



DASTĀN

DASTĀN, a term used in two different contexts in Persian music.

Melody. **Bārbad**, the minstrel of the Sasanian king Kōsrow II Parvēz (591-628), was said to have composed 360 *dastāns* in order to be able to play a new melody each day of the year (Christensen, *Iran Sass.*, p. 485). In contrast to the thirty *lahns* (pieces) also composed by Bārbad, the names of these *dastāns* have not been preserved, but among the approximately 170 names of pre-Islamic melodies that have been gathered from various sources (Şafwat, pp. 116-18) there are probably several names of *dastāns*. A note by Abū ‘Abd-Allāh K̄vārazmī (p. 238) suggests that the *dastāns* of Bārbad were still fashionable in the 10th century, and some modern scholars believe that they were the sources of the *dastgāhs* that constitute the present modal system (e.g., Joneydī, p. 137). Although there is no doubt some relationship between *dastāns* and *dastgāhs*, the two terms do not share the same meaning: *dastān* came to mean a fingering and, by extension, a scale (see below), whereas *dastgāh* refers to a collection of pieces grouped in relation to a dominant mode. Furthermore, considering their number, it is probable that Bārbad’s *dastāns* corresponded to melodies (*gūšas*), rather than to specific modes. *Āvāz-e dastān-e ‘Arab* is a *gūša* by which the *āvāz* (song) of **Abū ‘Aṭā** used to be known.

Fingering system. In early Arabic and Persian musical theory *dastān* designated either the fingering of the lute or the ligatures and thus also the modal scale corresponding to the positions of the fingers on the frets (see **DASĀTĪN**).



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