

# Genres of Turkmen musical folklore related to movements

## Abstract

This article is devoted to the genre diversity of Turkmen folklore. The purpose of the article is to characterize the categories and types of Turkmen folk music based on historical information and the classification system of Turkmen folk music genres, which are based on motor-motor elements. These include song and dance, game, and labor genres.

**Keywords:** musical art, turkmen folklore, lyale, monjugatdy, chapak, zikr, kushtdepi

Volume 11 Issue 2 - 2026

**Jamilya Gurbanova, Murad Gurbanov**

Head of Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan

**Correspondence:** Jamilya Gurbanova, Head of Department of Intangible Cultural Heritage, Ministry of Culture of Turkmenistan, Turkmenistan, Tel +(99312) 44 00 37

**Received:** April 21, 2026 | **Published:** May 05, 2026

## Introduction

The musical heritage of the Turkmen people is distinguished by the richness of genres and forms. It is difficult to name a sphere of life in which music would not play a significant role. Folk music is able to reflect the spirit of the era, the peculiarities of everyday life, and people's relationships with each other and with nature. The emergence of each genre during the evolution of artistic creativity is determined by specific social and everyday needs. Folk songs accompany people throughout their lives. Music embodies the richness of the human soul with incomparable power. Rapture and despair, triumph and anxiety, bright hope and disappointment, deep thought and fleeting impression, serene peace and the desire for action – there are many processes and states that are vividly reflected in music. The spoken language of humans and the expressive intonations of human speech represent a unique melody. The intonations of questions, exclamations, and complaints have had a significant impact on the development of folk melodies. Folk song is one of the main genres of Turkmen folk art. A large number of studies have been devoted to the study of Turkmen folk song. The issues of genre classification of folk art have been thoroughly researched in the works of N. Abubakirova, Sh. Gulliyev, M. Gapurov and other Turkmen authors.

The methods of systematizing folklore genres are actively discussed at scientific conferences and in the press, revealing different points of view on many issues. The study of a genre involves not only the examination of its history, but also the identification of its essential features in historical development, as well as the specific nature of its artistic images and stylistic characteristics. Without addressing the issue of scientific systematization of folklore material, a fruitful study of folk music is impossible. However, according to the Hungarian composer and researcher Zoltán Kodály, “the multifaceted nature of folk music cannot be confined to a single rigid system. In each of its branches, one must find the special order in which it can be most easily observed”.<sup>1</sup> The study of Turkmen folk song and dance genres in comparison with a variety of performance versions allows us to reveal their modifications and transformations throughout history. The modern melodies of Turkmen musical folklore are distinguished by established stereotypes and intonation-rhythmic formulas, which were formed during the pre-genre period of musical creativity, progressing from monodic improvisation to the emergence of a developed system of folk genres. The purpose of this article is to use historical information and the classification system of Turkmen folk music genres to characterize the categories and types of musical

heritage that are based on motor elements. These include song and dance, game based genres, and some types of obsolete labor genres.

## The origins of Turkmen folk music genres

For thousands of years, the Turkmen land has been the birthplace and place of prosperity of ancient civilizations. The geographical location of the region has influenced the blending of Zoroastrian, pagan, and Muslim customs among the ancient peoples who inhabited this territory. The interaction between agricultural tribes and the nomadic world has been a defining feature of Turkmen history. According to researcher Sh. Gullyev, “the Turkmen people are the direct inheritors of the musical culture of both the indigenous inhabitants of ancient Turkmenistan, as well as the ancient Turks and the Turkic-Oghuz tribes, who played a fundamental role in its ethnogenesis and ethnic history”.<sup>2,5</sup> Since ancient times, the territory of Turkmenistan has been located at the crossroads of two worlds (nomads and sedentaries) was characterized by a mixture of two economic structures, two language systems (Turkic and Indo-European) of various ethnic groups, which over the millennia influenced the creation of a peculiar culture of the Turkmen people. The history of Turkmen formation has had a direct impact on the formation of its national culture. To this day, the Turkmen have preserved their traditions, customs, language, religion, national costume, aesthetic views, and musical heritage.

The genres of Turkmen folklore reflect the phenomena of nature, the processes of human labor, and the main milestones in the history of the people. The initial stages of the formation of musical folklore date back to the pre-Islamic period. “The rituals and beliefs of the Turkmens related to magic, totemism, animism, fetishism, shamanism, and Zoroastrianism have been preserved to this day. Islam has not replaced all of these practices among the Turkmens, and they have continued to exist alongside or in combination with Muslim ideology”.<sup>3</sup>

Two main strata can be distinguished in the classification of musical heritage of Turkmens:

1. Song folklore and
2. The art of *bagshy* (professional music of the oral tradition).

Turkmen *bagshy* are still the bearers of oral-professional genres, for the development of which it is necessary to pass through a long-term school of mentoring and to receive the blessing of the teacher (*pata*). Their songs, epic genres and instrumental works *bagshy* can

perform at holidays and *toy*.<sup>1</sup> Depending on the performed repertoire, Turkmen bakhshi are classified into:

1. *sazanda* (instrumentalists),
2. *tirmechi* (folk singers) and
3. *dessanchy* (storytellers).

Genres of Turkmen musical folklore, unlike oral professional art, do not require special training and are performed without the participation of musical instruments. When performing folklore genres, there is no division into performers and listeners, any viewer involved in the action can become part of the tradition. However, their performance is timed to certain circumstances and is endowed with a functional identity (labor songs, lullabies, wedding folklore, etc.) The signs of folklore genres are melody, rhythm and the form of the composition. Genre categories which are based on motor elements can be identified by their characteristics. Since genres in music constantly complement each other, enriching and borrowing features from each other, the genre types of melodies appear in interpenetration. For the first time, the issue of systematizing of the folklore heritage was studied by V. A. Uspensky and V. M. Belyaev. In the monograph "Turkmen Music" the authors provide the following classification of Turkmen folk genres:

- 1) Works of a religious nature,
- 2) Works containing the motif of disillusionment in life,
- 3) Works of war, robbery, and hunting,
- 4) Works of love,
- 5) Medicinal works (not without a touch of shamanism) and
- 6) Historical works.

The authors have systematized the folklore songs into the following categories:

- 1) Lullaby songs (Huvdi),
- 2) Girls' songs (lyale),
- 3) Urban girls' songs,
- 4) Songs of young women (chuval gyz),
- 5) Labor songs,
- 6) Incantations and spells, and
- 7) Wedding songs.

As the authors note, "This classification shows that Turkmen women's musical creativity encompasses all aspects of traditional women's life".<sup>4</sup> In the pre-genre period of history, there was only one genre, "singing" in general. The initial stage of development was characterized by the fusion and lack of distinction between the parts of a single whole. The emergence of at least two contrasting genres is already a system. When describing the ancient, recitative-song type of folklore, researchers note that the words are not so much sung as spoken. In many cultures, the terms "sing" and "speak" are not differentiated. For example, in Turkmen *dessan* performance (epic art), the storyteller uses the phrase "*söz sözledi*," which means "said" or "told," before beginning to perform the song fragments.

In most cases, the performance of folklore songs was not singing as such. The expanded meaning of the term "sing" included singing,

<sup>1</sup>Toy – is a family or national celebration among the Turkmens, associated with weddings, childbirth, house construction, harvest, or other events.

dancing, playing, calling, shouting, begging, yearning, speaking, and chanting.<sup>5,16</sup> There are many ways of singing that are unusual to us. What may not seem like singing to us may be the only correct standard of singing for those who practice this tradition. The evolutionary process of the genre system formation in general goes from the applied and magical to the artistic and aesthetic. mRegarding the classification of Turkmen folklore genres, researcher Shahym Gulliyev writes: "Oral and written sources, as well as the surviving examples of live music, testify to the existence of various types and genres of Turkmen musical folklore, some of which are still in use today. This rich heritage of the past can be divided into labor, ritual, lyrical, and children's songs".<sup>6</sup> This principle is followed by Mukhamed Gapurov, who groups folklore genres according to their functional characteristics, resulting in the identification of ritual, calendar-labor, and family-domestic genres, with the latter group divided into lullabies, wedding, funeral, and lyrical songs.<sup>7</sup> According to researcher R. Abdullaev, "The peoples of Central Asia mainly consider two large groups of rituals and holidays: public and family. This division is largely arbitrary, as within the confines of communal life, an event such as a wedding was not limited to a family celebration, but rather involved the active or passive participation of almost all members of the rural community. At the same time, certain calendar rituals, such as the first plowing, harvesting, or planting, had a more intimate and family-oriented nature. Nevertheless, a traditional wedding is always considered to be a family holiday, and calendar rites are considered to be public holidays".<sup>8,15</sup> From our point of view, the classification system of musical folklore should be based on the functional purpose of the genres. In this regard, the main groups are the ritual and everyday folklore groups, which are further divided into smaller genre subgroups. Both groups include genres related to movement. Let's take a closer look at them.

### Ritual folklore

In Turkmenistan, song and dance genres, which are based on motor elements, have undergone a long evolution. The most ancient genres in the Turkmen folklore heritage are songs related to the invocation of rain ("Suyt Gazan", "Chemche gelin"), as well as magical rituals for driving away evil spirits (*zikh*). Currently, these genres have completely disappeared from performance practice and are only known through the activities of folklore groups. "Suyt Gazan" is a magical ritual associated with the invocation of rain, and it is considered to be the oldest surviving folklore genre. "The economic life and material well-being of our ancestors were often dependent on natural and climatic conditions, particularly the amount of rainfall during the spring months. In times of drought, farmers lost a significant portion of their crops, and livestock farmers faced difficulties in obtaining sufficient feed.

At such moments, the ancient Turks turned to the "master" of rain and the patron of livestock, relying on his ability to bring rain using the rainstone ("yada").<sup>9</sup> In some parts of Turkmenistan, the genre "Chemche gelin" was performed to bring rain.<sup>10,8</sup> Currently, the genres "Suyt Gazan" and "Chemche gelin" exist as a playful song performed by children who expose their faces and braids to the rain. Ritual action is one of the symbolic forms of behavior, and ritual singing is the highest form of symbolism. In the past, all aspects of Turkmen society's life, including everyday life, child-rearing, and the behavior of different age groups, were ritualized. These traditions are still alive and being observed today, allowing the society to address vital issues related to the preservation of its values, both material and symbolic. Rituals serve as a unique language and a means of expressing key ideas.

The main difference between the genres of ritual folklore is that they are performed at a specific time in connection with specific ritual circumstances, actions, and holidays of a family, clan, and national character (weddings, Nowruz, Kurban Bayram, and Oraz Bayram). The time of performance of ritual genres is clearly predetermined, whether it is a wedding or a public celebration. In his book “Turkmen Music,” V. Uspensky discusses the popular genres of hunting and healing songs in Turkmen culture. For example, the song “Kyrmyzy Koynekl” was performed to treat the disease *kyzamyk* (rubella), and the song “Meshrep” was sung during epidemics and natural disasters to maintain the people’s spirit of resilience. The melodies of “Porhannama” and “Porhan henı” (Melodies of Porhan), collected by V. Uspensky, were performed during the treatment of insanity and other nervous disorders during the shaman’s rituals. For this purpose, *zıkr*, a ritual aimed at exorcising evil spirits, was also performed.

The dervish’s rites were widely used in the activities of Sufi orders, where there were entire branches of *zıkr* associated with the secrets of healing through the influence on a person’s consciousness. Circular movements of the cleric (dervish) accompanied the healing ritual. As it entered the culture of the peoples of Central Asia and the Caucasus, the *zıkr* underwent significant changes. Among the Turkmen, *zıkr* was particularly popular among the tribes that inhabited the coast of the Caspian Sea (Balkan region). *Zıkr* was performed on Turkmen soil with the aim of spiritual purification, including the exorcism of evil spirits, the healing of the mentally ill, and the prevention of diseases. Turkmen *zıkr* was performed collectively, and its movements had a functional purpose and were accompanied by loud exclamations. Emotional exclamations are a distinctive feature of the genre and are an ancient attribute associated with incantation rituals. The high sound power and intensity of the pitch, characteristic of *zıkr*, is interpreted by K. Kvitka “as a manifestation of an ancient view on ways to influence the forces of nature”.<sup>11</sup> Characteristic body movements accompanied the multi-part ritual cycle.

Currently, there is no medical *zıkr* in Turkmenistan. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the functional basis of *zıkr* had transformed and the genre turned into a ritual with the function of a talisman. The ritual has retained its ritual movements, gestures, and exclamations, but has acquired a new name: “Kushtdepdi,” which literally means “trampling the earth.” To this day, there are six sections of the ritual cycle: “Oturma gazal,” “Bir depim,” “Uch depim,” “Divana,” “Sedrat,” and “Zem-zem,” each accompanied by body movements and traditional exclamations of “Kusht, Kusht.” The performance of modern “Kushtdepdi” involves singers of gazal, as well as performers of dance movements. The lyrics are often improvised. Gazal singers must have a beautiful voice, good memory, and improvisational skills. The audience enjoys the moments when the gazal singers engage in playful banter with each other. The lyrics of the gazals are not perceived as insults, but rather add a competitive spirit to the festive atmosphere. *Zıkr*, transformed into a colorful spectacle, spread throughout Turkmenistan and acquired regional characteristics. Passing through the prism of centuries, the Sufi *zıkr*, once used for spiritual purification, took on a new meaning in Turkmenistan, conveying a positive message: blessings for starting a new family, having a child, building a house, or purchasing a car. Gradually, the genre transitioned from a religious cult to a new status aimed at uplifting people’s spirits, promoting peaceful coexistence, and bestowing blessings on good deeds. Thanks to the kind wishes in the lyrics, this genre brings joy and youthful enthusiasm. Everyone participates in the rhythms of Kushtdepdi – children, young men and women, elderly women and old men, which symbolizes the eternal continuation of the human race (Figure 1).<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>In 2017, the Singing and Dancing Rite Kushtdepdi was inscribed to the



Figure 1 Kushtdepdi singing and dancing rite.

The Chapak dance (also called “Esgı-Chapak” (“old Chapak”) or “Chapak-Karsak”) is very popular in the Lebab velayat (southeastern region of Turkmenistan). The word “*chapak*” in translation from Turkmen means “clap”. In ancient times, even before the advent of musical instruments, people accompanied their songs and dances by clapping their hands. In the archaic views of many peoples, the moon and the sun are the eyes of the sky, so the touch of the palms is symbolic. In the ancient Turkic mythology, each palm symbolizes the moon and the sun, the male principle is laid in the upper world (*Yokarky dünýä*), and the female principle is laid in the lower world (*Aşaky dünýä*), their fusion during the clap forms a whole, or the middle world (*Aralyk dünýä*). The mention of the moon and the sun is often used in the texts of children’s counting rhymes. It was believed that clapping one’s hands would drive away evil spirits and protect against diseases. Therefore, the Chapak dance had a sacred meaning aimed at the continuation of the human race.

The tradition of women playing percussion instruments is practiced in several regions of Turkmenistan (Figure 2). During the celebration of Nowruz, women spend the entire night preparing the ritual dish of Sumelek from sprouted wheat, accompanied by songs and dances accompanied by the depa. The way modern performers hold the instrument with their hands, slightly tilted to the side, resembles the depictions of dancers on Parthian rhyta. On the friezes of the rhyta, horn-shaped wine vessels made of ivory and discovered in the excavations of Old Nisa (3rd century BC), there are engravings of dancing women accompanied by a tambourine. Researchers associate this instrument with the ancient cult of the moon and the rituals performed by its priestesses. The similarity between the performance style of the Parthian female musicians and modern Turkmen female performers suggests that the Turkmen depa is a direct descendant of the Nisian rhyton.

Currently, the Chapak dance is performed at festivals and weddings, but its origins can be traced back to ancient rituals that symbolized the fight against the enemy. The women would jump and move in a circle, clapping their hands above their heads. The ritual would continue indefinitely, until the performers were completely exhausted. In the views of the ancestors, with their ritual, women helped their husbands and brothers to maintain the strength of the spirit in the real battle. The dance includes several parts: “Chepbekey”, “Chemche-kashik”, “Khushdeki”, “Hekke bokush”, “Zhamly oyun”, the basis of each part is a certain rhythm formula, from which the movements of the dance

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flow. This ostinately repeated rhythm of the performer is tapped on the dep, maintaining it from the beginning to the end of the section.



**Figure 2** The tradition of women playing percussion instruments.

Clapping can be found in many national games of the Turkmen people. From the first months of a child’s life, they sing the nursery rhyme “Chapak, Chapak Elleri,” accompanied by clapping. Another popular game among Turkmen children is the competitive game “Ayterek, Gunterek”.

The game of Ayterek-Gunterek, in which the symbols of the moon (Ay) and the sun (Gun) are used in the name, is popular among children of all ages in all parts of Turkmenistan (Figure 3). The players divide into two teams, line up facing each other, hold hands, and shout out the words of a traditional quatrain in turn. In the last phrase of the text, the name of a player is called out, and that player must run and break through the line of the opposing team. If the line remains intact, the player joins the opposing team. This continues until only one person remains in each team.



**Figure 3** Turkmen children playing the game of Ayterek-Gunterek.

|                                  |                         |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Aýterek, Gunterek,               | The Moon and the Sun,   |
| Who do you need?                 | Bizden size kim gerek?  |
| We need a singing voice.         | Saýrap duran dil gerek. |
| Which of the voices do you need? | Dilleriň haýsy gerek?   |
| We need a girl named Dunya!      | Dünýä diýen gyz gerek!  |

The ritual genres of the Turkmen include the maiden song “Monjugatdy” (“throwing beads”), which is a kind of divination ritual. This ritual was performed on the night before Nowruz, a celebration that dates back to ancient times and is a common Turkic tradition. “The performance of the “Monjugatdy” ritual among the Turkmen was accompanied by songs. The words of the song, spoken at the moment of removing the bead, “told” the girl her fate”.<sup>12</sup> The genre contains a game element: the owner of the bead had to catch up with the girl who took the object from the common bowl. The last line of the song is repeated twice, picked up by all the participants (Figure 4). The favorite ritual of Turkmen children to this day is the carol “Ya, Remezan.” On the eve of the Oraz fast, on the night of the young moon’s appearance in the sky, groups of children visit their neighbors’ homes, singing ritual songs with wishes of good luck and prosperity in the new year, and the hosts reward them with sweets. The good wishes end with the lines: “May the one who gives more gifts have a son, and may the one who gives less have a daughter, Ya, Remezan!”



**Figure 4** The ritual genre “Monjugatdy”.

Ethnographer I. A. Belyaev, who recorded the lyrics of the song “Ya, Remezan” for the first time, ranked it among the disappearing customs of Transcaspians Turkmen: “The very custom of congratulating on Eid is that Turkmen children under the age of 12 celebrate their carols on the first day of Eid, before the time of the fourth prayer; they gather in droves. and, moving from wagon to wagon, they chant very diverse congratulatory songs passed down from generation to generation, for which they receive gifts: peas, sugar, lollipops, and so on. Children have special bags (*sanachi*) for collecting these gifts”.<sup>13</sup> Based on the fact that this song is performed on a specific day of a specific month according to the lunar calendar, it can be classified as a calendar-ritual genre. Comparing the song “Ya, Remezan” with other identical songs performed on the eve of Nowruz, researchers conclude that “this song was also performed by the Turkmen during the Nowruz celebrations, and after the adoption of Islam, it underwent a genre transformation and became a religious-ritual song.

### Household folklore

The genres of everyday folklore are performed in everyday life, and they include labor songs, lullabies, girls’ lyrical songs, and children’s and game genres. The songs “Degirmenci,” “Hokuduk,” “Hovlum,” and “Horele” are associated with the labor activities of the Turkmen people. The songs “Degirmenci” and “Hokuduk” were performed while working on a hand-cranked mill (the word “degirmen” means “mill”, and “hokuduk” imitates the sound of the millstones during

threshing), in them the sound of the millstones is imitated. When milking a cow or a goat, the song “Hovlum” was performed, when milking a camel, “Horele, duyam, horele” (the words “duyam” or “gubam” are affectionately called a camel by the people). The song “Khovlum” does not have a specific melody; it is based on the endless repetition of the word “khovlum,” and its rhythmic pattern is synchronized with the movements of the milkmaid’s hands (Figure 5). The accompanying texts during the milking process have little semantic content, and the soothing recitation serves as a gentle address to the animal. It is believed that the cow or camel, upon hearing the voice of its owner, becomes calmer and produces more milk. In terms of melodic intonation, these songs are similar to lullabies, but they lack the breadth of melody and poetic imagery. They are also shorter than lullabies.



Figure 5 The performer of the labor song Khovlum.

Turkmen folklore also includes songs aimed at taming livestock. With the exception of a few regions in the Balkan Province, where livestock farming is prevalent and women still use calming songs when milking their livestock, labor-related genres have almost completely disappeared from everyday life. The use of sounds that lack semantic meaning is exemplified by the “Khymmyl-Kharrov” genre, which is common among the Caspian Turkmen. The performers of this genre are women, whose specific hand movements and glissant cries represent the flapping of wings and the calls of seabirds. Huvdi’s lullabies are also part of everyday folklore. The soft, soothing melodies are accompanied by a monotonous rhythm that is determined by the rocking of the cradle (sallanchak). This is the most widespread genre in all regions of Turkmenistan, and the unique melodies are not only unique to each region but also to each family (Figure 6). It is not uncommon for female performers to use different melodies in the same family. The traditional melodized refrain “Huvva-huv” or “Huv, ballym, huv” is typically used to end the verses.

Lullaby genres are distinguished by the variety of texts with rich artistic images. The content of the texts used for lulling boys and girls is different. The texts vary depending on who is singing the lullaby – the mother, grandmother, or sister. The baby is affectionately referred to as “ballym” or “lyalyam” in the song. In addition to songs addressed to children, the Turkmen, like many other nations, have a number of songs that are sung by children themselves during games. All genres intended for children’s performance carry a positive, joyful message. These genres are of great educational importance, memorizing texts and reciting them affect the development of memory and foster a

sense of sociability in children. The popular genres of Turkmen folklore include girlish lyrical songs “Lale”. This is a whole cycle that is widespread in all corners of Turkmenistan and includes several varieties.:

1. “Damak lale”,
2. “Dodak lale”,
3. “Dyz lyale”,
4. “Egin lyale”,
5. “Hymmyl” (or “Yhhymmyl”).



Figure 6 The lullaby singer.

The songs are mostly performed either by girls and women, solo or in unison. Girls perform most of the lyrical songs, but there are also examples of love songs performed by young men. In many of these songs, the ending is a chorus that uses the phrase “Lale, vey Lale.” Each type of “Lale” song has specific motor elements that make it a song-play genre. For example, during the performance of “Damak Lale” (or “Bogaz Lale,” which means “throat” or “Adam’s apple”), the girls gently tap their throats with their hands, creating a distinctive emphasis on the strong beats of the melody (Figure 7).



Figure 7 Performers of the Damak lale genre.

In “Dodak Lale,” the playful nature of the sound is created by the performer’s fingers touching her lips while singing. The words of the quatrains are difficult to decipher with this method of sound production, so the lyrics are kept simple and often include proverbs.

When performing the song “Dyz Lale” (or “Ayak Lale,” which means “leg” or “knee”), the girls stand on one leg and perform intense body movements. In “Egin Lyale” (“Egin” means “body”), performed in pairs, the performers move intensively. Standing in a line with their arms pressed against their bodies, the girls jump, approaching each other sideways and slightly bumping into each other. The verses are accompanied by shouts of “Yhhymmyl, Yhhymmyl, Yhhy, Yhhy, Yhhymmyl”. V. Uspensky describes this song as follows: “Yhhymmyl is a word with no specific meaning, neither a game nor a dance. It has no words or melody. The girl, twitching her shoulders (lowering them down and raising them up) and her hands, makes guttural and wheezing sounds. The tempo is moderate. Khymmyl is usually performed in the evening”.<sup>14</sup> The fighting spirit of the performers in this type of “Lale” leads researchers to believe that the genre was once a form of incantation (the text of the “Khymmyl Lale” sample from the collection of A. P. Potseluevsky [15, 18] has an incantatory character, which can be compared to the “Chapak” genre).

In the Caspian region of Turkmenistan, another variety of “Lale” is popular: “Hymmyl-Kharrev.” In fact, there is no singing involved. The girls, like birds, move their arms and bodies, exclaiming “hymmyl-kharrev,” which resembles the behavior of seabirds.

The Turkmen wedding is a rich source of ritual and everyday genres. Along with ritual actions, wedding ceremonies combine songs, games, jokes, traditional ritual quatrains, proverbs, and sayings. The musical accompaniment of Turkmen wedding rituals is extensive and multifaceted. The music, singing, and movement of the performers significantly enhance the emotional tone and artistic value of the ceremony. The performance of song and dance genres adds a special sense of fun and excitement to the wedding ceremony. The spread of the popular wedding songs “Yar-yar” among most of the peoples of Central Asia (“Zhar-zhar”, “Yor-yor”) speaks of the once-united roots of the Turkic-speaking tribes. Along with “Yar-yar”, popular songs at a Turkmen wedding include “Donem”, “Olengh”, “Yarovdzhah”, “Yareizhan”, “Yarallay” and others. The texts of wedding songs carry good wishes of well-being, abundance and fertility to the young family. Poetic metaphors serve as symbols and semantic codes.

## Conclusion

Thus, folklore genres have gone through a long process of development, improving their melodic structure and poetic texts. The transformation of song genres is interesting, as several contrasting genres gradually emerged from the “common pot” (praggenre). Many genres of Turkmen folklore, such as those related to movement (e.g., archaic genres aimed at exorcising evil spirits or calling down rain), have completely disappeared from everyday practice. Some genres (labor genres, lullabies and maiden songs, dances, and wedding folklore) have retained their traditional form, although they have undergone some changes; others (the song and dance rituals of “Chapak” and “Kushtdepdi”) have evolved over time and have acquired new interpretations. As the tradition faded, the rituals lost their original purpose, leading to the emergence of entertainment forms. Thus, in Turkmen musical folklore, there are varieties of dance genres, lyrical songs, and genres of playful and humorous entertainment. According to researchers, the emergence of purely entertaining genres signifies the decline of traditional ritual-type culture. New genres develop on the basis of older ones, and many dance and lyrical songs incorporate motifs from ritual songs. The new conditions of the ethnic group’s existence lead to the convergence of folklore genres and their characteristics, resulting in a blending of genre components.

Having been formed in the depths of centuries, the genres of Turkmen folk art are still in demand, which indicates the unwavering connection between history and life. The process of continuity and cultural transformation of folklore genres, as well as the mechanism for preserving and transmitting folklore traditions, can be observed through the example of family rituals and national holidays, which hold a special place in the history of Turkmen culture. “Musical and ritual folklore,” writes researcher N. Abubakirova, “is a truly unique phenomenon that captures the cultural and economic type of an ethnic group, its aesthetic and artistic tastes, philosophy, beliefs, and connections with other nations, in its sound, structure, and poetic content”.<sup>16,13</sup> The stylistic features of each folklore genre include certain characteristics. Turkmen folk songs reflect the stylistic features of specific geographical zones, which are manifested in the singing style, instrumentation, and dialect of ethnic groups. Each region is characterized by a specific set of folklore genres, with its own distinctive timbre and intonation features. There are also signs of narrowly localized traditions. For example, the Chapak dance is mainly performed in the Sayat etrap of Lebap Province, while the *Kishamche*, *Nazanym*, *Atana Nyalet*, and *Hekkele* dances are performed in the Khojambaz and Farab etraps. Huvdi’s lullabies, Lale’s girls’ songs, and wedding genres are performed in all regions of Turkmenistan, each with its own unique characteristics. The current state of Turkmen folklore genres is determined by historical factors, the conditions of existence of folklore genres, and their local characteristics. The formation of Turkmen music genres and the decline of magical and ritual functions led to the disappearance of many ritual songs, which gave rise to non-ritual genres with their entertainment function. The transition from a magical function to an entertainment function created a fundamentally different system of genres and their expressive means.

## Acknowledgments

None.

## Conflicts of interest

None.

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