



ABŪ 'AṬĀ

ABŪ 'AṬĀ ('AṬĀ'), one of the twelve modes in the *dastgāh* system of classical Iranian music; more precisely, it should be called *āvāz-e Abū 'Aṭā* or *nağma-ye Abū 'Aṭā*. The reason for this name is not known; it is alternatively called *dastān-e 'arab* ("Arabian song;" M. Barkešlī and M. Ma'rūfī, *Radīf-e mūsīqī-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1963; M. Hedāyat, *Majma' al-adwār*, Tehran, 1317 Š./1938, III, p. 94). "Abū 'Aṭā" is a comparatively recent designation; this mode was formerly called Sāranj/Sārang (N. Foršāt-al-dawla, *Boḥūr al-alḥān*, Bombay, 1332/1914, p. 37; R. Kāleqī, *Sargozašt-e mūsīqī-e Īrān* I, Tehran, 1333 Š./1955, p. 496). This term suggests a possible link with a north Indian *rāg* Sāraṅg.

The mode Abū 'Aṭā in contemporary practice has the following scale structure: Sol, La-koron, Si-bemol, Do, Re, Mi-bemol, Fa, and Sol (Sol being the finalis). This scale is identical with that of Šūr; therefore in theory it is considered as one of the derivatives (*mota'alleqāt* "dependents") of the *dastgāh* Šūr. However, Abū 'Aṭā has distinctive melodies which are based on its modal characteristics, which differ considerably from those of Šūr. The *šāhed* ("note of stress") of Abū 'Aṭā is Do; the *īst* ("note of temporary stopping") is La-koron, which is also often emphasized and may be considered as the secondary *šāhed*. Although Abū 'Aṭā is said to have formerly had no modulation as such, today this mode incorporates several *gūšas* such as Sayakī, Ḥejāz, 'Oššāq, Gabrī, and Čahār-bāg (or Čahār-pāra). Among these the *gūša* of Ḥejāz is considered the most important and is indispensable for an improvisation in the mode of Abū 'Aṭā. Ḥejāz is, in fact, an extensive *gūša* (*šāh-gūša*) of Abū 'Aṭā and possesses distinctive melodies which can not be confused with Abū 'Aṭā



(H. Farhat, *The Dastgāh Concept in Persian Music*, unpub. Ph.D. thesis, University of California at Los Angeles, 1965, p. 68). The *šāhed* of Ḥeḥjāz is Re, which is the note a perfect fifth above the finalis of Abū 'Aṭā. This note also functions as the *īst*. Therefore the melodic activity of Ḥeḥjāz centers around the tetrachord of Re, Mi-koron, Fa, and Sol in the higher register; and it forms, together with the *gūša* of 'Oššāq, the *awj* ("highest point") or climax of an *āvāz* of Abū 'Aṭā. The *gūšas* of Gabrī and Čahār-bāg share the same modal characteristics with Ḥeḥjāz.

Historically, Ḥeḥjāz (*Hıcaz* in Turkish) is one of the oldest modes of west Asia. Ebn Sīnā mentions Ḥeḥjāz as a mode to be played "between the prayers" (H. G. Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century*, London, 1929, p. 197). Šafī-al-dīn describes the *maqām* named Ḥeḥjāzī in his *Šarafiya* (dated 1276) as a mode which has the following scale structure: Sol, La-koron, Si-koron, Do, Re-koron, Mi-koron, Fa, and Sol (Farmer in *The New Oxford History of Music I*, London, 1957, pp. 449-50). A mode named Ḥeḥjāz is widely found today in the musical practice of Turkey and the Arab countries in western Asia and North Africa, as well as in Central Asia (Tājīk and Uzbek). However, the modal characteristics of each variant type resemble neither those of Iranian Ḥeḥjāz nor Abū 'Aṭā. At the same time, those *maqāmāt* bearing the common name Ḥeḥjāz show considerable discrepancies among themselves in terms of scale structure.

Abū 'Aṭā is one of the most popular modes used in Iranian folk songs. Its mood is said to be "melancholic and moving" and generally close to that of Šūr (N. Caron and D. Safvate, *Les traditions musicales: Iran*, Paris, 1966, p. 66). Deeply religious chants such as *aḍān* ("call to prayer"), the chanting of the Qur'ān, and the singing/chanting of *monājāt* ("devotional prayers") are often executed in the mode of Ḥeḥjāz, which is an integral part of Abū 'Aṭā and sounds "Arabic" (A. N. Vazīrī, *Mūsīqī-e naẓarī*, part 2: *Āvāz-šenāsī*, Tehran, 1313 Š./1934, II, p. 36).

See also [Dastgāh](#) and [Maqām](#).

For a music sample, see [Qamar al-Moluk – Magar nasim-e sahar](#).

For a music sample, see [Čahār pāra](#).

For a music sample, see [Eqbāl Āḍar, Abu'l Ḥasan Khan Qazvīnī](#).

For a music sample, see [Abu 'Aṭā](#).



For a music sample, see [Hejāz](#).

For a music sample, see [Hejāz](#), [Bastenegār](#), [Yaquluna](#), [Čāhārpāre](#).

For a music sample, see [Tork čašmaš ar jānam fetne karde rāst](#).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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