

# Rast Maqam and Form in Azerbaijani Âşık Music: A Modal–Intonational Analysis of Selected Airs from the Epic “Âşık Garip”

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## Abstract

This study examines selected âşık airs performed within the epic *Âşık Garip* through a theoretical analysis of their modal–intonational, melodic, metro-rhythmic, and formal structures. Among the thirty-two airs constituting the narrative framework of the epic, fifteen are based on the Rast maqam; five representative examples—“Çukur Hava,” “Dastanı,” “Gülabi,” “Güllü Göyçe,” and “Kerem Köçtü”—were transcribed and analyzed in detail. The findings demonstrate that although these airs are grounded in the Rast maqam and particularly its Şikeste-i Fars section, their modal identity is dynamically articulated through shifting cadential tones, sectional expansion, and performance-based variation.

The analyses reveal that recurring melodic nuclei—especially the “a” episode and its variants (a1, a2)—function as primary form-generating elements, ensuring structural coherence across multi-sectional designs. Metro-rhythmic organization plays a decisive role in shaping expressive character, often combining stable metric accompaniment with *Ad libitum* declamatory vocal delivery. Furthermore, the dialogic interaction between vocal and instrumental parts expands the harmonic and timbral field through saz-based quartal and quintal sonorities.

Although the airs frequently appear in two- or three-sectional formal schemes, their underlying structural logic reflects a unified melodic core shaped by the semantic and narrative demands of the epic text. The study concludes that âşık music, as a syncretic oral art form integrating poetry and music, embodies structural flexibility, modal richness, and content-dependent formal variability within the framework of the Rast maqam tradition.

**Keywords:** Rast maqam; Şikeste-i Fars; âşık music; modal-intonational analysis; epic performance; musical form

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