The Musical Instruments

LUTES

The Turkestani Dambura

The Turkestani dambura (Figures 4.1–4.3) is the most widespread lute type of Afghan Turkestan. It is a two-stringed fretless lute with two lateral pegs. It is almost always strung with nylon cord; generally one long stretch of cord is used for both strings by means of the following procedure: the cord is attached to one peg, brought over the bridge and down to the notched fastening point at the base of the lid, then brought back up over the bridge to form the second string, and is finally tied to the second peg. One celebrated musician of the North, Bangeča Tašqurğani, prefers gut strings on his instrument, and is in somewhat the same position as those few violinists today who prefer pure gut to metal-wound strings. It does not seem that silk was ever used for dambura strings, as it still is on the Uzbek and Turkmen dutars. Usually, large quantities of nylon cord are wound over the tips of the peg and around the body of the peg. When a string breaks, the player merely winds off another length of cord. In this way, a performer can go for long periods of time without restringing his lute.

Peg shape varies little among Turkestani damburas. The most common form, with three points, is called *sepāra.* A notched triangular shape may also be found.

The Turkestani dambura is made in three parts: neck, belly, and lid. It is interesting to note that the local term for neck is the Persian word *dasta,* "handle," which well suits our terms "handle lute." Table 4.1 gives the terms for parts of lutes, in Persian and Uzbek.

Xarak and *eišak* both man "little donkey," indicating the role of the bridge as beast of burden. *Gušak* means "little ear," perhaps indicating an analogy between tuning and ear-twisting.

Body measurements for Turkestani damburas vary considerably; figures for a few sample instruments are given in Table 4.2 to indicate the general range in size.

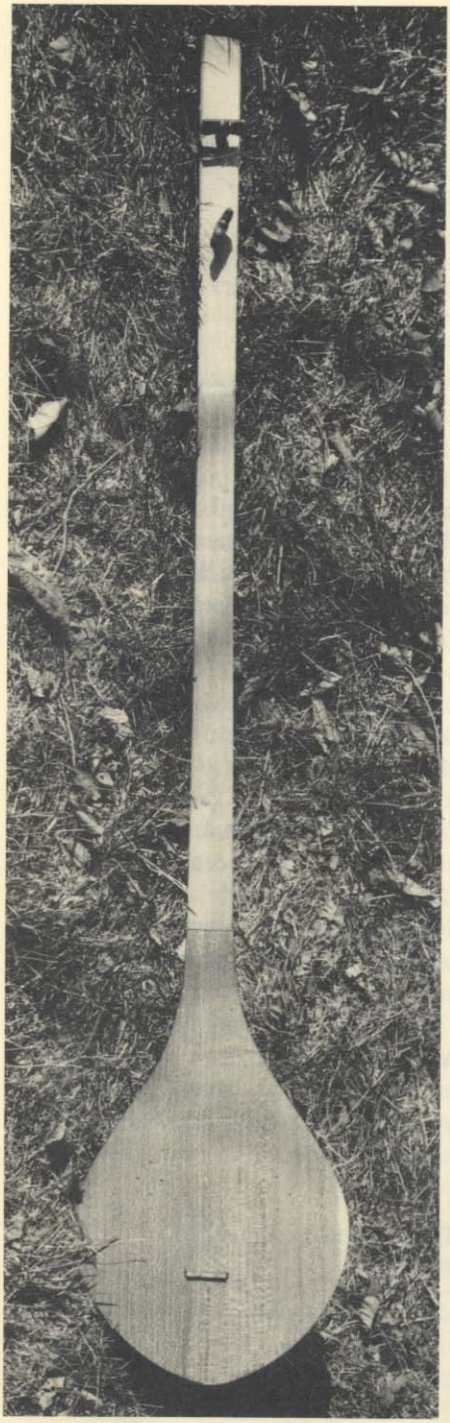


Fig. 4.1. Turkestani dambura

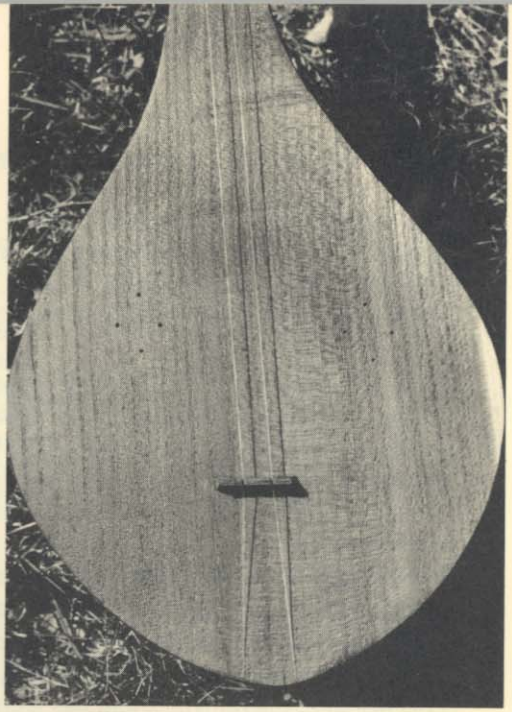


Fig. 4.2. Turkestani dambura lid

Fig. 4.3. Turkestani dambura back

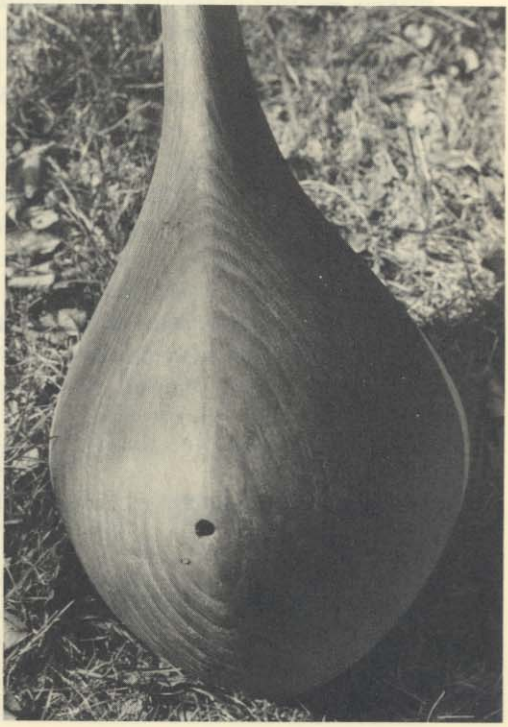


TABLE 4.1
Local Terms for Parts of Lutes

English	*Persian*	*Uzbek*
neck	dasta	dasta
lid	kāse	kasnak
belly	pošt	kasi
string	tār	tar, ziye
bridge	xarak	eišak
upper bridge	tārgir	?
peg	gušak	kulaq

From Table 4.2 can be seen not only that overall measurements vary considerably, but that the proportions between length, width, and depth can differ greatly. For example, whereas instruments 2 and 3 have almost the same overall length, instrument 3 is much wider and deeper than instrument 2 and has a considerably shorter neck. It should be added that the Turkestani dambura has a rather thick and wide neck in general. Instrument 3, which is typical in most respects, has a fingerboard 4.3 centimeters wide and 3.5 centimeters deep. Dambura makers say that in the past, the instrument was a good deal smaller and lighter. They describe its sound as having been more *zil,* or treble, in the old days.

Most of today's larger, heavier Turkestani damburas are decorated with small areas of cow-bone inlay, usually small concentric circles. They may be arranged as a group of three circles inside a triangular piece of bone inlay. Such a design is called *šeraz,* a term that has wide currency in Turkestan for various sorts of ornamentation in handicrafts, including pottery, clothing, etc. Recent Turkestani damburas have a smear of color over the bone inlay, most often in a bright reddish shade. The color is compounded of corn flour and watercolor and is daubed on quite freely over the inlaid sections, usually coloring some of the wood as well. The inlay occurs frequently on the neck,

TABLE 4.2
Dimensions of Selected Turkestani Damburas (In Centimeters)

Instrument	*Overall Length*	*Length of Neck*	*Greatest Width*	*Greatest Depth*
1	97	64	21	14
2	102	69	20.5	13
3	103	66	23	16
4	110	71	26	19

and may also be found near the peak at the back of the belly, on the back of the neck, or at the point where the neck joins the belly. Inlay is almost never placed on the lid. This is probably due to the fact that the lid is made of an unfinished, rather soft, quite thin wooden sheet which could not stand inlay.

A large sound hole is placed in the belly at the apex of the peak (see Figure 4.3). Sometimes a slight ridge is placed around this sound hole so that it can be decorated with bone inlay. Instrument builders and performers alike maintain that the hole serves to improve resonance rather than to fulfill an ornamental function.

The sound holes in the lid are the last work to be completed on the instrument. Several holes are drilled, usually in a given pattern; most frequent is a pattern of four holes in a diamond shape, placed on either side of the bridge (see Figure 4.2). Sound holes are rarely arranged as fancifully as they are on tanbur lids (see below). According to Turkestani dambura makers, the holes must be sunk a few months after the instrument has been in use, "to let the sound out." The craftsmen seems to feel that each dambura develops a tone quality of its own, which will be rounded out by the placing of holes when the instrument has reached a certain stage of maturity.

Turkestani damburas are made in family workshops, and the craft is hereditary. Among the craftsmen I visited at Dara-i Zendan, near Samangan, the old father, Jurai Qul, a septuagenarian, said that his family had been dambura makers as far back as he could tell. Of his seven sons, only one is involved in the instrument trade. The others are peasants, working the family plot located back of the workshop and living area in the rolling upland cliff country of southeastern Afghan Turkestan.

Jurai Qul and his son Šarif say they can make up to twenty instruments in a month, but put the amount of time needed for one dambura at five days. They make instruments both on commission from professional musicians and amateurs and for general market sale. Their damburas and those of other local makers can be seen in the shops of Samangan, which is the center of dambura construction for all of Afghanistan.

In making damburas, they use mulberry wood almost exclusively. However, more discriminating (and wealthier) customers will ask for apricot, pine, or walnut to be used in making the neck of the instrument. The main criterion for choice of wood seems to be durability. Hardwoods such as apricot or walnut last much longer than mulberry, though the latter is in fact a fairly tough wood. Mulberry trees are found in great quantity in northern Afghanistan, and are handy multi-

purpose trees: the fruit is widely consumed in both fresh form and dried (dried mulberries can be ground into a kind of flour in the winter); the leaves are fed to silkworms; and the wood can be used for various construction purposes. The shade value of a large old mulberry tree is highly respected as well.

Mulberry was extensively used by the craftsmen of Tajikistan and Uzbekistan as well. In N. A. Avedova's valuable study of Uzbek instrument making, one learns that in the seventeenth-century treatise on Central Asian music by Derviš-ali, mulberry was cited as the main wood for instrument construction, and Avedova adds that "old stringed instruments were almost exclusively made of mulberry" (1966:28–29). Modern makers of Soviet Central Asia use a wider range of woods, but mulberry remains a favorite.

Damburas are hewn from a single large block of wood. The block is patiently whittled down and hollowed out by means of a single tool — an axe *(kajkord)* with a wooden handle approximately one foot long and a wide, arched metal blade, about nine inches long, which ends in a flared, curved edge. Figure 4.4 shows the father-and-son team of Jurai Qul and Šarif hard at work. "It takes a thousand strokes to make a dambura," says the old man resentfully, and the actual number is probably considerably higher. All of the lutes of Afghanistan

Fig. 4.4 Turkestani dambura makers of Samangan

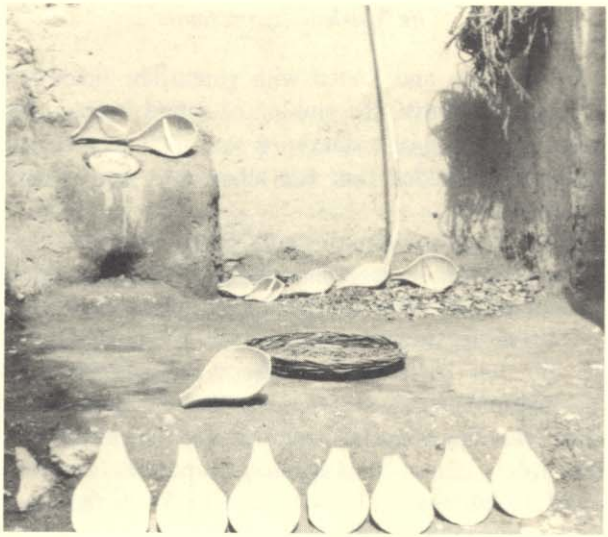


Fig. 4.5 Finished Turkestani dambura lids (foreground) *and bellies* (rear) *drying in the sun*

are made in this painstaking way, and the traditional method on the Soviet side of the border is identical.

It does not seem that great stress is laid on the lack of imperfections in the wood, for knots, wormholes, and other defects are allowed to remain in the finished dambura. I was not able to detect the presence of a significant body of lore about selection and processing of wood for damburas. Makers express a basic interest in using timber that is somewhat green. They prefer to have the instrumental darken and season with use, rather than choose more mature woods for the basic construction. Such a preference is somewhat at odds with information about instrument making in other areas of the Near East and Central Asia. For example, Avedova speaks of the celebrated Uzbek master, Usta Usman, as keeping his timber in a dry place for two to three years, and notes that the seasoning period may last up to five years (1966:58).

Jurai Qul finishes the surface of the belly and neck with a rather heavy file. As a result, his (and most other) Turkestani damburas are quite roughhewn affairs, becoming smooth only after long years of cradling against a performer's body. I once made the mistake of bringing Jurai Qul a large quantity of sandpaper from Kabul as a present, and was greeted with a lengthy outburst of hilarity. He felt that such feeble paper could never improve his sturdy mulberry wood.

The lid is added to the belly at the end of the construction process, having been briefly dried in the sun (Figure 4.5) while the belly and

neck were being made and joined with glue. The lid is also attached with glue. As noted above, the sinking of sound holes in the lid is the final stage in the making of a dambura, and is done after some months of use. It should be added that not all makers are as careful in this respect as is Jurai Qul.

Lids, like bellies, are smoothed by filing. Whereas the file marks on the belly radiate in several directions (with the grain, against the grain, and diagonally), those on the lid go only at right angles against the grain. The scrape marks on the neck are mostly with the grain, and a finer file has been used. Perhaps the coarsest woodwork on Jurai Qul's instruments is at the very end of the neck, above the pegbox. The instrument ends abruptly, and is cut off at a careless angle, with little attempt having been made to smooth down the unplaned surface at right angles to the back of the neck. All the damburas I examined were similarly made.

A bridge is added, made of any scrap of available wood, since so much of Afghan Turkestan is wood-free steppe and desert. There is no standardization of bridge shapes.

Once a dambura is finished, it is rarely altered in any way. If, in the course of time, a dambura "goes bad," expert players are familiar with some tricks to remedy the defect. For example, Abdullah Buz-baz of Tašqurğan advised me to cover the lid of my dambura with egg yolk, let it dry, and then scrape the yolk off to raise the level of the lid, which had become slightly concave. The method worked with considerable success.

The Turkestani dambura is the most widely used lute of northern Afghanistan. It is also found beyond the North within Afghanistan, perhaps most commonly in the Hazarajat of central Afghanistan. To the southeast, it can be found even in strongly Paštun areas of the country such as Lağman. To the east, distribution of the Turkestani dambura tapers off and overlaps with the spread of the Badaxšani dambura. To the north, the Turkestani dambura borders with the region of the Uzbek dombra, a closely related two-stringed fretless lute. To the west, the Turkestani dambura is played in the mountains of Badğis (the Paropamisus range) and reaches the zone of the Herati dutar.

A variety of ethnic groups use the Turkestani dambura. The bulk of the players are Uzbeks and Tajiks of Afghan Turkestan; however, the instrument enjoys wide popularity among the minority groups of the region — Paštuns, Hazaras, and Aimaq tribesmen — and has been adopted by the Turkmens to a certain extent as well. It is the teahouse instrument par excellence, usually occupying a handy position hanging on a nail, ready to be taken down by anyone who feels like strumming.

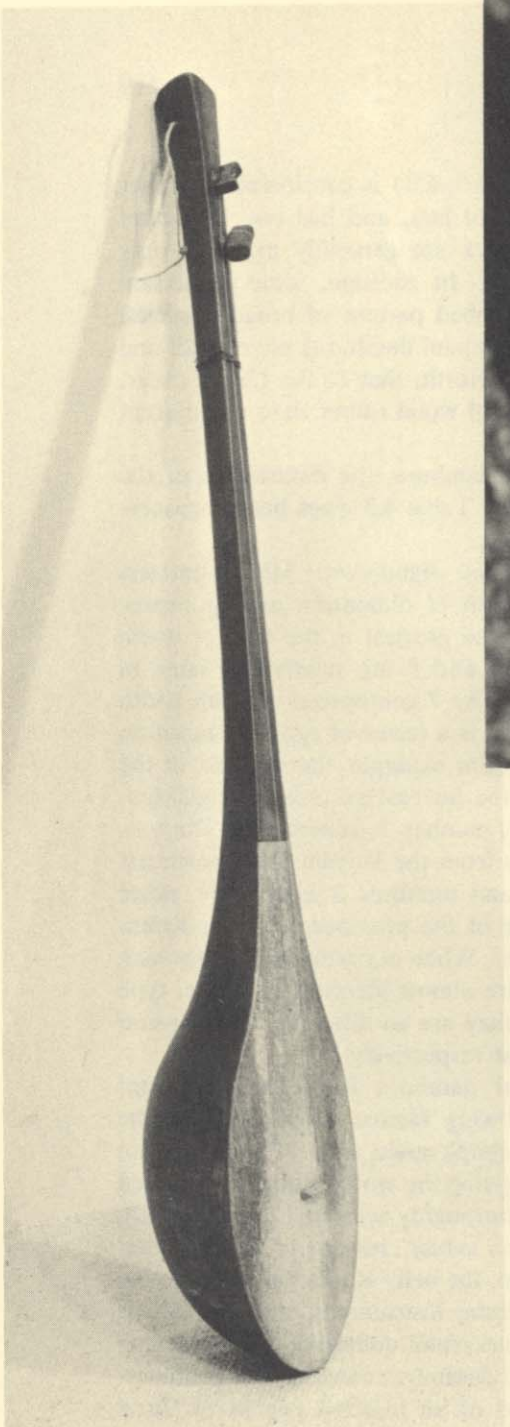
The Badaxšani Dambura

The Badaxšani dambura (Figures 4.6–4.8) is considerably smaller in all its dimensions than the Turkestani lute, and has one important structural difference: the body and neck are generally made of only one piece, to which the lid is attached. In addition, some Badaxšani damburas have bellies planed into a ribbed pattern of broad surfaces, tapering off towards the neck. No Turkestani damburas are ribbed, and the only ribbed lute belly found in the North, that of the Uzbek dutar, is actually composed of separate strips of wood rather than of different planes of one whole piece of wood.

As in the case of the Turkestani dambura, the dimensions of the Badaxšani instrument vary significantly. Table 4.3 gives basic measurements for selected Badaxšani damburas.

Overall variation in length can be significant: 10 centimeters between instruments 1 and 2. Variation of dimension among instruments of similar length can be seen to be greatest in the case of width and depth. Thus, while instruments 4 and 5 are nearly the same in length, instrument 4 exceeds number 5 by 7 centimeters in both width and depth. Differentiation of dimension is a factor of regional variation among Badaxšani instrument makers. For example, the smallest of the instruments cited, number 3, is from the far eastern area of Badaxšan, the Waxan corridor, while the largest, number 1, comes from Darwaz, the most northerly area. Number 4 is from the Šuğnan area, northeast of Faizabad, the provincial capital, and numbers 2 and 5 are either from the Faizabad area, in the center of the province, or from Kešm, the most westerly region of Badaxšan. What is particularly surprising is the fact that instruments 1 and 3 are almost identical in shape, type of wood, and construction, although they are so different in dimension and come from the far north and east respectively.

In differentiating the Badaxšani dambura from its Turkestani counterpart, one must note the following factors in addition to the considerations of dimension and belly shape noted above: the Badaxšani type is much more carefully finished, giving the wood a smooth polished surface; the wood seems to be more thoroughly seasoned to begin with; and the sound holes are placed at the center, instead of at the sides, of the lid (see Figure 4.7). In addition, the belly is much thinner, to the point of almost eggshell fragility in some instruments, and the lute is consequently much lighter than the Turkestani dambura. The fastening point of the strings on most Badaxšani damburas consists of a protuberance with slits for the strings, instead of an inserted peg as on Jurai Qul's instruments. Also, the neck flares out above the pegbox rather than tapering off, and is generally narrower, facilitating the playing of fourths, which is a hallmark of much of Badaxšani music. Badaxšani



Carol Reck

Fig. 4.6. Badaxšani dambura

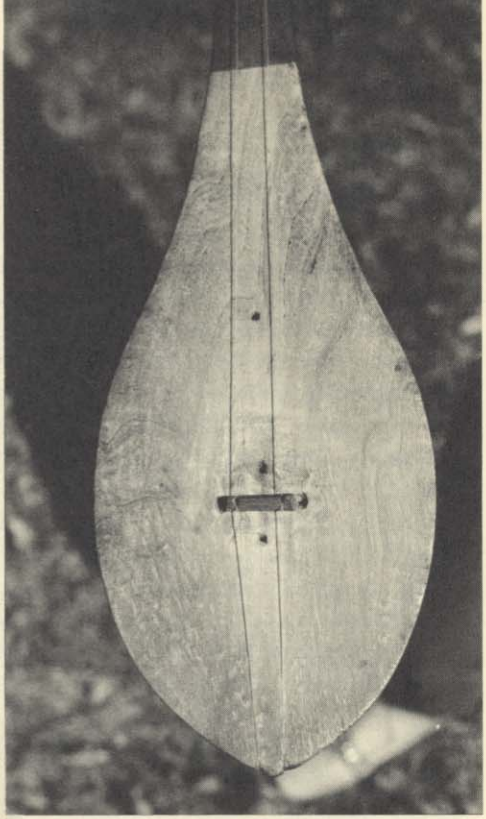


Fig. 4.7. Badaxšani dambura lid

Fig. 4.8. Badaxšani dambura back

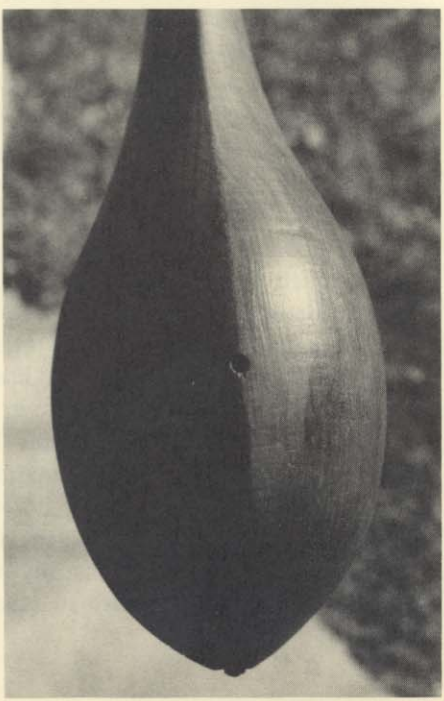


TABLE 4.3
Dimensions of Selected Badaxšani Damburas (In Centimeters)

Instrument	*Overall Length*	*Length of Neck*	*Greatest Width*	*Greatest Depth*
1	78	49	17	11
2	68	39	12	8
3	66.5	39	13	10
4	75	44	20	17
5	74	42	13	10

damburas come to a sharp point at the back of the neck, in contrast to the flat-backed neck cited by Jurai Qul as a criterion of Tajik-made Turkestani damburas. The *targir* or *gulband* (upper bridge) of the Badaxšani instrument is generally of gut, rather than nylon, perhaps because nylon cord is less available in Badaxšan.

It is also worth noting that there is no single center of instrument production in Badaxšan comparable to Samangan for Turkestan. This may well be due to the great difficulty of moving from one place to another in Badaxšan: for example, to get from Faizabad to Šuğnan, a distance of perhaps fifty kilometers as the crow flies, requires three to four days' journey on horseback in the summer, ten to twelve days in the winter. A comparable distance on the Turkestani steppe could be covered in three hours by the ubiquitous jeep taxis, even over rugged desert roads.

The Badaxšani dambura is quite similar in many respects to the Tajikistani dumbrak (*-ak* is a diminutive suffix in Persian). O. Dansker, in his study of the music culture of the mountain Tajiks of the Karategin and Darwaz regions of southern Tajikistan (adjacent to Afghanistan), says that there the dumbrak is "the most widespread and popular instrument" (Dansker 1965:249). Here is the description of the dumbrak from the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963:125):

> . . . [The dumbrak is] a two-stringed instrument with a length of about 700–800 millimeters, with a pear-shaped body and a comparatively long neck. It is made of mulberry wood. The body is hollowed out, and the back side is convex; two or three groups of small round resonating opening are drilled on the lid. The neck is round, without frets; wooden pegs are placed at its far end (head). The neck and body are made of one piece of wood. The strings are silk, sometimes gut; they are tuned to a fourth. The sound is marked by rattling. The right-hand technique is rather varied and consists of alternating striking of the strings with one or with all the fingers, and of the motions of the hand above, below, and on both strings. For the most part, three fingers (the thumb, first, and middle) take part in the left-hand play,

more rarely the fourth finger and, as an exception, all five fingers. As a rule, it is played only in first position. The sound of the dumbrak is not loud, and is accompanied by noises arising from the striking of the nails on the lid.

The dumbrak is played sitting or, at times, while standing on horseback while traveling; it is held in front of oneself in a horizontal position and by slightly raising (or lowering) the neck. The dumbrak is a very portable instrument; fastening it to his belt, the musician can easily handle it while walking or riding. This could not better suit the conditions of life of the Tajiks of the mountain regions, where the dumbrak is most widespread. On it, songs are accompanied, and dances and instrumental variants of songs are performed. Its role in the musical life of the inhabitants of mountainous Tajikistan is approximately that which the dutar plays among the Tajiks of the valley regions of the Republic.

The general description of dimensions and physical characteristics of the dumbrak fits those given above for the Badaxšani dambura. It should be added, however, that not all Badaxšani damburas feature one-piece construction for neck and belly. Some instruments, from the Šuğnan region, are made in three pieces — neck, belly, and lid — like the Turkestani dambura.

The description in the *Atlas* does not go into detail regarding the exact shape of the belly of the dumbrak; we have seen that the Badaxšani dambura may have a smooth, peaked back or a ribbed one. Such distinctions apply as well to the dumbrak. The instrument pictured in the *Atlas* is similar to the Badaxšani dambura of Figures 4.6–4.8; however, Dansker illustrates a dumbrak with ribbed back. A new instrument I purchased in Dushanbe (the capital of Tajikistan) also had the same construction, though it was somewhat longer and thinner than both the dumbrak in the *Atlas* and the typical Badaxšani dambura, as may be seen in Figure 4.9, in which the Soviet instrument stands next to a large Badaxšani dambura (instrument 1 of Table 4.3). It should be added that the new Soviet-made dumbrak was highly esteemed for its superior resonance by Badaxšani musicians when I introduced it to Faizabad. It enabled me to make a trade for a Waxan dambura, much to the delight of both the Waxi performer and myself.

Returning to the data given in the *Atlas,* it is interesting to note that silk and gut strings are apparently still widely used in Tajikistan, whereas the Badaxšani instruments tend to be strung with nylon cord, like the new Soviet dumbrak of the Dushanbe department store. The reference to use of the thumb in dumbrak left-hand technique is somewhat surprising, as the thumb is never brought into play on the Badaxšani dambura. The frequent parallel fourths in Badaxšani style are

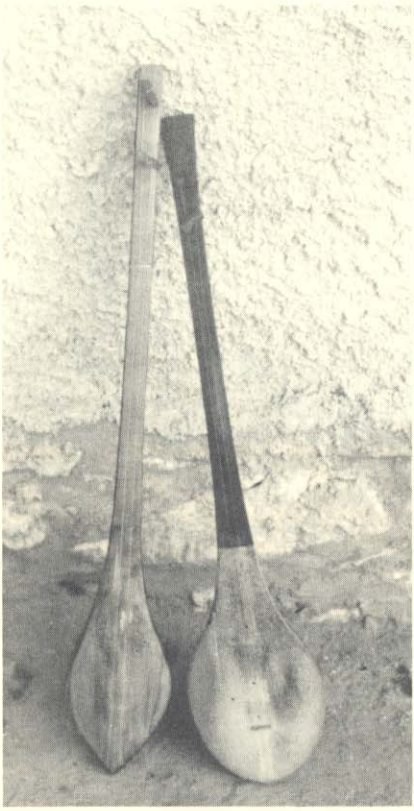


Fig. 4.9 Soviet Tajikistani dumbrak (left) *with Badaxšani dambura* (right)

always produced by placing the index, middle, or ring finger across both strings simultaneously, a practice facilitated by the narrowness of the instrument's neck, as noted earlier. In shunning the little finger in left-hand play, Tajikistani and Badaxšani players are both in agreement with Turkestani lutenists.

Dansker gives further details linking the dumbrak of Tajikistan to the Badaxšani dambura. The names for parts of the instrument coincide in most cases. Some terms are divergent, however, such as *parda,* instead of *tar,* for string; parda always means "fret" in Afghanistan. Another variant term is *biābun* for the neck, instead of *dasta.* The use of *zil* and *bam* for upper and lower strings is identical on both sides of the border. Also the same is the placing of the three to five sound holes of the lid in the center, under the strings and close to the bridge. A feature of ornament linking all varieties of dambura and dumbrak and connecting them with other instruments of the northern Afghanistan-

Transoxanian area is the widespread use of the bone ornament in the shape of a circle with a dot in the center, cited by Dansker as the most widespread pattern for ornament. He also notes that a special curved axe (*kajkord,* or "crooked knife") is used in instrument making in southern Tajikistan, corresponding to the axe used by Jurai Qul and other Afghan instrument makers (Dansker 1965:249-50).

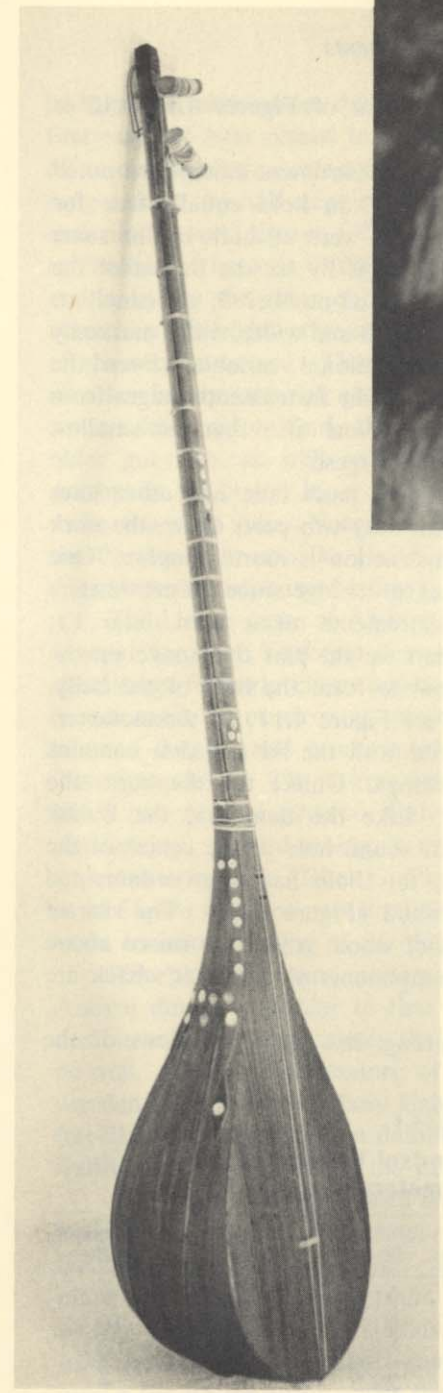
In comparing the Badaxšani dambura technique with that of another related lute, the Turketsani dambura, one notes some minor differences. One unique practice of the Badaxšani playing style is the use of two or even three fingers on the upstroke, instead of only the index finger, as in Turkestan, to produce repeated or different pitches, often in triplet rhythms. One technique rarely found in Badaxšan but frequent in Turkestan is the use of the middle-finger knock on the lid during the index-finger stroke as a type of accent. The narrowness of the lid of the Badaxšani lute decreases the effectiveness of this particular stroke.

It has been noted that the Badaxšani dambura, though it comes in different sizes and somewhat different shapes, is a distinctive lute found in all areas of the rugged terrain of northeastern Afghanistan. We have seen, further, that the dumbrak of present-day Tajikistan, an instrument nearly identical to the Badaxšani dambura, is widespread only in the mountainous regions, areas which border on Badaxšan and which, historically, were considered part of Badaxšan. It was not until 1895 that a clear line of demarcation was established between Russian and Afghan Badaxšan, so it is safe to assume that the dumbrak and Badaxšani dambura are one and the same instrument, used by the same ethnic group — the so-called mountain Tajiks — on both sides of the present border, and used by that group only.

The Uzbek Dutar

The dutar (Figures 4.10–4.12) is a long-necked, deep-bellied, two-stringed fretted lute — and the first fretted lute of our survey. In Uzbekistan, the dutar is by far the most popular instrument, found in many homes and played by amateurs and celebrated professionals alike for both the folk and classical repertoires. In Afghanistan, the dutar is scarcely to be seen, and one can count the well-known performers of this resonant lute on the fingers of one hand.

The following data are necessarily based on the instruments of one maker, a Turkmen of Andxoi who died around 1953. His are the only Afghan-made Uzbek dutars to be seen today, and there are perhaps only fifteen of these instruments left. His dutars are marked by their finesse of workmanship; it is unfortunate that it is too late to gather information on his method of construction. Table 4.4 gives the dimen-



Carol Reck

Fig. 4.10. Uzbek dutar from Andxoi

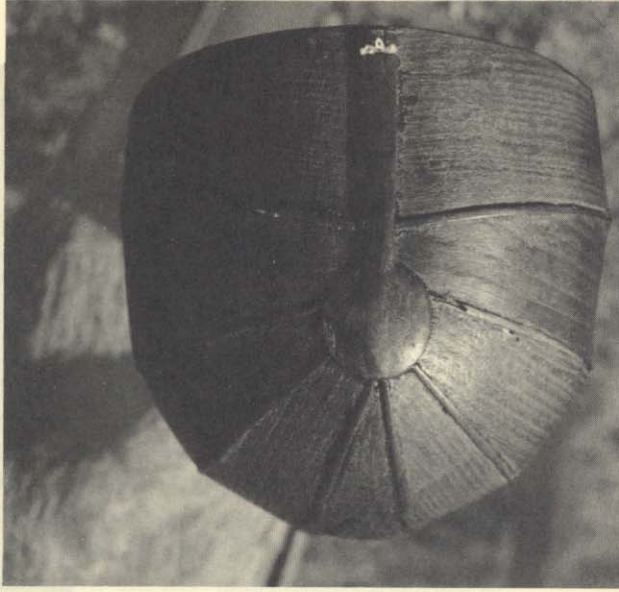
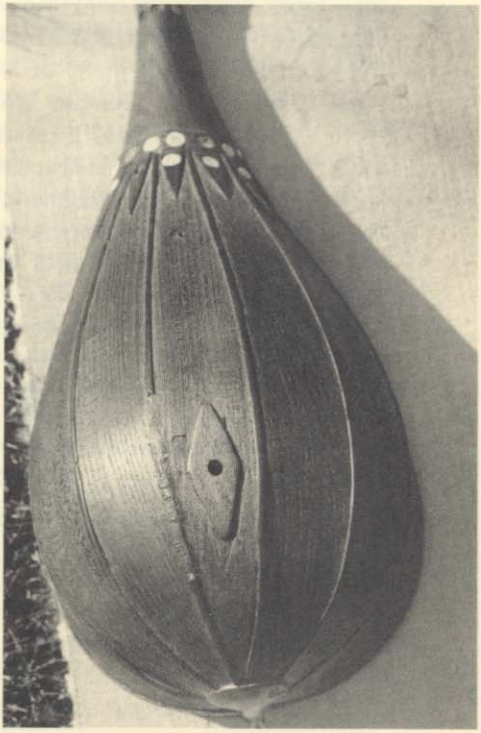


Fig. 4.11. Uzbek dutar, bottom

Fig. 4.12. Uzbek dutar back



sions of five Andxoi dutars; the instrument of Figures 4.10–4.12 is number 1 of the table.

Table 4.4 shows that the variations in instrument dimensions noted for other lute types of northern Afghanistan hold equally true for Uzbek dutars, even though the instruments were all built by the same maker. For example, though instrument 4 is by far the largest of the five dutars, its depth is the same as that of number 5, the smallest. Number 2 and 3, quite close in overall length and width, differ markedly in length of neck, an important constructional variable. Even the number of ribs that make up the bellies of the instruments ranges from eight to eleven, a significant variation. Note also that the smallest instrument has three ribs more than the largest.

Andxoi dutars have more constituent parts than any other lutes of northern Afghanistan. On the front, only two parts show, the neck and the lid, but at the back, the construction is more complex. One piece extends from the end of the neck to a ridge some 16 centimeters farther down towards the belly measurements taken from dutar 1); the ridge, 1.7 centimeters wide, borders on the ribs that make up the belly of the dutar. The ribs widen out to form the flare of the belly, then taper down to a joining piece (see Figure 4.11), a thermometer-shaped strip that joins at its upper end with the lid and that contains the slotted fastening point of the strings. Unlike the dambura, the dutar features two separate strings. Like the dambura, the Uzbek dutar of Andxoi includes a prominent sound hole at the center of the back. In the case of instrument 1, this hole has been ornamented with a diamond-shaped segment of wood (Figure 4.12). The ribs of the belly are joined by narrow strips of wood, which are raised above the surface of the ribs. All of the components of the dutar's back are held together by glue.

It is worth noting that the fretting, like the dimensions of the

TABLE 4.4

Dimensions of Five Andxoi Uzbek Dutars (In Centimeters)

Instrument	*Overall Length*	*Length of Neck*	*Greatest Width*	*Greatest Depth*	*Number of Ribs*
1	121	71	21.5	20	9
2	118	62	21	19	10
3	117	70	21	17	10
4	125	81	22.5	17	8
5	116	68	20	17	11

instruments, varies from dutar to dutar. Two systems are in use. The first employs frets placed to produce a chromatic scale over the range of an octave plus a perfect fourth, while the second, covering the same range, skips the half-steps between the fourth and fifth and the eighth and ninth scale degrees. The former system is known as *nimparda,* or "half-fret," because of the additional tones fixed between whole steps, and is by far the rarer of the two systems. Additional frets may be placed on the upper edge of the lid to obtain the fifth and minor sixth of the second octave. These can be made of small strips of leather, or other handy material, glued onto the lid. Frets are most commonly wound from nylon cord, though a given instrument may have both older gut frets as well as the more modern nylon. The fastening process is facilitated by a trough at the side of the neck, a feature to be found in other Near Eastern and Central Asian lutes, such as the Persian setar and the Uzbek tanbur (not to be confused with the Afghan tanbur, discussed below).

The Uzbek dutar of Andxoi is the only instrument of Afghanistan (except for some Turkmen dutars) that is still strung with the wound silk strings formerly characteristic of most lutes of the area. The silk is still made in Andxoi at infrequent intervals by Abdul Karim, an amateur dutarist and producer of silk scarves (for his handiwork, see Dupaigne 1968). The strings are tuned either to a fourth or to a fifth, which one Andxoi virtuoso, Ğafur Xan, calls first and second tunings respectively. A third tuning, in unison, is rarely used; it is called *kuštar* ("paired-string" in Uzbek). Pegs are placed either both frontally, as in Figure 4.10, or one frontally and one laterally. The latter is the more common pegging of the dutars of Uzbekistan.

The placement and patterning of the small sound holes of the Andxoi dutars is similar to that found on Turkestani and Badaxšani damburas, and approximates the usage of Transoxanian dutar makers as well. A distinctive feature of the Andxoi instruments is the high wooden upper bridge. Many Uzbekistani dutars have only the tied-on, fret-like fastening found on damburas, though some fine instruments of well-known makers feature the wooden piece of the Andxoi dutars.

Although time has robbed us of the opportunity of discovering the trade secrets of the Andxoi dutar-maker's art, some of the constructional features speak for themselves. The maker took exceptional pains to make the ribs of the belly thin, and to keep the neck fairly slender, so that the instruments are unusually light for their size and volume. Like Jurai Qul, the dambura maker of Samangan, the Andxoi master used a file on the belly across the grain of the wood, but his hand was considerably lighter in using the tool. There are no visible file marks

across the grain on the lids of Andxoi dutars, and no scrape marks at all on the necks, which are highly polished by use.

A special kind of dutar made at least once by the Andxoi maker is the type that unscrews for greater portability (see Figure 4.13). This instrument is somewhat smaller than some of the other Andxoi dutars, but is made with the same care. The only difference is the insertion of a screw mechanism at the end of the neck. When tightly closed, the dutar shows no sign of this alteration except for a strip of metal appearing at the back of the neck. This type of dutar has its counterpart in Uzbekistan, though there the instrument may have an additional screw that enables it to be broken down into three parts (Avedova 1966:76). The dutar can then be wrapped up in a kerchief and placed in a saddlebag for easy carrying over long distances on horseback.

Instrument 1 of Table 4.4 has the most interesting ornamental design of the five dutars under discussion. The inlay of pearl buttons (see Figures 4.10 and 4.12) is a most original innovation. Buttons are functionally placed on the fingerboard to mark the place of the fifth

Fig. 4.13.
Screw-type Uzbek dutar from Andxoi

and octave above the open-string pitch. The triangular pattern extending from the ridge toward the top of the belly is a stylistic link between the Andxoi dutar and the Uzbekistani dutar. However, no Andxoi dutars have the elaborate fingerboard ornamentation typical of the finest Transoxanian court instruments, or of the inlay work on older Afghan tanburs.

Most features of Andxoi dutars are shared by the instruments of Uzbekistan. The average length of 1150–1200 millimeters given in the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963:119) matches the instruments of Table 4.4 quite closely, as do other details of dimension and construction. Nevertheless, there are several differences betwen Andxoi and Transoxanian dutars that imply certain regional preferences. First, it should be noted that many Samarqand dutars I have seen do not feature ribbed construction of the belly, but rather have the one-piece peaked construction typical of the dambura. Second, the fretting of Uzbekistani dutars, as given in the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963:120), seems a cross between the fully chromatic (nimparda) and the diatonic scaling systems found on Afghan lutes, as the scale is said to be chromatic in the lower register and diatonic in the upper (overall range is identical: one and one-half octaves). Another difference to be noted is the recent substitution of metal strings for silk in Uzbekistan, underscoring the "old-fashioned" nature of Afghan dutar playing.

In terms of basic playing style, there is little difference on the two sides of the border. In right-hand technique, the alternate use of a single-finger stroke and the four- or five-finger stroke remains basic, the only difference lying in the use of the middle finger instead of the forefinger on the dutar as the usual agent on the single-finger stroke. I have seen only one stroke on the Afghan side that I have neither observed nor seen described in Uzbekistan. This is a favorite trick of Ğafur Xan's: he presses the thumb and forefinger of his right hand tightly together to produce a very strongly accented stroke. He uses this technique in pieces featuring variation, as a novel effect.

In left-hand technique, the main departure from dambura style is the use of the thumb to stop the lower string instead of placing one finger across both strings for chords. One reason for this difference may be the dutarist's interest in using the note on the lower string as a drone. If he employs his thumb to hold down the pitch, the index finger is free to move below and above the spot on the string opposite the thumb. Such a device is not necessary in dambura style, since the lower string, if stopped, is employed only for parallel intervals or for solo play and does not hold a stopped drone pitch. The greater freedom of the dutarist's fingers is thus related to the style of the music, in which

the Uzbek dutar stands closer to the Turkmen dutar (see below) than to the dambura.

Ğafur Xan distinguishes two kinds of bridges for the dutar, corresponding to two playing styles. A high bridge is said by him to be good for projecting individual notes in a slower tempo, whereas a lower bridge is favorable for the fast-note *reig* style, which he generally prefers. The Andxoi virtuoso is also a strong partisan of the nimparda (fully chromatic) fretting system which he considers to require a more advanced technique on the part of the performer. He derides players who shun the nimparda as weaklings.

The Turkmen Dutar

Like the Uzbek dutar, the Turkmen dutar is hard to find in Afghanistan, is mastered by only a few virtuosi, and represents a tradition that is closely connected to Transoxania. Unlike the Uzbek dutar, the Turkmen lute is found scattered across a wide area of northern Afghanistan and is produced by different artisans in each locale.

Table 4.5 gives the dimensions of dutars from three different communities. The first (Figure 4.14) was made in Qala-i Zal, a large Turkmen settlement northwest of Kunduz near the Oxus; the second (Figure 4.15) was played by a man in Tašqurğan who thought the instrument was made near that town; and the third is from Qizilayaq, an important Turkmen village north of Šiberğan.

From Table 4.5 it can be seen that the variability of dimension noted for other lute types of the North holds equally true for the Turkmen dutar. Particularly striking is the disparity of the proportions between length and width of instruments 1 and 2: the latter is both much longer and far narrower than the former. All three instruments have necks of apricot wood and bellies and lids of mulberry. Instrument 1, shown in Figure 4.14, is by far the most carefully made of the three. Its owner, Axmad-baxši, probably the finest Turkmen musician in Afghanistan, worked with the carpenter in designing and finishing the instrument and is very proud of the result. He would not sell

TABLE 4.5

Dimensions of Selected Turkmen Dutars (In Centimeters)

Instrument	*Overall Length*	*Greatest Width*	*Greatest Depth*	*Number of Frets*
1	90	19	10	13
2	97	16.5	9	12
3	91	18	—	14

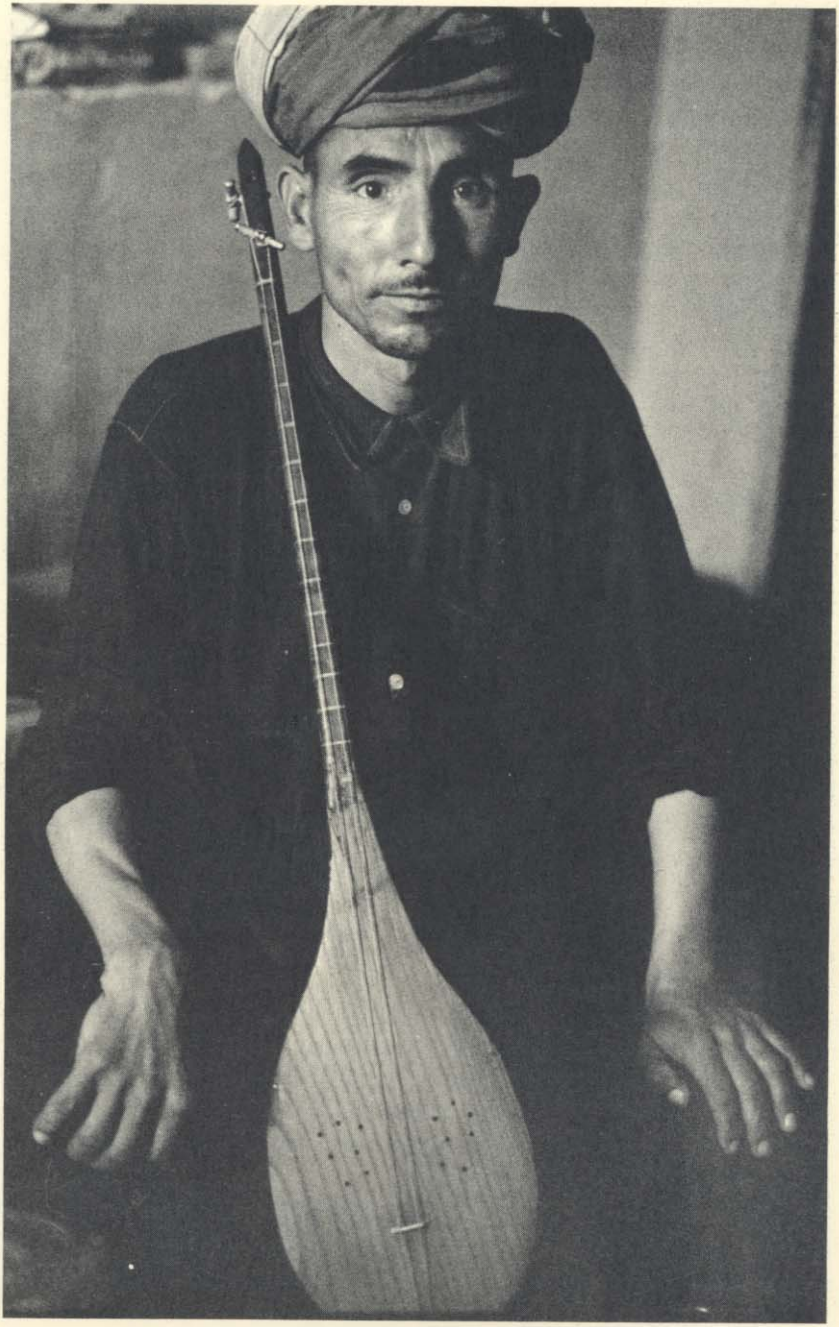


Fig. 4.14. Axmad-baxši with his Turkmen dutar

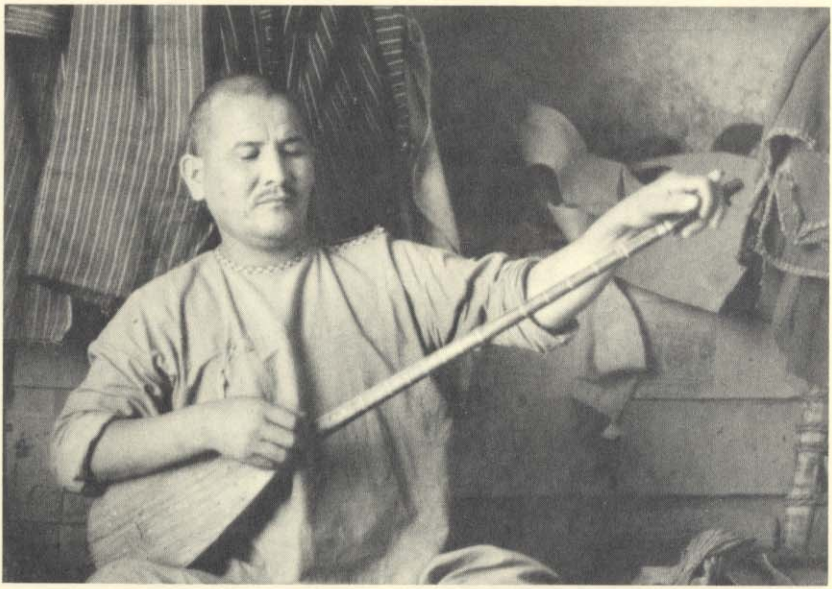


Fig. 4.15. Usta Hassan with his Turkmen dutar

his dutar for any price. Axmad-baxši feels that an instrument will not come out properly if a musician is not present at the construction. In this, he is at variance with the dambura makers of Afghanistan, who cannot themselves play the instruments they make and consult no one in making them. The most striking constructional feature of Axmad-baxši's dutar is the raised, wave-like fluting of the belly, which seems to be his own invention. The other Turkmen dutars under discussion have simple smooth peaked backs like those of Turkestani and Badaxšani damburas.

Like the Uzbek dutar, the Turkmen lute was traditionally strung with tightly woven silk cord, and Axmad-baxši continues this practice. Unlike most Andxoi Uzbek dutars, but like those of Transoxania, the Turkmen dutar has one peg placed laterally and one on the side. Axmad-baxši's instrument has silver pegs, which add the final touch to the overall elegance of his dutar.

The Turkmen dutar of northern Afghanistan is virtually the same as its counterpart in the Turkmen SSR. It is worthwhile quoting at length most of the scanty description of the instrument given in Soviet sources as general background. Below is most of the entry for the Turkmen dutar in the *Atlas:*

Dutar: a two-stringed instrument, close in construction to the Uzbek and Tajik dutar. Its general length is about 900 mm. In contrast to the Uzbek and Tajik dutars, the Turkmen dutar has smaller dimensions, a hollowed-out body, comparatively shorter neck and metallic, moveable frets with a chromatic scale (except for the farthest, highest pitch) with a range of one and one-half octaves. The strings of the dutar are silk, but in recent years they are often replaced by metal ones; they are tuned in fourths.

During play, the dutar is held in front of oneself in an inclined position; the body of the instrument is at belt level, with the head above the shoulder. The first string is pressed to the frets by the index, middle and ring fingers of the left hand (accomplished musicians also use the little finger), the second by the thumb and ring finger. Right-hand technique is distinguished by a great variety of strokes. Among the most commonly used:

a) striking the strings with the ring, middle and index fingers simultaneously, and in some cases even with the little finger;
b) striking with the index finger back and forth;
c) a sliding stroke up with the nail of the thumb;
d) an up-stroke and a down-stroke of the index finger with a sliding up-stroke of the thumb (for triplets);
e) alternating strokes of the index finger and thumb in fast passages, for grace notes, etc.
f) extracting the sounds of the index finger of the left hand by means of pressing on the string and plucking it simultaneously. (Vertkov 1963:116)

Several comments are in order concerning the information in the *Atlas*. First, it should be noted that the general length of the Turkmenian dutars is roughly the same as that of instruments in northern Afghanistan. The mentioning of a "hollowed-out" body for the Turkmen dutar as a contrast to Uzbek and Tajik instruments perhaps refers to the fact that the belly of the Turkmen instrument is not made of separate ribs, but is composed of one scooped-out chunk of wood. As to the fretting, the use of movable frets holds for instruments in Afghanistan, but the placement of frets varies slightly. Most Afghan Turkmen dutars have a completely chromatic scale without the whole-step placement of the top fret mentioned in the *Atlas*. Some Turkmen lutes of Afghanistan feature a different fretting, namely that of the Uzbek dutar, with whole steps between the fourth and fifth and eighth and ninth scale degrees. The use of metal strings is not at all typical of instruments in Afghanistan, though the practice seems to have almost completely replaced the use of silk strings in Turkmenia, at least among the performers of Radio Ashkhabad. It is worth noting that at the time Beliaev wrote (1928), he found that dutars were strung with silk cord only.

The various strokes described in the *Atlas* are analogous to those

used by Turkmen musicians of Afghanistan, and they bespeak the great variety of performance modes open to the Turkmen dutarist. Indeed, accomplished players like Axmad-baxši also employ additional strokes. One of his favorites is a wide, circular motion of the entire right arm, striking the string at the bridge and at the far end of the lid towards the fingerboard. Axmad-baxši feels that virtuosity on the dutar consists of a great variety of strokes, which are used as "ornament" (gul), in his words, offering an important visual dimension to his performance that acts as a counterpart to the diverse vocal and musical effects involved (see the section on Turkmen music in Chapter 3).

Some notes in the classic work on the music of Turkmenia, *Turkmenskaia muzyka* by Beliaev and Uspenskii (1928), offer valuable insights into the lore of the Turkmen dutar. Particularly interesting are the two legends given by Uspenskii's informants about the origin of the instrument:

A close friend of Muhammad's, Hazrat Ali, had a very beautiful horse named Dyul-dyul, for whom he took a groom, Baba-Kambar. This groom made a dutar and played on it so well, that Dyul-dyul began to grow thin. Seeing that the horse was suffering, Hazrat Ali began to worry about it, and, suddenly coming into the stable, discovered Kambar playing on the dutar. Kambar was so frightened by his master that he wanted to smash the dutar on a barrel. But Hazrat Ali stopped him and asked him to tell what sort of thing this was and how he made it. Baba Kambar said that when he made the dutar, it didn't produce any sounds until the devil helped him, after which it began to play. (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:89)

This story contains a number of striking elements indicative of the place of music among the Turkmens. The mentioning of Ali and his magic horse relates the story to widespread legends about Ali, a major religious folk hero of northern Afghanistan and Central Asia, and the fact that the sound of the instrument was inspired by the devil points up the negative attitude towards musical instruments and music itself, which continues to have considerable weight among all the peoples of the area. It is also interesting to note that among the Kirghiz, a Central Asian Turkic nomadic people whose music culture is related to that of the Turkmens, the founder of music and inventor of the lute (komuz) is also named Kambar, or Kambar-xan; a major genre of Kirghiz music, the *kambarkan,* is named for this legendary figure.

The second story of the invention of the dutar cited by Uspenskii relates not to the religious world, but to the culture of ancient Greece, which played an important role in the development of Near Eastern music:

Long, long ago lived a wise man, whose name was Eflatun (Plato). In his day there lived a bird Kaknus (phoenix), the feathers of which, when the wings flapped, produced very beautiful music. Eflatun, having studied these sounds, made a dutar and composed music for it, imitating the sound of the feathers of the bird Kaknus. (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:89)

Beliaev, commenting on the story, notes that Pythagoras plays a similar role in the legend of the origin of the robab among the people of Khiva, in present-day northwestern Uzbekistan (1928:90). It is also interesting to note that the imitation of bird sounds plays a role even today in the repertoire of various Central Asian lute types. I was not able to record legends similar to those gathered by Uspenskii, since the Turkmens of Afghanistan have forgotten much of the lore of their traditional arts.

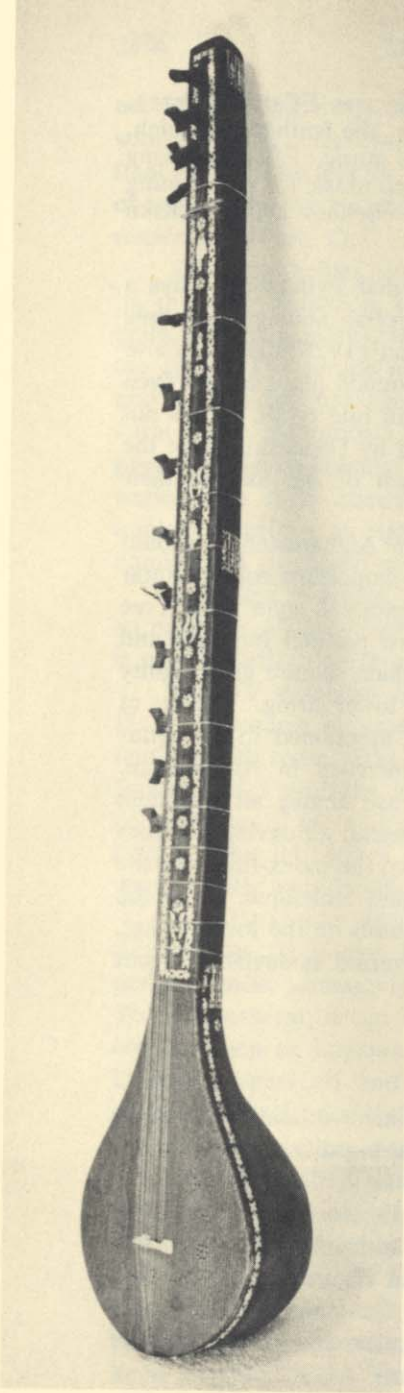
Returning to the playing style of northern Afghanistan, it should be observed that left-hand technique plays an important role in dutar performance, because of the nature of the musical style itself (see Chapter 3). Considerable stress is attached to parallel intervals and lower-string drone on various pitches, all of which require great agility of the thumb of the left hand, which covers the lower string. The use of the ring finger for stopping the lower string, mentioned in the *Atlas* as typical of Turkmenistan, does not find currency in Afghanistan. Left-hand pizzicato, however, is in common use among all Turkmen dutarists and is used as a special effect. In general, all deviations from the basic right-hand technique, which consists of the index-finger or the four-finger stroke, and from the basic left-hand technique, using the first three fingers on the top string and the thumb on the lower string, are considered as ornament, and are thus recognized as deviations from a norm of technique.

The Tanbur

The tanbur is the most widespread instrument of the North to be played with a plectrum. It is also the only stringed instrument under discussion that did not originate in the North or in Transoxania.

Of all the stringed instruments in use in the North, the tanbur has perhaps the widest variation in construction. Instruments range in size from quite small to very large. The tanbur in Figures 4.16–4.19 is a medium-sized instrument and is rather old. Generally speaking, size correlates with age: older instruments are smaller, and newer ones are larger, as in the case of the Turkestani dambura.

Size is not the only variable in tanbur construction. Of considerable



Carol Reck

Fig. 4.16. Tanbur

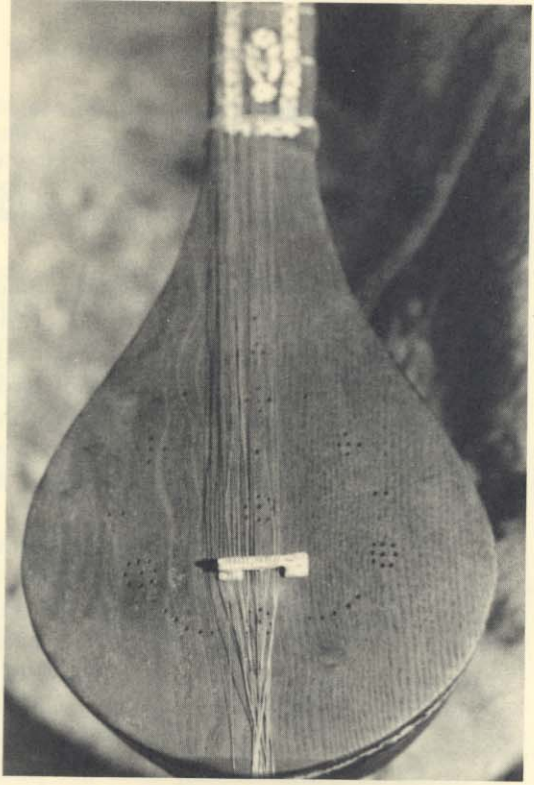


Fig. 4.17. Tanbur lid

Fig. 4.18. Tanbur, side

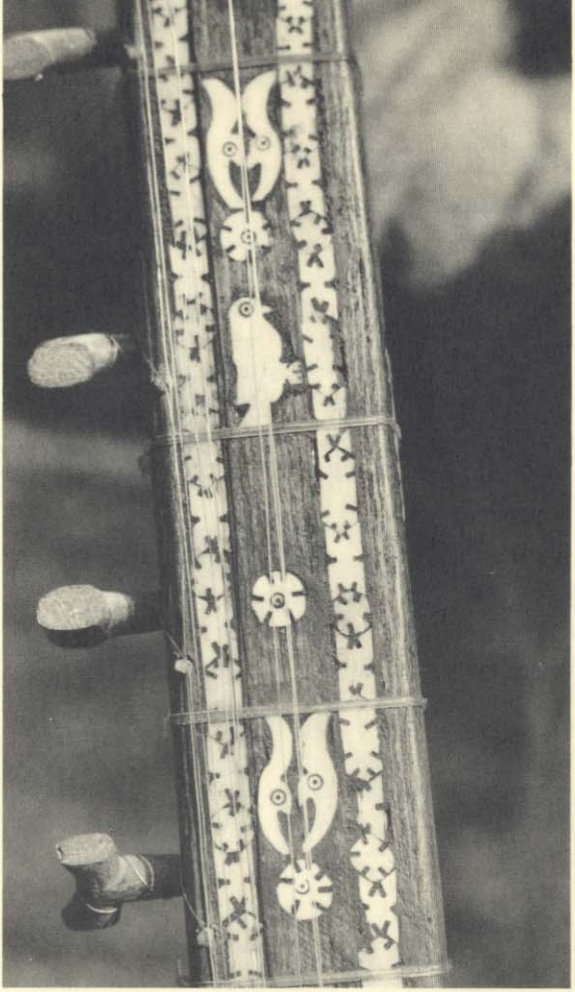


Fig. 4.19.
Tanbur neck, showing bone inlay

interest is the wide range in number of strings and frets. The tanbur pictured is an instrument with six basic strings and eleven sympathetic strings. While the number of basic strings is always six, the number of resonating strings varies from nine to about fifteen. Figure 4.16 shows fourteen frets, but other instruments of the same size may have as many as twenty-one frets, and larger instruments, twenty-three or more. The placement of the movable frets is also unstandardized. The generally accepted tuning is that found on the Uzbek dutar: chromatic, with whole steps between the fourth and fifth and the eighth and ninth scale degrees; however, all-chromatic or simply diatonic tunings are also found. Performers are quite careless about fretting, and when questioned, give no standard response as to what constitutes proper fretting.

Tuning of the strings is also variable. The first two strings are invariably tuned in unison and are usually placed quite close to one another and played together. However, the other strings may be tuned in different ways. The most common tuning consists of pitching the third string a fourth (sometimes a fifth) below the top two (melody)

strings, with the fourth and fifth strings tuned in unison with strings one and two. The sixth string may also be grouped with the first five, in which case it is tuned to the pitch of the top strings, or it may be considered as the first of the sympathetic resonating strings, in which case it is pitched a whole step higher than the top strings and begins a scalar tuning pattern carried through all the sympathetic strings; the scale chosen is the scale of the piece to be played. The last, and shortest, of the sympathetic strings may be tuned to the last pitch of the scale referred to, or may be tuned up to the octave of the pitch of the first melody string.

The bridge of the tanbur is constructed to accommodate the pattern of string distribution. The first two strings run through closely spaced slots at a point set off from the rest of the strings. The placement of the remaining strings varies; on some instruments, the third string, while set off from the first two, is placed slightly apart from the fourth and fifth strings. The latter are generally grouped with the sympathetic resonating strings, which run over the bridge at the same level as the other strings. The positioning of the resonating strings in the same plane as the remaining strings makes them accessible to the performer. These small strings are used by tanburists as a coloration, rather than melodically; occasionally a performer will sweep over the resonating strings as an effect.

The targir (upper bridge) at the bottom of the neck of the tanbur is also notched and shaped according to the distribution of strings. As there are invariably six strings pegged at the head of the instrument (three placed laterally and three on the side), the six notches of the targir are usually spaced so that the top two, melodic strings are set apart, as they are at the bridge, while the third string may run at a distance from the fourth, fifth, and sixth.

The holes on the lid of the tanbur usually form patterns of a more complex nature than those found on other lute types of the North. The overall design is usually in a teardrop shape that follows the general curve of the lid (see Figure 4.17). Groups of five holes in an X-shaped pattern are frequently used, as well as the diamond-shaped distribution of four holes that was seen on the dambura (Figure 4.2).

All the strings of the tanbur are always made of metal of equal gauge. When the tanbur is fully tuned, the pressure exerted on the bridge and lid by the combined tension of some twenty strings is considerable. To meet the pressure, bridges are constructed of thick bone, rather than of the usual wood found on other Afghan lutes. In addition, tanbur lids seem thicker than those of damburas. Another precaution frequently taken is the addition of a bone insert at the very end of the lid, where the strings pass over on their way to the fastening post.

Nevertheless, the lids of many tanburs are depressed as a result of the pressure exerted on them.

Overall shape of the tanbur varies considerably. The most common form is that of Figure 4.16: a very long, thick, and wide neck with a short, protuberant belly, somewhat dambura-shaped (see Figure 4.18). However, in recent years the outsized instruments built in Kabul and Mazar-i Šarif seem to be designed in imitation of the North Indian *sitar*. The body flares out sharply at the end of the neck into a definitely gourd-shaped belly like that of the sitar. The basic proportion of neck to belly is the same, however; the neck has simply become thicker, wider, and longer to keep up with the swelling of the belly.

Even among older instruments considerable variation in body shape can be found. One tanbur in my collection has a separate head attached to the neck for the pegbox. The head is set at a slight angle, tilting back from the neck, and is joined by glue to the neck. The instrument is provided with an extra targir of metal wire just at the juncture of head and neck to reinforce the joint and to guide the strings towards the lower targir. The instrument is not a new one, is exceptionally well crafted in general, and probably represents the taste of a particular maker or of the customer who commissioned the instrument. It also features pegs in the shape of a three-leaf clover, in contrast to the flared T-shape most common for tanbur pegs (see Figures 4.16 and 4.19).

The tanbur is held in an upright position, forcing the player to both support the instrument and play the tune with his left hand. He cradles the tanbur against his body but generally does not lean it all the way back at an angle to rest against the shoulder. Instead, he holds it sideways, so that the pegs of the sympathetic strings are against his body and the lid faces to his right. The tanbur is played with a wire plectrum, called *naxun* ("nail") or *mizrab,* similar to that used on the North Indian sitar. The plectrum is fitted onto the forefinger.

The basic stroke is a back-and-forth motion of the forefinger, which may become quite rapid. The right thumb usually hangs free, while the other three fingers often rest on the lid next to the bridge to provide a firm basis for the quick flicking of the index finger. This motion is the extent of tanbur right-hand technique. Left-hand technique is necessarily limited by the awkwardness of the playing position and the extreme length of the neck. On newer, larger tanburs, the distances between frets can be several inches, so that the player spends most of his time swooping from place to place while trying to keep the instrument in an upright position. The fact that there are numerous full-sized pegs for the resonating strings adds yet another limitation to left-hand technique.

Tanburs, like damburas, are made of three pieces — neck, belly,

and lid — and the same construction technique is also used for both lute types. Mulberry, the ever-popular wood for lutes, is invariably selected, and the usual hollowing-out process is employed. Tanburs are left unfinished and unpolished, like damburas, and as a result are usually rather heavy and somewhat unwieldy to play. Bone inlay is quite common, especially among older instruments. The ornamental details shown in Figures 4.18 and 4.19 are very typical of tanbur inlay and find wide currency among other wooden items of Afghanistan, such as the wooden-handled pistols and rifles of Khyber Pass fame that fill Kabul's antique shops. Such complex inlay is rarely used nowadays. A connection between the bone inlay of Afghan lutes and that of Transoxanian lutes has already been mentioned in the discussion of the Uzbek dutar. It should be added here that there seems to be no compelling reason to associate such design with Central Asian artisans alone, for similar ornamental detail can be found in Iran and among the Paštuns of Afghanistan as well.

The present-day distribution of the tanbur is somewhat erratic. Its main center of use in the North is Mazar-i Šarif, where there is also an instrument maker whose principal product is the tanbur. The tanbur is found only sporadically in other locales of the North, its use depending upon individual musicians' degree of contact with the instrument and on local taste. Outside of Mazar, the tanbur is most often seen in touring bands with Paštun dancing boys that may visit various towns in the spring and fall. Thus, the tanbur is neither a ubiquitous feature of the music culture of the North, like the dambura, nor the characteristic instrument of a particular group, like the Uzbek and Turkmen dutars, but is rather an intermediate lute type associated with urban music.

The "Pamir Robab"

The "Pamir robab" is an instrument used marginally in the North, in the far reaches of Badaxšan along the Waxan corridor, which borders China at its eastern end and separates the Soviet Union from West Pakistan and Kashmir along its narrow extent (see Map I). I have not personally seen the instrument played, but I was fortunate enough to inspect the specimen brought back by the French Hindu Kush Expedition of 1968 from the village of Sarkan, near Qala-i Panja, in the mid-Waxan. The instrument is shown in Figures 4.20 and 4.21. Sakata (1973:p.c.) has more recently described seeing a Pamir robab at Išmurğ in the Waxan; it had been constructed in the Šuğnan area. Sakata feels that the instrument type perhaps originated in the latter region and adds that there are Pamir robab makers in Časnud, Šeduj, and Rošan.

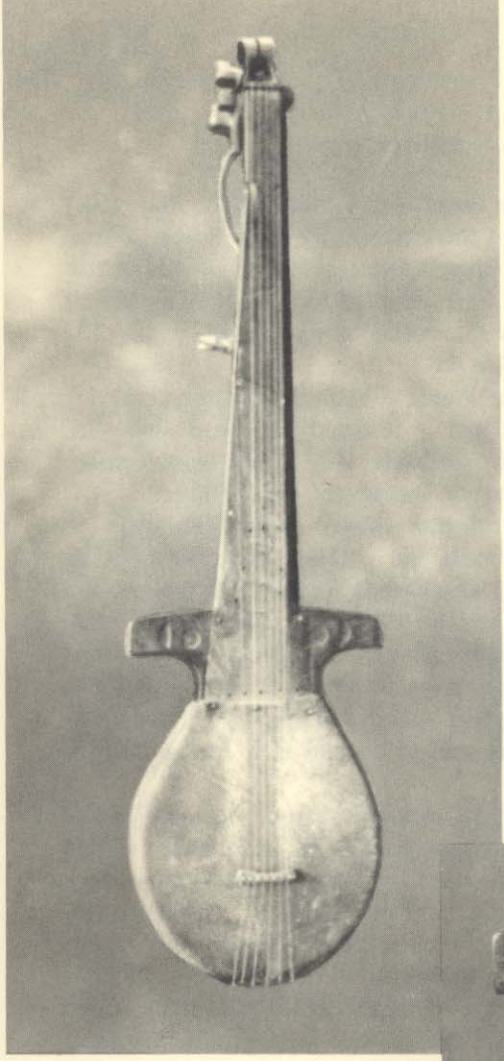


Fig. 4.20. Pamir robab

Fig. 4.21. Pamir robab lid

A similar instrument is pictured in the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963: Plate 639) but is unfortunately not described there or in any other Soviet source, to the best of my knowledge; neither is there a sample of this instrument on display in Dushanbe. I have adopted the Soviet term "Pamir robab" for the instrument, in the absence of any better term. The lute's dimensions are given in Table 4.6.

There are six strings on the Pamir robab. The leather covering on the sound box is quite thick and is fastened with iron nails (see Figure 4.21). The Pamir robab is played with a wooden plectrum, which is wedge-shaped and tied to the instrument on a string.

The Tajikistani instrument of the *Atlas* is quite similar in all respects to that of the Afghan Waxan, but is clearly the product of an accomplished maker. Both the Soviet and Afghan instruments are played by mountain Tajiks of the high Pamirs. The Pamir robab described for both regions is quite similar in appearance to a lute illustrated in the 1884 notes by Capus on Central Asian music. The broad neck, bent pegbox, protruding spurs, and thick belly are characteristic, and the instrument was said to be played by the women of Kašgar (Capus 1884:115).

The Pamir robab is quite close in many respects to another lute type illustrated in the *Atlas* on the same page. This instrument is called a "Dulan robab" and features the same bowl-shaped sound box, thick leather covering fastened with nails, and bent pegbox. There are two principal differences in stringing between the Dulan and Pamir robabs. Whereas the latter has six melodic strings, the former has three melodic plus ten resonating strings. The third string on the Dulan robab is used as a drone, while the upper two are paired, thus leaving only one effective melody carrier. This suggests that the playing styles on the two lutes differ as well, since available documentation for the Pamir robab does not indicate the use of one melody string plus drone. There is also a difference in the shape of the spur-like extensions, whose lower sides are finished off at right angles to the neck of the Dulan robab instead of following a slow curve down to the belly. According to the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963:1928), the Dulan robab has an overall length of not

TABLE 4.6

Dimensions of a "Pamir Robab" from Waxan (In Centimeters)

Length	*Width of Neck*	*Width of Belly*	*Depth of Belly*	*Circumference of Belly*	*Width of Each Spur*	*Length of Pegbox*
73	3-9	20	9	33	6.5	13

more than 80–85 centimeters, making it somewhat longer than the Waxan lute. The Dulan robab, like the Pamir lute, is fretless and is played with a wooden plectrum. Beliaev (1933:69) states that according to his informants, the Dulan robab comes from Kašgar, where it is played by the Dulan people.

Until there are further publications on the Soviet side regarding these rare instruments of the Pamirs, and until an extensive, badly needed musical and ethnographic expedition to the Waxan is undertaken, we must remain unenlightened as to the background, playing style, and repertoire of these unusually shaped lutes from the "roof of the world."

FIDDLES

The Ǧičak

The most widespread fiddle of the North is the ǧičak. Like the dambura, the ǧičak has a centralized point of production (the town of Tašqurǧan) and has an exceedingly cloudy history.

The ǧičak is the most standardized instrument of the North in terms of dimension. All of the instruments I observed employed the same colorful, prefabricated neck-and-spike piece of Tašqurǧan. Figure 4.22 shows a typical finished ǧičak, while Figure 4.23 presents the basis of the instrument: a single piece of mulberry wood, with a fairly ornate head and pegbox and a straight neck, tapering to an unpainted section to which the performer affixes the tin can of his choice as sound box. A nail is driven into the prepared hole at the base of this spike; a length of twisted wire is tied to the nail to make two strings; a bridge is placed underneath them; and a chunk of rosin is stuck for easy access at the back of the neck where it joins the sound box. This entire process, which costs less than one dollar, takes only a few minutes, and an instrument is created that will last for years. The length of the spike varies little; those I have measured range from 71.5 to 75 centimeters. The size and shape of the tin can are the main variables. Figure 4.22 shows a ǧičak that utilizes a five-pound tin of Shahpasand shortening, an Iranian product much in demand in Afghanistan; other instruments may feature round or square motor-oil cans. In general, it seems that a large square resonator provides the best sound quality; smaller or rounded cans tend to produce a more nasal, reedy timbre considered less desirable by performers.

The most striking features of the Tašqurǧan ǧičak are the carefully constructed details of the head, the deep groove of the pegbox, the extended cylindrical pegs, and the unvarying alternate stripes of green, yellow, red, and black. These colors and woodworking tech-

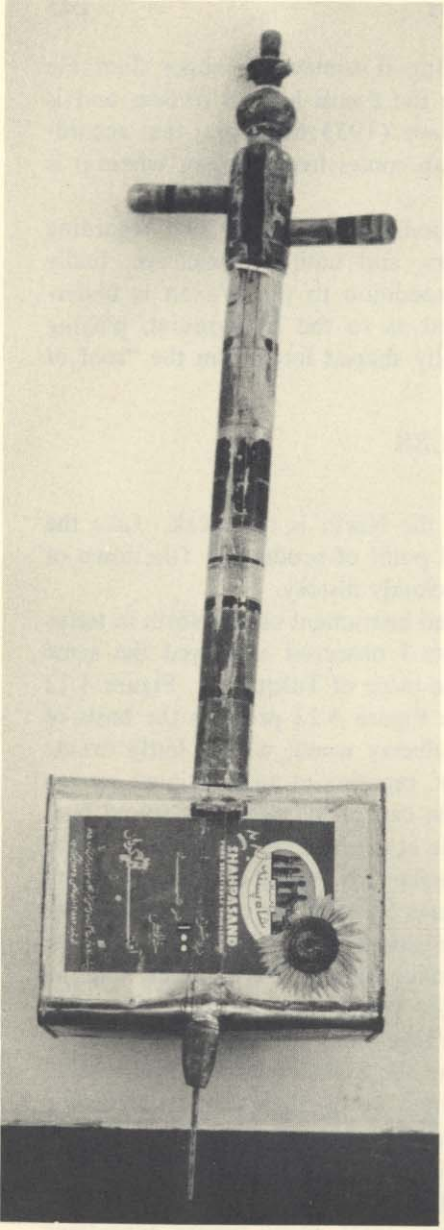


Fig. 4.22. Standard ğičak

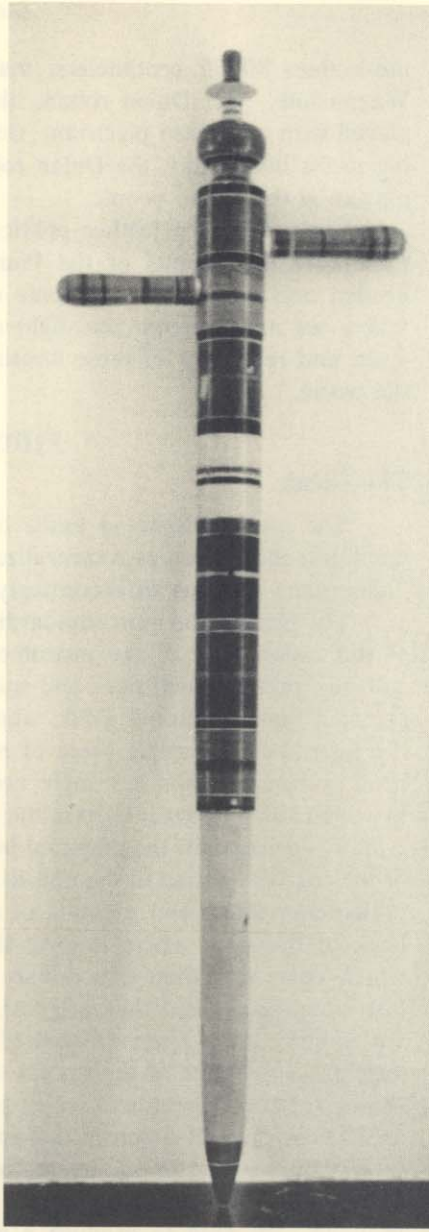


Fig. 4.23. Ready-made ğičak spike from Tašqurğan

niques are characteristic of all of the far-famed products of the Taš-qurğan *najari* (woodworking) shops, which include such varied items as cradles, tools for woodworking, small three-legged stools, and slingshots.

The bow receives much less attention that the fiddle and is generally made by the performer himself. A stick is simply whittled and horsehair stretched over it; then the hair is fastened to the stick by means of a piece of fabric tightly wound around, tucked under, and perhaps sewn together with thread. The performer supplies the necessary pressure to tighten the hair by pulling the fabric towards himself with the middle, ring, and little fingers and exerting counterpressure with the index finger, placed opposite on the stick. This comfortable hand position is quite effective in properly regulating tension. Nevertheless, the scraping of the bow hair on the metal strings exacts a high price in split hairs, and leads one to suspect that horsehair strings were once in use on the ğičak.

Strings are led high above the fingerboard by a high bridge positioned at the upper end of the south box; the height of the string is often increased by the placing of a broken match at the top of the neck as an upper bridge.

The ğičak is held in a vertical position. When the player sits cross-legged on the floor, the most common resting point of the spike is on the player's foot, usually in the instep or near the ankle. However, if seated in a chair, the performer rests the instrument on his thigh. Most of the time the bow moves across both strings simultaneously, but the player may vary the style and play on a single string or bring out one string above the other by rotating the ğičak slightly on its spike to favor a string.

Right-hand technique involves keeping the wrist loose, making possible a fast, whip-like motion of the bow for special effect. Left-hand technique is quite limited. As in the case of most lutes of the North, the little finger is rarely used, and only comes into play when absolutely necessary for reaching a high pitch. Because of the high position of the strings above the fingerboard, it is difficult to play the instrument beyond the first position. I have never seen a performer reach beyond the range of his little finger, which means the scope of the piece must lie within an octave at most above the open-string pitch; in practice, the range rarely exceeds a fifth or sixth. If a player has to hit a note above this range, he will generally play the pitch an octave lower, on the lower string, instead of trying to reach an uncomfortably high spot on the fingerboard and risk cutting his finger. The placing of the first three fingers across both strings to play parallel

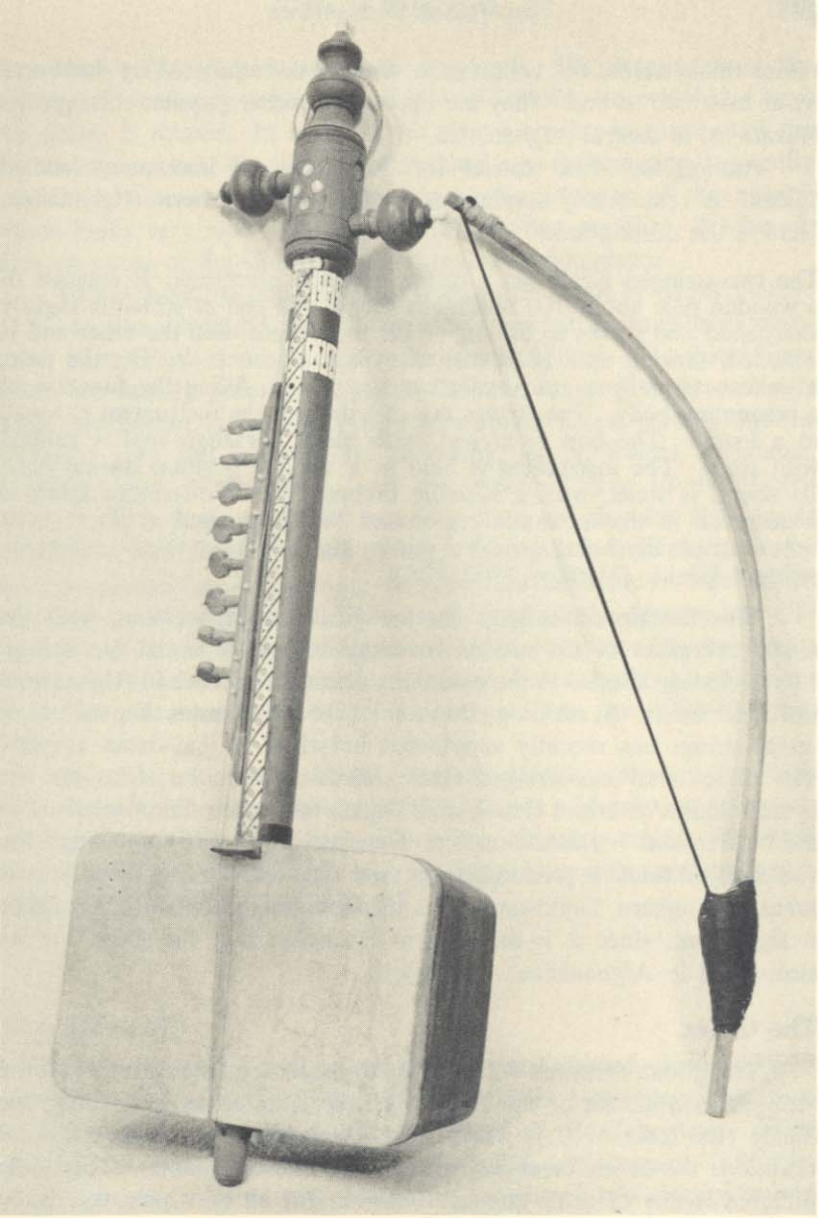
fourths is a common practice. The strings are invariably tuned to a fourth.

Recently a new shape for the ğičak has been created by Baba Naim, the gifted Badaxšani musician who helped popularize the ğičak in Turkestan. Formerly a member of the radio orchestra, he is now a steady player at the Afghan Room of the Spinzar Hotel in Kabul and feels a need for expanding the resonance of the ğičak, his principal instrument. His fiddle, and a similar one that I commissioned, are fine examples of the instrument maker's art, and testify to the fact that the old traditions of craftsmanship are not as moribund in Afghanistan as most visitors think. Baba Naim's modern ğičak (Figure 4.24) is in the shape of the traditional Tašqurğan wood-cum-tin-can fiddle; the shape of the head and placement of pegs has been kept, as has the positioning of the bridge. However, it features a skin-covered square wood resonator in place of the metal sound box and set of eight resonating strings to augment the sound production. The main differences between the new and old ğičaks, besides those mentioned, consist in the elimination of the grooved pegbox in favor of an inside track leading the strings to the pegs, the addition of a fixed bone upper bridge, and introduction of a new peg shape to harmonize with the design of the head.

The modern ğičak of Figure 4.24 is the product of several Kabul-area artisans. The bone work is of exceptionally high quality, and the elaborate care lavished on small details, such as the peg tips and the rectangular X-shaped inlay with pearl between the pegs, bespeaks a much more attentive workmanship than is usually found among instrument makers. The wood has also been sanded and polished with unusual care, and even a coat of varnish has been applied to the sound box. The decoration at the back of the neck is done in camel bone, while that on the fingerboard is the traditional sheep bone.

Baba Naim's innovation is not so radical as might appear at first glance. According to H. G. Farmer (1957:445–46), there was a fiddle named the ğičak in classical times in Persia, which had "a larger sound-chest than the Kamancha and had eight sympthetic strings in addition." Moreover, Beliaev (1933:56) notes that in Eichhorn's collection of late nineteenth century Uzbekistani instruments there are two ğičaks with resonating strings.

The present-day distribution of the ğičak, though wide, is somewhat erratic. By and large, it corresponds to that of the dambura. I have seen ğičaks as far southeast as Lağman province, near Jalalabad, and as far northwest as Andxoi. The heartland of the instrument is said to be somewhere in Badaxšan, possibly the Šuğnan area, according to Baba Naim and other informants. In Turkestan, ğičaks are scattered



Carol Reck

Fig. 4.24. New-style ǧičak

rather thinly across the countryside, usually outnumbered by damburas by at least two to one. They are apparently rather popular through the Hazarajat, in central Afghanistan.

Among the *Atlas* entries for Tajikistan, an instrument labeled "ğičak" is remarkably similar to the fiddle of northern Afghanistan. Here is the description:

> The two-stringed ğičak has a rather primitive structure. It consists of a wooden pole about 700 millimeters long, one end of which is slightly sharpened and serves as the leg of the instrument, and the other end is widened, serving as a head with two pegs placed in it. On the pole, a tin can (usually a gunpowder can) is placed, filling the function of a resonating body. The strings are of hair, and the instrument is tuned to a fourth. The bow is arched, with black horsehair that is rubbed with rosin. The instrument is held in a vertical position during play. Its sound is weak, with a whining timbre. The two-stringed ğičak is widespread in the mountain regions of Tajikistan, and at the present time is gradually being crowded out by the perfected three- and four-stringed ğičaks. (Vertkov 1963:128)

This description exactly fits the ğičak of Afghanistan, with the single exception of the use of horsehair instead of metal for strings; I have already alluded to the possibility of such a practice in Afghanistan in former times. In addition, Dansker (1965:446) notes that the use of metal strings has recently supplanted horsehair in Tajikistan as well. The three- and four-stringed fiddles mentioned in the *Atlas* are the spiked fiddles of urban Uzbek and Tajiks, which are direct relatives of the Persian and Turkish kamanča. Dansker (1965:446) notes that the two-stringed fiddle is predominantly used even today in the mountainous areas of southern Tajikistan. This location for the two-stringed fiddle is significant, since it is in adjacent Badaxšan that the ğičak has its stronghold in Afghanistan.

The Qobuz

The qobuz (Figures 4.25 and 4.26) is perhaps the rarest of all the stringed instruments of the North. I have documented it in only one locale (the town of K.), where it is associated with a highly unusual tradition: the curing ceremony of the local shaman (baxši). The fiddle pictured is one of three qobuzes I saw in K., all of which were quite similar in construction. The dimensions of the instrument are given in Table 4.7.

These measurements point up the sharp distinctions between the qobuz and all other lute types of the North. For example, the equality of length of neck and head is extraordinary, as in the fact that the head is somewhat deeper than the belly of the instrument. Also strik-

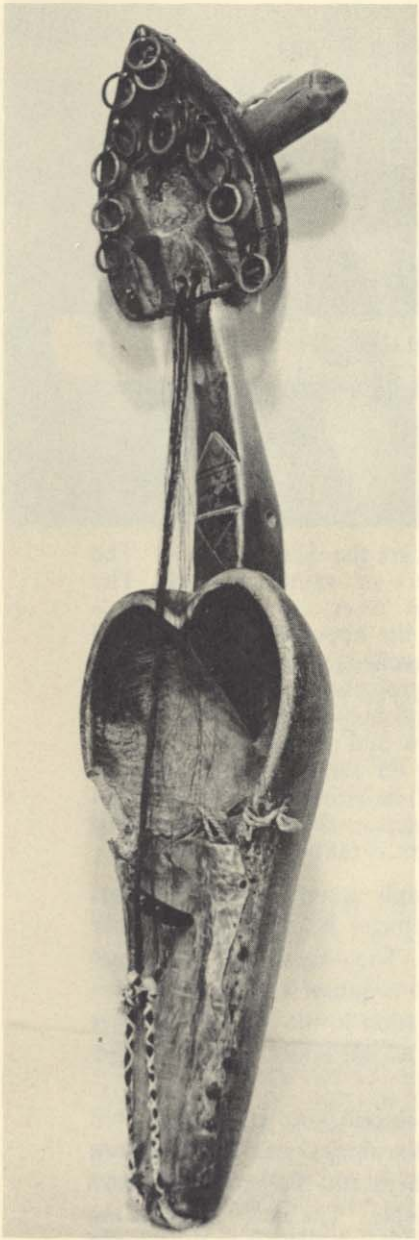


Fig. 4.25. Qobuz Carol Reck

Fig. 4.26. Qobuz soundbox

TABLE 4.7

Dimensions of a Tašqurğani Qobuz (In Centimeters)

Overall Length	*Length of Head*	*Length of Neck*	*Length of Belly*	*Width of Neck*	*Depth of Belly*	*Depth of Head*	*Height of Bridge*
74.5	19	19	36.5	14	7.5	8	4

ing is the great height of the bridge. Other features easily noticeable in Figure 4.25 are the iron rings fastened to the head (used as rattles during the baxši's ceremony) and the rectangular niche between the rings into which a mirror is placed (it is also said to have magical significance).

The qobuz seems less outlandish when compared to an instrument of the Kazakhs of Central Asia called the *qobyz,* described in the *Atlas* in the following way (Vertkov 1963:133):

Kobyz: a two-stringed instrument related to the Kirghiz *kyak.* The body, neck and head are made of one piece of walnut or birch. The body is ladle-shaped and hollowed out; the lower, extended section is closed by a membrane of camel skin, and the upper end is round and open. The neck is comparatively short, arched, without upper limit. The head is flat on the front side, and has projections ["cheeks"] on the back for pegs. The strings are of unwound horsehair (in the form of strands), fastened to a strap of leather below and to pegs above. Under the strings a high bridge is placed, having an almost straight left side and a longer right leg inclined outwards. The strings pass to the head through two round openings in the pegbox . . . the bow is short and arched. The average length of the instrument is 600–700 millimeters.

This account, as well as the photograph accompanying it, tallies precisely with every detail of the Afghan qobuzes and leaves little doubt as to the close ties between the instruments. The only distinctive feature of the qobuz in my collection is the extreme length of its bow (70 centimeters), which is in contrast to the information in the *Atlas.* All other details, including such distinctive features as the oddly shaped bridge, link the qobuz and qobyz closely.

It should also be noted that the qobuz, in one form or another, but under the same name, is played by the Karakalpaks of northwestern Uzbekistan and the Uzbeks of the Surxandarya and Kaškadarya regions just beyond the northern border of Afghanistan. The latter locale is the most probable point of connection between the Afghan specimens and those of Transoxania. Beliaev states that the qobuz was still in use among the Uzbeks of the Ferghana region and even in Buxara at the

time of writing (1933:53). His description of the instrument tallies with that in the *Atlas* and with Table 4.7, except for the average length, which is somewhat shorter in Beliaev's version (1933:52).

Unfortunately, all three qobuzes of K. are of considerable age, and no one in the town was able to venture an account of how the instrument came to be there. It was generally felt to be quite archaic, and functions only as the baxši's companion. The only use this performer makes of the fiddle is to keep up a continuous drone on the open strings, thus excluding any possibility of using the repertoire of the qobuz as an aid to confirming its connections.

The qobuz is yet another example of an instrument that relates directly to Central Asian traditions and is in highly restricted use in northern Afghanistan. Its virtual identity with the fiddle of the far-away Kazakhs must remain something of a mystery for the present. It might be added that the Kazakh communities of Afghanistan, while they still use the Kazakh dümbra, do not seem to have brought along any specimens of the qobyz of their homeland.

FLUTES

The Tüidük

The tüidük (Figure 4.27) is the principal Turkmen aerophone, and it is not played by members of any other ethnic group. It is a long, open-ended flute made of six or seven nodes of a local steppe reed. Performers often add a slightly tapered open brass mouthpiece. Table 4.8 gives basic measurements of three tüidüks, all from Andxoi.

While all three flutes have five finger holes on the front and one on the back side, the distances between holes varies considerably from flute to flute. For example, the shortest tüidük, number 3, has distances somewhat greater than number 1, which is a bit longer, and almost as great as number 2, which is considerably longer. This indicates the absence of a standardized "scale" on tüidüks; the playing style leaves considerable latitude in altering pitch to the player.

The extreme length of the tüidük and the rather wide spacing of some of the finger holes make it ncessary for the performer to use the second joints of his fingers to cover the holes; indeed, it is only with considerable effort that even this expedient works. A *tüidükči* rests on his knees while playing the flute (as in Figure 4.27), rather than cross-legged like most instrumentalists, probably to give himself more leeway in handling his instrument. Even so, he must tilt his head to accommodate the length of the flute, and is forced to make a special

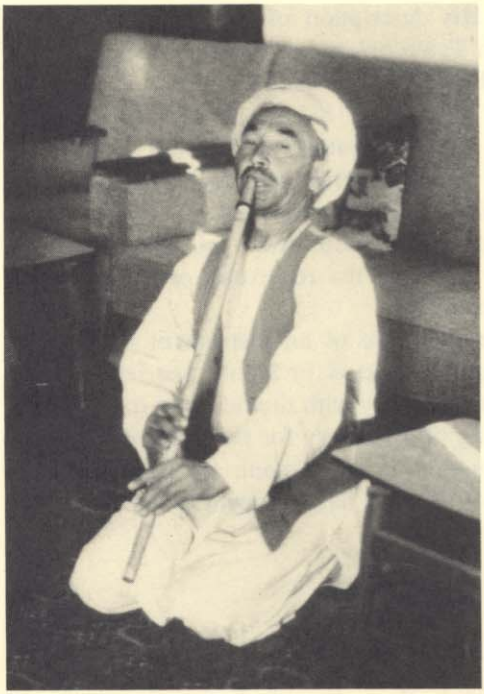


Fig. 4.27. Tüidük

effort to raise the bell of the flute when he desires to project the sound further; this is done only in moments of special importance during a piece. The player often sways to the music, describing a circular motion with the flute.

Since the tüidük, like the Turkmen dutar, is virtually indistinguishable from its Turkmenian Turkmen counterpart (called *kargy-tüidük,* a term I have never heard used in Afghanistan), it is again relevant to quote the entry in the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963:115):

Kargy-tüidük: An open flute made of a large reed (locally called kargy), 750–800 millimeters long. Among Turkmen tüidükchis there is the conviction that the instrument made from a stalk that has seven sections (six joints) will possess the best musical qualities. To make sound production easier, the upper end (head) is sharpened or they put a metal ring on it. Six finger holes are cut into the lower part of the stalk; one of these (the uppermost) is on the reverse side. On the front side, the finger holes are placed in two groups: 3 + 2. The scale of the instrument is diatonic, in the range of a sixth; in performance, it can be increased to two-and-a-half octaves.

During play, the kargy-tüidük is held in front in an inclined position; the tooth (canine) is placed in the upper end of the stalk. The whistling sounds of the kargy-tüidük are accompanied by whistling and

TABLE 4.8

Dimensions of Selected Tüidüks (In Centimeters)

Instrument	*Overall Length*	*Diameter*	*Number of Nodes*	*Distances Between Finger Holes**	*Distance From Top Finger Hole to Finger Hole on Back*
1	80.3	2	7	6.7, 4.6, 2.4, 2.5	6
2	85	2.5	6	7, 4.8, 2.6, 2.6	7
3	79.5	2	7	7, 4.8, 2.5, 2.5	7

*Measurements are from beginning of one hole to beginning of next hole and proceed from bottom to top.

humming noises that are more audible in the lower register, where the resonance of the instrument is significantly weaker. . . . The finger holes of the front side are covered by the second joints of the straightened fingers. The performer moves the instrument from side to side in time or describes a circular motion; in especially strained moments, the lower end of the instrument is raised above the level of the face. As a rule, it is played in the open air, although the resonance of the instrument is not marked by great strength. . . . The dimensions of *navai* [tüidük pieces] are small, since the difficulty of sound production on the kargy-tüidük leads to quick exhaustion of the musician.

Aside from solo performance, simultaneous performance of two tüidükchis in unison, at which they place themselves opposite one another, is also practiced. Not infrequently, this sort of duet takes on the form of a competition. Under the existing means of playing on the kargy-tüidük, its canal becomes strongly dampened, and the instrument starts to err. For this reason, the performer usually has a whole selection of kargy-tüidüks with him, keeping them in a special leather case.

The kargy-tüidük is primarily a pastoral instrument. In recent years the number of tüidükchis has steadily decreased. The more accomplished players are considered rarities.

This description calls for a number of comments. It can be seen by a glance at Table 4.8 that the average length of tüidüks in Afghanistan is somewhat greater than that given in the *Atlas,* and that the ideal number of reed sections (six) is often exceeded. It is worth noting that in *Turkmenskaia muzyka,* Beliaev gives 83 centimeters as the average length of the instrument. (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:96)

The data concerning playing technique and performance style correspond precisely to the data for Afghanistan, although I have never seen a tüidükči raise his flute above the level of his face, and I have not observed that the humming noise of the fundamental pitch, above which the melody is played, decreases markedly in the upper register. It is probably only due to the greater gap in pitch between the fundamental

and melody in the upper register that the ear is diverted from the fundamental, making it seem less important. That tüidük pieces are not very long is a fact taken up in more detail in Chapter 3.

Like the other Turkmen instruments (dutar and dili-tüidük), the tüidük is a rare find in northern Afghanistan. Hence, competition as an important basis for performance is a highly unlikely occurrence; there are simply not enough tüidükčis to go around. When the instrument is used today, it is in the hands of a professional musician, or baxši (not to be confused with the shaman of the same title), who plays for special occasions. The reason for the decline of tüidük performance by two players does not seem to lie in Turkmen tribal differentiations. Beliaev (1928:97) states that Uspenskii found the tüidük to be spread mostly in the Merv region, the place of origin of many Afghan Turkmens, and did not see the instrument among the Salyr, Yomud, and Čaudyr tribes. None of these tribes is present in any considerable numbers in Afghanistan, so it seems that the tüidük must have been particularly widespread among the Ersari, who make up the majority of the Turkmens of Afghanistan; its present decline, then, must be due to changes in the cultural milieu. As a final comment on the *Atlas* data, it might be added that I never saw the tüidük used as a pastoral instrument, though Turkmens cite this as a possibility.

Long open-ended, end-blown flutes have a long history in the Near East and Central Asia. Sachs cites the flutes used as early as the Egyptian Old Kingdom (1929:82–83). Today, the tüidük is only one of a great number of open-ended flutes current in the area. To the west, it is closely related to the nai or *mey* of Iran, Turkey, and the Levant; to the east, it shows a certain resemblance to the *sybyzga* of the Kaizakhs and the *čo'or* of the Kirghiz; to the north one finds the Bashkir *kurai,* and to the south the much smaller but similarly constructed nai or tula of the Paštuns and Baluch. Figure 4.28 shows the tüidük of Figure 4.27 placed next to a nai of the Levant and one of Kandahar, in southwestern Afghanistan. Note the similarity in dimension of the Levantine nai (length 74.5 centimeters) and the differences: six finger holes in a 3+3 formation instead of five, nine reed sections instead of seven. The nai of Kandahar, only 59.5 centimeters long and with only four finger holes, all on the front, stands in sharp contrast to the other two open-ended flutes pictured, and the rather elaborate carved and painted ornamentation makes this southern flute a much more colorful instrument.

The importance of the tüidük in Turkmen thought is illustrated by the high position the instrument is given in legend. According to Uspenskii's informants, "Adam was made of clay, but had no soul.

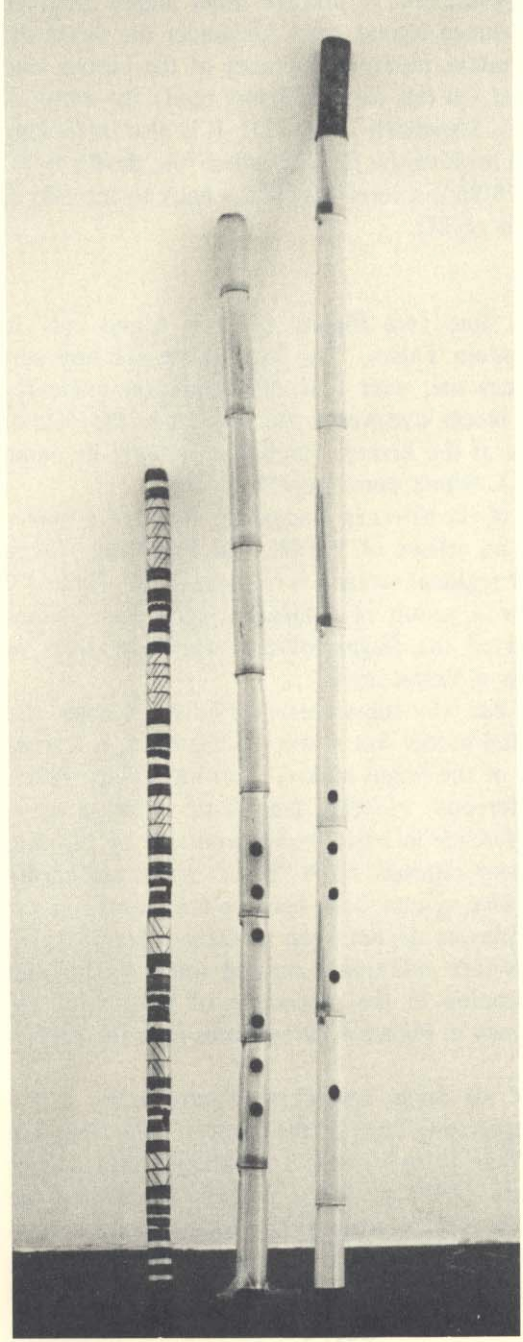


Fig. 4.28. Tüidük (right) *with Levantine opened-ended flute* (center) *and Kandahari open-ended flute* (left)

By playing on the tüidük, Israel, Jebiral, and the other angels breathed life into him." Another Turkmen legend gives Alexander the Great the role played by Midas in Western myth, in the story of the barber who mistakenly confides to a reed (in this case the kargy reed) the secret of the king's horns (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:95). It is also interesting to note that the hole on the back of the flute is called "the devil's hole" (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:95), a term that harks back to the tale of the origin of the dutar cited earlier.

The Badaxšani Recorder

This mellow-sounding flute (see Figure 4.29) is found only in Badaxšan, among the mountain Tajiks. The local name for any sort of flute is tula, or sometimes nai, with little differentiation made for categories of flutes such as block, transverse, etc., except in the case of the metal cross flute known as the *berenji* (probably deriving its name from *berenj,* a type of brass), which stems from Pakistan.

I have seen two types of recorders in Badaxšan: those of a maker from Šuğnan, and those of an artisan of Yaftāl, near Faizabad. There are probably countless other regional variations of these types. Table 4.9 gives the measurements for a group of Badxašani recorders. Numbers 1–4 are the products of the Šuğni master, who now lives in Faizabad, while number 5 is a Yaftal model.

I was not able to find out why some recorders have six holes and some five, nor why the Yaftal model has a hole on the back, a feature that is lacking in the flutes of the Šuğni maker. Performers just didn't feel that it made much difference. Another feature of variation overlooked by players is the difference in basic scales produced by blowing gently on the flute in its lowest register. Such "basic" scales are hardly relevant to the instrument's tone system, both because the lowest register is rarely used and because players do not keep to the pitches provided by the finger holes but produce additional desired tones by lipping. Nor is there any standardization in the placement of fingers on the sound holes; the method shown in Figure 4.29 indicates only the preference of one performer.

An unusual feature of the Šuğni recorders (Figure 4.29) is the banded decorative pattern encircling most of the surface. The rings are burnt into the wood rather than being incised, a technique that is rather unusual for the area. Sakata (1973:p.c.) has recently discovered the artisan's method: "The article is spun around on a lathe, then a special kind of thorn *(khar)* is lightly touched to it and the friction causes the article to burn (also on yak tail handles, etc.)." The *nai čupāni* ("shepherd's flute") or *tutak* of Tajikistan, as pictured in the *Atlas*

Fig. 4.29.
Šuğni-style
Badaxšani recorder

(Vertkov 1963:125), has similar banding, but it is accomplished by tying on what appear to be strips of gut rather than by treating the wood itself.

It is interesting that the Badaxšani recorder, unlike other members of the local instrumentarium, does not seem to have a direct relative on the Soviet side. The nai čupani, cited above, has a blunt end and does not appear to have an inserted block. These differences, as well as the sharp difference in length (20 centimeters for the nai čupani vs. an average of 30 centimeters for the Badaxšani recorder), set the two flutes apart. However, the fact that the tutak is made of

TABLE 4.9

Dimensions of Five Badaxšani Recorders (In Centimeters)

Instrument	*Overall Length*	*Minimum to Maximum Circumference*	*Number of Finger Holes*	*Distance Between Finger Holes*
1	29.5	4-8	5	2, 2.3, 2.3, 2.3
2	30.5	4.5-8	5	2.4, 2.3, 2.3, 2.2
3	32.4	5-9	5	2.5, 2.7, 2.5, 2.5
4	32.5	5-8.5	6	2.2, 2.3, 2.3, 2.3, 2.3
5	29.2	4.7-7.5	6 (one on back)	2.8, 3.0, 2.9, 3.0

two strips of wood glued together length wise (Vertkov 1963:125), like the Yaftal model of the Badaxšani flute, provides some basis for comparison.

The Badaxšani recorder seems to be widely used in its home area. Among a random crowd of perhaps twenty-five men gathered in the Faizabad bazaar to try out my newly acquired instruments, about half a dozen men admitted that they could play the flute, and did so. Considering the shame usually associated with musical ability in Afghanistan, this is a fairly high ratio of positive response. The fact that the flute is made and sold in the town, and played by both townspeople and country folk, is further evidence of its popularity, and it can be assumed that some people out in the hinterland make their own cruder flutes along the same lines. Most townspeople, while they can play the indigenous flute, often prefer the metallic cross flute (berenji) mentioned above, which is imported from Pakistan via Kabul.

It may be worth comparing the Badaxšani recorder with that of Kohistan, the heavily Tajik area just north of Kabul. The latter flute always has six finger holes, and it is a straight cylinder, somewhat longer (39 centimeters) and with a larger diameter than the Badaxšani block flute. It has an invariably diatonic basic scale, unlike the Badaxšani flute. It is also made of much lighter wood, both in density and color, and has no ornamentation at all, beyond two strips of gold paper glued just below the upper sound notch and at the very bottom of the flute. The finger holes are considerably larger in diameter and vary somewhat in size, probably because of the attempt made to regulate the scale.

Thus, the Badaxšani recorder seems to be an indigenous flute that is unique to its home area: it is not found anywhere else, and there are no other flutes either in neighboring Tajikistan or among Afghan Tajiks (such as those of Kohistan) that can be described as close counterparts to the block flute of Badaxšan. A possible exception is a similar block flute (though longer and not tapered) played by Hazaras only in the Bamian area; the scale on the one specimen I have is rather close to Badaxšani tunings, and the piece played by the Hazara who sold me the flute sounded remarkably like a felak.

SINGLE-REED PIPE

The Dili-Tüidük

The dili-tüidük (Figure 4.30) holds the distinction of being the only single-reed pipe in northern Afghanistan today, and probably in all Afghanistan as well. A paired single-reed pipe of the Uzbeks,

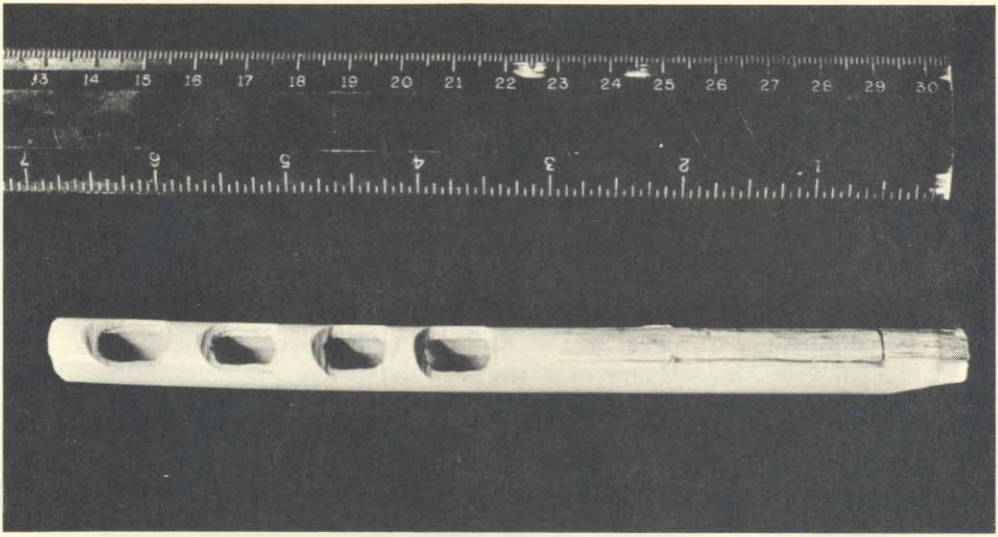


Fig. 4.30. Dili-tüidük

the qošnai, was formerly used in Afghanistan (Çagatay and Sjoberg 1955:108), but seems to have vanished.

The dili-tüidük is a very small instrument (length: 7.5 centimeters), easily carved from a common short steppe reed called *kamšak* and conveniently carried in the pocket. Let us turn once again to the Soviet *Atlas* for a description of the instrument as used in Turkmenistan (Vertkov 1963:115):

Dili-tüidük: the tongue-tüidük (dili = tongue) — made of thin reed, 150–160 millimeters long. In the upper part of the stalk a single reed is cut, and below, 3–4 finger holes are made. The scale of the instrument is diatonic, in the range of a perfect fifth, but performers widen it to two octaves and add necessary chromatically altered tones. This is accomplished by strong blowing, shortening the vibrating part of the reed with the lips, incomplete covering of the holes with the fingers and the placing of the palm at the end-opening.

The sound of the dili-tüidük, according to its coloring, approaches the timbre of the human voice, and for this reason, its most characteristic repertoire consists of songs.

The dili-tüidük, like the kargy-tüidük, is primarily a pastoral instrument, and is gradually going out of use.

The most striking feature of the above description is the estimate of length given, which is exactly twice that of the instrument in Figure 4.30. Perhaps the figures in the *Atlas* are somewhat exaggerated,

since Beliaev says of the dili-tüidük that "its measurements do not exceed those of a pencil" (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:97), which is much closer to the size of the instrument found on the Afghan side of the border.

It should be noted that the number of finger holes in Afghanistan is usually four, rarely three. In addition, the scale of the instrument in Figure 4.30 is within the range of a perfect fifth, but tends towards a Phrygian rather than a "diatonic" pentachord. The devices listed for changing pitch are in use among the Afghan Turkmens, except for the placing of the palm at the end of the instrument. While the timbre of the dili-tüidük, as stated in the *Atlas,* is somewhat like that of the human voice, in Afghanistan it tends to sound more like the kazoo. In any case, similarity to the human voice is not sufficient reason for explaining the predominance of songs in the instrument's repertoire, a characteristic that typifies all of the aerophones of Afghanistan. Beliaev feels differently about the quality of the dili-tüidük's sound, describing it as "sounding in the higher register like our piccolo" (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:97), a phenomenon I have not observed in Afghanistan.

Some features of the dili-tüidük pictured in the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963: Plate 554) also differentiate it from the pipe of Figure 4.30. The former has dark rings around its finger holes that almost suggest that the holes were burned, whereas the Afghan instrument has clearly had its openings cut quite precisely with a knife. Another distinctive feature of the Turkmenian instrument is the piece of string wrapped around the base of the reed; perhaps this serves to regulate pitch. Dili-tüidüks of Afghanistan need a short piece of thread under, rather than over, the reed to produce proper resonance; indeed the instrument cannot be made to sound without this aid. I have not seen a string tied over the reed, however, and such a practice stifles the sound on the instrument in my collection.

Since paired single-reed pipes are so widespread across much of the Near East, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, one wonders at the absence of joined dili-tüidüks in Afghanistan. An observation of Beliaev's gives some background to this question: "In earlier times the Turkmens had a paired dili-tüidük — the qošo dili tüidük, related to the qošnai of the Uzbeks, but at the present it has gone out of use" (Beliaev and Uspenskii 1928:97). Beliaev gives no indication of why the paired pipe vanished, and we have no way of knowing whether such an instrument was ever in use in Afghanistan.

The immediate neighbor of the dili-tüidük is the Uzbek sibiziq, which Karomatov (1972:63) states is found in "remote areas of the

Republic" and is played mainly by shepherds. His description of the sibiziq tallies closely with that of the dili-tüidük, to which he says the sibiziq is related. In addition, he cites a similar instrument of the Tajiks, the *surnak,* for which unfortunately no information is readily available. Katomatov sees the sibiziq as the ancestor of the qošnai, which looks very much like two dili-tüidüks tied together. I have no data on usage of the sibiziq or the surnak in Afghanistan.

To judge by the data for single-reed pipes given by Sachs (1929: 113–14), the dili-tüidük and sibiziq are somewhat anomalous in structure. First, Sachs notes that most clarinets with more than three finger holes are usually grouped in pairs. Second, he gives an exceedingly wide distribution for clarinets with four finger holes, leaving out the Turkmen area and including the following: Egypt, Russia, Lithuania, Sardinia, parts of Indonesia, and the island of Yap in the Pacific (1929:114). Such a pattern makes it hard to pinpoint the closest relatives of the dili-tüidük and sibiziq. The qošnai does not have the separate mouthpiece (containing the reed) characteristic of most paired pipes of the Near East, and thus stands particularly close to the dili-tüidük and sibiziq, though the greater length (average: 25 centimeters [Vertkov 1963:118]) and number of finger holes (up to seven) make even the qošnai seem considerably removed from the dili-tüidük and sibiziq.

The Turkmen dutar, tüidük, and dili-tüidük make up the basic instrumentarium of the Turkmens of northern Afghanistan. They are also said to play the jew's harp, which is produced in towns with heavy Turkmen concentrations such as Aqča, but I have only seen the instrument played by Uzbeks and Tajiks.

DRUMS

The Zirbağali

The zirbağali ("under-armpit"), a vase-shaped drum (Figure 4.31), is, along with the dambura and the doira (see below), the most widespread instrument of the North, indeed of all Afghanistan. While it is not an indispensable requisite of musical performance, it is often the boon companion of stringed-instrument players and singers, providing a steady rhythm for the melody. It may be played solo as dance accompaniment, but the doira is generally preferred for such occasions.

Figure 4.31 shows the most common type of zirbağali, made of pottery. Other types can be made of wood, and may even be decorated. Wooden drums are by far in the minority but are geographically as well distributed as pottery drums. Wooden drums are considered to be much

more valuable, probably because of their greater durability and cost of construction. The latter is probably the reason for the scarcity of wooden zirbağalis, and their greater prestige explains why performers refused to sell them to me. Wooden drums are always made of some hardwood, like apricot.

When the drum is made of pottery, the kind of material used for everyday household items such as pitchers and vases is employed. It is quite crude and fragile. The zirbağali may be glazed or left plain; the instrument in Figure 4.31 is dark green. Goatskin is generally used for the drumhead. It is usually stretched over the instrument and then secured by means of a strip of fabric fastened all the way around the edge of the skin; on the drum in Figure 4.31, the strip is dyed bright red. Only rarely have I seen a zirbağali with the skin laced onto the body, and then only once in the North. Before and sometimes during play, the skin is warmed over a fire to keep the drumhead taut. There seems to be no center of production for the zirbağali in the North; local potters make them on commission, but they are seen for sale in the bazaar only in the Kohistan area north of Kabul, where they are made in the famous pottery center of Istalif. Istalif drums are not exported to the North and are now mainly sold to tourists. Size varies considerably among zirbağalis, but 30 centimeters can be considered an average diameter for the drumhead, and 45 centimeters can be taken as a typical overall length.

True to its name, the zirbağali is usually held under the arm, with its neck resting on the player's thigh as he sits cross-legged on the floor. It is almost always held under the left arm and played with the right hand, but left-handed players can also be found. During play, the left arm may or may not clamp the drum firmly in place. Sometimes no pressure is applied and the drum merely rests along the player's thigh without support. It is never played in an upright position, which would stifle the resonance, but may be placed in a variety of positions. Figure 4.32 shows the zirbağali being rested along the player's instep.

Two sounds form the basic vocabulary of the instrument: a deep tone produced by striking the skin at the center and a less resonant sound produced by hitting the edge. A third type of tone quality can be attained by pressing one finger between the edge and center and varying the tension while striking the center; this produces a kind of swooping tone by changing the basic pitch of the drum.

The thumbs are never used. Quite often the right hand takes a position for striking the center of the skin, while the left is reserved for the tones closer to the edge. Figure 4.32 shows the player just as he has finished the center stroke with his left hand and is about to hit

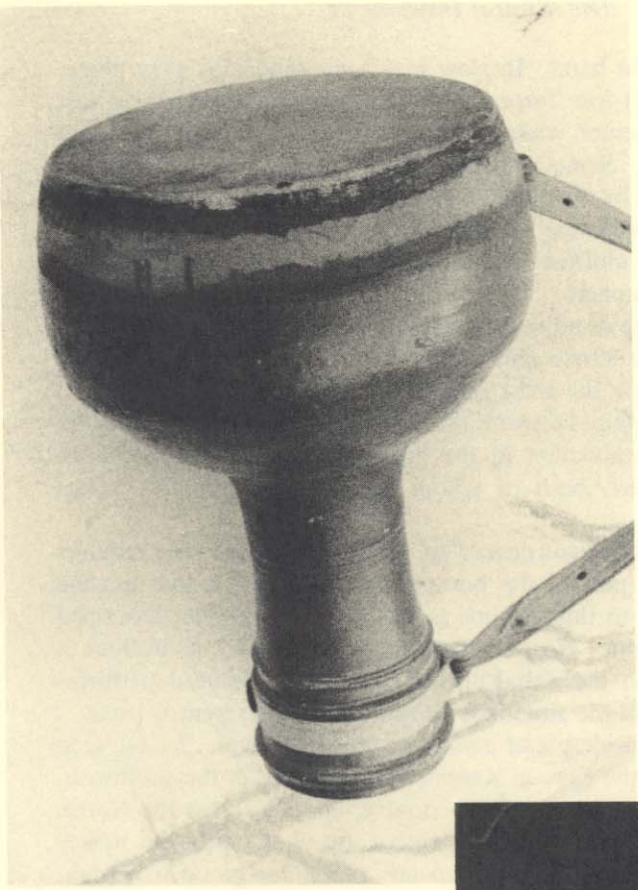


Fig. 4.31. Zirbağali

Fig. 4.32. Zirbağali playing position

the edge with his right hand. In slow play, one hand may play alone. In this case, either all four fingers play at the center, or the three last fingers play at the center while the index finger takes the pitches at the edge of the skin. Sometimes the latter tones are produced by an upward stroke made by the side of the first joint of the index finger. At the center, the stroke may be quite heavy, with an immediate recoil after impact, or if a muffled tone is desired, the hand stops the tone by remaining after impact.

Often when there is a break in his drum pattern, the player raises his right hand after a stroke and performs some gesture related to the dance, such as rotating the wrist gracefully. This is another indication of the close relationship between the zirbağali and the dance, again recalling the close connection in the minds of the audience between musicians and dancers, both of whom occupy the same low status in society.

The zirbağali is not considered to be an instrument that requires specialization on the part of the performer, and it is felt that anyone can play it. Related to this attitude is the lack of a highly developed technique for the drum. No one makes a serious effort to become a virtuoso performer on the zirbağali, and conversely virtuoso performance is not required in the situations in which the instrument is used.

The zirbağali is widespread across all of Afghanistan. I have seen it in Lağman, far to the east, in Kandahar and Girišk in the southwest, in Herat on the western flank of the country, and all across the North, from Maimana to Faizabad. This extensive use of the zirbağali makes it difficult to ascribe the instrument to any particular group or region, as does the fact that vase-shaped drums are found across the entire Near East. Perhaps the most notable feature of the drum's distribution is the fact that it has no relatives in Transoxania, which underlines the western rather than northern roots of the vase-shaped drum found in Afghanistan.

The Doira

The doira (Figure 4.33) is the principal frame drum of the North (and of all Afghanistan) and the main women's instrument. Although men may play the doira as well, it is strongly associated with women, and in particular with women's performance during wedding festivities.

The doira is a rather large tambourine, averaging about 40 centimeters in diameter and with a frame about 6 centimeters deep. Sometimes jingling plates of metal are inserted in slots along the side, as in the Western tambourine, but frequently they are merely nailed to the inside of the frame. Many doiras have no jingles at all. The frame itself

Fig. 4.33.
Doira

is generally made of at least two pieces of wood, roughly joined by a nail. The wood is unfinished and the strips are often not straight. The skin is usually of sheep or goat, but a high-quality drum may have antelope hide. There is rarely any trace of fur on the skin, which is stretched and glued onto the frame. Often the skin becomes slack after a short period of use and must be quite strongly heated to be usable at all. In short, the doira is frequently made with little care for its durability. A further constructional detail is the frequent addition of a crudely painted symmetrical design on the front of the drumhead. The ornamental pattern shown in Figure 4.33 is typical in its floral motif and rough free-hand style. Red and green are the common colors used.

Doiras are almost never sold publicly. The main exception to this rule is the widespread sale of the instrument during Nowruz season at Mazar-i Šarif, when heaps of crude tambourines can be seen around the central square of the great shrine of Ali. While an adequate census has not — and probably never will — indicate the actual spread of the doira, it can be assumed that in towns, nearly every house has a doira to be taken down for festivities.

The playing position of the doira is nearly uniform everywhere in Afghanistan. The instrument is held in the left hand directly in front of the player and is grasped at the center of the bottom arc by the thumb and pressed against the soft part of the palm between thumb and forefinger. The other fingers of the left hand help play on the skin. The right thumb is placed at the three o'clock position, pressing inward

to offset the pressure from the left hand and to provide additional support. The other fingers of the right hand play on the skin while the thumb is pivoted from the wrist. Thus, only two fingers are principally occupied in supporting the doira, leaving eight fingers free for playing.

Like the zirbağali, the doira relies mainly on two distinct sounds to build up rhythmic patterns. One is the central, bass sound and the other is the peripheral, treble pitch. Because of the more cramped position of the left hand and the relative freedom of the right hand pivoting on the thumb, it is the latter that reaches out to play the bass tones and the former that supplies the supporting treble pitches. Like the zirbağali, the doira is usually called upon to play only a modest accompanying role, in which all that is necessary is to strongly outline the basic beats of the musical phrase. However, some women take the trouble to develop a more involved technique, which may exceed that usually heard on the zirbağali. The doira, much more than the zirbağali, is absolutely indispensable to the dance, especially among women.

The doira is found in basically the same shape and size across the North and in the rest of the country, and is usually played in the same manner everywhere. However, one distinct usage can be found in the farther reaches of Badaxšan. There the instrument is called a *daf*, a term widespread for many types of drums across the Near East and into India, and it is somewhat larger (diameter: 43 centimeters; depth: 9 centimeters). In addition, it may be rested on the floor for play, with the performer's right hand providing support at the twelve o'clock position.

The term *doira* is common to a number of frame drums of the area, principally in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The description of the doira in the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963:122–23) not only confirms the close ties between tambourines on both sides of the border, but also hints at the greater variety of construction and manner of playing in Transoxania:

Doira: a tambourine with a narrow round wooden frame, on one side of which is stretched a membrane, and on the inside of which metal jingling bells are attached. The frame is bent, with a diameter of about 400 millimeters. The membrane is made of animal skin or stomach, and sometimes of fish skin.

During play the membrane of the doira is heated in the sun or over a fire. A well-stretched skin gives a clean, resonant and strong sound. The doira is held between the thumb and index fingers and is struck by the four fingers of both hands in the center of the skin, close to the periphery and near the frame itself. In the former case, the resulting sound is lower and muffled, in the latter, high and resonant. In addition, players strike with all the fingers together, separately, with a rap of the little finger, etc. At the necessary time the instrument is

shaken, producing the jingling sound of the metal rings striking against each other and on the frame. Sometimes, to gain great resonance during solo play on the doira, metal fingernails like thimbles are sometimes worn on the fingers.

In general, the doira has far greater prominence in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan than in Afghanistan. Solo players may even play simultaneously on several instruments and juggle them, performing with great virtuosity. A performance of this sort that I witnessed in Dushanbe (Tajikistan) was truly extraordinary.

Dansker (1965:255–57) reports two shapes of doira for the Karategin and Darwaz regions of Tajikistan: the first is built like the Afghan doira, with jingles nailed to the inside of the frame, while the second is made in the form of a Western tambourine, with slots cut out for the metal rattling plates. The symmetrical, somewhat floral design he gives for the outer surface of the skin is similar to that seen in Figure 4.33.

In rural mountainous Tajikistan, group performance on doiras was formerly practiced. According to informants, there are remnants of this style in present-day Badaxšan, involving several sizes of doira all playing the same rhythmic pattern. Nurjanov reports group performance in the Karategin and Darwaz areas under the name *doirajang* ("doira fight"), in which four or five women participate, but he does not state the degree of rhythmic complexity involved (Nurjanov 1965:138).

The Small Doira

The small doira, a frame drum (Figure 4.34), is a musical toy that is notable for being the only two-headed drum used in the North. In consists of a small (11 centimeters) pair of drumheads fastened to a somewhat larger (19 centimeters) stick that serves as a handle. Figure 4.34 shows the most typical small doira. Extending from both sides of the frame are threads fastened by tacks and wrapped around small pieces of wood that serve as beaters for the drum when it is shaken. The threads run about 8 centimeters long, and the spool-shaped beaters average just under 2 centimeters in length. Players often set the beaters into motion by holding the stick between the palms of both hands and rubbing the palms together. The two skins that form the drumheads overlap, and one layer is glued down over the other. The skins, like those on doiras, are often decorated with red and green natural dyes in geometric designs. The most common is perhaps a cross-shaped pattern that roughly divides the circle of the skin into quadrants; then each quadrant is partially filled with a similar design, such as the cherry-shaped figure of Figure 4.34.

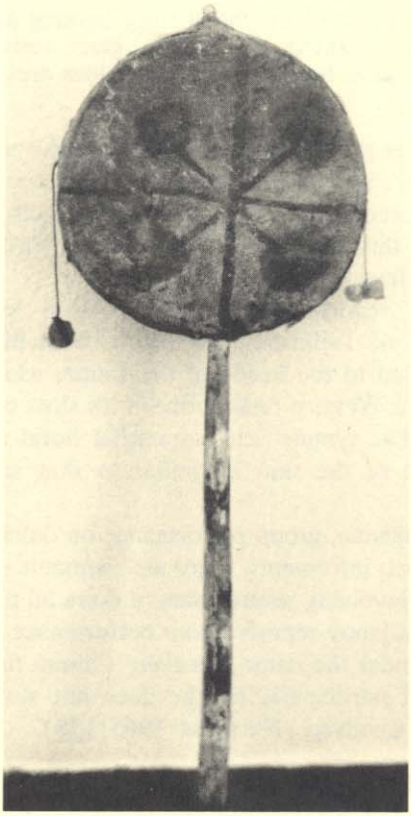


Fig. 4.34. Small doira

The small doira, which does not seem to have a name of its own despite its distinctive structure, is clearly regarded as a children's toy. It appears along with the doira at Nowruz time in Mazar, contributing to the holiday spirit of the occasion. It is rarely seen at other times and places. Large numbers of small doiras are made at Istalif, the potters' town cited above as a center of zirbağali construction, and are sold for a few pennies.

The small doira is a rather provocative instrument in terms of suggesting far-flung points of connection with other music cultures. Sachs (1929:172) has a special subdivision for this type of drum. He calls the instrument a *Klappertrommel* ("knocking drum"), which he defines as "a drum, the skin of which is struck through a jerking motion by small balls hanging on short strings" (1929:172). He gives the areas of distribution as Hither India, Tibet, Mongolia, China, Korea, Japan, Java, and Bali, and he adds that "since the device is given to so many forms of drums . . . this fact speaks against its being of great

age" (1929:173). The fact that the small doira has both two heads and a handle confuses the issue somewhat, since the typical small frame drum with a handle "known as the shaman's drum . . . [which is] spread over India, Central and North Asia and the American continent" (Sachs 1940:33) generally has only one head and is struck by a stick or the hand. Thus it is not completely clear what the origin or immediate relatives of the small doira of Afghanistan might be.

IDIOPHONES

The Čerğerānak

Among the various instruments sold as toys during Nowruz in the North (small doiras, animal-shaped pottery whistles, etc.) is a wooden ratchet (Figure 4.35) called the *ğerğerānak,* an onomatopoetic name. This wooden idiophone measures 17 centimeters long, with an 18 centimeter handle. The eleven-spoked ratchet wheel connected to the handle rotates when the instrument is shaken with a circular motion, pushing the raised slat, which is free at the end near the cog, and making a sharp rapid-fire clacking sound. The wood and the colored streaks of

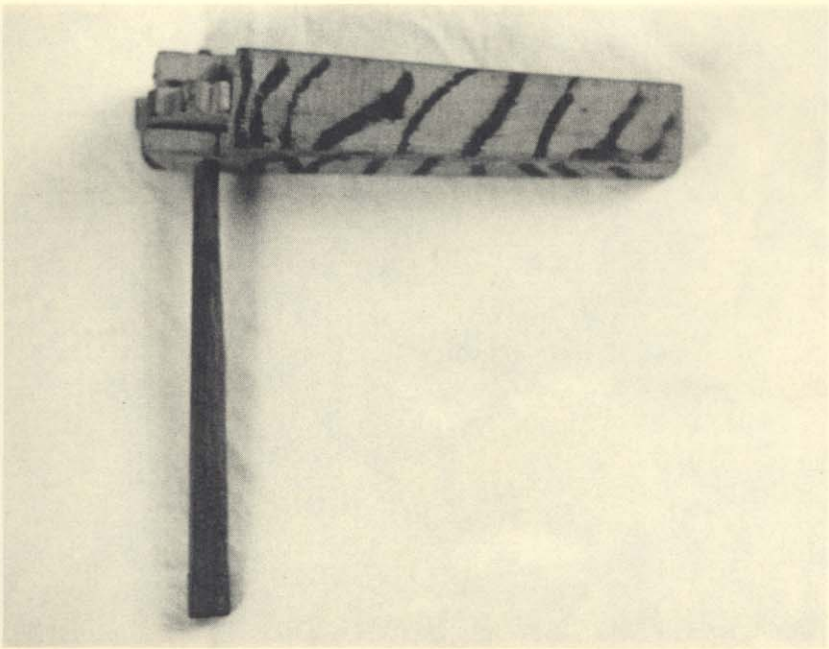


Fig. 4.35. Čerğeranak

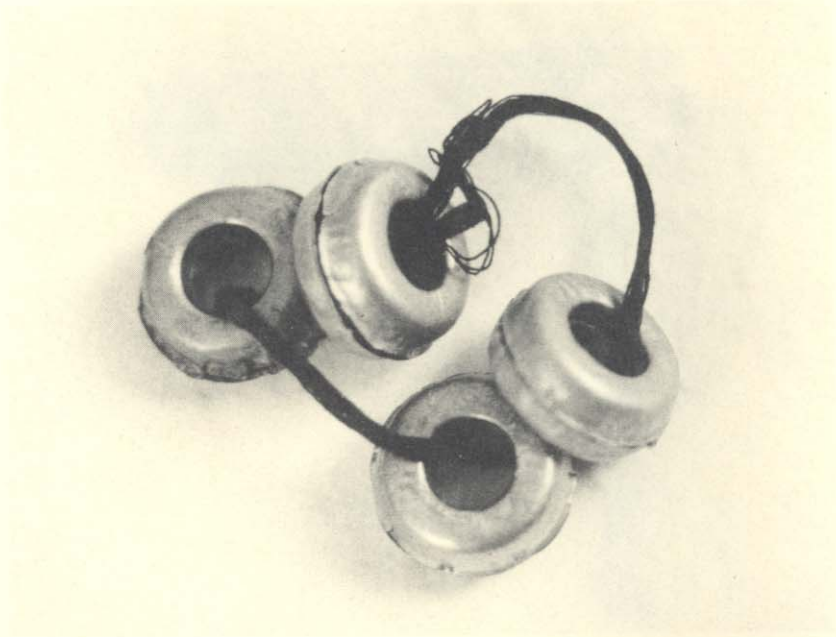
decoration are quite crude, but the parts fit together well and produce a resonant tone quality, much to the delight of children.

There is little information on ratchets in the Near East or Central Asia. Sachs (1929:227) regards the ratchet as "the most perfected form of the scraper." He adds that "the only non-European ratchets are found — also as children's toys — in Java, Hither India and Mesopotamia," and the illustration he gives of an Indian ratchet (1929:227) corresponds with the instrument of Figure 4.35 quite closely.

The Zang-i Kaftar

The zang-i kaftar ("dove-bell') is a set of small, doughnut-shaped crotals (Figure 4.36) used as a percussive accompaniment for the dambura. Each bell (diameter: 2.5 centimeters) consists of two hollow metal rings fastened together at the inner rims and left slightly open at the outer rims. The sound is produced by tiny metal pellets placed inside as rattles.

The zang-i kaftar (often termed just *zang*) come four to five in a set. They are strung together and donned by the dambura player on his right hand by fastening the string to his wrist, so that one rattle



Carol Reck

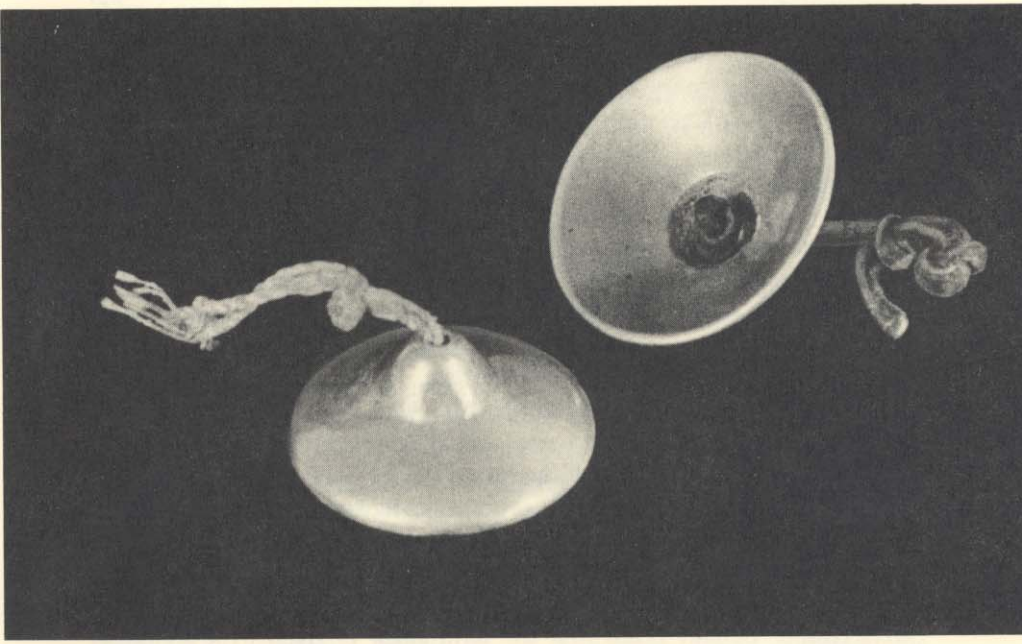
Fig. 4.36. Zang-i kaftar

hangs between each of his fingers; thus all of them sound each time he moves his hand for a stroke. Only a small proportion of players, usually well-known professionals, use the zang-i kaftar regularly. Most of the zang sold today are poor-quality Pakistani products brought up from Kabul. Locally made, highly resonant zang are hard to come by and must be obtained from damburačis. I bought my set after lengthy negotions with a jeweler, who had promised to make me brand-new bells. He finally decided it was too much bother and bought them from a local musician, selling them to me for a profit.

The zang-i kaftar is just another example of the attempt musicians make to provide intensive rhythmic support for the tunes they play (indeed, their efforts may sometimes reach the point of making the tune inaudible). Such a practice again confirms the close connection between music and the dance in the North.

The Tal (Zang, Tüsak)

The tal (Figure 4.37), also known as *zang* in Persian and *tüsak* in Uzbek, is a widespread idiophone of the North. It is the constant companion of the Uzbek teahouse singer, which explains its great popu-



Carol Reck

Fig. 4.37. Tal (zang, tüsak)

larity. Its piercing clink is the first evidence of live performance to attract a passerby in the bazaar on a busy market day and lure him into the teahouse for a bit of entertainment.

The tal consists of a small pair of finger cymbals made of brass, with the following average measurements: diameters, 5.5 centimeters; slant from rim to crown, 3.5 centimeters. The cymbals are each equipped with a hole at the peak of the crown for passage of a piece of sturdy string or a short leather thong by which the performer holds the instrument, one cymbal in each hand. He grasps the string with thumb and forefinger and presses the fingers against the crown of the cymbal. The cymbals are usually roughly made, so that the circumference of the rim is not evenly shaped and the slant is not equal from all points of the rim to the crown. The cymbals are also not usually matched exactly for size. Nevertheless, they produce a sharp, ringing tone that is quite effective and even true to pitch.

The tal is usually played by the singers in the conventional teahouse ensemble of dambura player and two singers, perhaps joined by a zirbağali or, less frequently, by a doira player. The singers sit face to face, both striking the tal in time to the beat. The usual playing position has the open faces of the cymbals perpendicular to the floor. In this case, one cymbal, usually the one in the right hand, remains stationary, while the other strikes the first either face-to-face, with the hand quickly removed to avoid damping the tone, or on the rim. In a second playing position, the stationary cymbal is held face-up. The cymbals are never allowed to hang free, but are always tightly controlled by the thumb and forefinger.

The tal is locally made in various towns of Turkestan and is found only in that region of Afghanistan. The existence of three names for the instrument is intriguing, and may help shed light on the origin of the tal. The term *zang,* a Persian word, is clear; it implies any sort of bell in Afghanistan, as in the case of the zang-i kaftar discussed above. The fact that there is a separate Uzbek word, *tüsak,* indicates the Uzbeks' fondness for the finger cymbals. The term *tal* is the most unusual, since it has no clear connection with Afghanistan and seems perhaps related to the Indian term *tal,* meaning a particular rhythmic pattern, as well as referring to certain types of bells (Sachs 1915:19).

Although the *Atlas* and other recent Soviet sources give no information on the spread of finger cymbals in Transoxania, Beliaev (1933:5) quotes August Eichhorn, the pioneer researcher of Central Asian music, who reported (in the 1880s) seeing tal under the name *sagat* in Uzbekistan. Beliaev notes that the term *sagat* is given by Curt Sachs as the Arabic word for castanets, and adds: ". . . under the name of

zang it occurs in Persia, Afghanistan and Chinese Turkestan" (1933:6)

Further evidence about the term *zang* in the Persian world is offered by the *Lavignac Encyclopedia of Music* (Huart 1922:3076), which illustrates a pair of small hand cymbals under the name *zeng*, noting that "they are held with the fingers and fulfill the function of castagnets for marking the rhythm of the dance." Sachs remarks that small cymbals are quite ancient, appearing as early as before the turn of the first millennium B.C. on reliefs in Nimrud; he feels that the small cymbals have a Central Asian origin, and he mentions the spread of similar metallophones in Mongolia, China, Siam, Annam, and Burma, as well as in Egypt and Morocco in the Near East (Sachs 1929:149–50).

Thus, it is hard to draw a simple conclusion about the origin of the tal, or zang, or tüsak, of northern Afghanistan, which seems to be only one of a great many small cymbal types found throughout large areas of Asia. The widespread use of the term *tal* along with the Persian *zang* and Uzbek *tüsak* may indicate some recent connection with North India. Such a link would probably relate to the eastern (Mašreqi) sector of Afghanistan, where it is common to find odd bits of terminology picked up from the North Indian music world.

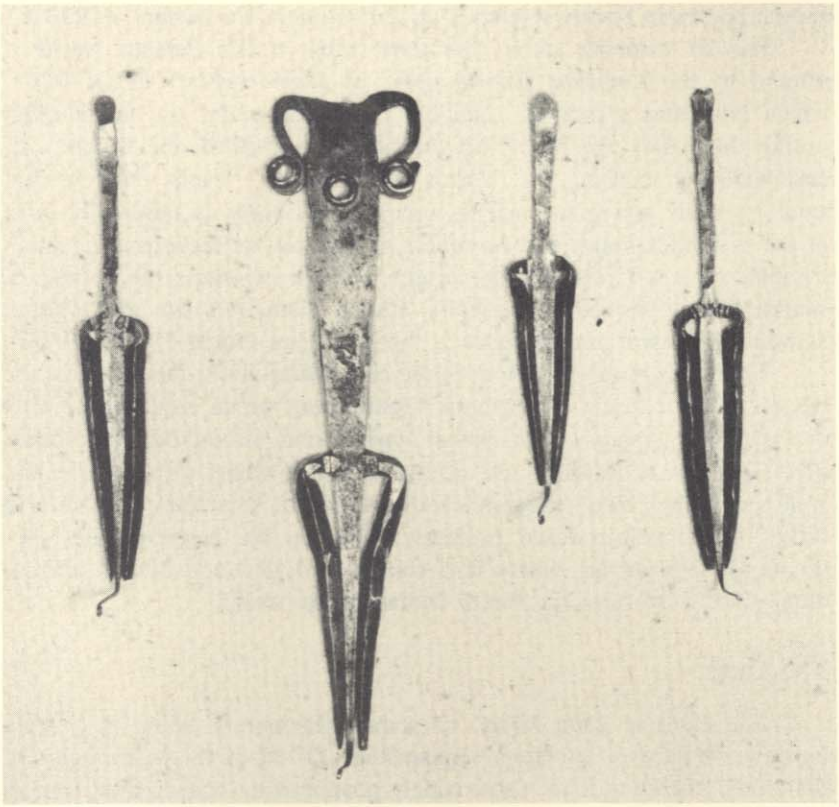
The Čang

The čang or čang ko'uz, or sometimes merely ko'uz in Uzbek, is the jew's harp of northern Afghanistan. Of all of the instruments of the North, the čang is the most widely produced in local market centers for the population of the immediate vicinity. As a result, the shape and size of čangs varies from town to town to the extent that one can identify the place of origin by appearance alone.

Figure 4.38 shows čangs from four northern towns, from west to east (left to right): Andxoi, Aqča, Tašqurğan, and Faizabad. Table 4.10 summarizes the specimens' basic measurements.

From these data it can be seen that the length of the lamella (bent section) is the most uniform dimension of the instrument. In order to be comfortably played, a tongue of 2 centimeters seems to be the proper length for plucking. Another prerequisite seems to be that the handle of the čang be nearly half of the total length of the instrument (čang 1 is a trifle short), a feature also dictated by comfort of playing. As can be seen in Figure 4.38, the narrow wedge-shaped design of the instrument remains constant despite variation in size.

The most remarkable difference among the four instruments pictured is the elaborate handle of the čang from Aqča. Although the proportion of handle to body is standard, the Aqča model flares out



Carol Reck

Fig. 4.38. Čangs from four northern towns (left to right): *Andxoi, Aqča, Tašqurğan, Faizabad*

TABLE 4.10

Dimensions of Selected Čangs (In Centimeters)

Instrument	*Place of Origin*	*Length of Handle*	*Length of Lamella (Bent Section Only)*	*Overall Length*
1	Andxoi	4.7	1.7	10.5
2	Aqča	8	2	15
3	Tašqurğan	3	2	8
4	Faizabad	5.5	2	11.5

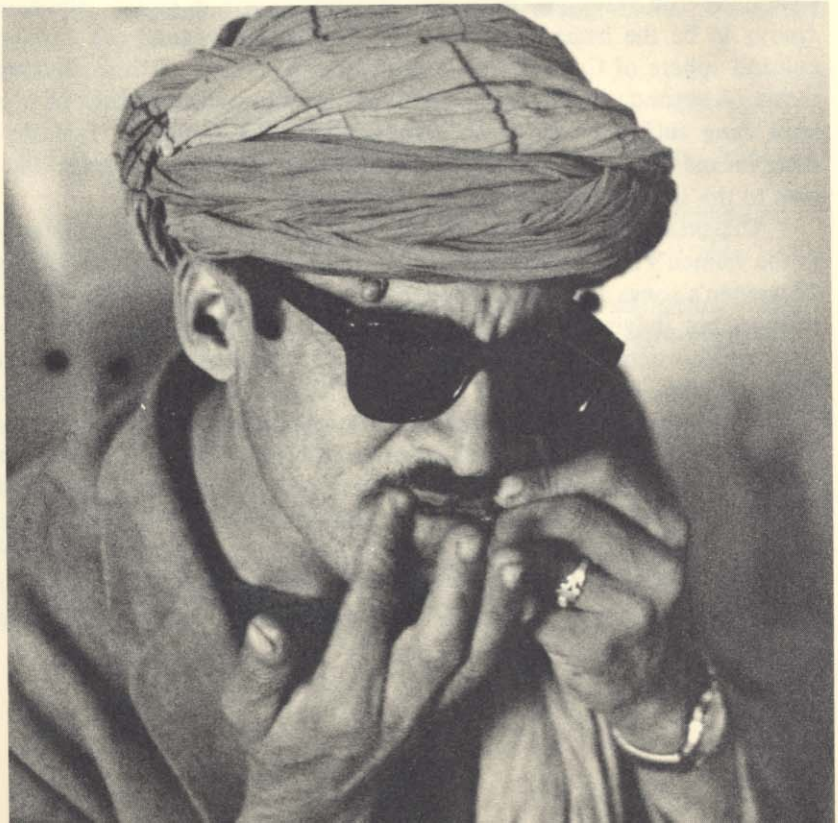
widely towards the top, where an ornamental scroll, resembling the horns of a goat, tops the bulky instrument. Čangs from the town of Saripul, south of Šiberğan, display the same shape as those from Aqča.

Čangs are made in the local bazaar by the ironsmith and are displayed among nails, hooks, and harnesses. They may also be sold in the banjara, or mixed-goods shops. In the North, only the modern towns like Kunduz make no local čangs, but instead import them from Kabul, a practice characteristic of such towns (see Chapter 2).

Figure 4.39 shows the normal playing position of the čang — in this case, a Faizabad specimen. The instrument is braced against the teeth, with the teeth slightly parted to allow motion of the lamella. Movements of the lips make possible some change of pitch. In the case of small instruments, like those of Tašqurğan, the instrument is nearly obscured by the performer's hands and lips during play.

The čang, according to all informants, is played mainly by women and children, but I have never seen it played by women and children. The only use of the čang I have witnessed is as an accompanying drone instrument in ensemble performance. A dambura and drum, or dambura and ğičak, may be joined by a čang, which punctuates every main beat

Fig. 4.39. Playing position for čang



with the same pitch from beginning to end of a piece. Even performers who are esteemed do nothing but provide the drowsy buzz of the čang on the same note throughout.

Čangs are judged by the clarity of their tone. Instruments in which the lamella rubs against the body or which are too small to produce a resonant tone are discarded by players.

The term *čang,* like so many other floating names for instruments in the Near East and Central Asia, does not directly carry over to Uzbekistan, where the instrument of that name is a type of hammered dulcimer related to the Persian santur. In classical Persian verse, the čang was described and pictured as a kind of harp. In Uzbekistan the situation becomes hopelessly complicated by two terms for the jew's harp: *čangkobuz* (pronounced "čangko'uz" by Afghan Uzbeks), in which the Persian word *čang* is coupled with the Turkic *kobuz,* and *temir-čang,* or "iron čang," in which the term *čang* seems to take on a more generalized meaning (Vertkov 1963:122). Karomatov (1972:95–101) notes further that a distinction may be made in Uzbekistan between the *temir-čangkobuz* (metal) and the *suiak-čangkobuz* (camel's rib) types of jew's harp. The former is quite similar to the jew's harp of northern Afghanistan, while the latter is not found in Afghanistan. In Kirghizia, where there are both wooden and metal jew's harps (played in virtuoso style), the iron variety is called *temir-komyz (komyz = kobuz),* showing *komyz* to be the basic root, since the Kirghiz are beyond the Persian cultural sphere of Central Asia. Full discussion of all of these floating terms is beyond the present study, but just the multiple uses of the term *čang* suffice to show the complexity of the situation. Literally, *čang* means "claw" or "hook" in Persian, and there may be some allusion to the shape of the jew's harp.

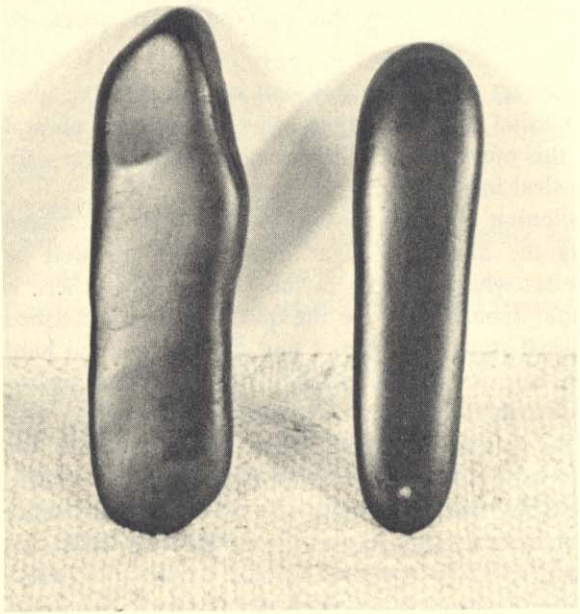
Uzbekistani jew's harps, like those across the border, seem largely in the women's domain and are used as accompaniment to certain genres of women's songs. Little of the repertoire has been maintained or transcribed, but judging from the scanty documentation available, Uzbekistani women were able to compose pieces of considerable complexity on the jew's harp, and thus show a link with Kirghiz and Kazakh tradition.

For Tajakistan, Dansker (1965:257) notes that the čang is so closely identified with females that it is often called *čang-i zanāna* ("women's čang"); it is played along with the doira as accompaniment to song and dance on long winter evenings in the women's quarters. He includes a picture of three different shapes for the čang of southern Tajikistan. Of these, one with a long handle comes the closest to the čang of northern Afghanistan but flares out rather more sharply than the Afghan instrument.

The Qairāq

The Qairāq (Figure 4.40) is a set of two matched river stones used as a percussion instrument. It is the only lithophone used in the North and appears to have a highly restricted spread at present. I tracked down only one performer of the qairaq, an older man who had long since given up playing the stones, and convinced him to demonstrate his skill.

His qairaq, which I acquired, is made of the same type of stone used by barbers all across the North as whetstones. They are brownish-grey and measure 12 by 3 centimeters and 12.5 by 3.7 centimeters. During play, the shorter stone, which tapers somewhat, is placed in the right hand between the thumb and forefinger, and the longer stone, somewhat broader, between index finger and middle finger. With a sweep of the left hand, the first joints of the four fingers strike the upper stone against the lower, creating a rapid succession of clicks. Yādgār, the virtuoso qairaq player of Dara-i Zendan (near Samangan), showed great dexterity in manipulating the stones, and would play them on his thigh, forehead, arms, and knee with great speed, provoking great hilarity among the onlookers; he used the qairaq to punctuate a comic ditty he sang without other accompaniment (recorded on Anthology AST 4007). He also used the stones as percussive support



Carol Reck

Fig. 4.40. Qairaq

for a dambura player, but seemed little interested in subordinating his talents for this purpose.

Such an isolated instance of an instrument's occurrence and use would be of little importance, if it were not for the fact that the qairaq is a traditional, widely used instrument of Uzbekistan. Here is part of the entry from the *Atlas* (Vertkov 1963:124):

Qairaq: 120–150 millimeters long and 50–70 millimeters wide . . . they are not specially treated, but found ready-made on the banks of rivers. The performer takes two in each hand and, opening and closing the palms, produces the striking of one plate on the other. Like castanets, the qairaq are used as accompaniment of dance, and different rhythms are struck on them.

From this description we can draw several conclusions. It is clear that the qairaq of Uzbekistan is, on the average, considerably wider than that of Afghanistan, though both types have the same riverine origin and hence lack standardization. The main difference, however, is in use. The Uzbekistani qairaq finds wide currency as a castanet-like companion of the dance, and is held like castanets during play, whereas the Afghan variety is used as percussive accompaniment for song and has a quite different playing position.

Beliaev (1933:4) gives a somewhat broader definition for the term *qairaq* in Uzbekistan:

Qairak: These are four smoothed pebbles, held two in each hand and used to perform rhythmic figures. For this purpose bones, pieces of dry woods, etc., can also be used.

Presumably, the term *qairaq* extends to any sort of castanet-like idiophone, regardless of material of construction. Any sort of hard natural object can be used for this purpose, with little or no treatment necessary to convert it into a musical instrument.

Widespread questioning in Afghanistan yielded little additional information concerning the qairaq. Yadgar himself told me that he learned to play the stones while in India in the 1920s. Since there is such a clear Transoxanian counterpart for the qairaq and no published data on the use of musical stones in India, I find this explanation hard to believe. In addition, the use of what seems to be an Uzbek instrument by a Tajik of a heavily Tajik area only adds to the mystery surrounding the use of the qairaq. Yadgar's great familiarity with the qairaq and his ready coupling of the stones with tunes points to a well-established local style that has fallen into disuse. Without further evidence, we cannot conclusively connect this local style with the qairaq tradition of Uzbekistan.