

*Afet HASANOVA*

## **AZERBAIJANI CULTURE OF THE MIDDLE AGES IN THE CONTEXT OF ARTISTIC TRADITIONS OF THE MIDDLE EAST**

### **Abstract**

*The article studies Azerbaijani cultural traditions in the context of common cultural values of the East. The study focuses on the historical aspects of the problem. Being analyzed from the cultural aspect of view, the subject brings forward the geographical, historical, ethnographic and psychological factors. In particular, the article pays attention to key processes taking place in the cultural history of the East since the Middle Ages forward. Manifestations of these processes in the Azerbaijani culture of are studied. Cultural partnership factors are disclosed. The common features observed in Azerbaijani cultural traditions are assessed based on both the historical and modern scientific criteria. The article provides scientific analysis of the formation of the artistic culture. Turkish ethno-cultural factor is drawn forward in the bilateral cultural processes. The paper investigates the synthesis of artistic styles in architecture. It justifies thoughts about the decorative-applied art in the Eastern art culture. The value of the Oriental traditions in the world heritage have been explained. Characteristic features of traditional music culture have been studied. In general, based on analysis of the sources related to the subject it may be concluded that Azerbaijani culture is the product of both the local and universal and regional contexts.*

**Keywords:** *Azerbaijan, artistic culture, architecture, arts and crafts, music, literary heritage.*

### **Preface**

The main task of studying of the Azerbaijani culture and art in the context of Middle East's artistic traditions is two-fold: to reveal and study the relationships of the Azerbaijani art with the East on the one hand, and to reveal the contribution of the cultural heritage of the nation to the

world art treasury and to show the stability and magnificence of the Azerbaijani art.

Combining in itself Oriental values, Azerbaijani cultural heritage continues to expand in its way to cultural integration. From this point of view, one of the most important issues is to study Azerbaijani cultural heritage in the context of oriental culture.

In general, bilateral relationships in art are considered to be one of the burning research areas in the modern science of art and culture. With regards to this, studying of Azerbaijani culture in the context of Middle East's art traditions will provide opportunities to reveal peculiarities of Azerbaijan's material and cultural heritage.

### **Research Methodology**

The study of ancient East is one of the main conditions in studying of the achievements of classical Eastern studies, and form the methodological basis in studying of the development dynamics of Oriental culture nowadays. Classical Eastern studies are very important for the modeling of the traditional Eastern cultures, and for identification of typological principles. Therefore, it is important to use the methods used in Eastern studies to research the eastern cultures (Z.N. Jafarzadeh, 2008, p. 15).

The peculiarities of the bilateral relationships are in close connection with the nation's history, political situation and many other factors. Azerbaijan's every historical period is characterized by the type, nature, and implementation of the given bilateral relationships.

The research on the history of the history and the culture should also be emphasized as those studies were focused on the interaction of Azerbaijani art with other regions. M. Abdullayev, R. Abdullayeva (Abdullayeva R.G., 1993), Akhundov (Akhundov A., 1997), R. Arazova (Arazova R., 1999), Z. Bunyadov (Bunyadov Z.M., 1965), T. Bunyadovun (Bunyadov T.A., 1993), M. Dadashzade (Dadashzade M.A., 1988), F. Azizova (Azizova F., 2009), Aliyev (Aliyev I., 1989), J. Ismaylov (Ismaylov J., 1997), Ch. Kadjar (Kadjar Ch., 1995), F. Mammadova (Mamedova F., 1999), M. Rafili (Rafili M., 1973) and H. Rzayev (Rzayev H., 1976) were referred to as a valuable source of research covering various aspects of the investigated problem.

There are also remarkable scientific studies touching upon this and other aspects. For example, this issue has been studied in the works of Russian orientalist scholars, such as V. Bartold (Bartold V.V., 1999), A.E. Krimski (Krimski A.E., 1981), E.E. Bertels (Bertels E.E., 1962), N.I. Konrad (Konrad N.I., 1966), V.M. Jirmunski (Jirmunski V.M., 1979), I.S. Braginski (Braginski I.S., 1964). Specifically, N.I. Konrad gives us valuable facts regarding cultural integration, creation of the idea of unity of the world's historical and cultural processes, connections among various cultures, and the work developed in the direction of identification of the character of those relationships.

These works represent interactive conditioning process in socio-political, socio-economic, cultural and ideological areas as a result of complex analysis of the historical development of artistic culture in Eastern countries.

There are available solid research works clarifying bilateral relationships of Azerbaijani musical culture with other Eastern nations in medieval ages. Among those, the most important works belong to U.Hajibayli (Hajibayov U.A., 1985), G. Gasimov (Kasimov K., 1949), M.S. Ismayilov (Ismailov M.S., 1991), G. Abdullazade (Abdullazade G.A., 1996), S. Farkhadova (Farkhadova S., 1991), R. Mammadova (Mamedova R., 2002), Z. Safarova (Z. Safarova, 1998), S. Tagiyeva (Tagiyeva S., 2007), R. Zohrabov (Zohrabov R.F., 2010). arch.

Due to the fact that the research has been devoted to artistic culture it was considered appropriate to use complex approach and align the historical and comparative-typological analysis. Thus, the study of the art integrated approach to the material was considered expedient to go about culture, history and comparative analysis of typological aligned. In our opinion, such compromise allows to fully open up the topic of the Azerbaijani art culture in the context of Eastern art traditions.

A comparative study of the Azerbaijani culture has many aspects. Therefore, it was considered necessary to separate dominant vector directions to establish a scientific concept of the comparative analysis. Comparative-typological method is the best choice in this regard. Because, the comparative-historical method allows to discover the common and the individual, the universal and the separate in any give culture via the reconstruction of the interaction of cultures. It is also interesting and relevant from the point of view of revealing the reasons of compliance and difference.

Centuries-long development of Azerbaijani art creativity beautifully reflects the existence of cultural relationships between the Middle East nations.

### **Cultural Partnership Factors**

When speaking of the cultural partnership, the geographic, historic and ethnographic, and religious and cultural factors are the first ones to be researched. There are many similarities between the culture of the Near and Middle East nations. This is explained by the similar natural and geographic and socio-economic situations and interaction of the cultures in those countries.

The characteristic feature of the spiritual culture of the Near and Middle Eastern nations is that being occupied by the Arabs in the medieval ages, these nations still preserve several peculiarities of the Arabic culture. There are a lot of Arabic and Persian words in the languages of

the region. All nations except those who speak Turkic and Kurmanj languages still use the Arabic alphabet. The education system, literature and art of these nations have been influenced by Islam.

Shariat, which spread in the Middle East in the VII-XII centuries as a regulator of legislative and religious terms for the Muslims, is still the essential law system in today's lifestyle of the Muslims of the given region. However, M.A. Rasulzade writes referring to the Arabic historian of the 14th century, Ibn Khaldun: "Islamic culture is not the monument created by the Arabs, it is the building constructed by all nations which admitted Islam" (Rasulzadeh M.A., 1991, p.6 ). This idea finds its reflection in the works of both the Eastern and Western scholars.

Eastern Islamic culture is closely connected with the three elements which created it. Thus, equally with the Arabs, there are Persian and Turks who contributed the same amount of effort, and sometimes even more to the development of Islamic science and mystery. Magnificent Islamic representatives who came out of these two nations have written numerous books on various Islamic topics. It needs to be noted that alongside with Arabic language, Turkish and Persian languages played important roles in spread of Islam in the region. Being the means of expression of the same thinking, sense and knowledge these two languages played crucial role in the development and dissemination of the Eastern Islamic culture. The famous orientalist V. Bartold writes in his "The History of Islamic culture", that the Turkish language was considered the third language in the Islamic world already in the 13th century. (Bartold V., 1940, p. 125).

Surely, until the moment when Islam took the leading positions in the cultural tradition of the East, the Near and Middle East's art was turned into the great cultural heritage based on the spiritual wealth, traditional tribal rituals and beliefs of the nations of the region, including the Azerbaijanis. Only starting from the VIII-IX centuries Islamic ethical and aesthetic standards are beginning to show themselves in various areas of Azerbaijani culture: architecture, fine and applied arts. (Azerbaijani Art, 1992, p. 53).

For an extended period of time Azerbaijan was a place for many religions. Iranian mazdakism, Greek ellinism, Byzantine's christianity and finally Arabic Islam have collided here. After adopting Islam, Azerbaijan gained the unity of its religion and culture, which resulted in ethnic unity of the whole Azerbaijan which became possible in the course of the big events starting from X century and until the fourteenth century through the Oguz-Seljuk Turks flow, and the Mongol invasion.

According to ethnographers, during that rebellious period in the 13th and 14th centuries, Azerbaijan has become mostly turkified and since this factor played the role in increase of turkification in Azerbaijan. Thus, from the religious standpoint, Azerbaijan fully accepted Islamic culture in the 8th century, and became completely turkified in the 13th century (Rasulzadeh M.A.,

1994, p. 98-99). However, Islam did not have equal impact on the craftsmanship, quality and content of the art across Azerbaijan. This effect has been relatively strong in urban areas. Feudal lords living in remote areas did not accept the religion in any way, and therefore it was not important for the poor to accept it as well (Azerbaijani Art, 1992, p.53).

Studying the historical development problems arisen in Azerbaijani culture in the medieval ages, it is important to take into account that this culture alongside with its origin is the product of the universal and regional context. The researchers (Gasimov Kh.S, 2008, p. 45) explain this by the following factors:

1. Azerbaijan is an Eastern country from the geographic and cultural-historical points of view, and Azerbaijanis have been in centuries-long bilateral cultural and historical invasion process together with neighbour countries;
2. Starting from the 7th century Azerbaijan entered the Islamic region and the system of “Muslim culture”, and Islam has become the leading power in the life of the nation in medieval ages;
3. Being one of the Turkic nations, Azerbaijanis could not stay apart from the the cultural and historical events which took place in the Turkic world.

### **Formation of artistic cultural traditions**

Complex interaction of Oghuz tribes with the local ethnic population in Azerbaijan in the XI-XII centuries, played important role in ethnic and cultural history of the country.

Seljuk Empire which was ruled by the kings from Turk-Oghuz tribal dynasty (1038-1157) was the most powerful state in the Middle East, covered a large area, and had a powerful effect on many nations in their economic, political, ethnic and cultural life.

The prospering period of this state covers the second half of the eleventh century. This period was characterized by development of the craftsmanship, the expansion of cities, cherishing culture, the formation of a number of Turkic nations, the dissemination of Turkic languages, science, literature, architecture and art were distinguished by a new development stage.

During this period, the strengthening of Azerbaijan's Eldegiz sultanate and Shirvan state created favorable conditions for the formation of the culture of Renaissance. The interaction of Azerbaijan with other Eastern cultural centers had a positive impact on this process. Being a part of the Sassanids and the Arab Caliphate for centuries strengthened these relations.

One of the most aspects was that the dynasties of Shirvan, Salari, Ravvadi, Shaddadi who

operated across the country, paid a lot of attention to the revival of local national traditions and development of science and culture. The efforts of the local dynasties resulted in strengthening of the process of formation of one common language (Turkish) and formation of culture. During the Seljuk period Azerbaijan's science and art entered a new stage of development under the Turkish influence.

It is no coincidence that this period in Oriental studies is known as a "turning point", "transformation period", "revival age". It appeared in connection with the rise of science and art. During this period, which covers 250 years of history, there was formed a different artistic style when compared to those which were before or after that period. This style is known in the scientific literature as a "Seljuk style". Artistic power of the Turkish ethnicity undoubtedly played an important role in its occurrence.

Azerbaijani culture during that period was developing on the basis of two factors: first one being Turkism, and the second one being Islam. In particular, the Turkic world which has developed in the frames of Islamic culture was open to the cultural integration.

On the one hand, it opened wide opportunities for universalization of the culture and art. On the other hand, it created favorable ideological conditions for the development of national and ethnic culture.

The blend of Arabic, Persian, Turkish cultural values with the national and local traditions allowed the emergence of a unique artistic specimens. Azerbaijan's rich pre-Islamic traditions being adapted to the Islamic culture, new and meaning, plunged into a new development stage.

During this period, such cultural centers of Azerbaijan as Ganja, Barda, Maraga, Derbent, Baku, Shamakhi, Tabriz, Ardabil earn fame in the East. Azerbaijan's prominent people working in various fields of science and art, provide their contribution to world culture. Khagani, Nizami, Bakhmanyar, Kh.Tabrizi and other philosophers and writers gained worldwide fame.

By writing in Arabic and Persian in the 11th-12th centuries Azerbaijan's prominent writers acquired the chance of becoming famous in the whole Muslim world. Most of the poets wrote praising poems about dynastic leaders and created unique works of art.

For example, an outstanding representative of Azerbaijani poetry Falaki Shirvani wrote poems praising Shirvanshahs, Mujir ad-Din was devoting his poems to Mohammed Jahan Pehlevan and Gizil Arslan (Red Arslan) from the dynasty of Eldegiz, and Gatran Tabrizi praised Azerbaijani rulers.

During this period, the interaction of music and word has reached its peak and it was impossible to imagine one separate from the other. It was during this period, that there were created unique works of art, and Nizami was the prominent representative of it.

Nizami's poetry of the middle ages is the most valuable source of information about the state of the art of music. In particular, his "Khamisa" is irreplaceable treasure in this sense. Through Nizami's works of that period it is possible to obtain information about the individual musicians, musical instruments, level of development of mugham, music theory and so on. These works reflected interesting facts about the importance of music of the middle ages.

Interestingly, these works provided valuable thoughts not only about Azerbaijani music, but also about musical art of Middle East region as well. In this regard, G. Gasimov wrote that "Nizami's poetic heritage of the XII century is the great source for studying of Azerbaijan's musical culture of the early period" (Gasimov G., 1949, p. 11).

From Nizami's works we know that mughams gained wide popularity being performed at various gatherings. At the same time, he stands out with his great knowledge of music theory. The poetry of the middle ages shows us how strong was the relationship between poetry and music. This connection improved the poets' artistic taste.

Despite that the writers still wrote in Arabic and Persian languages during the Seljuk period, folks started to use Turkish (Oghuz) language for communication. This, in turn, speeded up the usage of single Turkic language. Use of this language increased the development of cultural relationships among the nations residing in South Caucasus, Asia and Iran. Namely in Seljuk period, Azerbaijani art emerged taking advantage of both the close relationships with oriental culture and developing in parallel with the Turkic world.

### **Turkic Ethno-Cultural Factor**

Tradition ingrained in Azerbaijani culture, in the 13th century merged with the richer environment. Even if this period was characterized by Mongol invasion, it also was a period of a move forward in a certain sense. Such cities as Baku, Ganja, Shamakhi, Nakhichevan and Tabriz have developed in the 12th century known as Renaissance period. Astrology, mathematics, natural science, philosophy, medicine and other scientific fields were developed. This progress, of course, was not possible without the factor of cultural interaction. Connections with Iran, Syria, Egypt, Iraq and other countries were active.

Maragha observatory, built in 1259 under the leadership of N. Tusi in the middle ages has gained a reputation as a center for scientific research. Alongside with scientists from Azerbaijan there were scientists from Iran, Syria, India, China working in the observatory and in its library of 20,000 books. Together with Tusi, there were working many outstanding scientists of Azerbaijan and the world, such as G. Shirazi, M. Ordi, N. Gazvini, F. Maragai, A. Faraj, Fao Munchi from China, Mongolian Isa and others. The first academy in the East was founded by N. Tusi in Maraga

and was called "Dar al-ilm wa hikma". It was operating as a kind of "international educational complex" which provided lectures in the most diverse sciences – starting from humanities to philosophy, history, religion, logic, mathematics, as well as astronomy, medicine and natural sciences.

The medieval period in Azerbaijan was characterized with active bilateral cultural relations. Cultural values of Persian, Arabic, Turkish civilizations enriched local cultural traditions.

Tabriz miniature school found wide popularity in XIII-XIV centuries. This schools gained a special status for reflecting Turkish culture and art, thus standing out from the variety of other miniature centers. This is why Tabriz miniature school implemented important historical mission of integration of the Turkish world into the Muslim culture.

Music and literature were highly developed during the Renaissance period in Azerbaijan. Beautiful architectural monuments were built – Sheikh Safiaddin religious complex in Ardabil, Tabriz building of the Blue Mosque and the Khan's Palace and Shirvanshah's Palace in Baku.

Architectural monuments confirm close relationships between Azerbaijan and leading Eastern countries. For example, Azerbaijan's tower mausoleums, bright expressive architectural monuments in the Caspian Sea along the coast of southern Khorasan show the architectural influence of the Middle Asia.

It becomes clear from the works of Dust Muhammad Kharavi, Gazi Ahmed Kumi, Mustafa Ali Chelebi, Iskender Munshi Turkmen and others that the palaces of Sefevi dynasty were the thriving center for calligraphy, painting, music, poetry and arts in 15th-17th centuries. Shah Ismail Khatai founded the state of Sefevi which was known as the most advanced and exemplary economic and political establishment. This period is regarded as a renaissance of culture and art in Azerbaijan.

The relationship between different types of art were observed in middle ages. There was one common style which was showing up in carpets and other textile products, ceramics, jewelry products, architectural monuments, art, art books, design, and even the music itself. The main factor causing this style – was ornament.

XVI-XVII centuries were characterized by enriched musical culture, creation of new melodies, colors, development of classical mugham, emergence of new ashugs, and poetic creativity has improved a lot. One example of poetic folk art of this period was the heroic epos Koroghlu. It should be noted that the "Koroglu" became widely popular not only in Azerbaijan but also in other Turkish-speaking nations: Turkmen, Turkish (Anatolia), Uzbek, Karakalpak, as well as Georgian, Tajik and others.

Poetry, music, painting (drawing), architecture and art were inextricably linked to each other



and created unique artistic influence. Due to the poetic description of the word, where each letter had been given great importance, the special kind of art – calligraphy has developed as an independent area. At the same time, to make the power of word even greater there emerged the need for its musical expression. Thus, literally everything in medieval culture "emerged around" the word. This, in turn, was characterized by the common way of artistic thinking. Different historical periods in Azerbaijan were characterized with bilateral relationship with different ethnic groups (Turkish, Iranian, Caucasian, etc). All of these relationships, attaining local cultural traditions, culture and art of Azerbaijan defined a unique identity.

As a result, there were created new space for interaction and bilateral influence and enrichment and development of the selected new styles and schools. If B.C. there was more of a Hellenic influence, starting from the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries the gates started opening to the Eastern influence. From this point of view, these periods provide significant impact on Azerbaijan's cultural image through integration with Turkish, Indian, Chinese and Arabic worlds.

Depending on the specific historical and political situation in Azerbaijan and regions close to him, the culture and art were represented under the influence of the dynasties which governed. Thus, being ruled by the Arabic Caliphate, Seljuks, Mongols, has influenced Azerbaijan and neighboring countries and led to similar cultural development. There were two aspects of bilateral relations. Bilateral relationships between the countries led to proximity in architectural styles of the countries in the region.

Thus, the artistic culture and history, its characteristics, patterns of change in many cases depended on the ruling dynasties. Near and Middle East for centuries was the battleground becoming the arena of political and social events. The change of ruling dynasties often carried destructive nature. But even in this situation, the artistic culture developed and prospered, and, ultimately turned into the system with precise and complex differentiation. Wars, demolition of cultural and artistic centers, destruction of schools – none of those impacted the beauty and richness of the Azerbaijani art and culture. The laws of the Azerbaijani art were formed in the context of a single art system. Traditions have given rise to new interpretations, which also gave a push to the process of improvement.

### **Synthesis of artistic styles in architecture**

The synthesis of art and colorful richness of decor of the Middle Eastern countries, including architectural aesthetics of the Azerbaijani cities are the characteristic traits of the region. The expansion of cultural space between individual regions of the Arab Caliphate helped the development and strengthening of relations. It is noteworthy that the new elements, first of all

entered the material culture. For example, for the first time within the VIII-IX centuries, there began production of glazed ceramics, which opened a new era in the production of ceramics.

Significant influence of the Muslim culture is vividly seen in decorative art objects of the architectural complexes. The ornament being the "music for an eye" – turns into the main area of creativity for the artists, which translates into the development of their art taking away any restrictions. Arabic script pushed out all the others, and turned into the main ornament used in architectural monuments and ceramic products.

A lot of talented architects of Azerbaijan became famous in Middle East in the middle ages. Their high art and level of professionalism together with the innovative ideas provided excellent results, which were reflected in architectural masterpieces of that time. Azerbaijani architects took part in construction of numerous architectural forms in Middle Asia. For example, Ahmad ibn Sultan Abu Bakr Marandi built mausoleum for Sultan Izzatdin Keybolus in Sivas in 1217, and architect Badraddin Tabrizi built Movlana Jalaladdin Rumi's complex in Tabriz in 1274.

Other examples among independent monumental buildings include: "Gapa" mosque built in 1180 by architect Hassan Bin Firuz Maraghai in Divrig; "Forty Girls" mausoleum built by architect Ahmad ibn Abu Bakr Marandi at the beginning of the twelfth century in Niksar; Zeynalbey's mausoleum built by the architect Hasan Pir in the second half of the fifteenth century in Hasan-Keyda; Karvan-Saray and hydrotechnical unit built by the architect Hai Tabrizi near Konya on the Konya-Beyshahar road.

One of the most prominent architects of the Renaissance period is Adjemi Nakhchivani. "His influence on the art of a number of Middle East's architects is clearly seen. He created the architectural masterpieces, that will stand for centuries, the unfading beauty of his creative genius demonstrates the power of a great aesthetic pleasure "(Kadjar Ch., 1995, p. 138).

Due to the fact that Islam prohibited the depiction of people, the tower tombs played the role of the tombstones in the East. They were outstanding with their beauty and their monumentalism eternalized the memory about the famous leaders of the East.

In the 13th-15th centuries there were a lot of traditions adopted in connection with Far East: China, Uygur, Mongols. At the peak turn of historical development, during the reign of Shah Ismail, all cultural values were directed towards one single ethno-cultural medium. Safavids' political objectives and cultural trends were directed towards confirmation of Azerbaijani state status, which in its turn was based on the generality of ethnic identity and national traditions of the society.

Tabriz architectural school confirms its style in the monumental construction. Unlike the Shirvan-Absheron school who has not tried the greater and monumental buildings, Tabriz school

used the whole arsenal of new technical developments implement giant constructive objectives.

Main architectural trends found their reflection in the following works: religious monuments in Gazvin, Sav, Ardebil; government palaces in Tehran and Qazvin; palaces in Khoy, Surpi, Xarrakan; memorial buildings in Sultaniyye, Kalkhoran, as well as market complexes, caravan-sarays, baths and so on.

The process of the historical development of Azerbaijani architecture is characterized by the continuous relationships with Middle East's architectural schools. Of course, common socio-political systems provided positive impact on the development of close cultural ties in the region. Moral and religious proximity, adherence to the common religious practice, matching aesthetic pleasures, as well as the commonality of the lifestyle – all of this helped the formation and development of the architecture of this region.

Azerbaijani architects erected numerous monumental buildings in the East, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Divrig and many other cities. Azerbaijani architects impacted architectural traditions of the whole region, and at the same time used the most valuable achievements of the other countries (Amenzade R., 2007, p. 180-181).

During the development of the architecture Azerbaijan has always kept its national palette of artistic traditions. Bilateral relationships in the architectural area are good example of the synthesis of artistic styles.

### **Decorative-applied art in Eastern art culture**

Comparative research methods, alongside with revealing commonalities and differences between the applied art of Azerbaijan and the Middle East, served to determine the universal and local artistic characteristics of both cultural traditions.

The art of metal processing in the middle ages often resembled the work of master jeweler. There were used various techniques: carving, forging, casting, inlay and implementation of enamel and precious stones. Metal plant patterns, articles, had separate self-positioning system. However, the decor never spoiled architectonics of the object, it always was either on the top of the object or on the side.

Usually, to produce various things, there were used copper, brass, bronze and silver, which were convenient for processing. Metallic objects in the middle ages in the Middle East had identical characteristics in their shapes and decor. They were usually cone cut in the candlesticks, as well as tilted in the cups, trays spread. All this was decorated with tattoo, carvings, cast, embroidery and gold.

Metal inlay to create complex compositions were relevant and valuable because it was

durable, and besides that copper, bronze and silver on a dark background was looking clear and beautiful. Well-known artists from Iran, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Syria, Iraq and Central Asia created beautiful art objects which were used not only in the Middle East, but also in Italy, England, France, Germany, Russia, the Netherlands.

When talking about Azerbaijan's relations with Eastern countries it is important to note the role of jewelers. Working in adjacent regions they were introducing there their profession and traditions. In IX-X centuries the clothing style of the people in the North Caucasus was characterized by the stamping and embroidery. A little later (XI-XIV centuries) Central Asian and Siberian nomads started wearing silver carved and iron plated belts.

The mine technique was also widely used in jewelry art of the East. Colorful mine is reflected in Azerbaijan and Central Asia's jewelry. Arabesque-style plant-embroidered medallions are found in Khorezm. Such items were imported from Azerbaijan or Iran.

When reviewing Azerbaijani decorative-applied in the system of the Eastern art culture, it can be concluded that alongside with the historical and geographical and cultural factors arising from the similar aspects of a common creative features, it still has purely national elements, reflecting the original composition of its artistic structure.

### **Oriental traditions in literary heritage**

In connection with complex historical processes Ashig art developed in Azerbaijan and other Eastern countries stemming from the settlement of Turkic tribes. The oldest Turkish (Oghuz) monument, marking the early development stage of the example is "Kitabi Dede-Gorgud" epos. This epos existed in oral form until the seventh century, and was put in writing in the X century.

"Kitabi Dede-Gorgud" belongs not only to Azerbaijanis, but to the entire Turkic world. This book provides the information of ethnographic character, including household, lifestyle and psychological characteristics and provides images of the ancient Turks, including the image of Oghuz women.

"Kitabi Dede-Gorgud" epos has impacted the development of epos of many Turkic nations. Plot motifs and images included into the Oghuzname, principles, methods, and other features had been reflected in epic sagas in later periods in Turkic-speaking region. Azerbaijani epos such as "Koroglu", "Ashiq Garib", "Abbas and Gulzar," Kirgiz epos "Manas", Uzbek epos "Allamish", Kazakh epos "Alpamis", Tajik epos "Quroqli" and others can be mentioned here.

In 8th-18th centuries Saudi Arabia, Iran, Syria, Egypt, and other Muslim countries wrote their poetry according to the Arabic poetic laws.

In the initial period of the spread of Islam Arabs had great influence on literature of the

nations who were entering the Arab Caliphate, later the process was vice-versa. Of course, during the Umayyads ruling the Byzantine culture was adopted, during the Abbasids it was their Iranian traditions that were prevailing. In 8th-12th centuries there is created rich syncretic culture that affects the prosperity of Arabic literature.

Urban development, economic growth, the study of ancient philosophy, science and arts increased interest in understanding the fundamentals.

During this period, Azerbaijani poetry school earns fame in Persian language literature. Azerbaijani poets wrote not only in Persian but in their own native language too. Azerbaijani literary Renaissance introduced such poets as Khagani Shirvani, Falaki Shirvani, Izaledin Shirvani, Mehseti Ganjavi, Abulula Ganjavi, Gatran Tabrizi, Shams Tabrizi, Nizami Ganjavi, Imabeddin Nasimi, Mahammad Fizuli. The last three poets wrote magnificent poems and were the peak of the Azerbaijani Renaissance development.

Thus, cultural relations with other countries in the East, played a major role in the development of literature.

### **Oral traditional musical culture**

When speaking of the Eastern musical culture's impact on Azerbaijani music it is necessary to note that music in Arab and Muslim world is not simply music but contains in itself coded symbols. It is created in close connection with other areas of art: poetry, fiction, and architecture. This style of interaction of separate areas, especially the art of thinking is reflected in the structure. Another aspect of the relationship of the leading genres of oral traditional professional music shows the importance of the concept reflected in the philosophical and aesthetic categories.

Mugham started flourishing in the twelfth century. During this period, almost every academic theorist had professional command of performing mugham.

The middle ages were the period of foundation of classic rhythm system in the East. Achievements of Turkic, Persian, Arabic and other speaking nations were synthesized. According to written sources, this classic rhythm system used Arabic, Turkish, Persian, Tajik and Indian languages. Various ethnic and national elements created integration in the oriental system.

The middle ages were characterized with the diversity and colorfulness of the performing arts schools in the East. It was widespread to have practice near well-known musicians. At the same time, the wandering actors also contributed to diverse interaction of cultures, creating new opportunities for the development of styles from different schools.

During the middle ages unique classical ensembles, musical techniques, performing repertoire were formed.

The contemporary rhythm system of the Eastern nations is the successor of the rhythm system of the middle ages. Obviously, when compared to the classic form of medieval modes, they have been subjected to significant changes. Oral traditional professional music in the East served as a reliable indicator of the rhythm development, and reveal relevance inherent to various rhythm systems. In this regard, there are many Arabic music genres similar to Azerbaijani mugham – taksim, beshref, nuba, tehmile, Uzbek makom, Kazakh kuyu, Indian raga and others.

There are many similarities among Azerbaijani ashugs with those of Central Asian, Kazakh, Turkish and Iran. Similar poem forms, topics and motifs of eposes, musical instruments and a number of poems witness the close relationships among those cultures. Such eposes as "Koroglu", "Ashiq Garib", "Leyli and Majnun", "Farhad and Shirin", "Zohra and Tahir" have been widespread in a number of Eastern countries.

Azerbaijani music – the ceremonial songs and dance forms, ashugs' musical and poetic creativity and the art of mugham music were formed in close integration with the music of Eastern nations, in the process of interaction and communication.

### **Conclusion**

The research has shown that every artistic culture which entered the Middle East had its own artistic and cultural uniqueness. However, the relevance of development forms, compatibility, close cultural affinity relationship factors led to the formation common artistic culture.

Bilateral relationships and historical-cultural dialogue played crucial role in formation of Azerbaijani art traditions. The most effective and socially acceptable forms of cultural communication helped to create brilliant and unique traditions.

Azerbaijani culture combined in itself great art traditions. All kinds of art - architecture, fine art, decorative art, theater, cinema, music and folklore - has found their most striking manifestation.

The study of Azerbaijani culture in the context of Middle East's art traditions has shown that Azerbaijan has passed through rich and complex cultural development, building bilateral relationships with the Middle East nations, which resulted stimulation of cultural rise.

### **Bibliography**

1. Abdullazade G.A. Musical culture of the ancient and middle ages. Baku: Gartal, 1996, p. 288.
2. Azerbaijani art (authors: Kerimov K.J., Efendiyev R.S., Rzayev N.I., Habibov N.D.). Baku: Ishig, 1992, p. 344.
3. Jafarzadeh Z.N. Methodological problems of typology of Eastern cultures. PhD in

Culturology. Baku, Art and Culture, 2008, p. 24.

4. Hajibeyov U. A. Azerbaijani folk music. Baku: Science, 1985, p. 154.
5. Ismayilov M.S. Folk music and music theory point of the scientific and methodological essays. Baku: Science, 1991, p. 120.
6. Gasimov Kh. S. The culture of the Middle Ages. Baku: The National Academy of Sciences, Institute of History named after A.A. Bakikhanov, 2008, p. 448.
7. R. Mammadov, Azerbaijani mugham. Baku: Science, 2002, p. 278.
8. Rasulzade M.A. Azerbaijani poet Nizami. Baku: Publishing House, 1991, p. 232.
9. Rasulzade M.A. Azerbaijani cultural traditions. Bolsheviks' Eastern policy. Baku: Sabah, 1994, p. 132.
10. Safarova Z.A. Azerbaijani musical science (XIII-XX centuries). Baku, Science, 1998, p. 584.
11. Bartold V. History of Islamic culture. Istanbul, 1940, p. 226.
12. Abdullayev R.G. Questions of culture. Accumulation of articles. (Academy of Sciences of the Azerbaijan Republic. Institute of Architecture). Baku, 1993, p.120.
13. Azizov F. Literary mediation as a system in the Arab caliphate. Baku, Elm, 2009, 304 p.
14. I. Aliyev. Essay of Atropatena's History. Baku, Azerneshr 1989.
15. R. Amenzade. Composite patterns of monumental structures of Azerbaijan in XI-XVII centuries. Baku, Elm, 2007, p. 226.
16. Bartold V.V. Kitabi Dede-Gorgud. Baku, Une-XXI, 1999, p. 320.
17. Bertels E.E. Selected works. Nizami and Fuzuli. Publishing House of Eastern literature, 1962, p. 553.
18. Braginsky I.S. The study of the contribution of Eastern countries into the world aesthetic thought. / Problems of the theory of literature and aesthetics in the Eastern countries. Science, Moscow, 1964 p .3-19.
19. Dadashzade M.A. The spiritual culture of the Azerbaijani people in the Middle Ages (historical-ethnographic research). Abstract of dissertation of Doctor of Historical Sciences. Tank, 1988, p. 48.
20. Zhirmunsky V.M. Comparative Literature. East-West. L. Science, 1979, p. 493.
21. Zohrabov R.F. Azerbaijani professional music of oral tradition. Mugham- destgakh and Zerbi-Mugham. Baku: Mars print, 2010, p. 457.
22. J. Ismailov. On the question of the ancient relations between Azerbaijan and the Near East. Reports of the Second Int. symposium "Azerbaijan in international multi-faceted relationships", Baku, Elm, 1997, p.98-99.
23. Qajar. Ch. Outstanding sons of the ancient and medieval Azerbaijan. Baku, Azerbaijan, 1995,

p. 392.

24. Kasimov K. Sketches from the history of musical culture of Azerbaijan of XII century. / The Art of Azerbaijan. Book 2, Baku, Ed. The Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences. SSR 1949, p. 5-63.
25. Conrad N. West and East. M. Eastern literature, 1966. P. 496.
26. Krimski A.E. Nizami and his contemporaries. Baku, Elm, 1981, p. 485.
27. Mamedova F. Genesis of national consciousness of Azerbaijanis. Abstracts of the International Scientific Colloquium "National self-awareness". Baku, 1999, 21-24 April, p. 96-101.
28. Rafili M. Early Azerbaijani Renaissance. / M.Rafili. Favorites. Baku, Azerneshr 1973, p. 52-64.
29. N. Rzayev Art of Caucasian Albania from IV B.C. to VII B.C. Baku, 1976.
30. Tagiyev S. Ritual culture and musical folklore of the Turkic peoples. Baku, Elm, 2007, p. 380.
31. S. Farhadova. Ceremonial music of Azerbaijan (on the example of the funeral hymns and wedding songs). B., Elm, 1991, p. 130.