

Rondeau and virelai: the music of Andalus and the Cantigas de Santa Maria

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ABSTRACT. *Between the eighth and the thirteenth centuries the southern part of the Iberian Peninsula was dominated by its Arab and Berber conquerors and their direct political heirs. In this large and rich territory, called Andalus, an original mixture of Eastern and Western cultural elements gradually emerged. The southward expansion of the northern Christian kingdoms, beginning in the eleventh century, eventually displaced, circumscribed and debilitated Andalusian culture, which finally found in northwestern Africa its only stable refuge. Although the literary and artistic achievements of Andalus have long attracted attention, the place of music in medieval Andalusian culture has not lately been subject to close scrutiny. The present study, based largely on the analysis of Andalusian survivals in contemporary North African musical traditions, will attempt to identify what could have been the most typical musical forms of Andalusian song and evaluate their possible influence on the thirteenth-century Cantigas de Santa Maria and French secular song.*¹

The character of Andalusian music

The invasion of the Iberian Peninsula in 711 by Moslem armies from North Africa and the consequent military occupation and migratory movement do not seem to have had initially any major effects on the musical traditions of the Peninsula nor on its cultural traditions taken as a whole. Indeed, the invading warriors (mostly Berbers) lived at first in relative isolation. The Arab ruling class, few in number, had limited cultural impact, and the immigrants from Africa and the Near East likewise constituted a small minority. We may thus assume that until the ninth century the overwhelming majority of the population continued to adhere to its cultural and religious traditions. By establishing permanent communication with the Mediterranean South, however, the Moslem conquest stimulated the circulation of people, information and

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¹ This article was originally written in 1993/1994 in Portuguese as an Appendix to *Cantus coronatus*, a book on the notated *cantigas d'amor* of Dom Dinis (forthcoming); translated by Dr David Cranmer with the support of the Fundação Luso-Americana para o Desenvolvimento, it was later revised for independent publication. It should be read in conjunction with my chapter 'Andalusian Music and the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*' (note 31 below). I would like to express here my gratitude to Dr Adel Sidarus (University of Evora) for his advice on the sections of this article relating to Ibero-Islamic culture; this enabled me to make significant improvements to their contents and presentation. Any defects contained in these sections remain, however, entirely the author's responsibility.

musical instruments between the Peninsula and the Islamic world, which in due course would have important consequences.

The arrival in 755 of 'Abd al-Rahman, the only survivor of the Umayyad dynasty, whose caliphate, based in Damascus, had been overthrown, and the consequent foundation of the independent Emirate of Cordoba brought about the beginning of a period of stability and progress favourable to letters and the arts. With the arrival in 822 of the famous singer and lutenist Ziryab, a noted pupil of either Ibrahim or Ishaq al-Mawsili (and therefore an authentic representative of the classical school of Baghdad), oriental music came to occupy a more prominent place in Andalusian high society.²

The influence of Ziryab and his followers is reported to have had a marked effect on the history of Andalusian music, but it was certainly less widespread than is generally supposed. Given the intimate relationship between Arab music and poetry, as well as the dependence of music on patronage, it is probable that adherence to the oriental style of singing would have been restricted to the principal Islamicized urban circles, especially those of a higher social condition and dependent on central power. These constituted just a tiny minority of the population. For this reason courtly and popular musical environments must be considered separately.

The musical style imported by Ziryab from Baghdad was essentially a synthesis of traditions of Byzantine, Persian and Near Eastern traditions, adapted to the language, metre and spirit of Arabic poetry. According to George Sawa, the repertory consisted of songs which kept an individual identity, linked to style and authorship. They were sung by just one voice or by several in unison. The song melody followed a traditional rhythmic pattern, on the basis of which it was classified within a musical genre. Ornamental modifications governed by conventions were permitted during performance.

The song could be preceded by a vocal or instrumental prelude. Since instrumental music was considered inferior to vocal music, it was limited to the playing of preludes,

² A reliable historical biography of Ziryab is still lacking; the exact dates and circumstances of his career are reported differently by modern authors. The most detailed, accessible account is still, to my knowledge, Julián Ribera, *Historia de la música árabe medieval y su influencia en la española* (Madrid, 1927; repr. New York, 1975), 168–81; re-edited as *La música árabe y su influencia en la española*, (Madrid, 1985), 99–110. The real historical contribution of Ziryab appears nowadays to have been more modest than was initially supposed: see Jozef Pacholczyk, 'Early Arab Suite in Spain: An Investigation of the Past through the Contemporary Living Traditions'; Christian Poché, 'Un nouveau regard sur la musique d'al-Andalus: le manuscrit d'al-Tifashi', *Revista de Musicología*, 16 (1993), 358–66 and 367–79; *idem*, *La musique arabo-andalouse* (Paris, 1995), 35–7, esp. 42. Ziryab's success as a musician gave him a value as a teacher too. According to some commentators, he founded a conservatoire; see, for example, E. Lévi-Provençal, *España Musulmana*, Tomo IV of the *História de España* ed. Ramón Menéndez Pidal (Madrid, 1950), 173; followed by Adalberto Alves, *O Meu Coração é Árabe* (Lisbon, 1987), 25; and *Arabesco* (Lisbon, 1989), 30. Ziryab's private teaching activity may be described as a 'school' in the generic sense, but this has nothing to do with a conservatoire in the modern sense of the term – an autonomous, public, officially regulated, non-profit-making institution for specialized artistic training. Teaching them could be a very lucrative profession, given that the powerful would pay as much as a slave-girl's weight in gold if she were well trained as a singer and knowledgeable of a wide repertory. Naturally, Ziryab exploited this business to the full, teaching music at home not only to his own sons and daughters and to selected pupils, but to slave-girls whom he could afterwards sell.

interludes and postludes, in addition to its accompanimental role. (Instrumentalists sometimes performed versions of vocal pieces but such a practice was exceptional.) Instrumental accompaniment consisted of duplicating the melodic line in an ornamented form, generally at the unison or octave, thus giving a heterophonic effect. Wind or plucked stringed instruments could be used to accompany the singer, but never bowed stringed instruments. Generally the singer demanded just one accompanist, who typically played a plucked instrument. On certain occasions the accompaniment was reinforced (e.g., two lutes or one lute and a wind instrument). The number of lutes could be multiplied in the event of a group of singers accompanying themselves, but the resulting ensemble never included percussion. By contrast, a singer when singing alone could accompany him or herself with percussion instruments, such as the *duff* or castanets.³

Alongside the courtly oriental style and Berber or Bedouin-Arab folksong, there was also a strong current of indigenous vocal music, sung in Ibero-Romance dialects.⁴ This indigenous current has been used to explain the emergence of the poetic-musical genres which are typically Andalusian, the *zajal* and the *muwashshah*, and the success they obtained.

The poetic-musical genre known as the *muwashshah*, said to have been invented around 900 by a blind man from Cabra, is a strophic song composed in a learned language (literary Arabic, or Hebrew), generally characterized by the presence of a

³ George Dimitri Sawa, *Music Performance Practice in the Early Abbasid Era 132–320 AH/750–932 AD* (Toronto, 1989), 145–54 and 202–5. The *duff* (square-shaped, double-sided tambourine) and the castanets seem to have originated at the eastern end of the Mediterranean, but they may have been introduced to the Iberian Peninsula prior to the Moorish period through Jewish or Byzantine connections: see Ernesto Veiga de Oliveira, *Instrumentos Musicais Populares Portugueses*, 2nd ed. (Lisbon, 1982), 403 and 446. The lute, on the other hand, is one of the many oriental instruments which owes its spread in Europe to Arab dominance in the Peninsula. Habib Hassan Touma, in his article 'Indications of Arabian Musical Influence on the Iberian Peninsula from the 8th to the 13th Century', *Revista de Musicología*, 10 (1987), 137–50, esp. 143–4 and 147, cites specifically not only the lute but also the *nafir* (a straight trumpet), the *shabbaba* (a small recorder), the *rabab* (a bowed chordophone), the *tabl* (a drum) and the *nakarati* (a pair of drums). One could add the *darbukka* (a waisted drum), the *mandora* (a plucked chordophone) and the *al-buq* (a wind instrument). We should bear in mind that it is not always easy to specify the instrument corresponding to the nomenclature used in medieval Arab sources, nor does the reference to an instrument in Andalusian sources imply that it was unknown in Western Europe prior to the Moslem invasion of the Peninsula. On the other hand, there are instruments of oriental origin which may have made their way into Europe via Byzantium or the Mediterranean. We should also remember that the adoption of an instrument does not always imply the adoption of the functions associated with it, the appropriation of its repertory or the imitation of its original playing techniques, which is why the musical implications of such adoption often remain obscure.

⁴ We ought not to forget that Andalusian urban society seems to have continued to be bilingual until the end of the eleventh century, when the Moslem population of the south of the Peninsula reached roughly 80 per cent of the total. Indeed it was only in the tenth century that Arabic overthrew Latin as the language of culture among Mozarabs, and only in the second half of the century that the Moslem population overtook the Christian in numerical terms: cf. Thomas F. Glick, *Cristianos y musulmanes en la España medieval (711–1250)* (Madrid, 1991), 43–7. The progress of religious conversion during the tenth and eleventh centuries does not, however, imply a relegation of traditional Hispanic music in the face of Arab music, since, from the point of view of the prevailing opinion in rigorously orthodox Islam, all music, irrespective of its kind, is morally suspect or open to condemnation as a matter of principle.

prelude (or opening refrain?)⁵ sometimes omitted, followed by several verses divided into two parts: one with rhymes that vary from verse to verse, the other with invariable rhymes, the same as those of the prelude, as in the following example:

... A ... B
... A ... B

... c ... d
... c ... d
... c ... d
... a ... b
... a ... b

[... A ... B
... A ... B]?

... e ... f
... e ... f
... e ... f
... a ... b
... a ... b

These are long lines with internal rhyme (which was optional). Taking only end-rhyme into account, the scheme may be simplified as: AA bbba [AA] ccaa, etc. In the last verse, the second part was made up of a *kharja* (exit) or *markaz* (stirrup), normally distinguished by its use of a vernacular language (vulgar Hebrew, colloquial Arabic, Romance dialect or a mixture of Arabic and Romance dialects). It is on the rhyme, the metre and the music of the *kharja*, itself a quotation of a pre-existing composition, that the whole song is based.⁶

The typical *zajal* has a similar poetic structure but is distinguished from the *muwashshah* by its use of colloquial language and a tendency towards a more narrative content, by not making use of a pre-existing composition quoted in the *kharja*, by not repeating all the lines of the prelude or refrain in the second part of the verse but rather half of them (AA bbba [AA] cca, etc.) and by often displaying a less complex metrical structure (short lines or long lines broken into hemistichs but without internal rhyme).⁷ There is, however, a *muwashshah*-like *zajal* variety, whose

⁵ Scholars do not agree on the status of the introductory distich. Those who defend a folk, Romance derivation of the genre, tend to consider it a refrain, while those who claim an Arab origin for the *muwashshah* see it as a prelude. The character of the introductory lines could however depend not on the roots of the genre, but rather on the performance context. Taking into account that the composition could either be sung or read aloud, the introductory distich could assume both the function of a refrain, when sung, and that of a prelude, when recited.

⁶ The key concept is that all the relevant properties of the *kharja* are built into the main body of the *muwashshah*, so that it is prefigured long before it appears. For more information, see the synthesis by Pilar Lorenzo, 'Muwashaha', in *Dicionário da Literatura Medieval Galega e Portuguesa*, ed. G. Lanciani and G. Tavani (Lisbon, 1993), 470–2 (with bibliography).

⁷ Emilio García Gómez, ed., *El mejor Ben Quzmán en 40 zéjeles* (Madrid, 1981); Samuel G. Armistead and James T. Monroe, 'Beached Whales and Roaring Mice: Additional Remarks on Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry', *La Corónica*, 13 (1985), 206–42.

only distinguishing feature is the use of colloquial language instead of a learned one. A *zajal* where only part of the introductory distich is reinstated is called asymmetrical, the *muwashshah*-like alternative, symmetrical. The Arabic *zajal* is explicitly documented from the first half of the twelfth century. However, the Hebrew *zajal*, which is dependent upon it, appears a century earlier,⁸ and recent research provides firm support for the idea that the history of the genre may go back as far as the tenth or even the ninth century,⁹ as Baron d'Erlanger proposed as long ago as 1959.¹⁰

The *muwashshah* seems generally to have been sung by a single voice, possibly accompanied by a stringed instrument or alternating with a wind instrument, played by the singer him or herself.¹¹ This form of performance does not stray very far from the classical Arab tradition, which is coherent with the fact that the *muwashshah* was written in classical Arabic. The *zajal*, written in colloquial Arabic and closer to romance metrical models, may have been performed differently, and its initial lines may have been used more often as a refrain. The popularity and peculiarity of the peninsular musical traditions (among which the *zajal*) are attested to by an oriental traveller on a visit to Malaga in 1015. He complained of the din of the voices and instruments produced during the night throughout the city, contrasting it with the gentleness of the musical style imported from Baghdad which he heard in the house of a highly placed Andalusian dignitary.¹²

Andalusian music in this phase, then, was built upon three separate traditions: Arab-oriental, indigenous and Hispano-Arabic. The political evolution of Andalus, however, was to alter this panorama. The disintegration and consequent fall of the Emirate of Cordoba in 1013–31 led to a fragmentation of power. New Andalusian kingdoms were set up as regional powers, often entrusted to local families of long standing. This situation brought about an increase in opportunities for professional musicians, but it may just as well have contributed to a dilution of the influence of the classically rooted tradition in the face of indigenous currents. The religious intransigence of the new Murabit power, which established itself definitively from

⁸ Ezra Fleischer, *Shirat ha-qodesh ha-ivrit biymeit ha-benayim* (Jerusalem, 1975), as cited by Amnon Shiloah, 'The Jews of Spain and the Quest for Cultural Identity', *Revista de Musicología*, 16 (1993), 380–4, esp. 383; David Wulstan, 'The Muwashshah and Zajal Revisited', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 102 (1982), 247–64.

⁹ James T. Monroe, 'Which Came First, the *Zajal* or the *Muwashshaha*? Some Evidence for the Oral Origins of Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry', *Oral Tradition*, 4/1–2 (1989), 38–64. The author tackles the question from a theoretical stance, quotes both direct and indirect literary references to the *zajal* or its composition, dating back to the ninth and tenth centuries, and concludes that 'both the Arab and the Romance *zajalesque* forms descend from a native Romance prototype and are therefore sisters. In contrast, the *muwashshah* is a learned development of the popular *zajal* in Arabic and Romance, and is therefore its Arab daughter' (p. 60). This interpretation was challenged by Federico Corriente, who proposed the existence, around 900, of a non-strophic, proto-*zajal*; see Federico Corriente, *Poesía dialectal árabe y romance en alAndalus* (Madrid, 1998), 70–97.

¹⁰ Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger, *La Musique Arabe*, vol. 6 (Paris, 1959), 635.

¹¹ Consuelo López-Morillas, 'Was the *Muwashshah* Really Accompanied by the Organ?', *La Corónica*, 14 (1985–86), 40–54. The author answers the question posed by the title in the negative.

¹² Benjamin M. Liu and James T. Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic Strophic Songs in the Modern Oral Tradition: Music and Texts* (Berkeley, 1989), 27–8.

1091, had among its consequences, at least in the first instance, the condemnation of the practice of music and the halting of musical relations with the East.

The strength of the local traditions and the weakening of oriental influence at the beginning of the twelfth century, may have led the philosopher Ibn Bajja (known in the West as Avempace) to combine, in the words of the encyclopaedist Ahmad al-Tifashi (first half of the thirteenth century), 'the songs of the Christians with those of the East, thus inventing a specifically Andalusian style corresponding to the temperament of its people; the latter came to reject any other styles'.¹³ This comment probably refers to a systematization rather than a radical change. It does, however, document the full acceptance of Ibero-Islamic musical taste, as opposed to the oriental, classically rooted tradition. The Hispano-Arabic component thus absorbed the oriental component at the same time as it definitively superseded the indigenous component, which, however, can be presumed to have remained alive amongst the Mozarab minority, especially in rural areas.

The testimony given above seems to imply that the evolution from the classical modal system, which was basically diatonic,¹⁴ to the *maqam* system, which prevails in the Mediterranean to this day – an evolution that was achieved in the East only in the thirteenth century – did not have a decisive effect on the musical evolution of Andalus. Ziryab was connected with the conservative school of Ibrahim and Ishaq al-Mawsili, who rejected the first non-diatonic additions to the classical system. This allows us to suppose that he did not use the Persian notes and the zalzalian intervals introduced by some of his contemporaries. Even if the new oriental fashion eventually arrived in Andalus, as it probably did, it is unlikely that these innovations survived local musical habits and Ibn Bajja's reform. The diatonicism of late medieval Andalusian music is further confirmed through both historical and analytical indications.¹⁵

The hybrid style invented there, as epitomized in Al-Tifashi's description, was slower in tempo and melodically more 'spun-out' than the oriental style. From the second half of the twelfth century the professional singers delighted in the free insertion of additions and repetitions which could lengthen songs almost indefinitely¹⁶ (a practice that left a characteristic residue in the present-day *muwashshah* and in the North African repertory of Andalusian origin).¹⁷ It is unreasonable, therefore,

¹³ Liu and Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic Strophic Songs*, 42. See also Poché, 'Un nouveau regard'.

¹⁴ Owen Wright, 'Ibn al-Munajjim and the Early Arabian Modes' *The Galpin Society Journal*, 19 (1966), 27–48; Sawa, *Music Performance Practice*, 72ff.

¹⁵ The observation of Al-Tifashi according to which the Andalusians cultivated the ancient Arab musical style and the classical tuning of the lute (translation and commentary in Liu and Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic Strophic Songs*, 30–1 and 35–44); the lute method *Ma'rifat al-naghamat al-thaman*, quoted by Owen Wright, *The Modal System of Arab and Persian Music A.D.1250–1300* (Oxford, 1978), 7; and the overtly diatonic system cultivated by the Moroccan Andalusian tradition, a system which is probably also the historical core of the Algerian and Tunisian traditions; cf. Philip D. Schuyler, 'Moroccan Andalusian Music', *The World of Music*, 20 (1978), 33–46, esp. 36; C. Poché, *La musique arabo-andalouse*, 77–84.

¹⁶ Liu and Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic Strophic Songs*, 37.

¹⁷ Lois Ibsen al Faruqi, 'Muwashshah: A Vocal Form in Islamic Culture', *Ethnomusicology*, 19 (1975), 1–29, esp. 7; Schuyler, 'Moroccan Andalusian Music', 37.

to suppose that thirteenth-century Andalusian music should display the same characteristics as Eastern Mediterranean music of the same period.¹⁸

To sum up, the musical tradition of the Hispano-Arabs in the thirteenth century displayed varying degrees of hybridism. At the top of the social scale, oriental Arab music of the classical school gave way to a cross between classical and indigenous Iberian elements; the lower the position on the social scale, the greater importance given to the European element. The popularization of the hybrid Ibero-Arabic tradition must, however, have made its entry possible at all levels of the social fabric. If Andalusian popular music seems to have been permeable to oriental influence only to a limited degree, actual Arab ethnic influence must have been very minimal, bearing in mind the very few traces present in popular Spanish song that can be shown to be of Bedouin-Arab origin.¹⁹ Medieval Andalusian music should be regarded, therefore, as a hybrid tradition of local origin developed locally and not Arab music *tout court*.

The musical form of Andalusian song

The musical form of the medieval *zajal* and of the *muwashshah* has been the object of various suppositions made without sufficient foundation. Pierre Le Gentil suggested that early *zajal* settings would have reflected the asymmetry of its text, whether it was put into the form of a French rondeau or a form related to that of the virelai. Vicente Beltrán, taking up the latter suggestion and combining it with some of the parallels drawn by Anglès between the form of the *zajal* and certain musical forms to be found in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* and in the *Cancionero musical de Palacio*, proposed that the *muwashshah* would have been characterized musically by a structure of the type AB /CCC AB, while the *zajal* would have followed the structure AB /CCCB.²⁰ David Wulstan, on the other hand, made a detailed analysis of the contrafaction of poems of the *zajal* and *muwashshah* type, seeking to draw out hints as to the musical form underlying them. By combining this analysis with more general observations on the poetic metre of Andalusian poetry, he suggested that the *muwashshah* and symmetrical *zajal* would probably have assumed musical forms involving repetition patterns like those of the simplest virelai (AA /BBB AA) or rondeau (AB /AAA AB or

¹⁸ In the fourteenth century, Eastern Mediterranean music had a spasmodic influence on European instrumental music: Timothy J. McGee, 'Eastern Influences in Mediaeval European Dances', in *Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Music*, ed. Robert Falck and Timothy Rice (Toronto, 1982), 79–100; Shai Burstyn, 'The "Arabian Influence" Thesis Revisited', *Current Musicology*, 45–47 [Festschrift for Ernest H. Sanders] (1990), 119–46.

¹⁹ Marius Schneider, 'A propósito del influjo árabe – ensayo de etnografía musical de la España medieval', *Anuario Musical*, 1 (1946), 31–141, esp. 47–9 and 53–6; Josep Crivillé i Bargalló, *Historia de la música española*, VII: *El folklore musical* (Madrid, 1983), 267–84.

²⁰ Pierre Le Gentil, *Le virelai et le villancico. Le problème des origines arabes* (Paris, 1954), 235; Higinio Anglès, *La música de las Cantigas de Santa María del rey Alfonso el Sabio*, vol. III/1ª parte: *Estudio crítico* (Barcelona, 1958), 394; Vicente Beltrán, 'De zéjeles y dansas: orígenes y formación de la estrofa con vuelta', *Revista de Filología Española*, 64 (1984), 239–66, esp. 245.

AB /BBB AB) types.²¹ The *zajal* with an asymmetrical structure is considered, by extension, as musically asymmetrical.²²

Both Beltrán's and Wulstan's proposals are based on the presupposition that a parallel can be drawn between the poetic and musical forms, a presumed parallel that historical evidence shows to be far from universally applicable. If it is true that in a given song certain metrical conditions demand certain compatible musical features, it is also true that the fact that the words display an asymmetry as regards their rhyme scheme does not prevent the music from being symmetrical in form (like the *virelai*). It is also important to bear in mind a fundamental methodological difficulty, namely that a comparison of metrical forms may tell us about the presence or absence of musical contrasts, but it does not entirely resolve the problem of whether two lines have the same melody or not. The same kind of contrast may be obtained by opposing A to B or B to C. To give an example: both the structure AB /AAA B and the structure AB /CCC B (and not solely the first of these) are compatible with the metrical contrast between the refrain and the first three lines of the verse, as observed by Wulstan in a *zajal* by Ibn Quzman:²³

ʿaynayk bi-hal al-guyush hin tahush
 wa-lak ʿidar fi-l-wara
 lays billah mitlu yura
 ma kannu illa tira – zi-l-nuqush

In the present author's view, the only way to test the hypotheses put forward hitherto and to reach a tentative, though not merely speculative, conclusion about the problem of musical form in Hispano-Arabic poetry is through evidence from the Andalusian oral tradition. This can be facilitated by the analysis of the few authenticated medieval examples which have been transmitted from generation to generation by both ordinary folk and the professional musicians who inherited the Iberian repertory.²⁴

Although it can reasonably be doubted how faithful this transmission may be when considered in abstraction, it must be borne in mind that oral tradition, in its most

²¹ The form of the rondeau is exemplified musically in Wulstan's article 'The Muwashshah' through a *muwashshah* by Ibn Sahl (*Hal dara*) as preserved by oral tradition.

²² From David Wulstan's observations we may conclude that, in his view, the *zajal* assumed the forms AA /BBBA, AB /AAAA, AB /BBBB, aaB /AAAaB or aaB /BBBaB (cf. pp. 254–6). He makes an explicit contrast between the formal symmetry of the *virelai* and the supposed musical asymmetry of the *zajal* in a more recent article: 'Boys, Women and Drunkards: Hispano-Mauresque Influences on European Song?' in *The Arab Influence in Medieval Europe*, ed. Dionisius A. Agius and Richard Hitchcock (Reading, 1994), 136–67, esp. 140.

²³ Wulstan, 'The Muwashshah', 255.

²⁴ A step in this direction was taken by Leo J. Plenckers, who recently proposed that the musical form ($a\beta$ $a\beta$ $a\beta$ $\gamma\gamma$ $a\beta$) of the 'bald' Algerian *san'a*, an offshoot of the *muwashshah*, reflects that of its Andalusian predecessor. Plenckers's article, 'The Cantigas de Santa Maria and the Moorish Muwashshah: Another Way of Comparing Their Musical Structures', *Revista de Musicología*, 16 (1993), 354–7, came to my attention after the original version of this paper had been written.

conservative guise, has enabled complete melodies to cross hundreds of years without substantial alteration.²⁵ Generally speaking, the faithfulness of oral transmission is dependent upon chosen musical constraints and general cultural stability.²⁶ In the Islamic tradition the musical kernel of the compositions may be considered to include at least three fundamental aspects: the rhythmical mode (not only because of its mnemonic value, but also because it constitutes a culturally privileged parameter of composition and transmission), the overall melodic shape, and the order of the phrases (psychologically stable aspects which, together with the rhythmical mode, confer an identity on the composition).

It may be assumed that the cultural environment in the west of North Africa (in the area now shared by Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) experienced no major upheavals until the twentieth century. Now, the fact that songs composed between about 1100 and the middle of the fourteenth century, written in an idiom which subsequently fell into disuse, have continued to be sung up to the present is in itself evidence of the enormous conservatism of the Andalusian musical tradition, sustained both by the artistic prestige and political symbolism of the repertory and by the nostalgic memory of its origins.²⁷ It should be added that even before the migratory movements which occurred during the Christian reconquest, the tradition from the west of North Africa imbibed its repertory from the Iberian Peninsula and was known as early as the thirteenth century for its conservative character.²⁸ The tendency towards a fossilization of this professional repertory has been constantly reinforced. According to current scholarship, from the sixteenth century onwards new pieces apparently ceased to be composed in the traditional Andalusian style; every effort centred on memorizing the classical repertory. While this goal does not exclude some degree of transformation and the introduction of new texts, it points to the preservation of generic musical identities.²⁹ Thus it is reasonable to accept that, at least in general terms, the most fundamental aspects of Andalusian composition have undergone only unimportant changes, while its most flexible aspects (small-scale behaviour,

²⁵ The great antiquity of certain melodies is the focus, for example, of Schneider's essay (see n. 19) and the following studies: Constantin Brailoiu, 'Concerning a Russian Melody', in *Problems of Ethnomusicology*, ed. Constantin Brailoiu (Cambridge, 1984), 239–89; Paul Collaer, 'Notes concernant certains chants espagnols, hongrois, bulgares et géorgiens', *Anuario Musical*, 9 (1954), 153–60; 10 (1955), 109; Judith Etzion and Susana Weich-Shahak, 'The Music of the Judeo-Spanish Romancero: Stylistic Features', *Anuario Musical*, 43 (1988), 221–55; Judith R. Cohen, 'A Reluctant Woman Pilgrim and a Green Bird: A Possible Cantiga Melody Survival in a Sephardic Ballad', *Cantigueiros*, 7 (1995), 85–8.

²⁶ Mantle Hood, 'The Reliability of Oral Tradition', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 12 (1959), 201–9.

²⁷ In Morocco, Andalusian music, as an ancient form of court music, maintained its association with monarchy and symbolizes the legitimacy of the dynasty: see Jozef M. Pacholczyk, 'The Relationship Between the Nawba of Morocco and the Music of the Troubadours and Trouvères', *The World of Music*, 25 (1983), 5–16, esp. 10.

²⁸ According to Al-Tifashi, as quoted in Liu and Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic Strophic Songs*, 32.

²⁹ P. Schuyler, 'Moroccan Andalusian Music', 41; Pacholczyk, 'The Relationship', 8–10. The only suite known to have been composed in modern times (eighteenth century) departs from traditional Andalusian modality.

time length, performance practice, and possibly also melodic mode)³⁰ have probably undergone progressive modifications which, through a process of accumulation, may ultimately have had a significant effect on the content of the songs.

For our present purposes, given a representative musical sample, the tendency to preserve the formal characteristics (identity and order of phrases) is sufficient to lend retrospective validity to the analysis of the available musical examples. Modality, melodic particulars, overall size of the song and performance practice will not be considered here; rhythm deserves separate treatment.³¹

I begin with a formal analysis of eight of the ten compositions identified as being of Andalusian origin and published in 1989 by Benjamin M. Liu and James T. Monroe (excluding one of doubtful authenticity and another because it exists in too fragmentary a state).³² Half of these eight songs (two *muwashshahas* and two *zajals* with incorporated refrain) have the musical structure AB / BBB AB,³³ to which may be added another *zajal* in *muwashshah* form without refrain, which originally probably had a similar structure (AAA BA).³⁴ Of the remaining three compositions, a *muwashshaha* and a *zajal* in *muwashshah* form display a virelai-type structure (AA' / BBB' AA',³⁵ AB / CCC AB), while the remaining *muwashshaha* has the structure AB / AB AB B'.³⁶ It should be noted that the form AB / BBB AB corresponds to the definition of a rondeau (*rotundellus*) as given around 1300 by Johannes de Grocheio. This is a song

³⁰ Modal structure is easily changed in oral transmission. The centrality of modal classification in the transmission of Arabic song seems to be a circumscribed and relatively late phenomenon in the Middle Ages, and is compatible with changes in the meaning of modal names. The fact that the actual modes associated with Andalusian repertory are not exactly the same in Tunisia or Morocco suggests some resilience in its modal tradition.

³¹ Manuel Pedro Ferreira, 'Andalusian Music and the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*', in *Cobras e Son: Papers on the Text, Music and Manuscripts of the Cantigas de Santa Maria*, ed. Stephen Parkinson (Oxford, 2000), 7–19.

³² The compositions are: *Qad niltu hibbi*, a *zajal* (with an incorporated refrain) by al-Shushtari (ca. 1212–69), transcribed in Ra'is et al., *La Musique andalouse marocaine: nawbat 'griht l-hsin'* (Casablanca, 1985); *Umzuji al-akwas*, a *zajal* (with an incorporated refrain) by Ibn al-Khatib (1313–75), in Ra'is; *Adir la-na akwab*, a *muwashshaha* by Al-A'mà (d. 1126) or Ibn Baqi (d. 1145/50), in Ra'is; *Ila mata*, a *muwashshah* by Al-A'ma, *ibid.*; *Man li ha'im*, a *zajal* with the form of a *muwashshah*, attributed by oral tradition to Ibn Zuhr (1113–98), in Ra'is; *Hal tusta 'adu*, a *muwashshaha* by Ibn Zuhr, excluded as too fragmentary; *Hal dara zabyu l-hima*, a *muwashshaha* by Ibn Sahl (d. 1251), in Rodolphe d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, vol. 6; *Man habbak*, an anonymous *zajal* excluded as being of doubtful Andalusian origin; *Wa-husnak qad ishtahar*, an anonymous *zajal* probably of Andalusian origin, gathered in the Middle East by Salim al-Hilw, *Al-Muwashshahat al-Andalusiyya*: Beirut, 1965; and *Ayyuha s-saqi ilay-ka l-mushtakà*, a *muwashshaha* by Ibn Zuhr, sung by Palestinian informants and transcribed in J. Monroe and D. Swiatlo, 'Ninety-Three Arabic Kharjas in Hebrew Muwashshahs', *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 97/2 (1977), 141–63.

³³ *Qad niltu hibbi*: AB AB' / CB" AB" AB" ||: CB" AB" AB' :|| CB" AB" AB / AB AB' / CB" AB" AB'. *Umzuji al-akwas*: AB BBB AB. *Adir la-na akwab*: AA BA / BA BA BA / AA BA. *Hal dara zabyu l-hima*: AB B[B]B' AB.

³⁴ This concerns the composition *Wa-husnak*, which comes down to us with a very corrupt text to which the corresponding musical form is ||: A A' B B' B" C :||: D :|| D' [A A' B B' B" C]; the medieval text suggests the structure ABC ABC ABC DD ABC.

³⁵ *Ila mata*: ||: ABA' :|| B' ||: C D :|| (||: E :|| E) C' [ABA ABA B]. The B' section is merely a melodic extension without structural significance. A spurious poetic-musical addition, indicated here in rounded brackets, is omitted in the simplified structure.

³⁶ *Ayyuha s-saqi*; in Appendix III of Liu and Monroe, the final section has been inadvertently identified as containing new material, but in the transcription it has been correctly identified as being a variant of B. David Wulstan, 'The Muwashshah', 261, doubts that the form of this piece represents its original state and proposes two hypothetical reconstructions corresponding to the formal types rondeau and virelai.

which begins and ends with a refrain and whose internal parts have the same music as the refrain.³⁷ It differs, however, from the musical form of the French rondeau in that it repeats the second rather than the first melodic phrase of the refrain in the first lines of the verse. This particular feature and the fact that it is linked to a specific region, as will be seen below, justifies our christening it the 'Andalusian rondeau'.³⁸

The results obtained through the analysis of the medieval examples are confirmed and complemented by Andalusian oral tradition at large. According to Jozef Pacholczyk, the sections with *Bsit* rhythm in the *nawba Oshshaq* of the professional Moroccan repertory are typically in the forms AAA BA (for poems of five lines) and AB BBB AB (for poems of seven lines).³⁹ The same author subsequently demonstrated that these forms are also known in the Tunisian repertory.⁴⁰ Leo Plenckers drew attention to the use of the form AAA BA in the Algerian Andalusian tradition, not only today but in a transcription published in the eighteenth century.⁴¹ The virelai and Andalusian rondeau structures, ||: A :: B :: B' A and ||: AB :: B :: B' AB respectively, are well represented in Younes Chami's transcriptions of the Moroccan *nawba* of Rasd ed Dhil.⁴²

Further East, the more mixed the situation becomes. In the Mediterranean *muwashshah* studied by al-Faruqi, a variety of typical forms co-exists but it is not difficult to separate out two principal types: one, which al-Faruqi calls the 'modified rondo' (because instead of the rondo form AbAcAx . . . A, we have aBcBx . . . B), may be interpreted as a late transformation of the Andalusian rondeau form. The other type, which forms the majority, corresponds to the AABA global form, in which each section consists of two or more phrases. The latter structure may be realized as a form

³⁷ Christopher Page, 'Johannes de Grocheio on Secular Music: A Corrected Text and a New Translation', *Plainsong and Medieval Music*, 2 (1993), 17–41, esp. 24–6.

³⁸ Wulstan draws a technical distinction between the two types of rondeau on the basis of the vertical layout of their formal schemes: the French rondeau is 'left-handed' since it repeats phrase A, while the Andalusian is 'right-handed' since it repeats phrase B.

³⁹ Jozef M. Pacholczyk, 'The Relationship'. Corpus studied: eighteen songs drawn from the *Corpus de Musique Marocaine (Fasc.1)*, ed. Alexis Chottin (Paris, 1931).

⁴⁰ Jozef M. Pacholczyk, 'Rapporti fra le forme musicali della *nawba* andalusa dell'Africa settentrionale e le forme codificate della musica medievale europea', *Culture musicali: quaderni di etnomusicologia*, 3/5–6 (1984), 19–42.

⁴¹ Leo J. Plenckers, 'Les rapports entre le muwashshah algérien et le virelai du moyen âge', in *The Challenge of the Middle East: Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Amsterdam*, ed. Ibrahim A. El-Sheikh, C. Aart van de Koppel and Rudolph Peters (Amsterdam, 1982), 91–111.

⁴² *Les nawbas de la musique andalouse marocaine, II: La nawba de Rasd ed Dhil*. [Notation musicale de Younes Chami; interprétation du Maître A. Iabzour Tazi; préface de M. Iarbi Tamsamani] (n.p., 1980). For our purposes fifty-one vocal pieces were analyzed (pp. 75–130), of which ten are in Andalusian rondeau form and ten more in virelai form. The structures given correspond to the musical form as represented in the notation. In practice, according to the description found in the preface [p. 26], the form ||: A :: B :: B' A is interpreted for a five-line poem as A(A)A(A)AB(B)B' A, in which A corresponds to the melody of a line, (A) to the instrumental repetition of the A melody, B or B' to the melody of a hemistich, and (B) to the instrumental repetition of the B melody. Four-line poems are interpreted as A(A)A B (B) B' A. Those of nine lines are symmetrical between the initial and final sections (the A melody is applied to both the first and last three lines). The form ||: AB :: B :: B' AB always appears in association with five-line poems – in four cases it is interpreted as AB (AB) AB (AB) AB B(B)B' AB and in six cases the B melody is presented three times in a row instead of two. I am grateful to Salwa Castelo-Branco for the help she gave me in enabling me to refine the analysis of the forms in question.

of virelai, but it is found mostly in an intermediate form between the virelai and the Andalusian rondeau, which may be regarded as and called a 'cyclical virelai' (||: AA' :|| BA' AA', or ||: AB :|| CB AB, in which the A and C sections may be subdivided and longer than B, and ||: AB :|| may be repeated).⁴³

Thus it is probable that the musical form of the medieval *muwashshah* and the symmetrical *zajal* would have been mainly of the type AB /BBB AB (Andalusian rondeau), though sometimes acephalous (AAA BA), but the virelai types AA /BBB AA and AB /CCC AB and possibly the intermediate types AA /B[B]A AA and AB /C[C]B AB (cyclical virelai, hypothetically expanded) would also be represented.

The *zajal* and the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*

The musical form of the Andalusian *zajal* with asymmetrical strophes must certainly have been similar to that of the *muwashshah*, given that the *zajal* and *muwashshah* are the popular and erudite realizations of the same poetic-musical phenomenon; in the absence of direct evidence of the *zajal*'s musical form, we shall have to investigate how it was realized through indirect evidence. The Galician-Portuguese *Cantigas de Santa Maria* compiled by Alfonso X of Castile and León (1221–84) are relevant here not only on account of the known geographical and cultural connections of Alfonso's court with Andalus, but especially because they present an overwhelming predominance of *zajal* poetic structure, associated with musical forms of the virelai or Andalusian rondeau types.

The Andalusian rondeau appears in this Marian collection as AB /BB AB, a compressed version of AB /BBB AB. This form, which is virtually unknown elsewhere in the medieval Christian repertory, is to be seen in a large number of *cantigas* and is much more important in this collection than the form of the French rondeau.⁴⁴ It is unlikely that two varieties of Andalusian rondeau, a Moorish and a Christian one, should have arisen independently of each other in the same geographical area. It is more logical that Alfonso X's team should have imbibed Ibero-Arab culture, especially the more popular varieties.

⁴³ L. al Faruqi, 'Muwashshah', 3–4, 16–17. The corpus studied: 246 examples, of which 92 were published by d'Erlanger, *La musique arabe*, and 115 by al-Helou (=al-Hilw, *Al-Muwashshahat al-Andalusiyya*), the remaining 39 having been collected and transcribed by the author.

⁴⁴ Cf. Friedrich Gennrich, *Grundriss einer Formenlehre des mittelalterlichen Liedes als Grundlage einer musikalischen Formenlehre des Liedes* (Halle, 1932), 67–8, where the only example given of the AB BBBA form is taken from the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Taking as the corpus the compositions with strophes of four and eight lines and using as a working basis the scheme published by H. Anglès, we see that in 354 *cantigas* 71 (that is one-fifth), represented by the structures 12, 65, 73, 86, 88, 95 and 103, have the form of the Andalusian rondeau while only twelve, represented by the structures 7, 69 and 70, fit into the tradition of the French rondeau. The article by Jozef M. Pacholczyk, 'Rapporti', reached the author's hands only after completion of the first version of this paper. There for the first time the form of the Andalusian rondeau has been linked to the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Based on the schemes set out by Anglès, structures 12, 39, 103 and 104, the author gives 55 *cantigas* with this form. It should be noted that structure 39 (just as structures 37 and 40, which are related to it) corresponds to compositions with strophes of six lines and that structure 104 is open to a variety of interpretations.

A large majority of *cantigas* respond to the virelai formal type. These virelai structures are mostly symmetrical (AA /BB AA , AB /CC AB), but some songs have a shortened recapitulation, a variety which can be described as an asymmetrical virelai, rarely found in its simplest version (AA /BBB A , AB /CCC B). We must also consider the presence of the cyclical virelai (AB /CB AB), in which the anticipated recapitulation may betray the influence of the Andalusian rondeau.⁴⁵

The favour given in the *Cantigas* to the virelai musical form, at a time when it was virtually ignored in France, suggests a connection of the virelai with Iberian traditions. A Catalan precedent, the conductus *Cedit frigus hiemale*, dates from the first half of the thirteenth century. The virelai appears northeast of the Pyrenees around 1260, in the wake of the Aragonese and Castilian conquests in Andalus, but is clearly marginal in France until the end of the thirteenth century.⁴⁶ On the other hand, it dominates the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, compiled for the most part in recently-conquered Seville. The most plausible explanation for these facts is that it was Andalusian song, in its Romance, Ibero-Arab or Hebrew manifestations, which gave rise, directly or indirectly, to the virelai.⁴⁷

Thus, the two most important musical forms found in the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, a collection largely compiled in the Andalus, cannot be shown to depend on foreign models, and find, on the contrary, close parallels in the orally transmitted *muwashshah* and *muwashshah*-like *zajal*. The *Cantigas* have an asymmetrical *zajal* literary structure, which is extremely rare and late in the Galician-Portuguese and other troubadour traditions. This leaves Andalusian song as the most plausible model for both poetical and musical structures. Since it is unlikely that a *zajal*-structured song would turn to the *muwashshah* for its music, this model is to be identified with the *zajal*. The Andalusian rondeau form seems to have been predominant in the *muwashshah*; the larger role of the virelai in the *Cantigas* may in fact be due to their proximity to the *zajal*.

We can therefore propose not only that the typical *zajal* had musical forms similar to those of the *muwashshah*, but also that in the mid-thirteenth-century *zajal* the virelai reigned over the Andalusian rondeau, as suggested by the *Cantigas*. Its asymmetrical strophic structure would not always have been reflected in the music; a symmetrical musical form would have been privileged.

⁴⁵ I find only four *Cantigas de Santa Maria* which clearly have the simple asymmetrical virelai form (that is, where in the verse the same melody or melodies are repeated until the recapitulation of the last phrase of the refrain): nos. 59, 88, 294 and 320; to these may be added, though less certainly, nos. 81 and 195. By contrast, taking as a provisional basis the scheme of musical forms published by H. Anglès, *La Música de las Cantigas*, vol. 3/1, 397–400, I count twelve pieces as being embellished asymmetrical virelais (i.e., in which the partial recapitulation is preceded by a new melody): structures 13, 20, 23, 41, 108, 126, 130. The cyclical virelai form is represented by seven *cantigas*, following structures 16, 98 and 129b.

⁴⁶ Higiní Anglès, *La música a Catalunya fins al segle XIII* (Barcelona, 1935; repr. Barcelona, 1988), 256–7; Willi Apel, 'Rondeaux, Virelais, and Ballades in French 13th-Century Song', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 7 (1954), 121–30.

⁴⁷ Since we know virtually nothing about the hypothetical Romance predecessors of the *zajal* in southern France and Italy, an alternative scenario would make greater demands on the imagination. The reader may prefer to identify this Andalusian song with its central, Ibero-Arab *zajal* variety, but other interpretations are admissible.

In the face of this data, it would be wrong to insist that the musical form of the virelai is proper to the French tradition. On the contrary, it was probably encountered in Andalusian sung poetry at some distant date. We may also conclude that the rondeau, as defined by Grocheio, existed in two principal forms – the French and the Andalusian – the latter being at least as ancient as the former. These forms met in the thirteenth century at the court of Alfonso the Learned under the invocation of Mary. In succeeding centuries, however, their divergent fate came to mirror in some respect the deep divide in the West between the Christian and the Islamic worlds.