

Exploring Motivic Features for Understanding Modal Structure: The Case of Seventeenth-century Turkish Vocal Songs

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There have been attempts for analyzing, or generating a methodology for the analysis of the modal structure of the songs belonging to different genres of Turkish music, either historical or contemporary. In some of these works, specifying melodic motifs is a part of the analysis, being often used as an initial tool for determining the larger formal sequence, and also for subsequent observations which are mostly interested in the inter-motivic relationships. This paper will present a different approach for the use of motifs in analyzing Turkish music, by taking a group of vocal songs from the seventeenth century as point of departure. In my research with these songs, a detailed exploration of motivic features is expected to serve as a reference for better understanding the modal structure. These include the first notes, number of different notes, emphasized notes and preceding ones, contours, number of different melodic movements, and spans. Observing the common or major characteristics regarding the motifs among the songs that belong to a specific *makam* could help to find out the inner texture which contributes to the modal structure, and which might not be found in theoretical definitions.