

THE MUWASHSHAḤ AND THE KHARJA: AN INTRODUCTION

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The question of relations between Hebrew and Arabic literature was already the subject of scholarly debates 1,000 years ago (cf. the debate concerning the introduction of the Arabic metrical system in Hebrew literature). In Europe, discussions concerning Arabic influences in European literature began during the Renaissance with the *Dell'origine della poesia rimata* (1581 [1790]) written by Giammaria Barbieri (1519-75). Occitan poetry is mainly based on rhyme, which was derived from sources other than Latin and Greek. According to Barbieri, Provence took over these Arabic elements from Muslim Spain. The work of this scholar was published in the 18th century by Casiri, and other pioneers in the field of comparative literature, mainly Jesuits such as Juan Andrés, relied on these sources. The 19th century gave new impulses to this debate, particularly after the publication of the *Dīwān* of Ibn Quzmān (d. 1160) by David de Gunzburg (1896). This work is a collection of poems, called *azjāl* (sing. *zajal*), a form which resembles the *muwashshah*. Both types of analogous poems, the *zajal* and *muwashshah* (also called *tawshīh*), are particularly developed in al-Andalus and this Andalusī novelty soon became immensely popular in both North Africa and the Middle East, not only within the Arabic literary tradition but also in Hispano-Hebrew literature and in Hebrew literature outside Muslim Spain.

The *muwashshah* has an optional introductory strophe (*matla'*), a prelude which introduces the common rhyme. In the following five strophes this common rhyme scheme has to be repeated after the tripartite monorhymed section of each strophe (for instance *yz aaayz/ bbbyz/ cccyz*, etc.). The last section with the common rhyme *yz* is called the "exit" – in Arabic the *kharija*. The whole poem is written in Classical Arabic or Hebrew and this final section, the *kharija*, may be written in colloquial Arabic, or partially in Romance. The *zajal*, on the other hand, has an obligatory prelude and is written totally in colloquial Arabic, or in a "learned rendering of lower registers", not without interference from the Classical style. The prosody of these poems follows the classical *ʿarūd* system as it was developed by al-Khalīl b. Aḥmad al-Farāhīdī (d. in Baṣra in 786), although the Andalusī poets complicated the rhyme schemes. This was an important innovation within Arabic classical poetry, which was mainly monorhymed (the *qaṣīda*). The pioneer study on the *muwashshah* was published by Martin Hartmann one year after the publication of the *Dīwān* of Ibn Quzmān by David de Gunzburg

(Hartmann 1897), which was the first monograph on the *muwashshah* since the days of the medieval authors, theoreticians, and *aficionados* such as Ibn Sanā' l-Mulk (1155-1212).

Andalusī strophic poetry was not merely a literary genre, since these were, and still are, poems which can be used as texts in a musical context. According to medieval historians, the famous artist Ziryāb came from Baghdad to al-Andalus in 822 where he introduced and established new fashions from the East. He added a fifth string to the lute and founded a music school in Cordova, where he instructed the Andalusīs in the refined culture of Eastern music. Credited with having invented the tradition of musical performance in the form of a “suite” (*nawba*), he acquired enormous prestige in the Arab world. The new Andalusī “invention”, the strophic compositions, infiltrated the repertoire of both poets and musicians of the school of Ziryāb, so that a musico-poetical tradition was born. We can still hear remnants of this tradition in the Maghribī-Andalusī *nawbas* where Andalusī strophic poetry forms a substantial part of the repertoire; in the East we see a continuation of the Andalusī forms in the tradition of Near-Eastern folk poetry and mystical-religious poems. The *zajal* is still a favourite form in compositions of modern poets in the Middle East, although in both East and West the Romance elements gradually disappeared from the *muwashshah*. The musical tradition which accompanies the texts of strophic poetry is usually called *al-mūsīqā l-Andalusīya*. It is impossible exactly to reconstruct the medieval music, but recent research (Bennouna 1999) demonstrates that fragments from one of the main sources of Andalusī music, the *Kunnās* of al-Hā'ik (second half of the 18th century) can be related to the ancient Arabic tradition.

The debates about relations between Eastern and Western literature and music were given a new impulse in Spain by three scholars, Ramón Menéndez Pidal, Julián Ribera and Higinio Anglés, and particularly important comparative research has been done on the Galician-Portuguese *Cantigas de Santa María* of Alfonso X the Wise, King of Castile (1252-84). However the most important step forward in these debates was the publication of the Romance *kharjas* by Samuel Stern in 1948. (Other important contributions from the hand of this scholar were edited after his death by L.P. Harvey in 1974: an abridgement of his PhD thesis (1950) and a selection of his articles.) Stern's article was a real landmark in the historiography of Andalusī strophic poetry. *Kharja* scholarship was established, particularly after the publication of another series of *kharjas* by Emilio García Gómez (1952) in which we find 24 Romance *kharjas* in Arabic script, taken from the *Kitāb 'Uddat al-Jalīs* of 'Alī b. Bishrī (or: Bushrā) and the *Jaysh al-Tawshīh* of Lisān al-Dīn b. al-Khaṭīb, together with a vocalised version, a Spanish translation and a commentary. The two pioneer publications by Stern and García Gómez gave

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a new impetus to the ongoing discussions on questions of origins and influence and relations between Eastern and Western culture. The main importance of these texts is the fact that the chronological scope of Peninsular literature could be extended, although some scholars were too enthusiastic, overstressing the importance of these texts and placing reliance on textual interpretations which were not yet based on palaeographical evidence. The *kharjas* entered the Spanish anthologies as canonical texts and the “traditionalist” thesis of Menéndez Pidal (1937) and the studies of Dámaso Alonso (1949; 1961) enjoyed a great vogue.

In the subsequent decades further progress has been made, not only in *kharja* studies but also in the field of history, literature and (ethno-) musicology. The publication of the palaeographical editions of the *Kitāb ʿuddat al-jalīs wa-muʿānasat al-wazīr wa al-raʿīs* of ʿAlī b. Bishr al-Ghar-nāfī (b. second half of the 14th century, d. first half of the 15th) (Jones 1992), which is the most valuable work of Andalusī Arabic *muwaššahāt*, numbering 354 poems in all, together with the *Jaysh al-tawshīh* of Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb (1314-75), containing 182 poems, opened the way for further and more accurate interpretations by scholars.

Growing scholarly interest in the debate about relations between Arabic / Andalusī-Arabic poetry and Hebrew and European poetry and music, and also about the interpretation and importance of the Romance *kharjas*, provided the stimulus for Richard Hitchcock to organise the First International Colloquium on the Kharjas at the University of Exeter in January 1988. Two years later, in December 1989, Federico Corriente and Ángel Sáenz-Badillos coordinated a further meeting in Madrid, also called the “First International Meeting” since additionally to being a continuation of the Exeter meeting it was also a conference with a broader perspective, covering strophic poetry in general, and Hebrew, Arabic and Romance parallels. In fact, if we classify the subjects of the proceedings of the Exeter Colloquium, we find that this colloquium ranged fairly widely (Díaz Esteban’s article on the Visigothic, Latin, and Hebrew traditions; Arie Schippers on the present-day tradition of Andalusian *muwashshahāt* in North Africa etc). Musical aspects were also touched on during the Exeter discussions (e.g. Schippers’ article, and the relevant sections of the article by Díaz Esteban).

The published *Proceedings* of the Exeter Colloquium, edited by Alan Jones and Richard Hitchcock (1991), are still of great importance, since they also contain an informative article by David Wasserstein on the linguistic situation in al-Andalus, and an analytical index of extant Andalusī Arabic *muwashshahāt*, which is still an important tool for literary scholarship since it provides the necessary information about the sources, the person of the verb of

transition, the register of the *kharjas* and the structure and rhyme pattern, number of stanzas, etc. The *Proceedings* of the Madrid Conference as edited by Corriente and Sáenz-Badillos (1991) contain papers on a wide range of topics, with a special section of articles in Arabic.

Interest in the musical aspects is continually growing. One of the most important collections of poetry from al-Andalus in the Moroccan tradition, the *Kunnāš* of al-Ḥā'ik al-Ṭīwānī (second half of the 18th century) has recently been re-edited by Cortés García (1996) and Bennouna (1999). Although the real nature of the performance situation in al-Andalus in the Middle Ages remains unclear, it is continually fascinating that the transmission of the texts tells us that this tradition was never interrupted. The specific role and function of the different types of musical instruments has not changed dramatically, so that many aspects which are familiar to us from the musical practice of today will be more or less the same (although of course detailed reconstruction of the music will always be impossible, since there is no extant musical notation from this early period; and more recent influences are likely to have changed the character of musical performance during the intervening centuries).

It is without any doubt of great importance that Ed Emery decided to organise another conference, entitled *The Muwashshah: History, Origins and Present Practices*, held at the School of Oriental and African Studies [SOAS], University of London, on 8th–10th October 2004. The papers from that conference are reproduced in this volume. The contributions focus on the oral and written aspects of Andalusī strophic poetry, and particular attention is paid to the broader musical aspects (not merely from the Moroccan tradition). The importance of this conference lies particularly in the inclusion of papers of less-studied aspects of poetry and music, and less-studied traditions of other regions and countries (e.g. Libya, the Yemenite tradition, Neo-Persian stanzaic poetry etc), alongside reconsideration and reinterpretation of the familiar core topics.

In the section which follows I summarise the most important publications to have appeared in the period between 1991 (the publication of the Exeter and Madrid conferences) and the London conference. The list is not comprehensive, and for more details the recently published bibliography can be consulted (Heijkoop & Zwartjes 2004).

1. Genres

1.1. *Strophic poetry*

<i>Muwaššah</i> and <i>kharja</i>	Almbladh (1992-93b), Benabu (1998)
<i>Muwaššah</i> in the East	Al-Afandi (1999a, b)

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<i>Muwaššah</i> -like <i>zajal</i>	Einbinder (1995)
<i>Musammaṭ</i>	Ferrando Frutos (1996, 1998, 1999)
Musico-poetic aspects	Cohen & Katz (1993, 1994)
<i>Zajal</i>	Ibn Quzmān, Corriente (2002), Harvey (2001), Monroe (1996, 1997), Monroe & Pettigrew (2003), Sleiman (1992, 2000)

1.2. *Kharjas*

General	Espósito (2000), Galmés de Fuentes (1998, 2000), López-Castro (1999), Marcos Marín (1995, 1998, 2001)
Code-switching	Zwartjes (1994a), Sempere Martínez (1998), Bossong (2003)
Arabic <i>kharjas</i>	Corriente & Sáenz-Badillos (1996)
Romance <i>kharjas</i>	Corriente & Sáenz-Badillos (1994)
Women's poetry	Bossong (1997), Deyermond (1992, 1996)

2. Monographs, collected articles, PhDs

<i>Kharjas</i>	Zwartjes (1997)
Romance <i>kharjas</i>	Hanlon (1992)
Colloquial poetry	Corriente (1998)
Hispano-Arabic literature	Abu-Haidar (2001)
<i>Muwaššah</i>	Alvarez, L.M. (1994)
Hispano-Hebrew	Álvarez, M. (2001)
Literary traditions	Boretz (1994, 1998), Zwartjes (1994b)
Hispano-Hebrew	Chahbar (1993), Schippers (1994)
Courtly love	Galmés de Fuentes (1996), Robinson (2002), Al-Sawda (1993)
Origins of lyric	Menocal (1994)

3. Text editions, translations and anthologies

3.1. *Text editions*

<i>Kharjas</i>	Galmés de Fuentes (1994), Corriente (1998)
Hispano-Hebrew <i>kharjas</i>	Díez Merino (1995)

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<i>Muwaššahāt</i> in Egypt	°Aṭā (1999)
Al-Ḥā'ik (<i>Kunnās</i>)	Cortés García (1996), Bennouna (1999)
Ibn al-Khaṭīb	Jones (1997)
Ibn Labbāna	Hajjājī (1997)
Ibn Quzmān	Corriente (1995)
Yehuda ha-Levi	Sáenz-Badillos & Targarona (1994), Walali (1996)

3.2. Translations

A°mā al-Tuḥfīlī	Alkhalifa (2001)
Ibn al-°Arabī	Corriente & Emery (2004)
Ibn Gabirol	Cano Pérez (1992)

3.3. Anthologies

“Cantos de sinagogas”	Levin & Sáenz-Badillos (1992)
Medieval lyric	Beltrán (1997)

4. Proceedings and special issues of reviews

<i>Atalaya</i> (1997)	Conference on “Formes fixes”
<i>Revista de musicología</i> (1993)	
<i>Scripta Mediterranea</i> (1998-99)	

5. Music

General	Guettat (1999, 2000), Poché (1995), Touma (1998) Bennani (1995)
Jewish music in al-Andalus and North Africa	Zafrani (1998)
Discography	Heijkoop & Zwartjes (2004, pp. 333-41)

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