THE *MUWAŠŠAḤ* AS MUSIC: A BACKGROUND SKETCH

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Whether one considers its historical aspects or its contemporary ramifications, the *muwaššaḥ* [1] as a musical phenomenon is somewhat complex. Thus, albeit regrettable, it is hardly surprising that the following brief introductory remarks have no pretensions to providing either a comprehensive account or a proper *Stand der Forschung* survey. What they offer, rather, is a modest provocation: the suggestion that, despite all the attention devoted to it, from a musicological perspective the *muwaššaḥ* has hitherto generally been less a subject of investigation in itself than a way in to different topics and concerns. From this it would follow either that it has not been addressed sufficiently as a circumscribed and discrete body (or bodies) of musical practices the characteristics of which could be compared and contrasted with others to useful effect, or that it was not (or is not) sufficiently differentiated from other genres to warrant particular scrutiny.

There are, it is true, general accounts which provide a historical outline of the development of the musical settings of the *muwaššaḥ*, and which appear to reflect a scholarly consensus.[2] But what this reveals, for the most part, is the elaboration of a narrative strung together from fragmentary materials, sometimes with little pause to consider whether they can bear the weight of interpretation placed upon them. Allied to this is a presumption that there are links – however tenuous – demonstrable or yet to be discovered between the *muwaššaḥ* now and the *muwaššaḥ* then, thus fulfilling the often expressed hope that it might be possible to work backward from contemporary evidence, if not to fill the historical void then at least to sketch in salient features that might ultimately illuminate the genesis and early development of the form. As one such articulation of this desire to re-discover elements of Andalusian musical practice one may cite, from a typically elliptical but thought-provoking survey of cultural connections and interactions, Gerson-Kiwi:

> "The intriguing question which arises is whether, in today's repertoire, some melodic and textual residues may still be linked with the historical ones of the Andalusian Quattrocento." [3]

(This is followed, however, by a somewhat frustrating set of examples that, in their very variety, actually tend to thwart historical readings.)

One might also point to al-Farūqī's study ostensibly dedicated to the contemporary *muwaššaḥ* (or more precisely to its mid-20th-century manifestation).[4] While not eschewing historical context, this study certainly

concentrates on modern performance practice, and serves to outline various distinctive aspects, of which perhaps the one most relevant to stress here is the aesthetic separation between text and setting. However, it is fair to say that the emphasis is as much on the final element of its title (*Muwashshaḥ*: a vocal form in Islamic culture"), so that what it presents in the guise of an anatomy of a particular song form is a set of fundamentally essentialist propositions about the overriding religio-aesthetic implications of the concept of *tawḥīd*, and the more the *muwaššaḥ* is pressed into service in this way as an exemplar of some larger cultural paradigm, the more any singularities it may possess vis-à-vis other musical genres disappear from view.

The subtitle of the agenda of our present conference adopts, rather problematically, something like a standard Aristotelian plot analysis, separating out three phases: origins, history and present practices. Each, to the extent that it can usefully be severed from the others, may be said to lead in a different direction as far as the musical aspect is concerned. The last, it has been suggested, stands in need of further exploration, but at least one can envisage the disciplinary framework within which further ethno-musicological enquiry might be conducted. The second, it has been intimated, is generally approached as a potential vehicle for time travel in reverse rather than as a dynamic process with its own intrinsic interest: forward motion has, if anything, been viewed as a matter of regret. The first, for all its difficulty, has attracted the greatest share of scholarly attention, but given the lack of hard evidence has inevitably been caught up in the ideological web spun around conflicting accounts of literary origins and cultural influences. If today we cannot but be acutely aware of the incomprehensions that continue to attend the complex relationship between Islam and the West, such sensitivity helps us discern – and provide a corrective scepticism towards – at least some of the prejudices that have leached into the surrounding argumentation. The now venerable enthusiasms of Ribera, for example, and the reasons for them and for the reactions they provoked, are a familiar story and need not be rehearsed here.[5] Nor do we need to continue with an attempt to detect later, less overt examples; rather, a more refreshing emphasis should be placed on the dispassionate care with which the evidence has increasingly been sifted. Nevertheless, it is salutary to note that it is still possible, within more recent scholarship, to encounter diametrically opposed views on origins, depending in part on the extent to which musicological arguments are brought to bear. Thus, to cite but two instances, both Monroe [6] and Abu-Haidar [7] elaborate convincing lines of argumentation, with each not only speaking past the other on the basis of different material, but also, equally tellingly (and disquietingly), largely ignoring the evidence adduced by the other.

However, the present paper is not the place to pursue the argument into the literary and linguistic quicksands, but to note the nature and quality of the musical evidence, such as it is. Here we may begin, as a salutary warning,

with Guettat's bald observation that of the Arab musical practice of al-Andalus we have no direct witness,[8] and if we take this as referring to notation, he is, sadly, quite correct. The point may seem banal, but is crucial nonetheless: the notational record is rendered asymmetrical by the debilitating absence of any Arab sources contemporary with (or, ideally, earlier than) the *Cantigas de Santa María*, with the result that arguments about formal song structure are ultimately reliant on inferences from parallel textual traditions buttressed by the observation of 20th-century musical norms. Hypotheses about melodic idiom might well also have adduced the evidence of the *Cantigas*, emphasising the degree of commonality implied by the apparent musical syncretism of the court of Alfonso X (1252-84), where iconographical witness is supported by the documented presence of Muslim and Jewish musicians in his son's employ, but in the event they tend once again to invoke 20th-century practice as their primary source. They have, in consequence, a somewhat forlorn air: knowing that things change, we are still somehow expected to cling to the hope of being able to identify among the rubble shards from earlier strata.

Despite such drawbacks, it is reasonable to ask how relevant musical factors might be to arguments about literary origins. Not at all, apparently, for those advocating a purely Arab derivation (from *musammaṭ* models or the complexities of *sajʿ* in *maqāma* prose to *muwaššaḥ* to *zajal*), the case for which stands on a mixture of cultural, literary and linguistic grounds. But their very exclusion from the discussion is a suspect form of denial, and the crucial proposition it avoids, that even if not always sung the *muwaššaḥ* is, predominantly, a song form, is in contrast central to the theory of Romance origins.[9] Particularly instructive here are the studies by Wulstan[10] and Liu and Monroe.[11] The former is scrupulous in its discussion of the musical evidence, adducing, first, extant notations of parallel Romance refrain forms which show a clear text/melody correspondence at the level of the verse line, and carrying the argument forward to claim that the same correspondence held in the *muwaššaḥ*.[12] Implied is an isomorphism allowing ready transfer, an easy mapping of new texts in the same or a different language onto a pre-existing melody, and the same line of reasoning is deployed by Liu and Monroe in making a plausible case for taking a further step beyond the general supposition of hybridity to advance a vernacular Romance song type as the ultimate point of origin. Their account is equally exemplary in the way it presents data lucidly, and within its brief confines it provides an admirably full exposition of the textual evidence. But its very adequacy points up how thin that material is, showing by the arguments adduced how it can be moulded into a set of persuasive conjectures leading to potentially hazardous conclusions, and irrespective of how compelling or otherwise we find the conduct of the case to be it is difficult not to find the evidential base somewhat thin. Some things are doubtless clear: that we are dealing with a song form, that new poems were fitted to existing melodies (with the probable

corollary that different melodies could be used for the same poem), and that at least some melodies or melody types formed part of a common cultural pool, but if one wishes, and this has been a constant itch, to draw conclusions about derivations, influences and cultural transfer, in whichever direction, certainty recedes. A brutal summary of the Romance case would be that it manages to accumulate evidence to support the argument that the musically unattested *muwaššaḥ* song form evolved out of the musically unattested *zajal*, itself a contrafact creation derived from a musically and textually unattested Romance forbear; and allied to this is the claim that the grafting of an increasingly complex literary layer onto an already existing popular song form (whatever its ultimate origins) is a more convincing scenario than the reverse.

Not surprisingly, the temptation to search for corroboration in the form of survivals of medieval Andalusian practice in the contemporary Maghribi repertoire has proved irresistible. Given its early history and, especially, the absorption of large numbers of post-1492 Andalusian refugees, it is a reasonable conjecture that later cultural conservatism within the Maghrib might have provided a suitable environment within which at least some elements of Andalusian style and repertoire could be preserved intact. But a documentary void [13] is not of itself an indication of stasis: this remains an assumption with its own subtexts, including, for 20th-century western scholars sensitive to the presumed demise of folk traditions in industrialised Europe, a form of wish-fulfilment combined with apprehensions of loss: the yearning for a repertoire that is tantalisingly out of reach, having expired with its last exponents.[14]

The enquiry, again, proceeds along comparative and derivational lines, with appeal being made in the first instance to formal evidence that might reinforce the parallelisms already observed in the textual traditions. For example, a reasonable case has been argued (by Wulstan, Liu and Monroe, and Plenckers[15]) that alongside elements of stanza structure and rhyme scheme shared by the *muwaššaḥ* and Romance stanzaic verse forms (*rondeau*, *virelai*), a similar parallelism of musical structure can be discerned between the *Cantigas* and modern Maghribi settings of *muwaššaḥ* texts. However, this does little more than confirm the reasonable expectation of homology as a generally operative principle, and viewed on an even wider canvas it indicates that the medieval *muwaššaḥ* is likely to have embodied a principle of contrast usually articulated as alternation, that is, an underlying A B A form akin to the A A B A abundantly attested later in *qaṣīda* settings from the East, thus suggesting that from a narrowly musicological perspective its formal structure may not have been particularly distinctive.[16]

It is also the case that the presumed parallels detected in the modern *san'a* repertoire can sometimes be problematic. Both Wulstan and Liu and Monroe, for example, cite a *muwaššaḥ* by Ibn Sahl (d. 1251) still current in

the Tunisian repertoire. The text consists of *maṭla'* (rhyming ab, ab) + *dawr* (cd, cd – the musical setting jettisons the original third line) + *markaz* (ab, ab), in relation to which one would anticipate a straightforward A B A song structure. But in the event there is an instrumental prelude, and within the verse sections the correspondences are unpredictable: the setting repeats the second b and the first d; and the melodic segments correspond to the verse structure thus:

a b a b b / c d d c d / a b a b

α β γ δ δ / γ δ δ γ δ / α β γ δ

This hardly points to textual-musical formal correspondences sufficiently close to allow derivational inferences. As a similar lack of fit is endemic in the zajalesque *Cantigas* it would certainly be possible to posit a common origin, but otherwise the conclusion could be no more than that transfer is as eminently plausible as its direction would be difficult to determine. A degree of flexibility would in any case be required in a situation where an existing tune was used for a new poem which might not always fulfill the *mu'āraḍa* ideal of complete correspondence. Verse might tug at melody but, equally, musical imperatives could prevail, especially with the injection of sections of semantically void syllables, and even if this occurred but rarely, the fundamental independence of the melody would rule out the possibility of adducing musical factors in deciding between the respective merits of quantity versus stress in prosody.

In all, Liu and Monroe advance no fewer than ten settings for consideration as possible vehicles of ancient, conceivably even Andalusian, material. But the grounds are largely textual, and it is immediately apparent that at least some are musically suspect. To take just one parameter, four are assigned to the mode *ṣīka*, first attested in a Persian text of c.1300 and likely to have been a relatively recent modal derivation, and another is in *kurdī*, which surfaces in the literature even later. They are unlikely to have reached the Maghrib before the 15th century. A further piece, this time in a respectable Maghribi mode, can convincingly be demonstrated to be a late, probably mid-19th-century, derivation from an alien rhythmic intrusion.[17] But even conceding among the others some degree of continuity across the uncharted earlier centuries, if our concern is with origins nothing necessarily follows regarding the primacy of one cultural stream over another.

In effect, it would be prudent to concede that the musical archaeology based on Arab or related sources that has been conducted so far has not got us back beyond, at best, the early 18th century. On the basis that minority communities may retain features that the dominant culture has abandoned, Seroussi has persuasively argued that earlier material may be preserved in the repertoire of *baqqašōt*,[18] but even so, this presumably means of the period of Israel Najara, that is, no earlier than the 17th century. As direct witness of Arab

practice we have just one example from Algiers notated during the early 18th century, and otherwise various propositions derived from modern data. The example in question, examined by Plenckers, exhibits formal and modal similarities with *cantigas* as well as with modern *muwaššaḥ* settings, and serves to reinforce the reasonable postulate of a shared style domain, but if we turn to the 20th-century Maghribi repertoires, whatever plausible extrapolations might be made it would be unrealistic to expect them to preserve actual survivals of 15th-century Andalusian practice. Even if future research were to develop more refined stylometric methods whereby recent accretions could be excluded, it would still be wise to be modest about the time depth that could be claimed for the resulting core corpus, for we can hardly assume that it would have remained immune to style shifts. Also to be noted is the curious unspoken assumption that all we need to do, to demonstrate this case or that, is somehow rediscover the characteristics of the 15th-century pre-exilic Andalusian idiom, conveniently ignoring the fact that we would still have to travel back as far again in time to reach the period in relation to which arguments about origins need to be conducted.

On a more sceptical reading of the fragmentary evidence it could thus be claimed that we are left with little more than tantalising glimpses, and that in trying to construct from these a coherent narrative it has been necessary to rely upon the evolutionary framework set forth in the brief historical sketch offered by al-Tīfāšī (1184-1253).[19] His material, to be sure, is as seductive as it is illuminating, partly because it is so eminently sensible, but partly because through its account of, say, Ibn Bājja's creation of a new stylistic synthesis of Arab and Christian elements it panders to the wish-fulfilment of harmonious tolerance represented by the concept – or construct – of *convivencia*. Still, whatever might reasonably be read off his account of earlier periods (taken in conjunction with what can be learned from other sources, iconographical as well as textual), the caveat should be entered that al-Tīfāšī is writing at a considerable temporal remove from the main stages of development he reports, which are attributed to iconic figures rather than perceived as the result of incremental processes. More revelatory, therefore, because fundamentally more reliable, are his first-hand remarks about the repertoire and performance practices of his contemporaries, which at last give us a sound base from which to begin reading time forwards.

Al-Tīfāšī characterises the Andalusian style as relatively complex and conservative, and he makes a point of its retention of ancient song texts. Of some interest here, even if not fully germane to our theme, is the way he seems to have sloughed off the standard Western inferiority complex, still present in the semi-mythic embellishments of the early career of Ziryāb that would colour the later account offered by al-Maqqarī. But more to the point, although he offers no direct account he suggests a locus, a social context for the *muwaššaḥ*. His comments regarding improvisational virtuosity in solistic

performance are associated with settings of *qaṣīda* poetry, which may be thought to imply a divide between this and, presumably, group involvement in an alternating solo + chorus rendition of lighter pieces. Within the context of the *nawba*, the ramifications of which term lie beyond our present concerns, *muwaššaḥāt* and *azjāl* occupy the two final slots, following the slower and more serious *našīd* and *ṣawt*.[20] From this one might infer for the *muwaššaḥ* (here as distinct from the *zajal*) an intermediate position: of the same linguistic register as the preceding forms, yet performed with the same communal involvement as the concluding colloquial *zajal*. In this context it is instructive that al-Tīfāšī should provide texts and modal designations only for the *qaṣīda* verse set in the *našīd* and *ṣawt*. Rather than simply reflecting contemporary anthologising practice, this may possibly indicate that for him the compositions in these two forms represented the more specialised repertoire of professional singers, while the *muwaššaḥ*, however high the level of language (and literary artifice) involved, is assigned to the more popular end of the spectrum.[21] According to this reading, it may have been simply superfluous to cite *muwaššaḥ* texts that enjoyed wide diffusion: the omission was certainly not due to any dismissiveness on al-Tīfāšī's part towards communal entertainment, as is shown by the emphasis he places, in his concluding discussion of instruments, on the importance of the *būq*, presumably here a form of hornpipe, which is explicitly associated with convivial dance and song.

On the basis of al-Tīfāšī's evidence, it is clear that by the 13th century (and probably already well before) the *muwaššaḥ* and *zajal* were securely lodged as recognised genres within the normative structures of music-making in the urban centres of al-Andalus and, presumably, the Maghrib, despite the stylistic discrimination he makes between the two. For its later evolution in the Maghrib we are reduced to surmise, but we do have adequate documentation, melody always excepted, for the nature of the repertoire in the 18th century. This is provided, especially, by the song-text collection of al-Ḥā'ik, but the continuity suggested by the preservation there of a number of Andalusian *muwaššaḥ* texts should not blind us to the fact that the musical landscape appears to have altered considerably from that described by al-Tīfāšī (and that change was still continuing is indicated by the differences between the *kunnāš* of al-Ḥā'ik and earlier and later collections).[22] The previously prestigious solistic forms are no longer represented, there has been a significant change in modal terminology, and the organisation of the poetic material (nearly all of which is defined as *tawšīḥ* or *zajal*) approximates to the modern large-scale *nawba/nūba* groupings, each with internal divisions based on rhythmic criteria. Authorship is nowhere defined, and the older multi-stanza norms have been abandoned, the great majority of texts being pared down to two stanzas or, more usually, just one (and there is frequently no *maṭla'*). This kind of anonymous repertoire is suggestive of a reduction or elimination of the earlier

system of aristocratic patronage and the individual creativity it fostered, with a compensatory focus on group performance, not just as entertainment but as enacting social cohesion and reinforcing cultural memory, parallel with and quite possibly related to the communal performance of devotional songs in the *zāwiya*.[23]

The spread of the *muwaššaḥ* eastwards, and its subsequent evolution in the East, are poorly understood. This is attributable in part to the inadequate attention hitherto paid to the post-Abbasid era,[24] but more to the sheer paucity of evidence. One might begin by noting a puzzling incongruity between, on the one hand, constant references to the diffusion of the poetry, from Ibn Quzmān's *zajal*s onwards, reinforced by the imitative production of eastern poets such as Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk and Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī, and on the other the stubborn silence of the musicological literature. The eastern *nawba* has no equivalent slot for the *muwaššaḥ*, and there is no mention of it in the inventories of song forms given in some of the major treatises of the Systematist school, which dominated musical theory from the 13th to 15th centuries. It is also absent from the song texts quoted by al-'Umarī (d. 1349) in his accounts of recent as well as ancient musicians,[25] and likewise from the Arabic contents of early (15th and 16th-century) eastern songtext anthologies embodying the repertoire of the Persianate cultural sphere. Accordingly, as a musical genre we may still regard the *muwaššaḥ* as being concentrated in al-Andalus and the Maghrib, and although the evidence of e.g. Maimonides and the Geniza documents suggests that some enjoyed currency in Egypt,[26] it may well be that the differences of idiom between East and West to which al-Tīfāšī was alert acted as a brake on melodic diffusion, so that a plausible (but unattested) scenario would be a preference for kitting out an imported text with a new or pre-existing melody in the local idiom.[27] However, reference to Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī's *Tawšī' al-tawšīḥ* suggests that in learned circles the element of collective musical involvement may have been lost, for although that earlier indicator of song origin and identity, the demotic of the *kharja*, is still sporadically present, the *muwaššaḥ* text presents itself essentially as the elegant product of literary competition.[28] For its continuing use as a musical vehicle we may hypothesise, rather, a more popular level where, within the stock of Sufi and more generally devotional poetry, one ingredient was an offshoot of the mystical *muwaššaḥ* as developed by al-Šuštarī, sung at least partially without a rhythmic cycle and hence solistic and, presumably, tending to be more improvised than pre-composed.[29]

The later efflorescence of the *muwaššaḥ* also as a secular song form in the East would suggest, nevertheless, a history of social transformation and use not dissimilar to what we can surmise for the Maghrib. Despite the continuing absence of documentation in the theoretical literature, song-text collections of the 16th and 17th centuries already contain a significant proportion of strophic

verse,[30] and it would be reasonable to posit if not the evident centrality characteristic of Maghribi practice, at least a continuity sustained within the domain of religious song followed (or paralleled) by a resurgence of interest leading to the creation of a new secular repertoire. Again, we may presume a fundamental social shift: gone is the earlier model, preserved only in the Ottoman tradition, of successive master composers among the ranks of court musicians, their output so revered that it continues to grow posthumously. With loss of patronage comes anonymity and, probably much as in the Maghrib, the counterpoise emergence of Sufi orders as collective bearers of an increasingly popular repertoire.[31]

Aleppo in particular appears to have been a centre for the creation and diffusion of the new eastern *muwaššaḥ* during the 17th and 18th centuries, and the growing importance of the *muwaššaḥ* corpus is amply demonstrated by its prominence in 19th-century Egyptian song-text collections.[32] Here the label *muwaššaḥ* is ubiquitous, and even some of the few settings of *qaṣīda* verse they contain may fly the flag.[33] But in contrast to the pared-down versions characteristic of the Maghribi *ṣan'a*, they reveal a considerable – and possibly increasing – elasticity and complexity of structure. Indeed, on the basis of the purely textual information they provide it is difficult to draw a dividing line between the *muwaššaḥ* and a more recent offshoot of increasing popularity, the equally stanzaic *dawr*.[34] There is explicit recognition of the transferability of a tune to any text in same metre, but rather more interesting as a sign of things to come is the choice of a *muwaššaḥ* as the vehicle for the technical exposition of rhythmic cycles, with that illustrating *mukhammas* also exhibiting multiple modulation, going through eight different *maqām*s.

There is a sprinkling of *madīḥ* in these collections, devotional in tone, as expected, given the importance of the specifically religious *tawšīḥ* tradition, but the general range, as always, is erotic, bacchic, escapist, articulating the standard themes, however interpreted, of beauty and desire, separation and union. But whatever admiration one might have for their linguistic adroitness, in the way that they juggle conventional imagery and diction these texts provoke, and are perhaps meant to provoke, the feeling of the already having been heard, which could be read as continuing vitality or as exhaustion.

What is certain is that the repertoire will change quite significantly as we move into the 20th century, with the *muwaššaḥ* and the *dawr* successively losing their central position. Relevant here is the late 19th-century redrawing of the musical map attendant upon the reappearance of court patronage under the Khedive Ismā'īl, and the reappropriation of the classical literary tradition as part of the energising thrust of the *nahḍa*. It is significant that the early recordings of, say, Yūsuf al-Manyalāwī and Salāma

Ḥigāzī, made during the first fifteen years of the 20th century, are as much of *qaṣīda* verse, often by front-rank Abbasid poets, as of *adwār* or *muwaššaḥāt*, and these latter forms slip even further into the background when we come to Umm Kulṯūm, in whose repertoire there is a balance between *fuṣḥā* verse, classical and modern, and colloquial poetry supplied by such major 20th-century figures as Bayram al-Tunsī which is sometimes just as agile and complex in rhyme as the *muwaššaḥ*, and to that extent may be viewed as a contemporary equivalent.[35]

But in the East the *muwaššaḥ* proper has been accorded another rôle, almost as compensation for its gradual effacement from the repertoire of major singers, in a development already foreshadowed by al-Khula'ī (1880-1938). His instructions to those who wish to learn the art of composition include, in addition to the obvious need to master intricacies of mode and rhythm, the injunction to listen to foreign melodies – an interesting sign of the times – and to memorise, amongst other things, hundreds of Arab *muwaššaḥāt* and Turkish *bastas* and *bašraf*s, and that these are thought of as normative elements of a system is suggested by the way in which they are singled out, respectively, as the *furū'* and the *aṣl* when he gives a standard sequence of pieces (*bašraf*, *muwaššaḥāt*, *qaṣīda* or *mawwāl* + *taqsīm* and *adwār*). Symptomatically, his book ends with two examples of notation that are both *muwaššaḥāt* composed by al-Khula'ī himself. One is of standard proportions, but the other presents an atypically through-composed setting spread over no fewer than 67 cycles of *aqṣāq*. Its text begins in orthodox fashion with a *maṭla'* (rhyming a b), but this is followed by a *khāna* of no fewer that 19 hemistichs (all rhyming c) before reaching the *qafla* (a b). Inevitably, the vastly distended dimensions of this stanza necessitate melodic variety and hence formal autonomy, further reinforced by the injection of a setting of an extensive nonsense-syllable section after just 2 of the 19 hemistichs. The *maqām* exposition here uses a vast rising sequence, and attains an extraordinary range of two octaves and a third. We have thus arrived at a kind of test piece or demonstration tour de force, and al-Khula'ī's pride in his achievement is made clear by his offer of a prize of 20 Egyptian pounds to anyone who could emulate it.[36] Although not without precedents – 19th-century collections still include an ancient bravura modulatory display piece by al-Ṣaydāwī [37] – al-Khula'ī's composition may be viewed as an early stage in the evolution of a peculiarly modern paradox: that from a relatively popular strand of urban music-making the Eastern *muwaššaḥ* has gradually been transmogrified into a tool of academic instruction: its repertoire becomes the backbone of an official, conservative and preservationist programme, providing a pool of normative mode and rhythmic cycle combinations to inflict on aspirant musicians.[38] But more than this, through institutional patronage and the development of a partly westernised and therefore culturally more prestigious performance style, it is officially sanctioned as a repository of tradition, part of the heritage industry. It is, in a word, classicised, with all

the ideological ballast the term implies, and partially detached from the emotional turbulence of the world of *ṭarab*, acquiring thereby a respectability manifested in formal renditions by mixed choirs.

As a tool of eastern orthodoxy it is then, almost as a final irony, exported to the Maghrib, although there, despite occasional local imitations, it is recognised as essentially alien.[39] But the Maghrib itself has not been wholly spared similar efforts towards standardisation engineered by centralised cultural policy-making,[40] if with the important distinction that these have affected whole traditions rather than specifically the *muwaššaḥ* as an enclave within them. Consequently, one might regard any attempt to isolate genre-specific features as less profitable than exploring the nature and current situation of the so-called Andalusian traditions in general. These clearly still constitute a significant cultural practice, but one not devoid of paradox, for by virtue of the inexorable ideological pressure exerted on them to become *turāṯ, patrimoine*, what is regarded as Andalusian and therefore *aṣīl* might, in the increasingly hybrid cultural environment of contemporary urban society, be rendered peripheral by the very assertion of its centrality: having been co-opted as a monumental element of establishment ideology, the *muwaššaḥ* in the guise of the Maghribi *ṣan'a* is in increasing danger of being by-passed by youth culture. Nevertheless, this modern descendant of a distant ancestor can still serve as a cherished vehicle of collective memory. It embodies pride, recalling an idealised past of political dominance and cultural sophistication, but in the very act of doing so enshrines loss; and while remaining at its core a profound generator of *ṭarab* it is at the same time a vehicle of both personally felt and institutionalised nostalgia. It could perhaps be argued that the musical *muwaššaḥ*, irrespective of the differences in its western and eastern histories and current manifestations, is no longer a site of creativity, despite its continuing importance in both secular and religious repertoires. But whatever the future may hold, it has shown itself to be a genre of remarkable diversity and staying power, and – as the other contributions at this conference make abundantly clear – one that richly deserves further investigation.

NOTES

1. Considered purely from a musical perspective, the contrast between *muwaššaḥ* and *zajal* is only significant with regard to specific questions of form. Distinctions of register are irrelevant, and in what follows the term *muwaššaḥ* should generally be understood to subsume *zajal*.

2. E.g. G. Braune, "The spreading of the *muwaššaḥ*", *Revista de Musicología*, 16, 1993, pp. 1930-41, and M. Cortés García, "Vigencia de la transmisión oral en el Kunnāš al-Ḥā'ik", *Revista de Musicología*, 16, 1993, pp. 1942-52. A particularly thoughtful and rounded account is that in D. Reynolds, "Music", in M.R. Menocal, R.P. Scheindlin & M. Sells (eds.), *The Literature of al-Andalus* (*The Cambridge History*

of Arabic Literature), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000, pp. 60-82.

3. E. Gerson-Kiwi, "Musical settings of the Andalusian muwashshah-poetry in oral tradition", in *Migrations and Mutations of the Music in East and West*, Tel Aviv: Tel Aviv University, 1980, pp. 167-80. J.S. Pacholczyk, "The relationship between the nawba of Morocco and the music of the troubadours and trouvères", *The World of Music*, 25/2, 1983, pp. 5-16, gives an affirmative but perhaps over-enthusiastic response.

4. L.I. al-Farūqī, "*Muwashshaḥ*: a vocal form in Islamic culture", *Ethnomusicology*, 19, 1975, pp. 1-29. Although not in themselves studies of the *muwaššaḥ*, it is relevant here to mention also the extensive notations to be found e.g. in D'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, vol. 6, Paris: Geuthner, 1959 and H.H. Touma, *Die Nūbah Māyah. Zur Phänomenologie des Melos in der arabisch-andalusi Musik Marokkos*, Hildesheim, Zurich, New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 1998, as well as various Maghribi publications such as the multi-volume *Al-turāṯ al-mūsīqī al-tūnisī*.

5. Now that the dust has settled, it is interesting to see in F. de la Cuesta, "Relectura de la teoría de Julián Ribera sobre la influencia de la música arábigo andaluza en las Cantigas de Santa María y en las canciones de los trovadores, troveros y minnesingers", *Revista de Musicología*, 16/1, 1993, pp. 385-95, an attempted re-evaluation of Ribera's work. Elsewhere the debate about origins has generally formed part of a wider discussion, often conducted with polemical zeal, of the nature and extent of Arab/Islamic music influences in Europe (see e.g. H.G. Farmer, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence*, London: Reeves, 1930, O. Ursprung, "Um die Frage nach dem arabischen Einfluss auf die abendländische Musik des Mittelalters", *Zeitschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 16, 1934, pp. 129-41; Nachtrag, pp. 355-7 and, for a more judicious and dispassionate assessment of the evidence, E.R. Perkuhn, *Die Theorien zum arabischen Einfluss auf die europäische Musik des Mittelalters* (Beiträge zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte des Orients, 26), Walldorf-Hessen: Verlag für Orientkunde, 1976. An even-handed review of the literary evidence is provided by O. Zwartjes, *Love Songs from al-Andalus. History, Structure and Meaning of the* Kharja, Leiden: Brill, 1997.

6. J.T. Monroe, "Poetic quotation in the *muwaššaḥa* and its implications: Andalusian strophic poetry as song", *La Corónica*, 14/2, 1986, pp. 230-50, "The tune or the words? (singing Hispano-Arabic strophic poetry)", *Al-Qanṭara*, 8, 1987, pp. 265-317, "Which came first, the *zajal* or the *muwaššaha*? Some evidence for the oral origins of Hispano-Arabic strophic poetry", *Oral Tradition*, 4/1-2, 1989, 38-64.

7. J.A. Abu-Haidar, "The *muwashshaḥāt*: are they a mystery?", *Al-Qanṭara*, 13/1, 1992, pp. 63-81; "The Arabic origins of the *muwashshaḥāt*", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 56/3, 1993, pp. 439-58.

8. M. Guettat, *La musique classique du Maghreb* (La bibliothèque arabe), Paris: Sindbad, 1980, p. 114.

9. The need to recognise this crucial but often disregarded fact lies behind the generally justified if rather strident objurgations of M.R. Menocal ("Al-Andalus and 1492: the ways of remembering", in S.Kh. Jayyusi (ed.), *The Legacy of Muslim Spain* (Handbuch der Orientalistik, Abteilung 1: Der nahe und mittlere Osten, Band 12), Leiden: Brill, 1992, at pp. 494-9). It should not, however, be thought that all supporters of Arab origins ignore musical factors: they are assessed and discarded, for

example, in Miqdād Raḥīm, *Al-muwaššaḥāt fī bilād al-šām*, Beyrut: Maktabat al-nahḍa al-'arabiyya, 1987.

10. D. Wulstan, "The *muwaššaḥ* and *zaǧal* revisited", *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 102/2, 1982, pp. 247-64.

11. B.M. Liu & J.T. Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic Strophic Songs in the Modern Oral Tradition* (Modern Philology, 125), Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1989.

12. Perhaps less convincing is the suggestion, based in part on the evidence of Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (that a contrafact line with fewer syllables than the original was compensated for by adding nonsense syllables), that a missing *maṭla'* in an acephalic poem could have been substituted for in this way.

13. The void is not, to be sure, a complete vacuum, but the exiguous nature of the extant musicological literature can be gauged from the poverty of the pre-modern documentation cited by Guettat, *La musique classique du Maghreb*, pp. 180-6, and the consequently inevitable thinness of his historical survey.

14. E.g. S.M. Stern, *Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry*, ed. L.P. Harvey, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974, p. 72: "we have perhaps lost a chance, which could have been taken a century or half a century ago, to observe the last phases of the living tradition of the Andalusian *muwashshaḥ*". But Stern immediately goes on to express the hope that musical residues might still be identified.

15. L.J. Plenckers, "Les rapports entre le *muwashshaḥ* algérien et le virelai du moyen âge", in I.A. El-Sheikh, C. A. van de Koppel and R. Peters (eds.), *The Challenge of the Middle East: Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam*, Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam, 1982, pp. 91-111; "The *Cantigas de Santa María* and the Moorish *muwaššaḥ*: another way of comparing their musical structures", *Revista de Musicología*, 16/1, 1993, pp. 354-7.

16. Indeed, in the East it may have become progressively less so, being assimilated by the 17th century into the A A B A structure, at least in Aleppo (N. Abou Mrad, "Formes vocales et instrumentales de la tradition musicale savante issue de la Renaissance de l'Orient arabe", *Cahiers de Musiques Traditionnelles*, 17, 2004, pp. 183-215, at p. 193).

17. O. Wright, "Music in Muslim Spain", *The Legacy of Muslim Spain*, at pp. 569-71.

18. E. Seroussi, "La música arábigo-andaluza en las *baqqashot* judeo-marroquíes: estudio histórico y musical", *Anuario Musical*, 45, 1990, pp. 297-315.

19. *Mut'at al-asmā' fī 'ilm al-samā'*, ch. 10, 11, ed. Muḥammad. b. Tāwīt al-Ṭanjī, "Al-ṭarā'iq wa-'l-alḥān al-mūsīqiyya fī ifrīqiya wa-'l-andalus", *Al-Abḥāṯ: Quarterly Journal of the American University of Beirut*, 21/2,3,4, 1968, pp. 93-116 (tr. in Liu and Monroe). A refreshing reconsideration of the narrative structures and motivations exhibited by the principal historical sources is provided in C. Poché, "Un nouveau regard sur la musique d'al-Andalus: le manuscrit d'al-Tīfāshī, *Revista de Musicología*, 16/1, 1993, pp. 367-79, but this is concerned with the mythicising of such figures as Ziryāb (on whom see also O. Wright, "Music in Muslim Spain", and R. de Zayas, "Ziryāb ou le bonheur du mythe", *Cahiers des Deux Mers*, 1, 1992, pp. 20-7) and Ibn Bājja, not with the material relating to the development of the *muwaššah*.

20. In the earlier proto-*nawba* sequence associated with Ziryāb, the terms for the last

two slots are *muḥarrakāt* and *ahzāj*. To be presumed, therefore, is a development whereby during the 9th and 10th centuries the newly emergent popular *muwaššaḥ* and *zajal* song forms were able to supplant the presumably equivalent (that is, relatively light and fast) song types with which performances had previously ended. On the origins and diffusion of the *nawba* generally see e.g. J.S. Pacholczyk, "Early Arab suite in Spain: an investigation of the past through the contemporary living tradition", *Revista de Musicologia*, 16/1, 1993, pp. 358-66. Cf. also *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., s.v. *nawba*.

21. Abu-Haidar (in "The *kharja* of the *muwashshaḥ* in a new light", *Journal of Arabic Literature*, 9, 1978, pp. 1-13), draws a suggestive analogy for the *kharja* with the Iraqi *pasta*, but at least in al-Tīfāšī's day it appears that the comparison could more appropriately be made with the *muwaššaḥ* as a whole.

22. For this last point I am indebted to Dwight Reynolds, whose cogent critical observations also led to refinements elsewhere.

23. Guettat, *La musique classique du Maghreb*, pp. 178-80. The role of the Sufi fraternities in the preservation of the traditional vocal repertoire has been especially important in Libya.

24. A notable exception is E. Neubauer, "Glimpses of Arab music in Ottoman times from Syrian and Egyptian sources", *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, 13, 1999-2000, pp. 317-65.

25. Šihāb al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā b. Faḍl Allāh al-'Umarī, *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār*, vol. 10, facsimile in Publications of the Institute for the History of Arabic-Islamic Science, series C, vol. 46,10, Frankfurt, 1988.

26. Stern, *Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry*, pp. 79-80, 192-203.

27. While concrete evidence is lacking, it is certainly the case that any style one might envisage as current in the 13th century (on the basis of a comparison between medieval European song forms and modern Maghribi practice) would differ markedly in both modal structure and norms of text setting from the one representative full notation that survives of a composition by Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Urmawī (d. 1294). Accordingly, arguments based on this and another sample of notation provided by al-Urmawī himself (D. Wulstan, "Boys, women and drunkards: Hispano-mauresque influences on European song?", in D. Agius and R. Hitchcock (eds.), *The Arab Influence on Medieval Europe* (Middle East Culture Series, 18), Reading: Ithaca Press, 1993, pp. 136-67) need to be treated with caution.

28. See Miqdād Raḥīm, *Al-muwaššaḥāt fī bilād al-šām*, pp. 373-4. Its status as a virtuoso showpiece is underlined by its virtual absence from Ṣalāḥ al-Dīn al-Ṣafadī's bulky *Alḥān al-sawājiʿ bayn al-bādiʾ wa-ʾl-marājiʿ*, the more mundane contents of which consist of his extensive epistolary verse exchanges with friends and colleagues.

29. See E. Neubauer, "Glimpses". One may also compare the contemporary performance practice of the initial *tawšīḥ* section of *mawālid* in Egypt.

30. Personal communication from Eckhard Neubauer.

31. See E. Neubauer, "Zur Bedeutung der Begriffe Komponist und Komposition in der Musikgeschichte der islamischen Welt", *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Arabisch-Islamischen Wissenschaften*, 11, 1997, pp. 307-63.

32. E.g. the mid-19th-century *Safīnat al-mulk*, the *rawḍ al-masarrāt*, and the turn of

the 20th-century *Kitāb al-mūsīqā al-šarqī* of Muḥammad Kāmil al-Khula'ī (repr. Cairo: Maktabat Madbūlī, 2000) and the collection in the British Library manuscript Or. 8676. Interesting as an indication of turnover is al-Khula'ī's claim (p. 93) that of the more than 250 items in the *Safīnat al-mulk* only 80 were still known in his day. That the rôle of performers of religious repertoires was still significant in the 19th century is underlined by his identifying virtually every important composer of the preceding generations as a *šaykh*.

33. One has the candid rubric *hādhā al-muwaššaḥ aṣluh abyāt* (i.e. its text consists of *abyāt* = *qaṣīda*-type lines).

34. On the poorly documented history of which see I. el-Mallah, "Die musikalische Entwicklung der Ägyptischen Vokalgattung Dōr in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts", *Jahrbuch für musikalische Volks- und Völkerkunde*, 11, 1984, pp. 31-56.

35. For example *il-awwila fi l-ġarām*, where the first three complete lines, rhyming abc, abc, abc, are to be read (and make sense) as a+a+a+/ab+ab+ab+/abc+abc+abc. As performed by Umm Kulṯūm stanzaic brevity is supplemented by multiple varied repetitions of individual phrases, so that we have moved back to the improvisatory domain of the virtuoso soloist.

36. *Kitāb*, p. 92.

37. Neubauer, "Zur Bedeutung", p. 358. It also appears in British Library Or. 8676.

38. Cf. the comments on conservatory training in A.J. Racy, *Making Music in the Arab World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 28-9, which make clear the continuing importance, at least in Aleppo, of contact with the religious repertoire and style of performance.

39. 'Abd al-'Azīz b. 'Abd al-Jalīl, *Al-mūsīqā al-andalusiyya al-maġribiyya* ('Ālam al-ma'rifa, 129), Kuwait: Al-majlis al-waṭanī li-l-ṯaqāfa wa'l-funūn wa'l-ādāb, 1988, p. 43.

40. Some of its effects in Tunisia have been explored in R. Davis, "The effects of notation in the performance practice in Tunisian art music", *The World of Music*, 34/1, 1992, pp. 85-114, and "Cultural policy and the Tunisian *ma'lūf*: redefining a tradition", *Ethnomusicology*, 41/1, 1997, pp. 1-21.

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