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**THE FEAST AND HYMNS OF THE VIRGIN MARY'S ASSUMPTION IN SYRIAC COMMUNITY\*****Süryaniler'de Meryem Ana İntikâl Bayramı ve İlahileri****Asiye ÖZER\*\*****N. Oya LEVENDOĞLU\*\*\***

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**ABSTRACT**

This study aims to understand how the Syriac community living in the village of Anıtlı in Mardin's Midyat district experience the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, organized in the Meryem Ana Church, in the context of the relationship between music and faith. This research was conducted based on cultural analysis. Data were collected through observation and unstructured interviews and analyzed using a descriptive approach. Melodic nucleus was employed to analyze the makâm used in the rituals. As a result of the research, it is seen that music in the Syriac community emerges as an indispensable element for rituals performed with a cyclical system, and the phenomena and meanings constituting the belief are embedded in the melody and rhythm structures and thus in music to serve the purpose of the ritual. The messages conveyed in the rituals are blended with the effect created by the eight main makâm on the basis of theological grounds. In this context, it is understood that the hymns performed during the ritual, inspired by religious texts, have functions such as ensuring the permanence of the sacred texts on congregants participating in the ritual, intensify the religious experience and deepening it.

**Keywords:** Syriac Belief, Virgin Mary, Ritual, Musical Practices, Makâm Analysis.

**ÖZ**

Araştırmanın amacı, Mardin Midyat ilçesine bağlı Anıtlı köyünde yaşayan Süryaniler'in Meryem Ana Kilisesi'nde düzenledikleri Meryem Ana İntikâl Bayram'ını müzik ve inanç ilişkisi bağlamında nasıl yaşadıklarını anlamaya çalışmaktır. Bu araştırma, kültür analizine bağlı olarak yürütülmüştür. Veriler, gözlem ve yapılandırılmamış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmış ve betimsel yaklaşımla çözümlenmiştir. Ayinde kullanılan makâmın analiz edilmesinde ise ezgi çekirdek analizlemeleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırma sonucunda, Süryani cemaatinde müziğin, döngüsel bir sistem ile yapılan ayinler için vazgeçilmez bir unsur olarak ortaya çıktığı, inancı oluşturan olgular ve anlamlar, ritüelin amacına hizmet edecek şekilde ezgi ve ritim yapılarına dolayısıyla müziğin içine yerleştirildiği görülmektedir. Ayinlerde verilen mesajlar, teolojik zemin esas alınarak, sekiz ana makâmın yarattığı etki ile harmanlanmaktadır. Bu bağlamda, ayin süresince dini metinlerden esinlenerek icra edilen ilahilerin, ayine katılan cemaat üyeleri üzerinde kutsal metinlerin kalıcı olmasını sağlamak, inançsal etkiyi çoğaltmak ve derinlik kazandırmak gibi işlevler taşıdığı anlaşılmıştır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Süryani İnanç, Meryem Ana, Ritüel, Müzik Pratikleri, Makâm Analizi.

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**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Yapılan araştırmanın amacı, Mardin ili Midyat ilçesine bağlı Anıtlı (Hah) köyünde yaşayan Süryani cemaatinin, Meryem Ana Kilisesi'nde gerçekleştirdikleri Meryem Ana İntikâl Bayramı ayinini müzik ve inanç ilişkisi bağlamında nasıl deneyimlediğini ortaya koymaktır. Yapılan bu çalışmada, müziğin dini ritüeller içerisindeki işlevini yalnızca estetik bir unsur olarak değil, aynı zamanda inancın aktarımı, pekiştirilmesi ve sürekliliğinin sağlanmasında belirleyici bir yapı olarak ele almaktadır. Bu bağlamda araştırma, Meryem Ana İntikâl bayram ayininde icra edilen müziğin, cemaatin kolektif hafızası, inanç pratikleri ve ritüel bütünlüğü içerisindeki konumunu anlamayı hedeflemektedir.

Araştırma, nitel araştırma yöntemlerine dayalı bir kültür analizi yaklaşımıyla yürütülmüştür. Çalışmanın verileri, Anıtlı köyünde gerçekleştirilen Meryem Ana İntikâl Bayramı ayini sırasında yapılan katılımcı gözlemler ve cemaat üyeleriyle gerçekleştirilen yapılandırılmamış görüşmeler yoluyla toplanmıştır. Gözlem sürecinde ayinin genel yapısı, müziğin ayin içindeki konumu, icra biçimleri ve cemaatin müzikle kurduğu ilişki ayrıntılı olarak kayıt altına alınmıştır. Yapılandırılmamış görüşmeler ise cemaat üyelerinin müziğe yükledikleri anlamları, ayin sırasında deneyimledikleri duygusal ve inançsal süreçleri anlamaya yönelik olarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Elde edilen veriler betimsel analiz yöntemiyle çözümlenmiştir. Ayinde icra edilen ilahilerin melodik yapılarının çözümlenmesinde, özellikle ezgisel hareket temelinde bir analiz yöntemi olan Ezgi çekirdekleri yaklaşımı kullanılmıştır. Bu yöntem aracılığıyla, kullanılan makamların temel melodik çekirdekleri, ezgi hareketleri ve karakteristik özellikleri belirlenmiştir. Analiz süreci, müziğin yalnızca teknik bir unsur olmadığını; aksine, ritüelin inançsal içeriğini destekleyen, yönlendiren ve tamamlayan bir yapı olarak işlev gördüğünü ortaya koymaktadır. Ayinde icra edilen ilahilerin, belirli makamlar üzerinden şekillenmesi, teolojik mesajların duygusal ve algısal düzeyde cemaat tarafından daha güçlü, etkili ve hızlı bir biçimde deneyimlenmesini sağlayan işlevler üstlenmektedir.

Süryani cemaatinin kilise takviminde Meryem Ana için sekiz farkı bayram ayini bulunmaktadır. Süryaniler, rabbani bayramlardan biri olarak değerlendirdikleri Meryem Ana İntikâl Bayramını, her yıl 15 Ağustos'ta büyük bir coşkuyla kutlayarak ayin düzenlemektedirler. Özellikle Midyat Anıtlı köyünde bulunan Meryem Ana Kilisesi'nin tarihsel önemi ve bölgede azalan nüfus nedeniyle cemaat Meryem Ana'nın İntikâl Bayram ayini için bir gece öncesinden burada toplanır ve sabahın ilk ışıkları ile ayini gerçekleştirirler. Kilise mekânı, ritüelin icra edildiği fiziksel bir alan olmanın ötesinde, cemaatin kolektif hafızasının ve inanç pratiğinin somutlaştığı bir anlam alanı olarak işlev üstlenmektedir. Cemaatin her yıl aynı zamanda, aynı mekânda toplanarak ayini birlikte icra etmesi, inancın bireysel bir deneyimden çıkarak ortak ve paylaşılan bir ritüel hâline gelmesini mümkün kılarken aynı zamanda cemaatin inançsal boyutta bir olma, Tanrı'ya hizmet ederek ulaşma duygusunu, kültürel kimliğin güçlenmesini pekiştirmektedir. Bu birliktelik içerisinde müzik, ritüelin zamansal akışını düzenleyen ve kutsal metinlerin algılanışını derinleştiren temel bir unsur olarak öne çıkmaktadır. Ayin sırasında icra edilen ilahilerin, mekânın akustiğiyle bütünleşerek cemaat üzerinde ortak bir duygulanım ve anlam alanı oluşturduğu; bu sayede inancın, her ritüelde müzik aracılığıyla yeniden üretilen ve süreklilik kazanan bir yapıya dönüştüğü görülmektedir.

Araştırma bulguları, Süryani Kilisesi'nde kullanılan makamların, ayinlerin vazgeçilmez bir bileşeni olarak döngüsel bir sistem içinde konumlandığını göstermektedir. İnancı oluşturan temel olgular ve anlamlar, ayinin amacına hizmet edecek şekilde ezgi ve ritim yapılarına yerleştirilmekte; dolayısıyla icra edilen ilahiler, inançsal

mesajın taşıyıcısı hâline gelmektedir. Bu durum, ilahilerin yalnızca eşlik eden bir unsur değil, gerçekleşen ayinin merkezî bir bileşeni olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

Süryani kiliselerinde gerçekleşen ayinlerin, teolojik zemin esas alınarak kilisede kullanılan sekiz ana makâmın yarattığı etkiyle bütünleştirildiği görülmektedir. Her bir makâmın kendine özgü duygusal ve anlamsal çağrışımlarıyla inanç bağlamında kutsal kişilere atfedilmektedir. İcra edilen ilahilerin metinleri ise kutsal metinler ile uyumlu bir biçimde yazılıp günümüze geldiği görülmektedir. Belirli makâmlar ile icra edilen ilahilerin, ayin içinde yalnızca melodik tercihler olarak değil, inançsal duygu ve anlatıların güçlenmesini sağlayarak; cemaat üyeleri üzerinde kutsal metinlerin kalıcılığını artırma, inançsal etkiyi çoğaltma ve gerçekleşen ayinin manevi derinliğini güçlendirme gibi işlevler üstlendiği anlaşılmaktadır. Bu temelde, Süryani kiliselerinde icra edilen müziğin, ayinin hem yapısal hem de anlamsal bütünlüğünü destekleyen merkezi bir unsur olarak öne çıktığı görülmektedir.

Araştırmanın ortaya koyduğu bir diğer önemli bulgu, müziğin cemaat içinde kolektif bir deneyim alanı oluşturduğudur. Ayin sırasında icra edilen ritmik ve melodik yapıların, cemaat üyeleri arasında ortak bir inanç ve dil çerçevesinde, cemaat bireylerine aidiyet hissi yarattığı görülmektedir. Bu ortak deneyim hem inancın bireysel düzeyden kolektif düzeye taşınmasını sağlar hem de ayinin topluluk üzerindeki ortak kimlik etkisini artırmaktadır. Dolayısıyla birçok kültür ve inançta olduğu gibi müziğin, sadece bireysel bir duygusal deneyim değil aynı zamanda toplumsal ve kültürel bir bağlayıcı ve de tamamlayıcı bir unsur olarak işlev gördüğü değerlendirilmektedir.

Yapılan bu araştırma, Midyat Anıtlı köyünde yaşayan Süryanilerin Meryem Ana İntikâl Bayram ayininde icra edilen ilahilerin, inanç pratiğini tamamlayan çok önemli bir parçası olduğunu ortaya koyarken ayinlerde icra edilen ve belirli bir makâm döngüsü ile kurgulanan ezgi yapıları, teolojik mesajların cemaat tarafından daha etkili bir biçimde algılanmasını ve içselleştirilmesini katkı sağladığı tespit edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda araştırma, müzik ve inanç ilişkisini kültürel ve ritüel boyutlarıyla ele alarak, dini müzik çalışmalarına ve kültürel müzikoloji alanına özgün bir katkı sunmaktadır.

"...Rituals reveal values at their deepest level... man express in ritual what moves them most, and since the form of expression is conventionalized and obligatory, it is values of the group that are revealed. I see in the study of rituals the key to an understanding of the essential constitution of human societies"<sup>1</sup> (Turner, 2017: 6).

Rituals, the system of religious practice, are seen as a means of connecting people to the sacred. As they are known as the recollection of precious memories and the construction of symbolic meanings, rituals also ensure the continuity of social memory. Indeed, the notion of rituals has a character that is particularly associated with sacredness, a social focus, and an incentive. Every ritual object is endowed with specific symbolic meaning. In this context, music, which plays an important role in this social concentration, carries the discourses behind the rhythm into the associated context. Like rituals, music is a sociocultural action with its stylistic, sequential, and repeatable quantity. The characteristic 'rhythmic stimuli' of music reinforces the formality, patternedness, and repeatability of rituals and is seen as an inseparable part of rituals. Hence, as long as music and ritual are connected, it is possible to mention meaning and effect, and the most prominent socio-cultural context of this relationship is religion (Şahin, 2008: 279-280).

Rituals cannot attain meaning without a certain level of sacredness; they are thought to reinforce an individual's sense of social belonging, as well as ensuring the reproduction and continuity of the social structure (Durkheim, 1974: 225-226). In this context, despite all the transformations occurring in sociocultural lifestyles, rituals remain a central element of social and religious life (Turner, 1974: 65). Belief systems resort to various artistic forms to express themselves and gain a more influential position in social life. Music holds a special place among these art forms due to its ease of performance, prevalence, and high power of influence; music, which provides emotional intensity through rituals, is present in almost every faith, albeit in different forms, and is often positioned as a central element (Alcorta, Sosis, 2005: 345).

Music and ritual are not only a reflection of the sacred; they are also practices that play an active role in its construction (Alcorta, Sosis, 2005: 332). They are also believed to contribute to the harmonious maintenance of social life by building a bridge between the individual and society. Music performed within the context of rituals plays a significant role in strengthening faith and national identity, bringing together individual and social experiences and reinforcing the sense of "we" (Warner, 1997:224-229, Clark, 2006:477).

The theoretical dimension established with the holiness in religions is defined as 'faith' and its practical dimension as 'worship'. For a long time in the past, ritual was used in place of the notion of 'worship'. While rituals add a social dimension to beliefs, they also enable the expression of belief. On this basis, they also serve as a bridge between the individual and society. Meanwhile, music, which gives beliefs a social character, has become a commonly used way for societies to express their beliefs. Music, which is known to have a deep and widespread influence, plays an essential role in religious life with its features of emotional intensification in the context of rituals. It should not be forgotten that music, which is included in religious practices, particularly in religions such as Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, is in a direct relationship with the cultural context in which it is located, while its stimulating, impressive, unifying, integrating, deepening, and together enabling characters are evident (Şahin, 2008: 269-272).

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<sup>1</sup> Turner, V. (2017). *The ritual process: Structure and anti-structure*. London: Routledge

In this context, the Syriac community, as one of the ancient peoples of Mesopotamia, is a crucial exemplar for understanding the reciprocal relationship between religion, music, and rituals. The Syriac community has a rich culture with a six-thousand-year history. They consider the basic teachings of the Christian faith, the people, and events attributed to holiness to be touchstone in their culture and state they trace their roots back to the Arameans.

When the regions where the urban music cultural tradition exists are analyzed in a sociological perspective, it is evident that cultural interaction is inevitable, and a fact that the urban music tradition continues within the Church music is understood.

In the analysis of Syriac musical culture in relation to their religious practices, it is seen that the cycle of eight modes/makâms<sup>2</sup> used for the hymns performed in the rituals expresses the phases of human life and the afterlife. Each makâm has a different meaning and theological background. The use of makâm in daily and weekly rituals begins on the first day of each week (Sunday), starting with the feast of Resurrection, and there takes place a regular pairing of two makâm on a weekly basis. The music performed makes it easier to retain religious texts, purifies the soul and enhances the exuberant character of the ritual.

In order to understand the relationship between music and faith in Syrian culture, this research has focused on how the Syriac community in the village of Anıtlı in the Midyat district of Mardin experiences the feast ritual of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. Before going into the details of the flow of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary; Syriac identity, faith, existing musical tradition, the meaning and importance of the aforementioned rituals, the places where they were held, the themes that are formed by the musical elements integrated with faith, and each category under these themes will be explained.

The characteristics of the flow that distinguish the ritual of The Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary from the other rituals systematically performed by the Syrians will be determined and tabulated. For the ritual chosen as the focus of the research, the hymns performed specifically for this ritual will be identified and melodic and textual analyses will be included. On this basis, the main question that the research seeks to answer is “how do the Syrians living in the village of Anıtlı in Mardin Midyat district experience the ritual of The Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in the context of the relationship between faith and music?”. The sub-questions posed to answer the main question of the research were determined as follows;

- a) In what type of setting is the ritual of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary held?
- b) What type of a flow does the ritual of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which is performed in the church of the Meryem Ana, have?
- c) What are the characteristics of the musical components of the ritual in terms of makâm?
- d) What are the distinctive features of the ritual of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, among the systematic rituals?

## Method

<sup>2</sup> In Syriac church music, it has been understood that the concepts of "mode" and "makâm" are used synonymously to describe melodic structures. In this study, the concept of "makâm" was preferred to describe Syriac church music and to better understand its melodic structures.

This study is based upon a qualitative research model oriented towards culture analysis within the discipline of ethnomusicology.

Ethnomusicology, defined as the study of music within a cultural context (Hood, 1957: 2), is a discipline that develops theoretical and methodological approaches to analyzing the relationship between culture and music. This discipline not only considers music as a sound phenomenon but also seeks to understand it by analyzing the cultural practices, belief systems, and social structure dynamics of the communities that produce it. It also examines this process through field research that encompasses the sensory context (Blacking, 1999:58).

Culture analysis, one of the qualitative research designs, focuses on the definition and analysis of all elements that compose culture such as social behavior, structure, functioning and norms. The aim of the studies conducted with culture analysis is known as defining and interpreting a particular group or culture. By its nature, the phenomenon of culture is changing and it is not possible to measure it with data collection tools determined within sharp boundaries, but it is observed, experienced and felt. For this reason, a researcher who analyzes culture is required to spend a significant amount of time in the study area in order to better comprehend the effects of the culture on individuals or groups (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2018: 97-98).

Although we initially felt the cultural closeness, when we started the fieldwork, sociological and theological differences were promptly noticed and our concerns developed along with this process. However, the first interview we had with Saliba Açış in Diyarbakır Meryem Ana Church paved the way for the continuation of the relations based on the principle of mutual trust and sincerity, and our role as an insider was accepted by the community during the process. The interviews that we conducted with other source persons that we reached using the snowball technique and the ceremonies we attended were of great importance in the data collection and analysis process. One of the biggest difficulties that we experienced during this process was the inability to hold regular ceremonies due to the shrinking congregation, and the other was transportation-related difficulties due to the large area. The study process was completed with the participant observer role we assumed during the study process, the interviews we conducted with source persons while maintaining our impartiality, and the support given to the creation of an important Turkish written source with the aim of making Syriac culture visible and passing it on to future generations.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

Data were collected through unstructured interviews and audio and video recordings taken from the field. The interviewees consisted of two categories: those who directly performed the ritual and those who participated in the ritual. Since the rituals were performed by the spiritual leaders and deacons, the interviews were conducted with them, while the participants were represented by the parishioners. The data were collected through observation notes made by regularly attending rituals in Syriac churches in the region for a year and by recording the ritual of the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which took place on 15.08.2022, on camera. The interviews and recordings made during the data collection process were carried out with the permission of the individuals.

In the Syriac Church, the rituals performed according to the theological calendar are always performed in the same manner, but only changes are made to emphasize the meaning and importance of the day. These changes have been determined as: Paul's letters, the hymn performed before the gospel, the section to be read in the gospel,

the hymn to be read after the gospel, Lutanya<sup>3</sup>, and the hymn performed at the end of the service. In this context, for the part of the study related to music, four hymns that constitute the basic structure of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary ritual and are suitable for the maximum variety of sample types due to the rich material they contain were selected.

Descriptive and content analysis approaches were used to analyze the data. In descriptive analysis, in addition to the previously prepared themes, new themes were created based on the data obtained through unstructured interviews (video, ritual transcription). In this context, the data within the themes were organized according to their common and similar characteristics, and sub-themes were created under each main theme. The semantic relationship between the music and literary tradition and the symbolic transmissions formed within the phenomenon of faith of those who are ascribed holiness have been revealed through content analysis.

In this research, the "Melodic Nucleus" approach, a method of analysis based on melodic movement, was used.<sup>4</sup> Bayraktarkatar and Güray (2023) explain the definition of makâm in the context of melody nucleus as follows: "(...) it can be inferred that there is a certain pattern, a pattern underlying the traditional recognition, reproduction and formation of the unique composition of a makâm. The structure of the pattern in question transforms the makâm into a distinguishable and identifiable form through the practice of hearing. (...) A pattern—in the terms of the definition of makâm—is a melody pattern/melody structure that arises from the hierarchical movement of the pitches in the sound set with each other, containing unique information and frequently recurring. Each melody nucleus reveals its own difference in the simplest and plainest way..." (Bayraktarkatal and Güray: 2023: 13).

The pitches within the melody nucleus are functionally divided into four different types.

- 1) Center Identifier Pitch: "m"
- 2) Co-identifier pitch: "t"
- 3) Reinforcing pitch: "p" dominant /cofinal
- 4) Ornamental Pitch: "s"

Central descriptor: This pitch holding the most important place in the naming of the makâm is also the main axis of the melody nucleus. The common descriptor is the pitch that establishes a tension-resolution relationship with the central pitch, defines the melodies and takes on an integrative role. The reinforcing pitch, when used in melodic organization, has the role of supporting the stable balance on the central defining pitch. Finally, the ornamental pitch has the role of providing "melodic transition, variation, connection and movement" between the other three pitch types used in melodic organization (Bayraktarkatal and Güray, 2023: 20).

The original names of the notes in Turkish music used in the makâm analysis of the hymns and their positions on the staff are shown below:

<sup>3</sup> The name given to the hymn that most clearly emphasizes the meaning and importance of the day.

<sup>4</sup> There have been pioneering studies on the subject of approaching makâms from a melody-based perspective. See: "Geleneksel Türk Müziğinde Makâm Kavramı" (Bayraktarkatal, 1997), "Bin Yılın Mirası" (Güray, 2012), "Ezgisel Kodların Belirlediği Bir Sistem Olarak Makâm Kavramı: Hüseyini Makâmının İncelenmesi" (Bayraktarkatal-Öztürk, 2012), "Makâm Müziğinde Ezgi ve Makâm İlişkisinin Analizi ve Yorumlanması Açısından Yeni Bir Yaklaşım: Perde Düzenleri ve Makâmsal Ezgi Çekirdekleri" (Öztürk, 2014)



Figure 1. The original names of the notes in Turkish music

## Conceptual Framework

In this part of the study, the relationship of the music with the concepts of faith and symbolism is discussed.

**Syriacs with their beliefs and worship.** Syriacs, who have been able to live in different regions with different beliefs, are a community that has maintained their culture and language, which is the most important element of culture, throughout history. Although they have a deep-rooted historical heritage, they prioritize their history, which has been integrated with Christianity after they accepted this faith. Another aspect they value is the Syriac language, which they consider sacred because they are the community that speaks the same language as Jesus Christ (Bozok, 2009: 23). The Syriac language has gained the position of the most prominent language for the Christian world after the Greek language, and has become the language of science, culture and literature of the entire region (Ayağ, 2014: 15).

There are different views on the origin of the word Syriac, but the most prominent and the dominant view is that the Greek term Surios/Suros was coined by the Romans for the peoples of the Middle East who spoke languages other than Greek (Brock, 2023: 18).

Although the debate on the origins of the Syriacs is ongoing both among themselves and among researchers, they have themselves three different views on the origin debate (Durak, 2000: 2). As a result of the views put forward and the studies conducted, it is accepted that the Syriac ancestors are the Arameans, who established kingdoms in northern Syria and Mesopotamia, and whose traces are seen throughout history with their alphabets, languages and cultures (Tahincioğlu, 2011: 23).

The debates about the nature of Jesus Christ also formed the basis of theological and social divisions within Syriacs (Çelik and Aksoy, 2017: 193-197). In the mid-fifth century, this division was clustered under eight different names: East Syriacs (Nestorians), West Syriacs, Chaldeans, Syriac Angelites, Greek Catholic Angelites, Maronites, Syriac Catholics and Syriac Protestants (Akyüz, 2005: 22).

According to research, the population of this ancient community, which has various metropolitans in India, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Turkey, is approximately four and a half million. In Turkey, the population of Syriacs is thought to be approximately twenty-five thousand (Şen, 2020: 38). Today, Syriacs in Turkey live mainly in Mardin, Diyarbakır, Batman, Siirt, Adıyaman, Şanlıurfa, Hatay, İstanbul, Adana, Malatya, Kahramanmaraş, Gaziantep, and Elazığ. In Turkey, the Syriac Ancient Church has metropolitanships in Midyat, Istanbul, Mardin and Adıyaman (Bozok, 2009: 30-31; Şen, 2020: 43).

According to the Syriac Orthodox Church, God (the father) and Jesus (the son) are one. In Jesus Christ, God and man unite to form one nature; that is, Jesus Christ is both God and man. In addition to the belief in God, other



beliefs of Syriacs consist of Angels, the Gospel, the Resurrection and the Afterlife, and Sin (Ayağ, 2014: 83-87; Durak, 2000: 16).

Syriacs perform their collective worships in the church. The birth, life, crucifixion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are the main center of worship (Durak, 2000: 16). Prayer, fasting, Tithing (Zakat) and Holy Pilgrimage (Hajj)" are basic principles of worship (Ayağ, 2014: 87-91).

### **The Meaning of the Church in Syriacs and the Church Hierarchy**

The churches, which have a great importance in Christianity, are known as the name given to the "community of believers in Jesus Christ" and the place where believers gather to fulfill their worship (Küçük, 2013: 93). The church was founded by Jesus Christ and is eternal, therefore Jesus Christ is the essence and head of the church and left the administration of the churches to his apostles (Durak, 2000: 28; Genç, 2020: 48). Syriac clergy is systematized in a certain hierarchy and divided into three as Episcopate, Priesthood, and Deaconate (Ayağ, 2014: 92-95; Bozok, 2009: 44-47; Doğan, 2019: 22-25).

### **The Function and Meaning of Music in Syriac Worship**

The aim of all religious structures is to attain divine knowledge. The general term for unknown and mysterious teachings, 'esotericism', appears in almost all philosophies of religious belief. It shows the awareness of another path to the inner reality, to the secret, other than the one that is concretely proposed. In the history of religions, art and music used to have a limited function in order to attain the divine knowledge or light, but they have gained over time a deeper meaning in worship ceremonies, making the sacred more prominent, hearing the sacred, and confronting the divine, thus creating a wide range of functions (Güray, 2010: 127).

Since the Ancient Greek period, philosophy, science and art culture had been transferred to the Byzantine Empire through translations conducted by Syriacs. The synthesis of esotericism and exoteric understanding that existed in Egyptian and Ancient Greek belief systems can be found in the concept of 'divine beauty' that exists in the foundation of Christianity. The Christian understanding of an 'asceticism and dedication to the path of God' became a fundamental element of the intense monastic culture over time. For this very reason, the philosophy of religious belief shaped by this philosophy has been embodied in a symbolic, abstract and esoteric expression in art. Thus, art works which have a functional meaning in Christianity, are influential tools used to reflect the relationships between 'God, Emperor and people' (Güray, 2012: 62). Such a functional role of art can also be seen in the Christian system of religion and worship. The ancient Greek thinkers, who discovered the power of music and art to perceive one's own universe in order to understand the cosmos, carried this influence into Byzantine culture. In this view, music is a means to understanding one's self and the mystery within one's self, as well as God and religion. It is this belief that led the Syriacs to introduce music into the church in the first place. In this context, for Syriacs, music is an opportunity to find the whole of the expressions that are incomplete with words (Güray, 2010: 127-129).

After the temple built by the Prophet David, music took its place in religious ceremonies, but it was given more significance during the reign of the Prophet Solomon, and 24 choir teams were established in this temple. It is known that the Syriacs first divided the psalms of the Prophet David into 15 sections, each section consisting of

four hymns of praise, and hummed them at certain times of the day. Later, the prayers and hymns sung in the church were arranged in different makâms and started being performed.

In 107 A.D., two separate choir groups were formed in the central church in Antioch, and by the seventh century, all church hymns were arranged according to Sundays, festivals and other days and it was ensured that they were sung jointly (Danno, 1998: 8). Syriac church music, which is thought to have reached its peak in this period, is said to have approximately 3000 hymns. Only half of these hymns composed for church music, which entered a period of setback after the seventh century, have survived to the present day and were collected in the book *Bet Gazo*.<sup>5</sup> Bardaysan, a third century poet, and Mor Afrem contributed the most to the increase in the number of hymns written (Danno, 1998: 8; Güray, 2012: 65). It is an inevitable reality for Syriacs that church music has a connection with their collective memory and has an impact on their culture and worship.

For the prayer program performed in the Syriac Church, ten books with hymns in them are used. However, they are chanted with different makâms, depending on the nature of the ritual and the date of the ritual (Güray, 2012: 65). The textual sources of the hymns are the holy books and the texts written by the church fathers inspired by these books. The texts selected from these sources have started to be performed with eight makâms over time. The sacraments to which the Syriac Church is firmly attached and the understanding of music associated with it contain deep implications and intentions. The first is to distance themselves from the music of communities outside the faith, which they consider pagan; the second is to minimize the boredom of the participants during long rituals; and the third is to reach the meaning of the hymns during prayer through music and to strengthen their faith by affecting the people praying with music. Thus, the persistence of these meanings in ritual serves a dual function: reinforcing Syriac communal unity and ensuring the intergenerational transmission of their distinct, faith-formed culture (Danno, 1998: 13; Şen, 2020: 95). The book in which some of the hymn texts are notated and organized is called *Küçük Bet Gazo*. This book consists of some selected texts of the *Great Bet Gazo* and these books are used in all Orthodox Ancient Syriac Churches (Şen, 2020: 96).

Hymns are divided into types according to the subjects they contain; the meaning of the ritual and the time they are sung. Each hymn is performed on eight different modes and the words are the same but the melodies are different. Another musical performance used by the Syriac Church in religious rituals is the type called prayer. The only difference between prayers and hymns is that they have a recitative feature. Hymns and prayers, which are performed with a single voice and based on the human voice, consist of melodic structures that carry the characteristics of the eight modes accepted by the Syriac Church (Bozok: 2009, 84-89; Danno, 1998: 17-21; Şen, 2020: 97-112).

The twelve-makâm system, previously used in the Syriac church, was thought to be distant from Christian theology, and the eight-makâm system was adopted. Considering the positive effects of these makâms on the human soul, it was deemed appropriate to perform them during worship or during the performance of the ritual (A. Özer, Interview 4, 07.03.2020). Syriac Church Music realizes itself within the cycle of the number "seven". The world was created in seven days, and the eighth day is considered the beginning of the new life to come. There are seven days a week and seven prayers each day. The mysticism of the number "eight" is formed with the addition

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<sup>5</sup> It means 'treasury of makâm' in Syriac.

of the plus one to the number "seven", which forms the root of the solar calendar. The number eight reflects the other life, and has developed the eight-makâm tradition in parallel. On this basis, the first day (first makâm) reflects birth and the eighth day (eighth makâm) reflects death, that is, the beginning of the new life to come and its eternal cycle. Syriac makâms and their meanings are shown in the table below. (A. Özer, Interview 4, 02.09.2022; Şen, 2022: 90-132).

**Table 1.** *Syriac Makâm Names and Their Meanings*

First Makâm	Kadmoyo	The herald, the greeter, the softener	Uşşak
Second Makâm	Trayono	Cold and degrading	Uşşak
Third Makâm	Tlitoyo	Very painful and harsh	Segâh
Fourth Makâm	Rbi'oyo	Cold and exciting	Rast
Fifth Makâm	Hmişoyo	Strong and burning warmth	Segâh
Sixth Makâm	Şhtitoyo	Softening and crying (sad)	Acemli Hüseyini
Seventh Makâm	Şhbi'oyo	Extraordinarily warm	Sabâ
Eight Makâm	Tminoyo	Very harsh	Hicaz

These makâms are based on the four values<sup>6</sup> of the Christian faith, namely the Virgin Mary, the Holy of Holies, the Redemption-Return and the Cross-Fathers-Saints. The first and second makâms are associated with Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary. They also reflect birth, the beginning of life. The third and fourth makâms symbolize the commemoration of the deeds of saints and sacraments, the fifth and sixth makâms reflect repentance, the seventh makâm reflects death, and the eighth makâm reflects the resurrection, the beginning of eternal life (Güroy, 2012: 65; Şen, 2020: 156-157). According to this system, the use of makâm in daily and weekly rituals starts on the first day of each week (Sunday) starting from the Nativity Feast and is systematically realized by matching two weekly makâms (A. Özer, Interview 2, 02.09.2022). The weekly cycle of eight makâms is given in the table below (Aydın, 2018:40; Şen, 2020: 131).

**Table 2.** *Cycle of Makâm Use in the Ancient Syriac Church*

Number of weeks	Market	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Week	1st Makâm (Kadmoyo)	5th Makâm (Hmişoyo)	1	5	1	5	1
Week	2nd Makâm (Trayono)	6th Makâm (Şhtitoyo)	2	6	2	6	2
Week	3rd Makâm (Tlitoyo)	7th Makâm (Şhbi'oyo)	3	7	3	7	3
Week	4th Makâm (Rbi'oyo)	8th Makâm (Tminoyo)	4	8	4	8	4
Week	5th Makâm (Hmişoyo)	1st Makâm (Kadmoyo)	5	1	5	1	5
Week	6th Makâm (Şhtitoyo)	2nd Makâm (Trayono)	6	2	6	2	6
Week	7th Makâm (Şhbi'oyo)	3rd Makâm (Tlitoyo)	7	3	7	3	7
Week	8th Makâm (Tminoyo)	4th Makâm (Rbi'oyo)	8	4	8	4	8

<sup>6</sup> The four values are defined as "birth, life, maturity and death".

The hymns in one vocal line are performed alternately between the spiritual leader and the deacons who lead the ritual. The hymns and prayers performed in the church are taught by *Melfone*<sup>7</sup> through the auditory memory method (Şen, 2020: 126).

### **Midyat Anıtlı Village Meryem Ana Church**

Midyat district, known as a city of culture, is a geographical region where Syriacs, Yazidis, Muslims and other faith communities live together. The region, which the Syriacs define as Turabdin,<sup>8</sup> is known as the region stretching from the Diyarbakır basin to the Syrian deserts, from the Hakkari Mountains to Mount Cudi on the eastern side of the Tigris Valley and the Mardin Mountains extending to the west of the valley (Öztemir, 1988: 34). In Turkey, this region contains Midyat, Hasankeyf, İdil, Savur, Ömerli and a large part of Nusaybin (Özmen, 2006: 161- 162).

The construction date of the Meryem Ana Church— located in the southern part of Anıtlı village and one of the first portative structures of the region— dates back to the first century. However, the exact date is not known. The square plan of the exterior and the dome-shaped interior of the Meryem Ana Church, built on a two-thousand-year-old monument, are among the remarkable features (Ayağ, 2014: 111; Küçük, 2013: 115). Another feature that distinguishes the church from other churches in the region and makes it unique is the cross on the ceiling of the ritual section and the dove motif depicting the spirit of Jesus Christ on the top of the cross. In the interviews, the theological narrative of this motif was conveyed as follows: "After Jesus Christ was baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit descended from the sky in the form of a dove and landed on Jesus Christ" (A. Özer, Interview 1, 15.08.2022).

### **Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary**

The Syriac Church uses the Taklab Calendar<sup>9</sup>, which was created in the 400s AD and is based on the solar calendar. According to church theology, this calendar is taken as a basis and important days and holidays are arranged according to this calendar. The festival rituals celebrated after the fasting and abstinence that are held beforehand are considered sacred and ensure the unity and solidarity of the society. Among the annual rituals, the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is celebrated every year on August 15 after the fast of the Virgin Mary (Durak, 2000: 83); three days after the Virgin Mary is buried, she ascends to heaven, praised by angels (Şen, 2020: 140). In the theological transmission, while the apostles were present at the time of the Virgin Mary's burial to show the reverence and love they felt, the Apostle Danube, who was on his way from India for the burial, was unable to be present. Three days after the burial of the Virgin Mary, when the Apostle Danube arrived in Jerusalem, he had a vision of the Virgin Mary ascending into heaven accompanied by angels. At that moment, he asked her for a blessing, which she granted and threw her own belt to him from the sky. The Apostle Danube, who had joined

<sup>7</sup> In Syriac, it means "Teacher".

<sup>8</sup> In the interview, it was reported that the word "Tur" means "mountain" and the word "Abdin" means "Slave"; in other words, Turabdin is defined as "Slave Mountain" (A. Özer, Interview 5, 02.03.2024)

<sup>9</sup> The liturgical calendar (church order, ceremonies, etc.) created by the church fathers based on the solar calendar until 2050. (A. Özer, Interview 3, 15.01.2023)

the other apostles, shows this belt as proof that the Virgin Mary had indeed ascended to heaven with the vision he had seen. Thus, this day is considered sacred for Christians and celebrated as a holiday (Genç, 2020: 100).

Syriacs come to the village of Anıtlı the day before the Feast of the Assumption and gather at the Virgin Mary Church for evening prayers. After the evening prayers are over, they spend time in the church garden, chatting with their guests from different regions and sharing the buns and food they make at home. After this sharing, they spend the night in the church for collective or individual prayers and worship, and at the first light of the morning they perform the feast ritual.

As a result of the fieldwork, the ritual flow of the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary was analyzed and themes and codes were determined. In this context, the ritual flow in question is shown in the table below.

**Table 3.** *The Flow/Cycle of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary*<sup>10</sup>

Participants in the Performance of the Ritual / Performers	Symbolic Transference	Bodily Practices	The function of music	Music Genres	Hymns performed
Priest: (In the Church, all clergy are priests) (Compulsor)	-Reenactment of the last Passover/Supper with the 12 disciples of Jesus Christ (Matthew:26:17-30)	-Coming to the rituals hungry (fasting for at least three hours beforehand)	-Invitatory -Calling and preparation -Emotion Transfer/Transference tool	HYMNS -Measured/Rhythmic	-Lalohoşubhobravmo -Bnuhroķ -Baslut Emok - Eramermok -Kadishat Aloho
Deacons (At least one must attend)	-Paul's letter to the Hebrews 9:3-12 -The Gospel (Luke, 10:38-4) -Acquittals	-Wearing symbolic clothing that carries sacredness -Circular (rotations around the altar, kudishkutsin and congregation) -Worship -Blessing - Cross extraction - Burning incense - Passing around a censer - Obeisance and Homage (sometimes with head bowed, arms crossed above the navel, kissing the Gospel and the walls of the Kudishkutsi in a circular gesture) -(at the end of the ritual) Eating and drinking from the sacred offering	- The transportation route of the secret doctrine - Expression tool (Repentance, Gratitude, Purification, Asking for Help and Mercy) -A tool for adding meaning, strengthening and creating depth -Tool for creating enthusiasm -A means to reach the state of ecstasy -The means of reaching the sacred -A means to teach -A means of feeling a sense of unity -The means of transcendence Consecration (becoming part of the Holy, accessing the Holy)	-Out of Measure/Out of Rhythm	-Fawlosšliho -Hallel Dream (Before the Gospel) - Etneşufrâyktohar no (Sabâ melody nucleus) - Yoldath Aloho bthulto (Hûzi melody nucleus) - Kdommoryomrahmon o -Kadish Kadish - Movtoķmoran -Raķemı'laynAloho -Romath Maryam (Nihâvend melody nucleus) -Abun dbâşmayo -‘Ibed Mor duķrono -Moran eṭraḥamı'layn -Loķ congratulations -Havdnurone -En fagreķhrahikmenan (Hicaz melody nucleus)
Congregatio: (Not mandatory)	-Law of Faith -Censer presentation -Greeting -Ritual entry and presentation -Memorials -Lutanya (Hymn emphasizing the meaning and importance of the day) -O our Father in heaven -Strict intensive Worship -Sermon -Prayer of gratitude -Conclusion (concluding prayer of the priest, concluding hymn of the deacons) -The priest dismisses or releases the congregation from the church				

### Makâm Analysis in Hymns Focused on the Virgin Mary

The tonal characteristics of church music and the meanings attributed to it are in line with Syriac theology. The festivals celebrated and the rituals that take place before them can be defined as concrete examples of this parallelism and unity. Members of the congregation who come to church cleansed both physically and spiritually take their places by saying the Trinity.<sup>11</sup> The priest, who is defined as the spiritual leader, begins the liturgical ritual by reciting prayers and hymns containing the meaning of the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary according to the church calendar. The hymns to be sung within the eight makâm cycle determined according to

<sup>10</sup> It has been determined that the parts written in red are the sections that are performed specifically during the Meryem Ana Feast ritual.

<sup>11</sup> The Trinity Sign representing the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

this calendar are sung with the 7th makâm, Şhbi'oyo, that is, the Sabâ makâm melody nucleus. The meaning of the seventh mode, which is attributed to the death in the stages of life, is described in the church as an extraordinary warmth.

In the Syriac Hymnal published by the Syriac Music Institute, Gabriel Aydın (2018: 43) shows the Şhbi'oyo sequence, known as the 7th makâm, as below:



Figure 2. Seventh Makâm Şhbi'oyo

Aydın showed the 7th makâm, which forms the melodic core of the Sabâ makâm, with the initials of the words used in Western music and the tonic and dominant pitches in the scale. F (final) is the tonic pitch; f (Co-final) is the co-tonic pitch; and D (Dominate) as the dominant pitch.

For the celebration of the Feast of the Assumption of Mary, the hymns preferred to emphasize the meaning of the day in the ritual flow will be analyzed.

#### The hymn *Etneşufrâyk* performed before the Gospel.

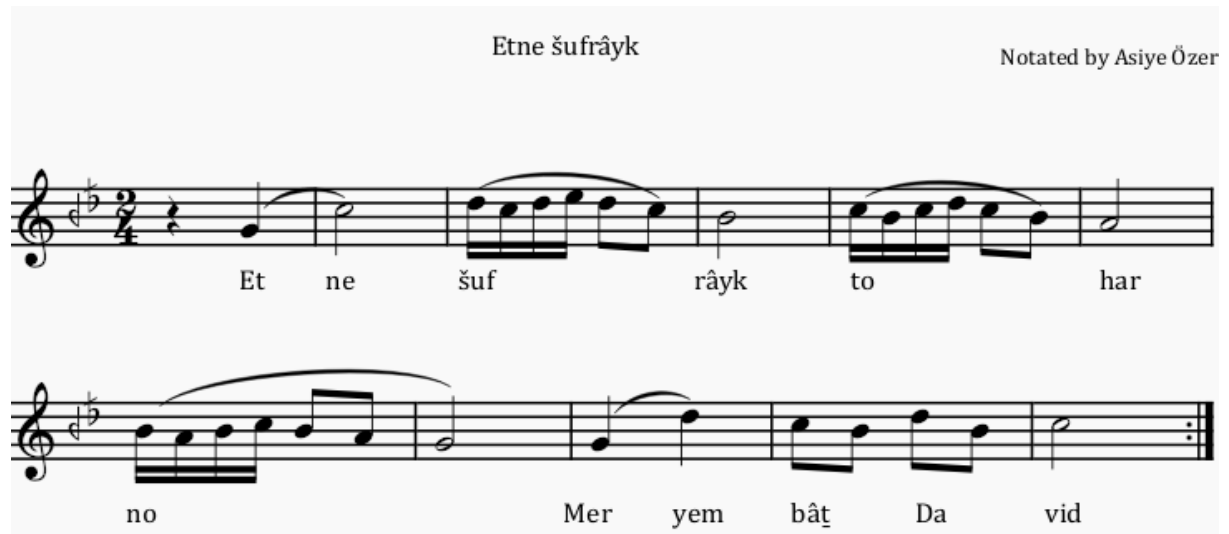


Figure 3. Notes of the hymn *Etneşufrâyk*

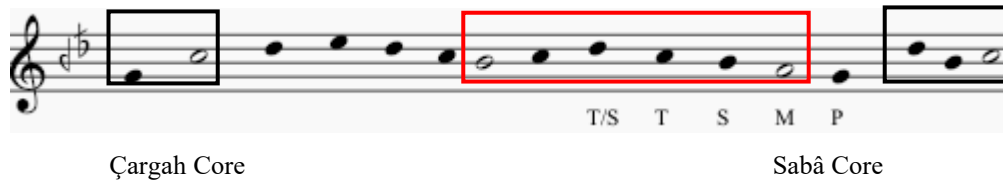


Figure 4. Melody Nucleus of *Etneşufrâyk*

In the unstructured interviews, it was stated that *Etneşufrâyk* is a special hymn that is performed before the Gospel in all rituals attributed to the Virgin Mary. It derives its specialty from the fact that it has to be performed with a makâm different from the makâm determined in the whole ritual. In many sources, it is written that this hymn is performed with the Rast makâm scale known as the 4th mode (Aydın, 2018: 43; Şen, 2020: 125), but in the field research conducted, it was heard/detected that the hymn was performed with the Sabâ melody nucleus,

and in this context, the hymn in question was notated and analyzed again. The hymn in question has a structure in accordance with the oldest type of Çargâh. It is seen that it moves from the pitch of Rast to the pitch of Çargâh and is positioned here. After the Çargâh and Sabâ melodic nucleus, the piece is concluded with a stay in the Çargâh pitch.

This melodic type is the characteristic movement of the Çargâh branch, which is described in 15th century makâm theory books in relation to the Rast cycle.

In the period known as the "systemist school" in Turkish music, which complemented each other with Farabi, Safiyüddin and Merâgi, there is no precise and detailed transmission that would shed light on Çargâh or parallel to the definition of Çargâh in the Arel-Ezgi system (Erguner, 2003: 168).

One of the 15th century theoreticians Kadızâde Tîrevî explained the makâm of Çargâh as follows: Çargâh begins its melodic development from its own pitch. After descending to Segâh, Dügâh, and Rast pitches, it goes back to its own pitch, and when going up to higher pitches, it moves through Sabâ and Hüseynî pitches and resolves on its own pitch again (Erguner, 2003: 169).

In the 18th century, Abdülbaki Nasır Dede treated the makâm as the 48th composition and explained it as follows: "Çargâh starts with Sabâ, uses Acem, Gerdâniye and Muhayyer pitches, and resolves on the Çargâh pitch" (Başer, 1996: 184).

#### The hymn *Yoldaṭ Aloho Bṭulto* performed post the Gospel.

**Yoldaṭ Aloho Bṭulto** Notated by Asiye Özer

Yol daṭ Alo ho Bṭul to duk ro neḡ lburk ṭ o lra ḥi ke val ka ri be fa noy še lo

ṭ hun lay no dak rih hab leh ḥul mo no vlay no dam ʿok b ʿoy leh lu bo bo

vay no dbi šo šo hek leh ṭ ru div me neh bas lu teḡ vab bo ʿ teḡ raḥ me neh vun

ʿ layn ha le lü yah šlu teḡ t ʿa dar lan

Figure 5. Notes of *Yoldaṭ Aloho Bṭulto*



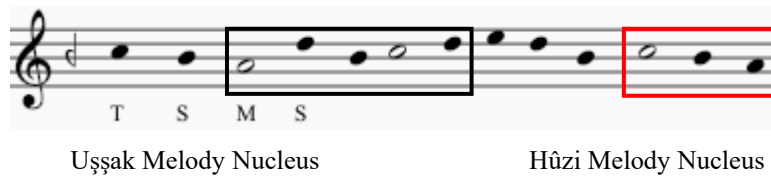


Figure 6. Melody Nucleus of *Yolda Alohobŭlto*

In the melodic movement of the hymn titled *Yolda Alohobŭlto*, which is constructed with a 4/4 rhythm pattern, the melodic movement of the Hûzi makâm is characterized by the fact that it frequently touches the pitch of Çargâh, which is the characteristic feature of the Hûzi makâm, and it touches the pitches of Çargâh and Segâh from the pitch of Nevâ, which is accepted as the core of the Uşşak-Hûzi melody, and resolves by descending to the pitch of Dügâh.

In the melodic construction of the piece, it shows the characteristic feature of the Hûzi makâm with its constant emphasis on the sound of Çargâh and its descent from this pitch to the pitch of Dügâh.

Hızır Ağa gives the description of Hûzi makâm as follows: "Hûzi, on the other hand, starts from the Nevâ pitch, uses Çargâh, Segâh, Dügâh and Rast pitches and resolves on Dügâh" (Daloğlu, 2013: 12).

Güray (2023: 29-30), in his work "Ezgisel Organizasyonlar ve Makâmlar", in the section Makâms Born from Hüseyinî; he included Karadeniz's description of the Hûzi makâm as follows: After starting to express on the Çargâh and Nevâ pitches and making short stops on these pitches, it descends to the Rast pitch with the Segâh and Dügâh pitches and makes short stops on this pitch as well. After that, it decides on the Dügâh pitch by using the Nevâ, Hüseyinî, Acem, Çargâh and Uşşak pitches. The special flavor of the makâm is created by making continuous stops on the Nevâ, Çargâh and Rast pitches. Although some composers do not stop on the Rast pitch and use the Nevâ and Çargâh pitches excessively, it is more appropriate to stop on the Rast pitch in order to create the actual variation of the makâm.

The descriptions being examined, it is seen the Çargâh and Nevâ pitches play a determining role in the melodic movement of the Hûzi makâm. However, it is also to be stated that these pitches have a function that cannot be ignored in relation to the Rast pitch when moving towards the Dügâh pitch (Güray, 2023: 30).

#### The hymn Roma Maryam performed Lutanya

Notated by Asiye Özer

Roma Maryam

Figure 7. Notes of the Roma Maryam



Nihavend Melody Nucleus

Figure 8. Melody Nucleus of *Romaṯ Maryam*

The hymn named *Romaṯ Maryam*, which is constructed with 4/4 rhythm pattern, is performed in Nihâvend makâm. The melodic movement was created with the Nihâvend melodic nucleus while remaining on the Nevâ and Çargâh pitches and reaching a resolution on the Rast pitch.

Tanburi Küçük Artin's definition of Nihâvend makâm is given below (Popescu-Judet, 2002: 29):

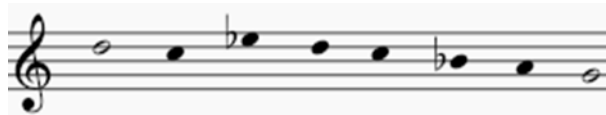


Figure 9. Nihavend Definition of Tanburi Küçük Artin

Ekrem Karadeniz, while describing the Nihavend makâm sequence (1983: 88), supports the melodic movement described by Tanburi Küçük Artin.

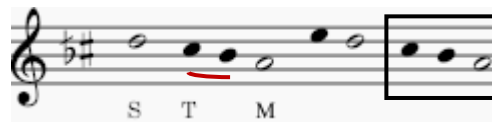
**The hymn En Faghreḳ Raḥik Menan performed at the end of the ritual:**

Notated by Asiye Özer

**En Faghreḳ Raḥik Menan**

En fag reḳ ra ḥik me nan ka diš to šla vo tek ʿ man e nen bḳul ʿe do nin lhav ḥay lo

kas yo dan ḥet vaš ro beḳ et ka šaf leh ka diš to dan ḥa se lan.

Figure 10. *En Faghreḳ Raḥik Menan*

Hicaz Melody Core

Figure 11. Melody Nucleus of *En Faghreḳ Raḥik Menan*

The hymn *En Faghreḳ Raḥik Menan*, which is constructed with simple rhythm patterns in 2/4, was performed in the Hicaz makâm. The melodic movement was created with the Hicaz melodic core while staying at the Nevâ and Çargâh pitches and reaching a resolution at the Dügâh pitch.

The definition of the Hicaz makâm, which has been frequently defined in theoretical works since the 15th century and widely used in Anatolia, is given by Hızırbin Abdullah in his *Kitab'ül Edvar* as follows: "It consists



The eight makâm used in the Syriac Churches also represent a cycle. In addition to representing the stages of human life, i.e. birth, life, death and resurrection/the beginning of eternal life, which are considered to be the four values of the Christian faith, these offices theologically symbolize Jesus Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Holy of Holies, the Resurrection-Return, and the Cross-Fathers-Saints. All Syriac systematic rituals have the same flowing structure, but there are changes that emphasize the meaning and significance of the day. These changes are: Paul's letters, the hymn before the Gospel, the Gospel reading, the hymn post the Gospel, the Lutanya, and the hymn at the end of the ritual.

All of the hymns in the feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary, which is performed in a cyclical system in which the sacred word is transformed into sacred sound, are inspired by religious texts. These hymns aim to develop faith influences such as forgiveness, purification, and reaching the consciousness of truth on the members of the congregation participating in the ritual; music, on the other hand, has assumed a function that ensures the continuity and deepening of these goals to be achieved. At the same time, the hymns performed during the rituals, which last an average of one to two hours, have functions such as keeping the congregation alive, ensuring spiritual unity, evoking emotional reactions, and transforming the atmosphere into a calm atmosphere, sometimes euphoric and sometimes calm with deep thoughts.

In the unstructured interviews and the literature reviewed, it is said that the entire ritual of the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary is performed in the Sabâ makâm, which is defined as the 7th mode. However, in the recordings made during the field research, it is seen that the melodies heard include Hûzi, Nihâvend and Hicaz modes in addition to Sabâ makâm. In this context, the hymn Etneşufrâyk , which is performed before the Gospel in the ritual flow; the oldest Çargâh, the hymn named Yoldaṭ Alohoḇṭulto, which is performed post the Gospel; Hûzi, the hymn Romaṭ Maryam, which is called Lutanya; Nihâvend and the hymn En Faghreḵ Raḥik Menan, which is performed at the end of the ritual flow, consists of Hicaz modes and these hymns are constructed with 2/4 or 4/4 rhythm patterns.

In the analysis of the hymns performed in the ritual flow, it has been seen that these musical practices reflect a religious music tradition unique to the region not only in terms of melody but also in terms of performance and stylistics. It is a fact that in these lands where cultural richness is present, music practices are fed by this richness. For this reason, makâms constitute the most important component of the musical culture of the peoples living in these lands. In this context, the makâms that were identified in the hymns performed in Syriac rituals represent the most frequently used makâms in Anatolia, and in this respect, makâms are crucial in terms of revealing the strong interaction and ancient connections between cultures.

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### Source Persons

**Interview 1:** Saliba Açış, Deacon of Meryem Ana Church of Diyarbakır, was born in 1977 and graduated from high school.

**Interview 2:** Melki Ürek, the Syriac Ancient Metropolitanate of Adıyaman and Environs, was born in 1959 and graduated from primary school

**Interview 3:** Davut Ün, the secretary of the Syriac Ancient Metropolitan of Adıyaman and Environs, was born in 1989 and graduated from university.

**Interview 4:** Gabriyel Akyüz, Priest of Mardin Kırklar Church of Mardin, was born in 1956 and graduated from secondary school.

**Interview 5:** Murat Üzel, Priest of The Syriac Ancient Church of Berlin, was born in 1965 and graduated from university.