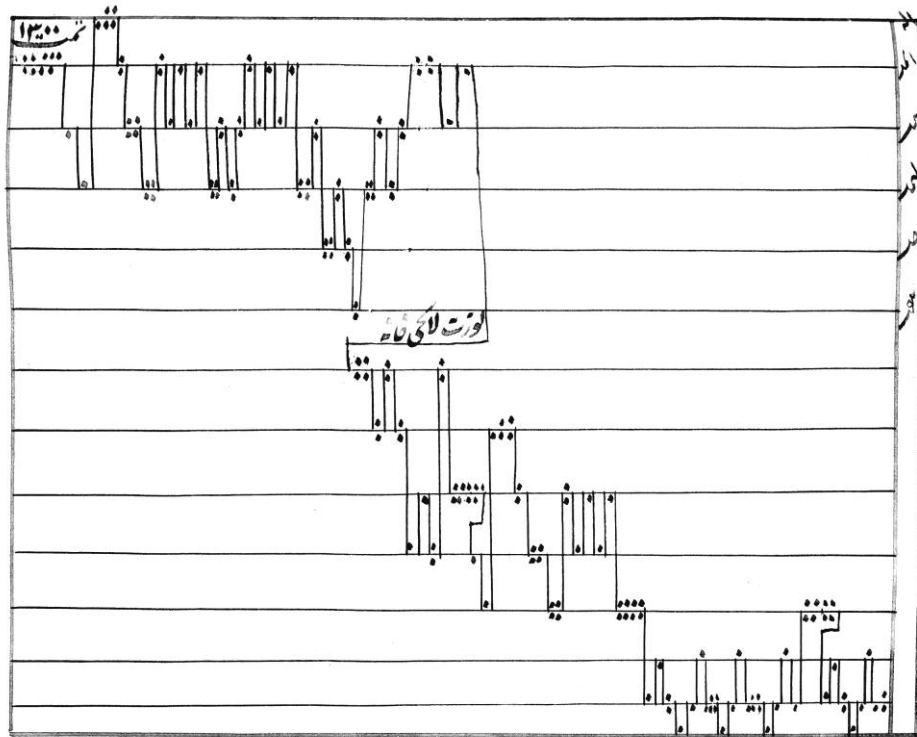
Tanbur tablature specifies five main aspects of the makoms:

- Names of spheres, cycles, sections and parts of multi-level structure of makom cycles;
- Tone series (modal base);
- Usuli (modal metric-rhythmic base), performed on percussion instruments;
- Verbal texts for vocal parts;
- Segmentation symbols separating the instrumental and the vocal parts within the composition structure.

Example 1. Show on the screen one page each of instrumental, vocal parts from the tanbur notation, with commentary, and show the location of the parts' names, melodic lines, rhythmic formulas, verse texts, as well as segmentation symbols.

The image displays a page of handwritten musical notation for the tanbur. The notation is organized into several systems, each containing multiple staves. The top system includes a vocal line with Persian text: "هر چه شک کردی چنانکه ای کز کجا تو بیای...". Below this, there are several instrumental staves with rhythmic and melodic markings. The text "نقص مقام رابست" is written across the first few staves. The second system features the text "مغز است بی تو چو کوه دریا...". The third system includes the text "عید و دل از بیابان زمام که کونکوم و شردور زستان". The notation includes various symbols such as dots, lines, and arrows, indicating specific musical techniques and rhythms. The page concludes with a small numerical sequence "۱۶ ۱۷" at the bottom left.

From the manuscript of Kamil Devani



From the manuscript of Yusuf Bayani

Thanks to the above qualities, the tanbur notation form plays a vital historic function by enabling the continuity of the classical musical tradition. At present, approximately 20 lists of notation manuscripts are known, which are kept in various state and private foundations of Uzbekistan, St. Petersburg and Moscow. These manuscripts hold a vast potential for research of the foundations of classical music in Central Asia within the context of its present form.

Unfortunately, these sources have not been subject to thorough scientific and practical study for approximately 100 years. Only 15 years ago, a group of enthusiasts – musicians and Orientalist scholars – have commenced, under my supervision, a serious study of the three most significant lists of manuscripts which in their totality give the most complete understanding of the cycle of Six and a half makoms of Khorezm:

- Manuscript of the great calligrapher and scholar of instrumental parts of makoms Khudaibergan Mukhirkan (1823-1922), dated 1883;
- Manuscript of the magnificent court singer, musician and calligrapher Matyakub Kharrata (1864-1939), dated 1884;
- Manuscript of the distinguished poet, musician and calligrapher Mukhammad Kamil Devani (1887-1938), written circa the end of the 20s or beginning of the 30s of the past century.

The first findings of the initiative group, presented to the Republic’s musical society in concert on December 20, 2002 in the Great Hall of the State Conservatory of Uzbekistan, have exceeded all expectations. Experienced musicians and masters of the young generation were enraptured by the wholeness and perfection of the instrumental and vocal parts of the makoms performed in concert. They unanimously remarked that they have never heard such perfect sounding of Uzbek classical music samples.

Comparative analyses of the tanbur notation texts created approximately 130 years ago reveal significant differences from the samples preserved in practice: contemporary Uzbek classical music traditions show an overall trend of reduction of the scale of the form, omission of many constitutive parts of cycles, especially those of the instrumental part of the makoms, as well as a strive to eliminate the authentic texts of the classical poets from the performed vocal parts.

Thus, canonical musical texts of the classical makoms are being continually abridged in contemporary practice, and only separate parts remain in use, and at that in abridged form. This can be illustrated on the example of the instrumental melody “Mukhammasi Ushshoq” from Makom Rost. Here is what it looks like in its present practice.

2. The note sample of this Mukhammasi Ushshoq is displayed on the screen, accompanied by audio.

M.M. ♩ = 76  
1-xoha

Mukhammasi Ushshoq from Matniyaz Yusupov’s book “Khorezm makoms”, vol. VI.

M.M. ♩ = 50

1-хона

Mukhammasi Ushshoq from the Khorezm Tanbur notation

Firstly, the rhythmic formula here is simplified, according to which it can no longer be called “Mukhammas” in the full sense, since the main determining factor of the makoms’ part is their usul, the meter and rhythm formula. The “Mukhammas” usul appears in tabular notation form as follows:

3. Show notes sample, commentary to identify the five musical measures.

Listening to the same part of “Mukhammasi Ushshoq” on the basis of the five-part usul and its comparison with the previous example.

It can be seen that the “Mukhammas” usul consists of five rhythmic musical measures, called “zarbam”. This is where the name “Mukhammas” originates; it literally means five-stop rhythmic formula. The tanbur notation has 4 Mukhammas and all of them are given in this same usul.

Another noteworthy aspect of the tanbur notation is that it preserved many other usuls of instrumental and vocal parts based thereon. For example, “Chor

Zarb”, “Murabba””, “Musaddas”, “Mussaba””, Nim Sakil”, “Se Usul”, which were not preserved in another other mokoms note collections.

On the whole, it may be said that the Tanbur notation, in its most complete and accurate form, preserved many melodic and rhythmic formulas of the classical music of Central Asia – Makoms – which are recorded in the written sources of the preceding centuries.

Today the musicians of many world countries are concerned with one global problem, which is the preservation (conservation) and development (representation) of traditional music, especially the indigenous classical strata which developed within their canonic frameworks for centuries.

Tanbur notation represents an unique first-hand source of these rules which allow us to reconstruct, preserve and develop the indiginous forms of Uzbek national musical classics on the basis of real (in contradistinction to abstract, as in musical treatises) research material. In this capacity the tanbur notation aids the preservation of a large section of the classical music genre system – Makoms.