



HAFT KOSRAVĀNI

HAFT KOSRAVĀNI, the seven musical systems or modes attributed by Abu Maṣṣur Ṭa'ālebī (*Ġorar*, p. 698) to Bārbad (q.v.), the famous court musician of the Sasanian king Kōsrow II Parvēz (r. 590-628). They were sung in royal banquets during the lifetime of Ṭa'ālebi. Haft Kosravāni seems to be what Abu'l-Ḥasan 'Alī Mas'ūdī called the royal modes (*al-ṭoruq al-molukiya*) created by Persians. Mas'ūdī, writing on the authority of Ebn Kordādbeh, described seven of them, although he gave only the name of six (*Moruj*, ed. Pellat, secs. 3213-14). Ebn Kordādbeh (pp. 16-17), who mentioned the melodies and tunes created by Persians, numbered them as eight.

According to Mas'ūdī (*Moruj*, tr. Pellat, sec. 3214), the first mode was *sekāf* (apparently related to *sokāfa* "plectrum"; see *Borhān-e qāte'*, ed. Mo'in, p. 1150); the second mode, whose name is omitted, was distinguished by the elegance of its divisions; the third one, *amrsah* (most likely the same as *abrina*, mentioned by Ebn Kordādbeh, see below), encompassed the beauties of all the melodies and with its ascending and descending movements could do more than all the others. Then was *mādārvāsnān* (cf. *mādrovāsbān*, in Ebn Kordādbeh, connected to Mādro-vāspān, a town near Ḥolwān on the Khorasan road in Persia; see Schartz, *Iran*, p. 693; Tafazzoli, p. 2230), the most low-pitched, slowest and most liable to proceed from one modulation to another. Next comes *sāykāt*, the one the heart cherishes. The term *sāykāt* seems to be a corrupt form of *šāyagān*, itself derived from *šāhīgān* (palace, in Pahlavi). The sixth is *sisam* (apparently *šešom*, the sixth), a mode whose effects are striking and serious. The seventh is *juba'rān* (or *hurān*), which graduates on a single



modulation.

Ebn Kordādbeh (pp. 16-17) gives these modes the following names: first, *bandestān*; the second *bahār*, which is the most pleasant of all; the third *abrin* (in some sources *āfarin*, see Tafazzoli, p. 2230), usually played on a high string; the fourth *abrina*, encompassing the beauties of all melodies and surpassing all others in its ascending and descending movements, which can change from one mode to another. Next is *mādrovāsbān*, which has a greater capacity for moving out of one melody into another and then returning to it; the sixth *šesom* (*šešom*), played with strong fingers (i.e., strokes); the seventh *al-qobba* (arabicized form of the Pers. *gonbad*), which has a scale depending on the tune harmonized with it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Sadid-al-Din Moḥammad Awfi, *Ja-wāme'-al-ḥekāyāt wa lawāme' al-rewāyat*, ed. M. Ramazāni, Tehran, 1956, pp. 58-59.

Christensen, *Iran sous les Sassanides*, pp. 184-85.

Ebn Kordādbeh, *Ketāb al-lahw wal-malāhi*, ed. I. A. Kālifā, Beirut, 1964.

Dāryuš Šafwat, *Ostādān-e mūsīqī-e Irān*, Tehran, 1350 Š./1971.

Aḥmad Tafazzoli, “Bārbad yā Pahlbad,” in *Nāmvāra-ye Doktor Maḥmūd Afšār* IV, Tehran, 1988, pp. 2222-35.