Music in the World of Islam

A Socio-cultural study

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6 Decentralization and Advent of Local Styles

On the face of it, the ʿAbbāsid caliphate (750–1258) was the longest dynasty. Soon after the brilliant reign of Hārūn al-Rashīd, however, the extensive empire was beset by a process of disintegration, accompanied by territorial and political fragmentation of the caliphate. Independent dynasties arose in various parts of the empire and assumed effective control over their territories. Although most of them continued to recognize the supremacy of the ʿAbbāsid caliphs, some nevertheless undermined the caliphate's hegemony. From that time on, in effect, three major groups of non-Arab converts to Islam began to share dominion over the empire and contributed to its expansion; they were the Persians, Turks and Berbers.

General background

The Persians

In the East the Persian and Persianized dynasties (Ṭāhirids, Saffārites and Sāmānids), while ruling as vassals of Baghdad, encouraged a revival of separate culture and literature, thereby generating a sense of Persian cultural identity within Islam. During the ninth and tenth centuries, Persian became the dominant language in Iran and in the Central Asian sphere of Iranian cultural influence. Together with others, Persians also played a prominent role in one of the most striking movements in Arab cultural history and literature – the *Shuʿūbiyya,* which in diverse forms extended from Spain and the Maghrib to remote parts of Central Asia (Mottahedeh 30).

The *Shuʿūbiyya* emerged during the time of the Umayyads as an expression of dissatisfaction on the part of various subject races suffering from the inequality and discriminatory status imposed upon non-Arab people by the dominating élite of Arab extraction. But the movement erupted most vehe-

mently during the time of the early ʻAbbāsids, when it became a vociferous response to Arabian aristocracy's boastful claims that it was the noblest of all races and spoke the purest, richest language in the world. Asserting that the Arabs were surpassed by other nations in virtues and abilities, the bolder spirits among the *Shuʻūbīs* adduced proof of the absurdity of Arab claims, arguing that the latter were altogether inferior to the Persians, Greeks, Indians and others. Thus, for instance, certain *Shuʻūbīs* refuted the generally recognized excellence of the Arabs in rhetoric and oratory, claiming that they distracted their listeners' thoughts and obviously failed to grasp the essentials of the art of rhetoric. Commenting favourably on the poems written and set to music by the *Shuʻūbīs* H. T. Norris writes: 'The better and more accomplished singer was the one who dispensed with the rhythmic beat sustained by an instrument when he sang his air'. This statement probably refers to the much appreciated form of singing that emphasizes long and expressive unaccompanied vocal improvisation. In the same spirit, Norris goes on to make the following astonishing statement: 'The Shuʻūbīs scorned the Arabs for their rhythmic deficiency, although Arabs, they suggested, tried hard to hide this defect in metre and rhyme when they contended with their opponents' (CHAL 35: 31–47).

In the main, the *Shuʻūbiyya* aspirations were rather of a socio-cultural than a political or even religious nature; those aspirations were indeed defended by social and cultural arguments. Examining the ethnic pride inherent in the *Shuʻūbiyya* movement, the eminent scholar I. Goldziher contended that the cultural conflicts were caused by the assimilation into the very diverse Islamic ethnic community (Goldziher 25). The motivations of the *Shuʻūbīs* and their opponents were analysed differently by the distinguished orientalist H. Gibb (Gibb 24), who believed that some *Shuʻūbīs* wanted to remould the political and social institutions of the Islamic empire and the inner spirit of Islamic culture on the model of Sassanian institutions and values. This was probably the case at that time in Persia, where being *Shuʻūbī* meant endeavouring to re-establish Persian as the literary language, while confining the use of Arabic to the theological sciences.

The Turks

The second element, the Turks, made themselves felt by the second half of the ninth century when, as military commanders, they assumed control over the caliphs in Baghdad, dethroning them at will. Their influence became decisive in the eleventh century when masses of their tribes led by the Seljuqs – named after their first chieftain Seljuq – occupied North India and most of the Iranian plateau, defeated the emperor of Byzantium and spread into the plateau of Anatolia. Seljuq's grandson Tughril beg, after taking the caliphate seat of Baghdad in 1055, was invested by Caliph al-Qāʾim with his

own sultanate, or temporal authority, thereby marking the inception of a separate political institution – the universal sultanate. Once firmly in control of the caliphal territories, the Seljuqs, who had embraced *Sunnī* Islam, came under the powerful influence of High Islamic traditions in government, politics and culture and identified their interests with those of the urban élites. In this capacity, they claimed authority over the whole of *Sunnī Islam*, while recognizing and co-existing with the caliphate. Tughril, and his nephew Alp Arslan who succeeded him, led a sustained confrontation with the Fātimid's dissident Shī'ī caliphate in hope of assuming control over their territories and regaining them for the orthodoxy. On the northern front, the Seljuqs achieved a resounding victory in 1071 against the large army commanded by the Byzantine emperor Romanus Diogenes at the battle of Manzikert near lake Van. As a result, Anatolia was now open to permanent Turkish settlement.

The defeat of the emperor of Byzantium provoked the First Crusade, in response to the Byzantine government's appeal to the pope. The First Crusaders, under Godfrey of Bouillon, conquered Jerusalem on 15 July 1099. The Crusaders' arrival in the East was to have several effects, which we shall return to later.

The Berbers

In 909 Arabs and Berbers of Kabylie established a dynasty of Shī'ī rulers in Tunisia who denied the rights of the 'Abbāside caliphs; they established the Fāṭimid caliphate, claiming descent from the children of Fāṭima, the prophet's daughter. They conquered large areas of North Africa, Egypt, Syria and parts of Arabia. In 969 they moved their capital from al-Mahdia in Tunisia to Cairo; the actual name of the city is derived from Miṣr al-Qāhira, a town established in 970 by the first Fāṭimid caliph al-Mu'izz. The claim of the Fāṭimid caliph to universal sovereignty was soon confronted with reality: Fāṭimid power proved too weak to overthrow the 'Abbāsid caliphate of Baghdad. Nevertheless, for about a century, under the caliphs al-'Azīz, al-Ḥākim, al-Ẓāhir and al-Mustanṣir, Egypt played the role of a major Mediterranean power; for some two centuries, Cairo was the scene of brilliant intellectual development and of a splendid court renowned for military pageantry. Intellectual and religious life was concentrated in the great Mosque al-Azhar, the building of which was begun in the reign of al-'Azīz and completed by his successor al-Ḥākim.

Music at the court of the Fāṭimids

Music was passionately cultivated by almost all the Fāṭimid caliphs. They

spent fabulous sums on musicians, singing-girls, dancers and banquets. The Caliph al-Mustanṣir (1036–94), for instance, tolerated pictures of dancing-girls in his vizier's dwelling, even though possession of such paintings transgressed the precepts of Islam. The caliph himself indulged in drinking wine and feasting to the accompaniment of music in a special pavilion he had constructed in imitation of the *zamzam* building and well at Mecca. He is also said to have given a gift to a favourite singing-girl – an estate near the Nile known as *arḍal- ṭabbāla* (the land of the female drummer). However, the most vivid musical pictures contained in accounts of this glorious period described the military bands adorned with colourful banners and insignia that augmented the splendid pomp of royal ceremonial processions and festivals. Even the various classes of officers and court officials were entitled to have their own lavish ceremonials – *mawākibs*. Contemporary eye-witnesses, such as the traveller Nasir-i Khusraw who visited Cairo during al-Mustanṣir's reign, confirm these accounts (Nasir-i-Khusraw 14: 128, 137).

According to the historian ibn Khaldūn, the *'āla* (outfit) under the Fāṭimids was composed of 500 banners and 500 trumpets (Rosenthal 63: II, 48–49). The Egyptian historian ibn Taghrī Birdī (1409–1470) wrote a ten-volume history of Egypt from its conquest by the Arabs in 641 to 1469, called *al-Nudjūm al-ẓāhira* (The Resplendent Stars). Numerous passages of this tremendous work refer to music and its function in relation to many aspects of culture; it also includes comments on famous musicians. In describing the celebration of the new year by the Fāṭimids in 975, shortly after their capital was moved to Cairo, he reports that 50 *naqqārāt* (kettle-drums) and 50 *kūsāt* (cylindrical drums) players all mounted on mules, participated in the grand procession. As the caliph approached the city gate, a golden horn with a curved head emitted marvellous sounds, and other horns replied. Following the caliph through the gate was a vast ensemble of *ṭubūl* (drums), *ṣunūdj* (cymbals) and *ṣafāfīr* (whistles) 'making the world hum'. A similar celebration was held on the occasion of the sacrificial feast *'īd al-aḍḥa*.

Ibn Taghrī Birdī also informs us that in the year 978 the 'Abbāsid Caliph al-Ṭā'ī (974–991) was the first to have the *ṭablkhane* (military and ceremonial band) play in front of his palace three times a day. The *ṭablkhane,* which was elevated to great prominence and attained its largest size under the Fāṭimids, played a significant role as a symbol of prestige and mark of royalty in all territories under Islam. Its major functions, as described repeatedly by ibn Taghrī Birdī in his book, were to accompany feasts, play at the sultan's coronation, announce good news such as the sultan's recovery from an illness or his reaching maturity. Led by the emir's *ṭablkhane* these bands participated in battle, as for example in the battle against the French Crusaders that took place on Egyptian soil in 1250; they also took part in victory parades and the like (Farmer 95: 206–208).

Incidentally, the end of Crusader presence in that region coincided with the fall of the Fāṭimid caliphate; both powers were defeated by a Seljuq Kurdish officer – Saladin. Initially sent to help the Fāṭimids against the Crusaders, Saladin overthrew them in 1171, restored their territories to *Sunnī* allegiance and established the new dynasty of the Ayyūbides.

The foregoing description of the role of music in Egypt is only one of many examples demonstrating that the fragmentation of political power into many independent dynasties was not detrimental to cultural development. On the contrary, the decentralization and proliferation of ruling centres offered increased support and patronage for learning and culture, as can be confirmed by a few other examples of famous scholars and writers on music with whom we have already made acquaintance. The great philosopher and music theorist al-Fārābī, al-Iṣfahānī, the author of the Book of Songs, and the historian al-Mas'ūdī, all flourished under the reign and patronage of the Ḥamdānids in Syria; the philosopher, physician and music theorist Avicenne was patronized by the Sāmānids in Central Asia; the theologian and religious reformer abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī who had a considerable impact on Ṣūfīsm, taught at the *Niẓāmīya,* the most famous of the *Madrasahs* (theological schools) created by the Seljuqs.

The third element of non-Arab converts to Islam – the Berbers, who as we have seen, began to share dominion over the empire and to contribute to its expansion, became particularly prominent in North Africa, the Saharan and sub-Saharan areas and in the Iberian Peninsula. The conquest of the Iberian Peninsula by the Muslim armies, their long-standing presence there, as well as their cultural achievements, will be treated in the following section. At this point, however, it is interesting to conclude this general background survey with an intriguing fact that pursuant to the establishment of a branch of the Umayyad dynasty in Spain by an Umayyad prince who escaped the massacre of his kin in the East, and, more particularly, with 'Abd al-Raḥmān the third who proclaimed himself caliph in 929, three caliphs were in power at the same time: one in Baghdad, one in Cairo and one in Cordoba.

The Andalusian musical tradition

In the year 711 the Berber officer Ṭāriq, at the head of 7000 warriors, crossed the straits of Gibraltar and established a foothold on Spanish soil. Thereafter, assisted by Ibero-natives, the Muslim armies swept through vast territories, encountering resistance in only a few towns. The victorious march was halted in 732 with the defeat of Muslim conquerors at the gates of Poitiers (France). Together with the 'clients' of his house, in 755 the Umayyad prince 'Abd al-Raḥmān landed on Spanish soil; in May 756 he established his residence at Cordoba where he founded the brilliant

Marwānid kingdom and was recognized as emir. The Umayyad rule lasted from 756–976. 'Abd al-Raḥmān the third, who proclaimed himself caliph in 929, raised Muslim power in the Peninsula to its ultimate heights.

Under the Umayyads *al-Andalus* (the Arab name for Spain) knew its most flourishing period, but this came to an end with the fall of the caliphate and the establishment of the petty states (*mulūk al- ṭawā'if*), coinciding with the first steps of the *Reconquista*. 'The *ṭā'ifa* (singular of *ṭawā'if*),' writes E. García-Gómez, 'may be likened to the republics of Italian Renaissance, wearing a turban, but lacking a purse, and moreover inclined to betray one another at any moment' (García-Gómez 31: 232). The deteriorating situation brought to the scene the *Almoravids*, who were summoned from North Africa. Their domination between 1091 and 1145 hardly improved matters; the period was also marked by the growing success of the *Reconquista*. In 1145 the *Almoravids* were replaced by another North African movement, the *Almohads*, who emphasized the unique values of Muslim tradition as the norm of life. At the end of their reign in 1269, the Christians were already masters of almost all Spanish territories, with the exception of the Nāṣarite kingdom of Granada which resisted for two and a half centuries more.

The fall of this last stronghold in 1492 marked the end of eight centuries of Muslim domination. During that period the Iberian Peninsula was the scene of one of the most fascinating examples of cultural interchange. Indeed, a multitude of human groups, different in race, religion and social class, interacted and intermingled until they finally moulded a new type of Andalusian individual with a unique cultural style. This variegated society was compounded of a minority of Arabs of pure extraction, a majority of neo-Muslim Hispano-Christians converted to Islam, numerous Berbers, Negroes and freed slaves from Eastern and Western Europe, Mozarabs – that is to say Christians who refused to convert to Islam and perpetuated their unique rites and music – and, in addition, Jews.

The Jews had been in Spain uninterruptedly for many centuries starting with biblical times, and relatively many came there after the destruction of the second Temple of Jerusalem in 70 AD. As a component of the heteroclite Andalusian society, they interacted with all the other entities to create a social and cultural symbiosis. Within this framework, music occupied a prominent place. The Jews also contributed to the development of various branches of knowledge and the arts and were active as councillors, ambassadors and agents , promoting contacts between *al-Andalus*, Europe and the Orient. Until the fifteenth century they also functioned as court-musicians in Muslim and Christian territories. However, despite their profound involvement in the consolidation of the new Andalusian culture, they became extremely eager to demonstrate their own cultural identity. Under the patronage of Jewish notables and statesmen such as Ḥisdāy ibn Shaprūṭ in

Cordoba and Shmuel ha-nagīd in Granada, artists working in the Hebrew language created refined liturgical and secular poetry and songs, while scholars devoted themselves to the study of Hebrew and other fields of Jewish learning, including the science of music (Shiloah 265).

It should be noted that in the process of crystallizing the Andalusian culture the Arab minority vigorously pressed its influence in ways that would ensure the hegemony of Arab language and values. Under the first Umayyad rulers, singers were imported from the East. The prolific Tunisian writer Aḥmad al-Tīfāshī (1184–1253), in his newly discovered manuscript on Andalusian music, reports in the name of a local expert that 'The songs of the people of Andalus were, in ancient times, either in the style of the Christians, or in the style of the Arab camel drivers (*ḥudā'*) . . . until the establishment of the Umayyad dynasty' (Liu 81: 42). According to the same author, a significant change came about due to the great Baghdadian musician 'Alī ibn Nāfī', nicknamed Ziryāb, who arrived at the Cordoban court of 'Abd al-Raḥmān II in 822 and 'introduced previously unheard [innovations], and his style was systematically adopted, while all others were forgotten' (Liu 81: 42). This concise but significant statement became a highly colourful and detailed story under the pen of a later Maghreban author, the *littérateur* and biographer al-Maqarrī (1591–1632).

Al-Maqarrī's story as it appeared in his work *Nafḥ al-ṭīb* . . . in turn became the basis and point of departure for all subsequent writers on Andalusian music who often reproduced his work with additional elaboration. Al-Maqarrī described Ziryāb as a highly gifted and inspired innovator who, soon after arriving at the court of 'Abd al-Raḥmān the second, became chief court musician and was charged with improving and raising the level of all musical activities. Due to his highly refined taste, this artist, still in his early thirties, came to be regarded as an authority on such matters as fashion, hair-do, perfumes, culinary art and the like. In the realm of music he was credited with improving the strings of the *'ūd*, increasing their number from four to five and replacing the plectrum with an eagle's feather. In addition, he was considered the inventor of the performing sequence *nashīd-basīṭ-ahzādj* (vocal improvisation, metrical slow movement and rapid rhythmic finale, respectively), as well as of the sophisticated compound form: the *nūba,* along with its related modal concept and arrangement. This gifted musician, who had a phenomenal memory, was also a distinguished educator said to have conceived a special educational method. He pioneered the institutionalization of musical education, his school having been widely known and respected. As a result, by the time he died in 857, art music in al-Andalus had reached its peak and on the whole had divested itself of the bonds of Oriental models. Yet, although well on its way to shaping a splendid local art, the Oriental Great Tradition continued to be this music's guiding spirit.

Unlike Al-Maqarrī who depicted Ziryāb as a cultural hero and the inno-

vator of the Andalusian style *in toto*, al-Tīfāshī presents us with a more balanced and dynamic image of those developments. Thus, for instance, extolling the remarkable contribution to the fusion of styles in Andalusian music of the great philosopher and 'most illustrious music expert' ibn Bādjdja known in the West as Avempace (d. 1139), al-Tīfāshī writes: 'After having secluded himself for a few years to work with skilled singing-girl slaves, he improved the *istihāla* and *'amal* (two musical forms) by mixing the songs of the Christians and those of the East' (Liu 81: 42). This key statement alludes to a process that starts in the ninth century with Ziryāb, culminates with ibn Bādjdja in the twelfth century and continues on after him with improvements by other great musicians whose names are cited by al-Tīfāshī: ibn Jūdī, ibn al-Ḥammāra, and 'the seal of this art' abū'l-Ḥusayn al-Ḥāsib al-Mursi (Liu 81: 42).

It is interesting that the intermediaries in ibn Bādjdja's enterprise were singing-girl slaves who obviously played an important role in all Andalusian musical activities. Seville was the major centre in which gifted singing-girls were trained and given a comprehensive general education in addition to music. Among those girls were white Christians taken as slaves. They were called *rūmiyya* and in poetry were often likened to doves on the summit of trees. When put up for sale, the qualifications expected of a singing-girl included elegant handwriting, excellent memory, mastery of the Arabic language, expert performance on various instruments, proficiency as a dancer and in shadow play. Such a consummate artist was sold for a very high price.

Curiously enough, the suite form *nūba,* which Al-Maqarrī claims was invented by Ziryāb, is not expressly mentioned in al-Tīfāshī's treatise. Might it then have been in the process of elaboration? The idea of this form may even have existed during Ziryāb's time or before. Indeed J. Pacholszik, in an unpublished lecture, suggests the existence of an earlier hypothetical source – a suite in the Eastern tradition – which would mean that Ziryāb might have been only a transmitter and modifier rather than a creator. In any event, the Andalusian *nūba* as it survived in the North African centres took considerable advantage of the new poetic strophic genres, *muwashshaḥ* and *zadjal,* that flourished during the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The new poetic genres

The eminent Spanish scholar E. García-Gómez writes : 'The *muwashshaḥ* is undoubtedly the most original product of the Umayyad culture, rising far above the provincial level of its other achievements' (García-Gómez 31: 229). Indeed, the *muwashshaḥ* in classical Arabic and *zadjal* in the vernacular constitute a common denominator of sorts whereby the different groups could take advantage of the remarkable local innovation.

The inventor of the *muwashshaḥ* is said to have been the blind poet Muqaddam ibn Mu'āfa (end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century). As to when the *zadjal* was created and by whom, we do not yet know definitively. In any event the *zadjal* reached its peak with the outstanding poet Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Quzmān who died in Cordoba in 1160. It is said that ibn Quzmān, known to his contemporaries as the prince of *zadjal*, at first used the classical forms and language but, realizing his inability to compete with the great poets of his time, he decided to shift to the vernacular and popular forms. Knowing the Romance dialect well, ibn Quzmān interspersed his compositions with Romance words and phrases. His exciting *chansons* with their characteristic and admirably musical metres were enthusiastically received by both the élite and the common folk.

The *muwashshaḥ* derives its name from *wishāḥ* – a belt ornamented with pearls and rubies; the *zadjal* means elevation of the voice and singing. In both genres the fundamental unit is the strophe, and (*bayt* or *djuz'*). The perfect form (*tāmm*) of the *muwashshaḥ* begins with one or two lines (prelude) called *madhhab, ghuṣn* or *maṭla'* with a rhyme scheme: AB or ABAB. Then come the two parts of the strophe: (a) *dawr* or *simṭ* which includes a varying number of hemistiches sometimes with the same rhymes as the prelude; the rhymes of the *dawr* vary from strophe to strophe, and (b) *qufl* which maintains the same rhyme all the time and is exactly like the prelude with respect to number of lines and rhymes; it is a sort of refrain and in songs may repeat the line of the prelude identically. A *muwashshaḥ* of five to six strophes can have the following rhyme scheme:

--------A --------B or ABAB --------c --------c
--------c or cdcdcd --------A --------B or ABAB etc.

The structure of the *zadjal*, which usually includes more strophes than the *muwashshaḥ*, is as follows: AA bbbA cccA or A bbbA cccA. A most striking feature of the *muwashshaḥ* is the use of concluding verses in Romance called *khardja* (clausula, exit). Some writers maintain that, in part, it may have been borrowed from a popular lyric and in part was composed by the poet to be incorporated into the *muwashshaḥ*.

The bilingualism or trilingualism expressed in the *khardjas* represents a confluence of three literary traditions and the elaboration of different linguistic permutations – Arabic/Romance, Hebrew/Romance and Arabic/Hebrew – within a single artistic tradition. A plebian tendency and the influence of bilingualism found fullest expression in the zadjal, wherein, incidentally, there is no *khardja*. The discovery in 1948 by Samuel M. Stern of this surprising unit at the end of Hebrew and later at the end of Arabic poems, gave rise to a heated argument between Romanists and Arabists that we shall refer to when treating the Arabian influence (Stern 241). It is generally

accepted that the two genres were closely linked to music. Commenting on a definition in Aristotle's *Poetics*, the famous Andalusian philosopher ibn Rushd, Averroes (d. 1198), writes in his *Talkhīṣ*:

> The imitation in poetry that is sung pertains to three things: the harmony of notes (melody), the rhythmic component (rhythm) and the imitation itself (words). Each of these three can exist by itself, like the melody that is heard in wind instruments; the rhythm in dance; and the imitation in verbal articulation, that is to say, the non-rhythmic suggestive part of poetic discourse. It is also possible for all three to be used together as in the case of the genres in vogue in our locality known as *muwashshaḥ* and *zadjal* that characterise the poems created in this language (Arabic) by the people of the Peninsula.

Due to the intimate association of these strophic genres with music they gained considerable popularity, not only in Spain, but also in North Africa and major Near Eastern centres where they continue to thrive both in art and folk music.

The zambras and leilas

These two key terms refer to major musical activity in Andalusia – the nocturnal music and dance entertainment sessions that were held in palaces and private homes, sessions frequently referred to by ibn Quzmān in his *zadjal* poems. The term *leila* corresponds to the Arab *layla* (night – sing. of *layālī*) while *zambra* derives from the Arabic *samar* or *musāmara* which means nocturnal conversation and depicts a 'literary' genre most typical of Bedouin life. Similar to the *zambra*, we find the term *samra* in Yemen and elsewhere designating a nocturnal entertainment session which includes songs, dances and instrumental music (Lambert 418: 129–134, 193–197).

In his *ḥadīqat al-afrāḥ*, the author al-Shirwānī tells the story of a writer who visited Malaga in 1016 and could not sleep at night because of the noise emanating from a *zambra* being held in a neighbouring house. At a certain point he is fascinated by a musical piece, goes out and observes the happening which he describes as follows: in the middle of a vast dwelling there was a big garden in the centre of which 20 guests were seated in a row, wine goblets and fruit within reach. Young girls holding lutes (*'ūd* and *ṭunbūr*), cithar (*mi'zaf*), an oboe-like instrument (*mizmār*) and timbrels, stood aside without playing. A female musician was seated alongside them, her lute in her lap: the eyes of the entire audience were on her, their ears attuned to her songs that she accompanied with her instrument. The female ensemble described by this eyewitness was called *sitāra;* they played with the soloist and also accompanied the female dancer. In these typically Iberian entertainment sessions male musicians also took part.

In addition to *zadjal* poems, many sources describing the *zambra* emphasized the prominent role played in this session by the instrument known as

būq. Al-Tīfāshī describes it as 'the noblest instrument among them, and the one producing the greatest pleasure in dancing and singing' (Liu 81: 43); and the historian ibn Khaldūn evaluates it as 'one of the best instruments of its time' (Rosenthal 63: II, 396). The *būq* usually designates a horn, yet in the context of Andalusian music it might have corresponded to a double reed instrument similar to the shawm. It may be possible to resolve this difficulty by reference to the *albogon* depicted in a miniature of the Alfonsino codex E1 of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* (see below, p. 80). The miniature of *Cantiga* 300 shows an instrument with a bell made of a big horn, a conical tube made of wood and pierced fingerholes, and a double reed surrounded by a circular disk on which the lips of the player rest (Alvarez 261: 83–84). This unusual instrument was favoured in both folk and art music. It is said that Emir Muḥammad the first had at his service a number of *būq* virtuosi, and that he himself excelled in playing a golden ebony *būq*, set with precious stones.

Finally, it should be noted that the *zambra* and *leilas* were so deeply rooted in Andalusian customs that they continued to exist for more than 70 years after the fall of the last stronghold in Granada, mainly among the *Mudjeras* (Muslims living under Christian rule) and *Moriscos* (Moors converted to Christianity) (Manzano 260: 17, 29).

Arabian influence on medieval European music

The question of the Arabian influence on Medieval European music has been heatedly debated among scholars of our time. The discussion involves an era when Islamic culture was most widespread and had tangible as well as intellectual contact with Latin Christendom. During the high Middle Ages these contacts were established by way of the Crusaders in the Holy Land and the Muslims who occupied the Iberian Peninsula and Sicily.

The Crusaders

For two centuries the Crusaders were in direct contact with the Muslims, yet Muslim influence seems to have been insignificant. The sporadic interest that was echoed in their contemporary accounts and literary writings such as the cyclic poems, was confined to the Saracen military bands and their overwhelming effect. Those bands combined different types of drums, trumpets, horns, shawms and cymbals; they were used ceremonially to mark rank and prestige, as well as to exhort warriors in battle and for tactical purposes. From the many colourful descriptions in Christian chronicles one can infer the formidable effect produced by those bands on the Crusader troops. The French chronicler Joinville wrote in his description of the siege of

Damietta in Egypt (1249): 'The noise they made with their kettledrums and trumpets was terrible to hear' (Bowles 247: 17). In the numerous reports on those bands and the tumultuous sound they produced, the instruments' names appear in latinized form: the French *nacaires* or English nakers for *naqqārāt*(kettledrum); *tabor* for *ṭabl* (cylindrical drum); *anafil* for *al-nafīr* (trumpet). As to the latter, the term *fanfare,* still in use in the context of military bands, may have been derived from *al-nafīr.* The question is, of course, the extent to which this contact influenced European music. Available evidence indicates that the long exposure of Christian forces to this martial music led to the importation, adaptation and improvement of Islamic prototypes (Farmer 237).

Sicily

The Muslim conquest of Sicily began when the armies of the North African Aghlabid dynasty succeeded in establishing a firm foothold on the island by taking Palermo in 831. After a long period of disunity and unrest among the conquerors, the second half of the tenth century and beginning of the eleventh were marked by the spread and consolidation of Arab civilization in the island. In 1060 the Normans, under Count Roger de Hauteville, put an end to Muslim rule. However, the new ruler adopted the Arab administrative system as well as basic elements of Islamic culture in intellectual life and the arts. His successors, Roger II (d. 1154) and Frederik II of Hohenstaufen (d. 1250) followed in his footsteps and were ardent Arabophiles. Nevertheless, one should not overlook the ambivalent attitude of the Normans that expressed itself in their persecution of Muslims and vehement liquidation of an Arab communal presence in Sicily.

Sympathy for Arab and Muslim culture manifested itself in the encouragement and support the rulers gave Arab scholars and artists. Thus, for example, it was at the court of Roger II that the Arab geographer Idrīsī wrote his famous description of the world. As a result, the scholars, particularly Jews – who as linguists and translators encouraged the transmission of Arab sciences to the Occident – and the many musicians and court dancers who enhanced the banquets of the aristocracy ensured the survival, at least for a time, of fundamental aspects of Arabic music in Sicily (Burnett 263). A chronicler describing a reception in honour of the Earl of Cornwall, who was on his way back to England after the crusade, referred to the strange music and bizarre instruments that 'the Englishman had never before seen or heard', as well as to 'acrobatic dances of lovely Saracen girls' (Bowles 247: 21–22).

Further evidence of the artistic influence is to be found in the richly carved and painted ceiling of the Capella Palatina in Palermo, founded in 1140. A number of Near Eastern artists were summoned by the monarch to

contribute to the realization of the monumental edifice. The painted ceiling, representing themes and techniques typical of Near Eastern paintings, includes the pictures of a variety of instrumentalists and dancers; the instrument depicted most frequently is the *'ūd* (lute) (Villard 18; Granit 33).

Spain

The other and much more important conduit through which Muslim culture and music reached the West was Spain. Indeed, in the twelfth century the Latin world began to absorb oriental lore; many pioneers of the new learning turned to Spain when seeking knowledge in mathematics, astronomy, astrology, medicine and philosophy. Many important Greek scientific texts were preserved in Arabic translation, becoming part of the body of Arab scientific knowledge. Although the Arabs did not alter the foundations of Greek science, they made several important contributions within its framework.

The rich literature dealing with the influence of Hispano-Arabic music on European song was marked by controversial views on many issues such as the nature and origin of Andalusian music, and the part played in its development by the different components of Andalusian society. The debate over the two poetic genres discussed above, the *muwashshaḥ* and *zadjal*, was intense and heated. In 1912 the eminent Spanish scholar J. Ribera y Tarrago (1858–1934), who wrote on historical, literary and musical themes, launched this debate in a lecture on the outstanding composer of *zadjal*, the poet ibn Quzmān. He contended that the two genres born in Muslim Spain in imitation of already-existing Romance-language lyrics had exerted considerable influence on the lyrics of the Troubadours in Provence and the rest of Europe as well. He considered ibn Quzmān's collection of poems the key to his advanced thesis. His conclusions evoked furious polemics (Ribera 232). After Samuel Stern's discovery in 1948 of the final verses (*khardja*) in Romance (Stern 241), Ribera's disciple E. García-Gómez offered further support to the thesis that the source of inspiration had been earlier, already existing Spanish poetry. He considered the invention of the two above-mentioned genres an '. . . enterprise of folklorists who undoubtedly were aristocratic Arabs, but amateurs when it came to popular folk arts' (García-Gómez 243: 122).

Ribera y Tarrago launched the same debate in connection with the famous musical work the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. This collection of 413 songs about the Virgin Mary was accumulated between about 1250 and 1280 under the direction of King Alfonso and was illustrated with illuminated miniatures. There is disagreement as to whether the king limited his participation to supervision or actually wrote some of the words and music himself. The 41 miniatures included in the Alfonsine codices reflect the

musical cosmopolitanism of Alfonso's court. They depict musicians of all three faiths as well as 44 different Spanish and Arab instruments.

In a solemn lecture delivered in 1921 at the Royal Spanish Academy on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the birth of the enlightened Spanish king Alfonso el Sabio (the wise), Ribera extolled Alfonso's breadth of mind, tolerance and keen interest in cultural matters. He then went on to suggest that the king had naturally addressed himself to the best and most flourishing music of his time, that is to say, the music of the defeated Arab subjects, and had set to it the texts of the famous *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Ribera also argued not only that the rhyme scheme of most of these cantigas corresponds to that of the *zadjal*, but also that the whole work in its original form was performed by famous professional musicians of the three faiths according to the norms and performing practice of Andalusian music then in vogue. At a later date Ribera, among the first to precipitate the debate about Hispano-Arab influence, addressed himself to this thesis in two other publications. One of those who took exception to the idea of Arabian musical influence on the cantigas was the eminent Spanish scholar Higinio Angles (Ribera 238). Angles made a monumental study (1943–1964) of Alfonso's *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and publicized the entire corpus of 413 melodies which he transcribed in modern notation, identifying ten distinct musical genres such as *virelai, rondeau, sequence* and *lai*. Concerning Arab influence, Angles maintained that the lack of Arabic-notated documents hampered such an investigation. He contended that Spain had had indigenous music long before the Arabs arrived and that this tradition was never supplanted by the Arabic musical idiom (Katz 259).

One of the strong supporters of Ribera's thesis was the celebrated expert on Arab music, Henry George Farmer, who gave special impetus to the entire question of Arab influence. In 1925 he published a pamphlet called 'Clues to the Arabian influence on Musical Theory' (Farmer 233), in which he took issue with the view that there was less Arab influence on music than on other Western European cultural manifestations. Among the clues attesting to Arab influence on music, Farmer pointed to the instruments that were adopted by the West, first via the military at the time of the crusaders, and later through other contacts and in connection with other musical forms. Among the instruments borrowed by the West and cited as clues are the lute (*al-'ūd*); the *rebec* (*rabāb*); the guitar (*qīṭār*); *adufe* (*al-daff*) and *pandore* (*al-bandair*). Another important subject to which Farmer paid particular attention concerned the origin and characteristics of the Andalusian strophic genres *muwashshaḥ* and *zadjal*, their link to later Roman musical forms and lyrics, as well as their affinities with the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Thus we find him a fervent champion of the thesis stressing unequivocally that 'many of the song forms and dance forms of the minstrelsy of Medieval Europe can be traced to the Arabs' (Farmer 233: 62).

It is in the realm of music theory and musical thought that the most convincing traces are discernible. However, when published, Farmer's far-reaching arguments about the primordial achievement of the Arabs in general music theory and their innovation of compositional procedures such as the organum, notational system, rhythmic modes and so forth, met with both enthusiasm and criticism. In the case of his chief opponent, Kathleen Schlesinger, the issue was publicly debated in the *Musical Standard* (Schlesinger 234), which led Farmer to write his book *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence* (Farmer 235). It is true that in the realm of musical thought and music theory, the influence should have been perceptible, yet its traces here were rather meagre, unlike the obvious Arab influence on medicine, mathematics, physics, astronomy, astrology and philosophy.

With the exception of the Latin translations of al-Fārābī's book *Iḥṣā' al-'ulūm* (Classification of Sciences) which includes a chapter defining the division and objectives of the science of music, there are no extant Latin translations or compilations from the Arabic to help us (Farmer 42). Nevertheless, al-Fārābī, the great Arab philosopher and music theorist, has often been extolled along with Boethius and Ptolemy as one of the great authorities on the science of music. It is noteworthy, however, that the masterpiece *The Grand Book on Music* and other important musical treatises of his are not found among the many Arabic works that have been translated into Latin.

In more than a few studies on the influence of Arab music the prevailing tendency has been to emphasize the unilateral nature of that influence – usually justified by the cultural superiority of the disseminators. Furthermore, no attempt has been made to single out the distinctive traits that underlie the Andalusian style's particular confluence of diverse stylistic features; nor have studies been conducted to show how the musical system of the recipient culture responded to the influence, or how Arabian music impinged on it.

In view of the foregoing, it appears likely that the question of the influence that naturally accrues from contact between two different cultures can best be considered from the standpoint of the nature and degree of impact on the music. For present purposes, therefore, it is pertinent to ascertain whether musical influence remained on the level of borrowed ideas and random superficial elements, or left significant imprints. We may assume that borrowing certain musical elements from another culture does not necessarily imply adopting its music; general and philosophical ideas cross cultural boundaries much more easily than do stylistic, creative and sentient components. This is particularly true in the case of music, which is an emotional language laden with culturally bound symbolic codes; hence it is understood, felt and appreciated by those who are entirely integrated within a given culture. Thus, for instance, the Arabs who borrowed extensively from

Greek theoretical writings on music and incorporated much of their content and methodology into their own system remained quite indifferent to Greek music and its practice. While the Arabs' indebtedness to Greek science and philosophy is recognized, one does not find traces of such indebtedness in their rich literary and dramatic output.

During recent decades a few scholars who ardently posited Arabian influence reached far-fetched conclusions with regard to all the above fields. They point to the compound form, the *nūba*, as the predecessor of and model for the European suite; with no supporting evidence, they claim that the instruments borrowed by the Europeans brought their characteristic music across the borders with them. An Arab example quite close to our own time belies this view. In the second half of the nineteenth century, under the impact of European influence, musicians from various Near Eastern centres replaced the traditional *rabāb* (a fiddle usually played on the knee) by the European violin. This instrument was immediately incorporated into the traditional ensemble to fulfil a role identical with that of the *rabāb*. It brought no violin music with it and, moreover, to fit the new environment it underwent a change in intonation and in the technique by which it is played; in North Africa the violin is even played on the knee as the *rabāb* was in its time. This seems to confirm that the partial or total adoption of another musical language implies radical transformation and transvaluation of the musical style and behaviour in the recipient culture.

Survival of Andalusian music in the Maghrib

It is almost certain that the numerous musicians included among the Hispano-Arab exiles who took refuge in the Maghrib brought the flourishing Andalusian art with them and endeavoured to transplant it in their new environment. We may also assume that the imported art was not unknown and might have been cultivated in major Maghrib centres even before the last Muslim left Spanish soil.

There is evidence that the sophisticated Andalusian compound art music form, the *nūba,* was most highly esteemed among the people of the Maghrib. In cultivating it they even perpetuated certain local Spanish styles and schools. According to Alexis Chottin, the French scholar and expert on Moroccan music, the school of Sevilla found its continuation in Tunis; that of Cordoba in Tlemcen; and the schools of Valencia and Granada were perpetuated in Fez (Morocco) (Chottin 159: 93–94) .

It should be borne in mind that Spanish musicians used a system of 24 *nūbāt* (pl. of *nūba*), alleged to correspond to 24 modal scales and to possess a whole range of cosmological affinities. Among the rare documents describing this system is a poem by ibn al-Khaṭīb al-Salmānī from Granada (fl. 1294)

whose authorship is not yet definitively ascertained. The poem deals with the classification of 24 Andalusian modes into four principals and their branches, as well as their affiliation to humours, elements and natures. The poem was published by Farmer in his *An Old Moorish Tutor* (Farmer 47). Did that complex, flourishing tradition survive in its entirety? The first Western scholar who addressed this question was the Spaniard Raphael Mitjana (Mitjana 92). In an article published in 1906 he claimed, with no supporting evidence, that when in 1492 the last Arabs left Spain and took refuge in the Maghrib, a famous musician named al-Ḥā'ik devotedly collected the traditional *nūbāt*; to make them more accessible, he reduced their number from 24 to 11. Alexis Chottin in his *Corpus de la musique marocaine* (Chottin 155: 98–101), agreed that the anthology of 11 *nūbāt* was compiled by al-Ḥā'ik, but not before 1792. C. Brockelmann, in his authoritative German *History of Arabic Literature* (Brockelmann 16: SII, 709), contended that the work was completed in 1717. Since the discovery of new manuscripts and related collections of *nūbāt* ascribed to al-Ḥā'ik, it has become clear that the various questions concerning the transplanting of the Spanish tradition call for serious re- examination. Indeed, one of the later collections ascribed to al-Ḥā'ik (Leiden Or. 14100) as well as a treatise by 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fāsī (d. 1685) include lists of 24 *nūbāt* (Shiloah 76: 108–109). Hence, it is conceivable that the material was newly organized or simplified at some time near the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Be that as it may, it is evident that the ramified Andalusian *nūba* has been decisive in Maghreban art music and was eventually considered by its practitioners as the distinguishing mark of that music. The safeguarding and local enrichment of it has not been limited only to propagators of urban art music. To some extent, it also owes its preservation to religious movements and mystical Muslim brotherhoods. In Lybia, for example, the repertory of Andalusian *nūba* form, known as *ma'lūf*, could survive only thanks to the *'Isāwiyya* confraternity; the musical repertory of the *Qādiriyya* brotherhood in Tunisia comprised 13 complete *nūbāt*. When they assigned the term *ma'lūf* to the Andalusian art tradition, the Tunisians began to distinguish between its serious religious aspect – *ma'lūf al-djad* – as opposed to its profane aspect (Guettat 185: 179–180). In the same spirit, Jewish communities in North Africa, particularly in Morocco, adopted the model of the *nūba* for singing *Baqqashot* (supplications) – post-midnight ceremonial singing on Friday nights in winter. This custom originated in Safed (Palestine) under the influence of the Kabbalistic school that flourished there during the sixteenth century. The mystics of this school and their followers attributed great importance to singing from midnight on.

Several different names designate local compositional sequences of a basic compound form that corresponds to and perpetuates the structure and ideals of the Andalusian *nūba*. It is known variously as-*ṣan'a*, *'āla*, *gharnāṭī*,

ma'lūf, and *mūsīqā andalusiyya*. Of course, like all living traditions, those of the Maghrib absorbed influences emanating from the immediate milieu in which each tradition emerged. This compound art music form will be discussed further in Chapter 10.

Arab and Islamic music in sub-Saharan Africa

North African Arab and Berber elements that played a significant role in establishing and elaborating the Andalusian style and later ensured its survival outside the Iberian Peninsula were also quite active in the long process of Islamization of African societies south of the Sahara. The Islamization of black African societies, however, acquired certain previously unknown aspects. It was not only that the contact involved strong, well-anchored pagan tribal beliefs, customs and outlooks, usually accompanied by distinct functional musical idioms; there was also something very special about the way by which Islam reached those societies. Traders, not warriors, carried the new elements across the Sahara. Arab military conquerors of North Africa in the second half of the eighth century stopped on the fringes of the Sahara and, from centres established in oases at the northern gates, traders began to penetrate into the sudanic belt of West Africa. As trade developed, they established towns in the southern Sahara, opened new routes and created commercial centres which became arteries and foci for the spread of Islam among black peoples. At the same time they engaged in slave trade to North Africa that later gave rise to the establishment of large communities in various Maghreban centres. There they formed religious confraternities of their own and distinguished themselves as musicians and dancers (see Chapter 11).

According to N. Levzion, there were three successive stages in the Islamization of West Africa: first the growth of a Muslim community under a non-Muslim king; then the adoption of Islam as the court religion; finally, the rise of Islamic militancy, entailing the imposition of Islamic law and conversion of the common people. It was the second stage that was most typical of West Africa until the eighteenth century (Levzion 34).

In the Eastern Horn (Ethiopia and Somalia), where geographical proximity had created long-standing relations between Arabia and Ethiopia, the eighth century saw the establishment of the first Muslim settlements. By the ninth century there were Muslim communities all along the trade routes to the interior. While in Ethiopia the Muslims were unable to proselytize among the Christians, farther southward their influence resulted in the emergence of Muslim political units. The most important of these were the twelfth-century sultanate of Ifat and that of Mogadishu – which in the thirteenth century was the major coastal town.

Early settlements of migrants from Persia and Arabia on the East African

coast go back to the sixth and seventh centuries; Afro-Arabic interaction over the centuries stimulated the growth of a new civilization, known as Swahīlī, from the Arabic Sawāhila (people of the coast). Islam reached this area and West Africa at about the same time, but while in West Africa the faith penetrated inland, in East Africa it remained confined to the coastal areas, manifesting itself only through individual conversion.

The impact of Islamic and Arabic cultures undoubtedly had a far-reaching influence on many cultures of these areas, but the nature of this influence varied; it was more effective in Northern Sudan and Mauritania, while in most other places it underwent varying degrees of modification. Referring to the cultural dynamics in the sub-Saharan area, N. Levzion argues that the Islamization of Africa was greatly aided by the Africanization of Islam. Even in the case of Arabic, the language of Islam, although most Muslims can recite from the *Qur'ān,* their knowledge of Arabic is very limited. Only scholars have acquired a good command of the language and have produced works in various fields of Islamic sciences. In order to win adherents, he adds, Islam had to adopt the this-worldly orientation of African religions. Furthermore, Islamic ideas were interpreted in traditional terms and Muslim festivals were transformed to such an extent that their original Islamic features were hardly recognizable. Essentially, therefore, rites of passage combine Islamic and traditional ceremonies (Levzion 34: 355–356).

Dealing with the effect of Islamic and Arabic cultures on the musical traditions of African societies, the African musicologist Kwabena Nketia argues that in most parts of sub-Saharan Africa the musical traditions underwent various degrees of adjustment and, according to him, 'the adjustments were not as radical as it is generally supposed'. He adds: 'It appears that African converts did not have to abandon their traditional music completely, even when they learned Islamic cantillation or became familiar with Arabic music' (Kwabena 250: 10). The latter remark contrasts sharply with any expectation one might have had that the influence would be apparent above all in the *Qur'ān* recitation and the *'adhān* – the call to prayer – because they are both performed in Arabic. To explain this seeming incongruity, one should remember that, due to the importance of correct, careful, solemn recitation of the *Qur'ān* known as *tadjwīd,* a remarkable system evolved regulating cantillation with respect to the laws of phonetics and precise rendition of the sacred text. Although they tried to adhere to the rules of the *tadjwīd,* few African readers managed to acquaint themselves with the characteristics governing voice quality, intonation, pitch, vocabulary, pronunciation and stresses; their reading remained coloured by residual elements of African vocal style. If that is the case with *Qur'ān* reading, it is interesting to examine what occurred with other forms of Islamic religious music, namely the music accompanying festive occasions such as the

mawlid – the celebration of the Prophet's birthday – and the rituals of mystic brotherhoods.

Scholars who have explored these forms of Islamic ceremonial music point to the existence of many local styles that vary according to place and social class. They also are distinguished by a pronounced African stamp. The use of indigenous resources in musical practice is referred to by J. S. Trimingham who observes: 'the musical aptitude of the African, characterized by the chant, highly developed rhythm and antiphony, has found expression in the recitals of religious poems in Arabic and vernaculars at *dhikr* gatherings' (Trimingham 22: 125). Arthur Simon, who investigated the ceremonial music of brotherhoods in Sudan and Nubia, comes to the conclusion, in view of the predominant African elements, that the music he analysed presents an example of the Africanization of Islamic elements. And he adds: 'Influences might go back to the religious practices of Islam like that of the brotherhoods, but, as we can see, its range of influence upon secular music and its tonal structure is limited' (Simon 255: 18). Indeed, in the realm of secular music, it is generally acknowledged that the influence of Arabian music is even less pervasive, with the Sudanic area revealing the greatest increment in Arabic and Oriental instruments such as the (oboe-like) *ghaita,* the long-tubed trumpet and a number of bowed string instruments. In relation to these and other borrowed instruments, K. Nketia says: 'Generally speaking, the different types of Arabic instruments have simply furnished models for the manufacturing of local equivalences. It follows that certain instruments, like the one-stringed fiddle, occur in different sizes, forms and timbres' (Kwabena 250: 10).

An interesting case is that of Mauritania which, culturally speaking, forms a bridge linking the Arab–Berber region of North Africa and the 'land of the Blacks'. Formerly Berber-speaking, it was the homeland of the *Almoravid* dynasty which invaded and conquered the Maghrib in the first half of the tenth century and later ruled in Spain between 1091 and 1145; it was converted to Arabic speech in the fourteenth century. Arabic-speaking peoples in the north constitute 80 per cent of the population and are called the 'Moors'; they refer to themselves as *bīḍān,* 'whites', to distinguish themselves from the negro inhabitants of the south who speak various African languages.

On the whole, the 'Moors' cultivate poetry sung in Arabic and to a lesser extent in vernacular languages. Their classical music is founded on four 'modes', each of which can be expressed either in the 'white' or 'black' style, or the intermediate 'spotted' style. There is a professional class of musicians called griots who, like their counterparts among the Wolof society of Senegal and Gambia, sang praises and were genealogists. In both cases their 'art' reflects an admixture of Negro and Muslim cultures (Guignard 174: 103–110; 155–168; 178–180).