



## GHIJJAK – AN ANCIENT BOWED STRING INSTRUMENT OF THE KARAKALPAK PEOPLE.

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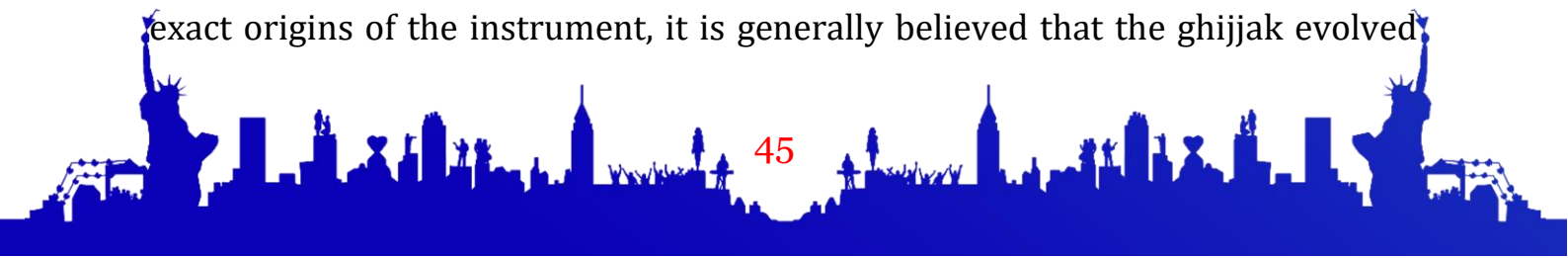
Nukus branch of the Uzbek State Institute of Arts and Culture.

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15253572>

**Annotation:** This article discusses the g'ijjak – an ancient stringed musical instrument of the Karakalpak people. It analyzes the origin, structure, and role of the g'ijjak in music. The article highlights the significance of the instrument in Karakalpak music, its role in folklore and epic traditions, as well as its differences from other string instruments. It also explores the historical development of the g'ijjak and its preservation in the modern era. The article emphasizes the importance of the g'ijjak as a part of musical traditions and cultural heritage, and stresses the need to pass it on to younger generations.

**Keywords:** – musical instrument, national, music, qobyz, ghijjak, dutar, tanbur, rubab

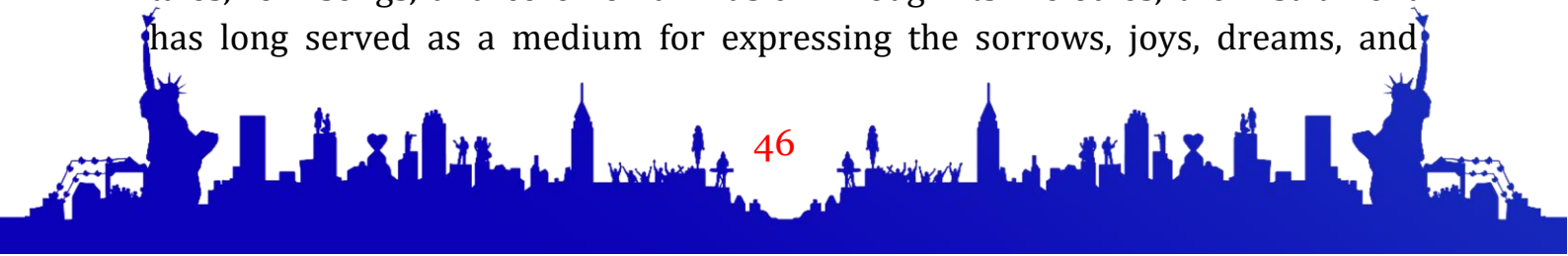
The ghijjak is an ancient stringed musical instrument of the Karakalpak people, holding great historical and cultural significance. The ghijjak plays a particularly important role in preserving the musical heritage of the Karakalpak people and serves as a key tool in studying their culture. Music holds a special place in the rich cultural heritage of the Karakalpak nation. This musical legacy has developed over centuries and has been passed down from generation to generation. An inseparable part of this heritage is the national musical instruments, among which the ghijjak deserves special attention. Ghijjak is a traditional bowed string instrument that plays an important role in expressing the spiritual world, sorrows, and joys of the Karakalpak people. In the book "Uzbek Traditional Instruments" by S. Begmatov and M. Matyoqubov, the following is stated: "At the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries, traditional Uzbek instruments such as the chang and Kashgar rubabs took shape and came into use. The oud and qanun were revived, significantly enriching performance practices. The Afghan rubab and kird instruments also found their place in the practical music scene with their unique charm. In connection with the development of modern composition, several family variations of folk instruments such as the chang, rubab, dutar, and ghijjak were created." "The ghijjak holds a significant place in the musical traditions of Turkic peoples, particularly among the Karakalpak, Uzbek, Turkmen, Kyrgyz, and other related ethnic groups. While there are no definitive written sources detailing the exact origins of the instrument, it is generally believed that the ghijjak evolved





from earlier bowed instruments such as the kamancha or qobyz. As a unique musical instrument of its era, the ghijjak has a deeply rooted and ancient history.

The ghijjak is traditionally used to produce modal and melodic music, which is characteristic of Turkic musical systems. Over the centuries, it has played an essential role in the development and transmission of folk music. Its evolution has taken place across various cultures and countries, where it has been adapted and refined into different forms. In Karakalpak and Uzbek folk music in particular, the ghijjak occupies a prominent position. Within Karakalpak culture, it has been especially important in the performance of epic poetry and storytelling traditions. The instrument was commonly used by dostonchi (epic reciters) and musicians to accompany heroic narratives and folk songs. The ghijjak, therefore, functioned not only as a musical tool but also as a cultural symbol, helping preserve the collective memory and artistic expression of the people. In Uzbek music, the ghijjak is also widespread and highly esteemed. It features prominently in narrative musical forms, especially in the recitation of epics and folk tales. As one of the oldest and most celebrated instruments in Uzbek traditional music, the ghijjak is recognized for its expressive range and emotional depth. The ghijjak is a bowed string instrument that continues to be widely used in the musical practices of various Eastern peoples. Among the Uzbeks, Tajiks, Uyghurs, Karakalpaks, and Turkmens, it is referred to as ghijjak. In contrast, among the Azerbaijani, Armenian, Georgian, Iranian, and Turkish musical cultures, it is known by names such as kaman, kamancheh, and other local variants. Its use and recognition across the East highlight its rich and enduring musical legacy. [2] Although the ghijjak may appear simple in design, its construction requires considerable craftsmanship and precision. It typically consists of the following main components: the body is usually made from wood or gourd, with a dome-shaped structure and a hollow interior to enhance resonance. The strings are made from silk, satin, or modern metallic materials. During performance, the musician places the instrument on their lap, pressing the strings with the fingers of the left hand while moving the bow with the right hand. This technique allows for the production of varied tones and subtle nuances. The sound of the ghijjak is notably soft, deep, and emotionally evocative. These characteristics make it particularly suited for performing songs in the doston (epic) and lyrical genres. The ghijjak is deeply intertwined with the oral traditions of the Karakalpak people, especially in the performance of epic tales, folk songs, and ceremonial music. Through its melodies, the instrument has long served as a medium for expressing the sorrows, joys, dreams, and





hopes of the people. The ghijjak is typically played either as a solo instrument or in combination with other traditional instruments such as the dutor, doira, and qobyz. In particular, it has been a vital accompaniment for bakhshis (epic storytellers) and dostonchis, who used the ghijjak's expressive tones to bring oral folk literature to life. The ghijjak is not merely a musical instrument — it is a symbol of the Karakalpak people's historical memory, spiritual wealth, and cultural heritage. Within its sound lies the history, life, and dreams of an entire nation. Preserving, studying, and passing the ghijjak on to future generations is a responsibility we all share. Through traditional instruments, we reconnect with our roots and safeguard our cultural treasures. When dostonchis (epic storytellers) perform, they typically accompany their recitation with the dutor, while the ghijjak provides the emotional background. In folk songs especially those about love, longing, or sorrow the ghijjak proves to be a perfect match. In folkloric ensembles, the dutor and ghijjak are often played together in harmony. As the storyteller chants the epic, the musician strums the melody on the dutor, while in the background, the ghijjak weaves a deeply moving atmosphere, amplifying the emotions and drawing the listener in. This is the true musical soul of the Karakalpak people.

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