Historical Background of the Dastgăh Concept in Persian Musical Manuscripts

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Abstract
The historical background of the dastgăh concept, and the process through which it replaced the maqăm system, still remains a major question in the history of Persian music. It is usually vaguely assumed that both concepts of the dastgăh and the radif were introduced to Persian music during the Qajar era. The present paper is a first attempt to shed light on the issue through a historical musicological study as well as a number of hitherto neglected Persian musical manuscripts. This paper discusses the gradual historical evolution of the dastgăh concept from its earliest manifestations as an entity within the maqăm system up to the formation of the idea of the radif, as the main core and the model repertory of contemporary Persian classical music, in terms of several stages that began in the Safavid period and got its final accomplishment formulation in the Qajar epoch.

Keywords: Dastgăh, Maqăm, Radif, History of Persian Music, Persian Musical Treatises and Manuscripts.

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Introduction

This paper tries to examine the process of transition from the maqām to the dastgāh system and formation of the idea of the radif in Persian classical music. It is usually vaguely assumed that both the dastgāh concept and the radif phenomenon were introduced to Persian music in the Qajar epoch (1787-1925). Literature review on the subject (for instance, Kīānī 1998: 12; Binesh 1995: 139-141; Farhat 1990: 19-20; Mashhūn 1994: 366-367; Ţalāīī 1993: 12) suggests that (1) it is often taken for granted that the formation of the dastgāh and the radif have taken place in the same period; (2) little attention has been paid to the primary musicological sources, Persian musical manuscripts; (3) most of the ideas presented so far are mainly of a speculative nature. Keeping all into consideration, this paper tries to follow the process of formation of the dastgāh concept through some hitherto less-known musical manuscripts. It will be argued that we should distinguish several stages in the process of evolution of this new musical system in Persia. This process began with the appearance of the dastgāh concept as an entity within the maqām system in the mid-Safavid period and reached its final formulation in the late Qajar epoch as manifested in the radif repertory. Henceforward, a number of hitherto neglected manuscripts in which the term dastgāh has been mentioned, will be introduced and textually analysed.

1. The Dastgāh Introduced

It seems that the term dastgāh, as a musical concept within the maqām system, was introduced to Persian music in certain manuscripts belonging to the mid-Safavid period. In at least two musical manuscripts seemingly belonging to the 17th century, the term dastgāh has been cited in a rather different sense from what it means today.

(A) There is a musical treatise in a collection of manuscripts in the form of Microfilm 2214 of the Central Library of the University of Tehran in which the term dastgāh is mentioned.³ However its content reveals that the musical system was based on the 12 traditional maqāms, and related modal entities the term occurs only once in this treatise in the following sense:

Now it should be known that there are six maqāms, each of which is half-parde, and there cannot be composed any swat or naqsh in them, because they do not have the dastgāh.² (f. 337)

(B) There is a collection of musical treatises in the manuscript collection 2591 of the Central Library of the University of Tehran, which is dated 17th century. The sixth treatise in this collection, falsely known as the Rawḥānī manuscript (MS 2591/6), also begins with a description of the usual modal system, in terms of the traditional twelve maqāms and other related entities. It has referred several times to the term in the following sense:

[...:] Neyriz is a naghma having dastgāh and namūd [...:] Āraq is the fourth maqām and its šu’bas are rāy-e āraq and maghtūb, both of these naghmās are namūds without

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³ Although we lack exact information about when, where and by whom this treatise was written, its style suggests that it belongs to the mid-Safavid period.

² For a discussion of the technical terms appearing in this fragment, as well as another possible reading and interpretation of this sentence, consult Asadi 1992.
the dastgāh [...] Bozorg is the eighth maqām, which has two malkās [malkāts? (=cadences)] and is devoid of the dastgāh [...] (ff. 793-794).

The meaning of the term dastgāh in such manuscripts implies a potential component probably related to a cyclic formal structure. The word dastgāh per se, etymologically speaking, signifies a coherent collection, hence it is comparable to the concept of the "cyclic form" in ethnomusicological literature (cf. Feldman 1996: 509; Asadi 2000: 10, 17-18). It is quite noteworthy that the term, in this sense is often used in phrases like "having [the] dastgāh" or "devoid of [the] dastgāh," which points out to its potentiality. Henceforth, it may be concluded that in the mid-Safavid period this concept usually signified a potential factor to distinguish certain maqāms from the others. It seems that such a distinction was made on the basis of the cyclic or compound structure of some maqāms in a formal, practice-oriented, sense. Another interesting point is the usage of the term namūd, which seems to have been in a way related to some sort of melodic or modal transformation. The term namūd currently, in the Uzbek-Tajik Shashmaqām, signifies the appearance of the melodic or modal structure of a maqām or shu'ba in another maqām or shu'ba, which is usually regarded as a climactic point (Karomatov 1981: 102).

2. Formulation of the Four Principal Dastgāhs

In another musical treatise, which probably belonged to the late 17th century, or even a later period, the term dastgāh is mentioned in rather the same sense as in the above-mentioned manuscripts (A and B). This treatise sheds some new light on the issue by indicating "the four principal dastgāhs". It is an anonymous manuscript entitled Treatise on the Science of Music that is included in the manuscript collection number 3536 of the Malek National Library and Museum in Tehran (C).

Amongst the four principal dastgāhs one is ḍahārgāh [...] at first the darāmād is presented from zangūleh, which is also called zangūle-ye jaras, then it presents the simple segāh, then it enters ḍahārgāh [...] (f. 141v)

The term dastgāh in this manuscript also implies a cyclic form, in which modulation to different modes takes place. One of the most important ideas cited in this treatise, lies in its reference to the "four principal dastgāhs," which may be interpreted as a newly introduced criterion for categorizing aspects of the musical system in that period. It may be inferred that in this stage the cyclic structure, in terms of the dastgāh, gained more importance in musical practice, due to the categorization made on its basis. Moreover, the four principal dastgāhs, with regard to their presumably cyclic structure, signify a possible relation between the concepts of the dastgāh and the shadd. Although the term shadd in musical literature during the 13th and 15th centuries was mainly synonymous with the maqām and parda, and in some treatises of 16th century it is used in

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1. In this treatise the term namūd also is cited, which is related to namūd. The namūd may have been a short form of the namūdār.
rather the same sense as the dastgāh in the 17th century. For instance, musical treatises like Behjat al-Rūḥ, pseudo-Rawḥānī, Maʿrefat-e ‘Elm-e Mūsāqi or Karāmīye refer to the four shodūd (plural of shadd) in relation to musical practice. Each shadd in such manuscripts comprises several modes. A clue, which suggests the possible relation between the concepts of the shadd and dastgāh, lies in their cyclic structure that begins and ends in the same mode while modulating to some other modes. In another manuscript (Kulliyāt-e Yūsufī, f. 22) both terms, the dastgāh and the shadd, are cited together as:

[...] When the instrumentalist or the vocalist wants to go on to the dastgāh, first he [or she] should start with shadd-e dogāh, then moves to huṣūr... [and so on and finally] returns to dogāh.

3. Formation of the Twelve Dastgāhs

The concept of the dastgāh as the main basis of the musical system was possibly introduced in the early Qajar era by a musician named Āqā Bābā Makhmūr, as mentioned in a unique musical manuscript entitled Kulliyāt-e Yūsufī by Dīāʾ al-Dīn Yūsufī (cf. Massoudieh 1997: 39). According to this treatise, in the reign of FathʿAli Shāh (1797-1835), Āqā Bābā Makhmūr introduced the basis of the musical system into twelve dastgāhs, i.e., rāstpandgāh, navā-neyshābūr, homāyūn, māhūr, rohāb, shūl-o-shahnāz [shūr-o-shahnāz], čahārgāh-mokhālef, segāh, dogāh, zābol, ‘ashīrān and neyriz (f. 37). Therefore, it may be inferred that the previous four-dastgāh system changed into a newly formulated twelve-dastgāh system around late 18th or the early 19th century. The information provided in this manuscript is quite noteworthy in some respects, for instance it says:

[...] You should know that the [musical] terminology is quite different between the performers and the scholars. Because the instrumentalists [or musicians] have named each of the āvāzes by their own terminology, also the musicians themselves greatly vary in their terminology with regard to the names of the maqāms and shuʿbas. (f. 17)

According to Dīāʾ al-Dīn Yūsufī, difference in terminology among instrumentalists is partly due to the differences in their particular instruments. For example, he adds, certain āvāzes should be performed in high registers on one instrument and in low registers on another, hence resulting in a difference in terminology (ff. 17-18). This issue has even been reflected in his own treatise, since in folio 16 he refers to dastgāh-e salmak, which is not mentioned among the twelve dastgāhs cited at the end of this manuscript on folio 37. Likewise, the names of the four shaddās mentioned in this manuscript are different from those cited elsewhere (cf. Behjat al-Rūḥ, among others.). Thereupon, the strong possibility of the existence of various synchronic styles in the classification and even in the number of the dastgāhs should also be taken into consideration.

4. Reformulation: Primary and Secondary Dastgāhs

It seems that the twelve-dastgāh system went through reformulation in the late Qajar epoch. Having briefly mentioned the old maqām theories,
Forsat al-Dawla Shürrazi (1855-1920) in his work, Bohûr al-Allāhūn, points out to some noteworthy information. He says in that period the dastgâh system changed: some dastgâhs were added, left or changed their names (Shürrazi 1988: 18-19). He adds that the music scholars that time made some changes to the old dastgâhs and based the new system on seven dastgâhs (Ibid.). He refers to “the twelve old dastgâhs” and says that “the old dastgâhs have been changed into seven dastgâhs” (Ibid.). Therefore, it may be said that, contrary to the common belief (e.g. Kânî 1998), before that time the dastgâh concept had already been in use and indeed went through an internal reformulation in that period, around 1914.

Moḥammad-Taqī Dâneshpazhûh (1976: 225) refers to another musical treatise in his catalogue of manuscripts, which may help us get a better understanding of this process of reformulation. Although, all efforts of the present author to find a copy of this manuscript, which has once been kept in a private library, have been in vain, yet its title as mentioned by Dâneshpazhûh yields valuable information. It is entitled [A Musical Treatise] “On the Six Primary and Six Secondary Dastgâhs along with two Cycles and some Poems about the Maqāms”. The title, per se, suggests that there has been a tradition of categorizing the cycles, or dastgâhs, into primary and secondary ones, a tradition that is still being used in the contemporary Persian classical music. Currently, there are seven primary dastgâhs, the names of which concord with those cited in Bohûr al-Allāhūn, and five [or even more in practice] secondary ones referred to as the ővâzes.

In connection with the tradition of the six dastgâhs, Azerbaijani treatise on the Science of Music entitled Ẓodûh al-sandbox can be referred to which bears the date of 1884 (Navvâb 1913). This treatise, which is published in Baku in 1913, cites the concept of the dastgâh, in terms of its cyclic structure. The author points to six dastgâhs and provides us with descriptions of their constituent parts. This raises an important question, as how can the close affinity of the concept of the dastgâh in Persian and Azerbaijani musical traditions be justified? The fact that Mozaﬀar al-Dîn Shâh (1896-1906), as a Qajar prince, had lived in Tabriz might be worthy of notice in finding a possible answer to such a question.

5. The Idea of the Radīf

The formation of the radīf, as a fixed collection of traditional model melodies, is of a later origin. This term has not been mentioned in the known musical literature prior to the 20th century. It might be possible that, as Nettl (1992: 4) and Talâ’î (1993: 8) suggest, the idea of the radīf, as a model repertory for traditional music education, has been formulated after the Western repertoires in the early 20th century. The codification and compilation of the traditional repertory of Persian classical music is usually attributed to the Farâhânî family of musicians in the late Qajar era (Talâ’î 1993: 8). The earliest versions of the radīf were arranged for the long-necked lutes, the setâr and the tûr, by such great masters as Mirzâ ʿAbdollah (1843-1918) and Aqâ ḤoseīnQoli (d. 1913) at the Qajar court. Thus, it can be called as direct outcome of Qajar period. In connection with the
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contemporary structure of the dastgāhs, as constituent cycles of the radīf, another manuscript seems to yield brief, but interesting, information. In a musical manuscript, entitled The Food of Soul Lies in the Science of Music, by Mo'ayyed al-Tojār, written in the reign of Mo'azaffār al-Dīn Shāh (1896-1906), the term dastgāh is also used. Moreover, it refers to some parts of the structure of a few dastgāhs such as māhūr and homāyūn, and gives instructions with regard to the appropriate poetic feet (bohzūr). It is noteworthy that, his descriptions of [dastgāh-e] māhūr as comprising the 'arāq and sāqīnāma and of [dastgāh-e] homāyūn as including būdād and shūshtar [shūshtrā] (ff. 164-166) coincide with the contemporary repertory of the radīf. In the contemporary repertory of Persian classical music, the radīf, 'arāq and sāqīnāma are among the gūshes of dastgāh-e māhūr; likewise būdād and shūshtrā are both among the main gūshes of dastgāh-e homāyūn.

Conclusion
The evolution of Persian classical music system, from the maqām to the dastgāh and formation of the idea of the radīf, seems to have gradually taken place through five stages. Moreover, contrary to the common belief, the concepts of the dastgāh and the radīf were introduced to Persian music in different periods. This process begins in the mid-17th century with the appearance of the term dastgāh in musicological literature as a potential factor within the maqām system. The dastgāh, thus, seems to have been associated with the cyclic structure of certain maqāms. In the second stage, presumably later 17th century, the dastgāh concept gains more importance as a criterion to organize aspects of the musical system. In this period, the four principal dastgāhs, in terms of cycles accommodating several modes or maqāms, seem to have been introduced to musical practice. In its third stage, during late 18th or the early 19th century, the four-dastgāh system was replaced by a new system of the twelve dastgāhs. In this period the dastgāh concept as the main criterion for organizing the musical system seems to have been established. In the fourth stage, presumably in the late 19th century, the newly introduced twelve-dastgāh system went through an internal reformulation leading to the distinction of primary and secondary dastgāhs. There seem to have been at least two main trends in this process of reformulation, i.e. two groups of either six primary and six secondary cycles or seven primary and five secondary cycles. In the fifth stage, in the early 20th century, the idea of the radīf, as a prescribed sequence of melodic modes and the collection of a series of the gūshes into seven dastgāhs and five āvāzes, was formulated. Currently, the radīf, as the model repertory of Persian classical music, serves as the main pedagogical repertory as well as the point of departure in improvisatory performances, and the main source through the musicological analysis of which the canonical syntax of Persian classical music can be revealed.
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پیشینه تاریخی مفهوم دستگاه در رسالات موسیقی ایرانی

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واژگان کلیدی: دستگاه، مقام، رده‌بندی، تاریخ موسیقی ایران، رسالات و نسخ خطی موسیقی ایرانی

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