

New directions in the study of medieval Andalusí music

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The study of medieval Arabo-Andalusian music has recently begun to play a more prominent role in medieval Iberian Studies. New directions have begun to open up and the field is currently moving forward using multiple new approaches. Important medieval texts, previously thought lost, have surfaced in recent decades creating a new body of evidence for scholars to interpret. In addition, a number of already well-known texts are now being re-evaluated from a musicological, rather than a purely literary, standpoint and are revealing significant new insights about the musical cultures of medieval Iberia. Painstaking research in a variety of different archives and collections has begun to offer a more detailed sense of the context of medieval musical performances, the lives of performers, their economic and social status, and so forth. And comparative studies across historical time periods and regional traditions are providing radical new interpretations of the history of certain musical structures, modes of transmission, and individual repertoires.

The present survey offers an overview of recently published research in the field of medieval Arabo-Andalusian music and sketches out a variety of new lines of research that are currently, or should be, followed by future scholars.

Keywords: music; al-Andalus; *kharjas*; al-Bu'īṣāmī; al-Hā'ik; Cordoban court; Morisco; Mudejar

The study of the music of al-Andalus played a prominent role in the field of medieval Iberian studies during the first half of the twentieth century when scholars such as Julián Ribera y Tarragó, Henry George Farmer, Higinio Anglés, and others published a series of controversial and contradictory studies. This early twentieth-century flurry of publications centered on the question of whether medieval Andalusí music had or had not influenced the musical tradition of the Occitanian and Catalan troubadours, Alfonso X's *Cantigas de Santa María* and the Gallego-Portuguese tradition of *cantigas de amigo*, and was deeply implicated in the larger question of how, and to what extent, medieval Arabo-Islamic culture had influenced that of western Europe, a question that continues to provoke spirited debate even today.

Little research, in fact, was done in this earlier period on Andalusí music *per se*, independent of the question of influence on Western music, in part owing to the lack of medieval musical transcriptions and what was perceived as a dearth of medieval textual sources. As more and more texts have come to light in recent decades, however, and more and more passages pertinent to the study of music have been discovered in texts focusing on other matters, that situation has changed dramatically. Although several historical surveys have been published in recent years which trace the Andalusí musical tradition from its origins in al-Andalus to its many modern descendants in the

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Arab world and in Sephardic Jewish communities, these works have not fully integrated the implications of these new materials.¹ Arab scholars, in general, have focused more on the post-Iberian regional traditions of North Africa and the Eastern Mediterranean rather than on the medieval period, and, although their works often contain an introductory account of the early tradition before dealing with the later periods in more detail, these works similarly have not incorporated the most recent discoveries or research methodologies.² As a result, scholars of medieval Andalusī music are now faced with a tantalizing variety of new directions for future research, some of which are outlined in this essay in the following categories: (1) the publication of significant new texts; (2) the re-evaluation, from a musicological standpoint, of texts that have already been published and/or translated; (3) the study of archival collections of legal and financial records; (4) new lines of research drawing upon a wide variety of documentary sources; and (5) comparative studies across cultural boundaries and historical periods.

I. New texts

The discovery of highly significant and hitherto unknown texts has greatly transformed numerous aspects of the field of medieval Andalusī studies in the past half century. To give but two particularly noteworthy examples, the publication of the autobiography of Ibn Buluggīn (d. after 1094), the last Zirid emir of Granada, provided remarkable insights into the history and culture of eleventh-century al-Andalus and elucidated new dimensions of the medieval Arabic autobiographical tradition.³ In the field of Andalusī poetry, the recent publication of a massive collection of poems by Ibn Zamrak (d. after 1393), one of the poets whose works adorn the walls of the Alhambra, has just increased by fourfold the number of poems known to us by this poet. The manuscript, which had been preserved and passed down in a Tunisian family for several centuries, contains some 471 poems, including 345 previously unknown poems consisting of over 4500 new verses. Its publication will undoubtedly lead to a significant reevaluation of Ibn Zamrak's literary production and status in coming years.⁴ Thus, in contrast to some other sub-fields of medieval history, Andalusī studies continue to be dramatically reshaped by major new finds.

The study of medieval Andalusī music has been no exception regarding the impact of newly discovered primary sources. Some of the most striking examples of the past half century or so include Samuel Stern's publication of a corpus of bilingual "Romance *kharjas*," which completely altered previous theories about the origins of the multi-rhymed, strophic genres of Arabo-Andalusian song, the *muwashshah* and the *zajal*, and led to the production of an extensive body of scholarly publication.⁵ What had previously been understood to have been a poetic development purely within the Arabic tradition was suddenly reconceptualized as the result of cultural interactions among Arabic-speakers and speakers of Romance in the Iberian Peninsula. These *kharjas* were quickly heralded as the earliest examples of Romance poetry in Iberia, despite the somewhat problematic fact that they are composed in a bilingual mixture of Arabic and Romance. Scholars of Iberian literature and linguistics have put forth a variety of

¹Guettat, *Musique classique; Musique arabo-andalouse*; Poché, *Musique arabo-andalouse*.

²Abd al-Jalīl, *Al-Mūsīqā al-andalusīyya*; Binmūsā, *Al-Mūsīqā al-andalusīyya*.

³Lévi-Provençal, *Mudhakkirāt al-amīr*; Tibi, *Tibyān*; Reynolds, *Interpreting the Self*.

⁴Nayfar, *Al-Baqīyya*.

⁵Zwartjes, *Love Songs*.

theories regarding the linguistic context from which these intriguing bilingual verses emerged, but this debate has had little impact on the study of Andalusī music, first because the *kharjas* are not musically distinct from the rest of the song in which they appear, and second because the corpus of bilingual examples is extremely limited, both historically and quantitatively (the bilingual *kharja* very rapidly disappeared as a feature of Andalusī strophic poetry and only a small number of examples have survived). The most intriguing musical aspect of these early bilingual verses is the theory that they represent quotations from already extant songs and thus may have indicated the melody to which the new text should be sung: in essence, a medieval cue similar to the modern phrase “sung to the tune of ...”. Two seminal articles by James Monroe also served to end a surprisingly virulent debate among Western scholars of Iberian literature about whether the *muwashshah* and *zajal* were in fact musical traditions in the medieval period (i.e., songs rather than poems).⁶ By marshalling together documentation from a wide variety of medieval Arabic and Hebrew texts, all of which describe the musical performance of the new strophic poetic forms, Monroe was able to demonstrate that medieval authors did indeed conceptualize the *muwashshah* and *zajal* genres primarily as song, even if not every *muwashshah* lyric ended up being set to music.

In the 1960s the discovery and publication of a fragmentary text by Aḥmad al-Tifāshī (1184–1253) radically transformed the overall understanding of the history of Andalusī music. Al-Tifāshī wrote that although the style of the famous ninth-century singer/composer Ziryāb had reigned supreme for several centuries in al-Andalus, the style of Ibn Bājja, known to the Latins as “Avempace” (d. 1139), had then replaced it and that in the author’s own time only the style of Ibn Bājja was to be found.⁷ This passage includes the now oft-cited statement that in creating his new style, Ibn Bājja mixed “the songs of the Christians with those of the East, thereby inventing a style found only in al-Andalus, toward which the temperament of its people inclined, so that they rejected all others.”⁸ Al-Tifāshī’s observations immediately called into question the otherwise widely held belief that the “Andalusī” musical traditions of North Africa (that is, the musical repertory believed to have originated in al-Andalus, but which was then transmitted and expanded in North Africa in later centuries) were direct descendants of the musical school of Ziryāb, and it became necessary to reimagine the history of Andalusī music as one that had undergone a series of dramatic transformations. The same text includes a detailed discussion of the musical instruments of al-Andalus and a very informative description of the differences in the singing styles of Ifrīqiyyā (modern Tunisia), Morocco, and al-Andalus, both of which also altered previously accepted scholarly opinions.

More recently, Ziryāb’s role in the formation of the Andalusī musical tradition has been greatly elucidated by the discovery and publication of a work previously thought to have been lost, the “second book” (*al-sifr al-thānī*) of the *Kitāb al-muqtabis* of Ibn Ḥayyān (987–1086) now available in a facsimile edition of the manuscript,⁹ an Arabic version edited by Maḥmūd ‘Alī Makkī,¹⁰ and a Spanish translation by Maḥmūd ‘Alī Makkī and Federico Corriente.¹¹ Ziryāb’s life was previously known almost entirely from one single source, *Nafḥ al-ṭīb min ghuṣn al-Andalus al-raṭīb wa-dhikr wazīriḥ*

⁶ Monroe, “Poetic Quotation,” “Tune or the Words.”

⁷ Tanjī, “al-Ṭarā’iq wa-l-alḥān.”

⁸ Liu and Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic*, 42.

⁹ Ibn Ḥayyān, *al-Muqtabis al-thānī*.

¹⁰ Ibn Ḥayyān, *Crónica de los emires Alhakam I y ‘Abderrahmān II*.

¹¹ Ibn Ḥayyān, *Al-Sifr al-thānī min kitāb al-muqtabas*.

ā Lisān al-Dīn ibn al-Khatīb (The scented breeze from the tender branch of al-Andalus and mention of its Vizier Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khatīb), by al-Maqqarī (d. 1632). This biographical account, while extremely famous, is filled with historical problems, chronological lacunae, and hyperbolic assertions. The eleventh-century work of Ibn Ḥayyān, which was the source text for al-Maqqarī's biography of Ziryāb, now provides a corrective to some of the most flamboyant claims about this renowned singer and offers a much more believable account of musical life in the Cordoban court in the early ninth century.¹²

Equally dramatic has been the impact of the publication of another remarkable text, *Īqād al-shumū' li-ladhdhāt al-masmū' bi-naghamāt al-ṭubū'* (The lighting of candles for the delight of ears from the melodies of the musical modes) of 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad al-Bu'īṣāmī (fl. during the reign of Sultan Ismā'īl, r. 1672–1727) edited by 'Abd al-'Azīz ibn 'Abd al-Jalīl (1995). Until the publication of this work, scholarly and popular opinion had held the songbook (*kunnāsh*) of al-Ḥā'ik, commonly dated to the end of the eighteenth century, to be a reliable compilation of a nearly unchanging Andalusī repertory preserved and transmitted in Morocco, one of the best documented modern descendants of medieval Andalusī music. According to the text's editor, the al-Bu'īṣāmī collection predates that of al-Ḥā'ik by eighty or more years and although the manuscript of his songbook is not complete, the comparison of the existing sections from al-Bu'īṣāmī with their counterparts in al-Ḥā'ik reveals a very surprising state of affairs: only 50% of the repertory is the same (84 of 168 songs). There are several possible explanations for this dramatic rupture: (1) the Moroccan Andalusī repertory has undergone far more historical change than had previously been assumed; (2) the two compilers were drawing from different regional traditions; or, (3) the overall repertory of Andalusī music was far larger in this period than was previously imagined and both collections include only a portion of this vast oral tradition. In any case, the singular position of al-Ḥā'ik's collection can no longer be taken for granted.

To cite one final example of an important new text, the early centuries of Andalusī music will have to be significantly re-evaluated in light of the recent discovery of some eighteen biographies of Andalusī singers primarily from the Cordoban courts of al-Ḥakam I (r. 806–22) and 'Abd al-Raḥmān II (r. 822–52) found embedded within *Masālik al-abṣār fī mamālik al-amṣār* (The paths of perception among the kingdoms of the capitals) by Ibn Faḍlallāh al-'Umarī (1301–49), which provide a portrait of a musical tradition exposed to a wide variety of influences and which valued innovation and experimentation.¹³ In short, significant major texts concerning the history of Andalusī music continue to be discovered, and the publication, translation, and analysis of these new texts represent one of the most fundamental ongoing lines of research in the study of medieval Andalusī music.

II. Re-evaluation of known texts

It is not, however, only in the publication of recently discovered texts that progress in the field is to be made; in quite a number of texts that have already been published and translated, there are significant passages about music that have been either overlooked or obscured in translation. The single most important text for the history of the medieval Andalusī *muwashshah*, for example, is without doubt *Dār al-Ṭirāz*, the twelfth-

¹²Reynolds, "Al-Maqqarī's Ziryāb." A full English translation of this text will appear in my *Musical Heritage of al-Andalus* (forthcoming).

¹³Reynolds, "Arab Musical Influence;" "Music in Medieval Iberia."

century treatise composed in Cairo by the Egyptian scholar, poet, and government official Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk (1155–1212). The text was originally made known to Western scholars through Martin Hartmann's study and translation in the late nineteenth century;¹⁴ it was then edited and published in Arabic by Jawdat al-Rikābī,¹⁵ translated in its entirety into Spanish in an edition by Emilio García Gómez,¹⁶ from which the poems (though not the treatise itself) were translated into English by Linda Fish Compton,¹⁷ and most recently a revised Arabic edition has been published by 'Inānī.¹⁸

All of these various editors and translators, however, were specialists in Arabic literature and had no training in musicology, so it is not surprising that the critical passages in this work which deal with the *music* of the *muwashshah* rather than the lyrics have either been ignored or, when translated, rendered so poorly as to make them unintelligible. Emilio García Gómez, in his study and translation, went so far as to reject Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk's statements on the music of the *muwashshah* out of hand, declaring the twelfth-century author to be "incorrect" in one passage, dismissing another passage as being "absurd," and declaring a third to be "an exaggeration."¹⁹ Indeed, the Spanish translator's disdain for the author's views is quite remarkable, particularly since the translator was wrong on all three counts.

A recent re-evaluation of this text from a musicological perspective demonstrates that this is, in fact, one of the most valuable and important extant texts for reconstructing the musical history of the *muwashshah*.²⁰ First of all, the text proves definitively that the author understood the *muwashshah* to be purely a musical, sung tradition, and not a spoken or written poetic genre. The key to understanding his writings is precisely that he expected his readers to know the examples he cited and to be able to *hear* those examples in their heads in order to follow certain of his arguments which are based in the *melodies* to the texts he cites and not in the words. One method for deciphering his observations involves locating modern examples of *muwashshahs* that possess the musical structures he describes in his text and using these to illustrate his arguments.²¹ Among the most important observations that can be extracted from *Dār al-Ṭirāz* is that the *muwashshah* already appears to have possessed in the twelfth century the basic binary musical form so common in *muwashshahs* still sung today.

Both the *muwashshah* and *zajal* genres possess a poetic structure of two alternating parts: in one section the rhyme remains constant every time it reappears, and in the other a new rhyme appears at each occurrence, hence the well-known rhyme scheme AA BBB AA CCC AA DDD, and so forth. Musically the vast majority of known *muwashshahs* and *zajals* use a pattern of two alternating melodies that change at the same points that the rhyme does, so that the rhyme scheme above is likely to have a parallel melodic structure of xx yyy xx yyy xx yyy. That this binary melodic structure, which is known throughout the Arab world in modern times, was already referred to by Ibn Sanā' al-Mulk in the twelfth century is remarkable testimony to the continuity of the musical form of the *muwashshah* and *zajal*.

¹⁴Hartmann, *Über die Muwaššah; Das arabischen Gestrophengedicht*.

¹⁵Rikābī, *Dār al-Ṭirāz*.

¹⁶García Gómez, "Estudio del *Dār at-Tirāz*."

¹⁷Fish Compton, *Andalusian Lyrical Poetry*.

¹⁸Inānī, *Dār al-Ṭirāz*.

¹⁹García Gómez, "Estudio del *Dār at-Tirāz*," 34, 51, 59.

²⁰Reynolds, "Musical Aspects of Ibn Sanā'."

²¹Reynolds, *Musical Heritage of al-Andalus*. It will include a full English translation of this text.

Another example of a translation that might lead to serious misinterpretation is one which occurs in a recent work on popular culture in al-Andalus,²² citing al-Ḥumaydī's *Jadhwat al-muqtabis*. The passage occurs in a wonderful description of a wedding being celebrated in tenth-century Cordoba, in which a master musician, who had previously performed in the court of 'Abd al-Raḥmān III, takes out a *būq* (a type of clarinet) and accompanies a singer who begins to sing a *muwashshaḥ*: "El flautista de Nakur iniciaba el canto de la *muwashshaḥa* (especie de composición métrica) célebre entre la 'amma de Córdoba" (The flute-player from Nakur started the singing of a *muwashshaḥa* (a type of metrical composition) famous among the masses of Cordoba)." This would appear to be exciting new evidence for the performance of a *muwashshaḥ* in the second half of the tenth century, except that the Arabic text says nothing of the sort. The phrase cited above from the Spanish text does not occur in the Arabic and is apparently an interpolation by the author or the Spanish translator. Indeed, there is no indication that the four mono-rhymed verses included in the original Arabic are from a *muwashshaḥ* at all, and they are almost certainly instead from a *qaṣīda* (ode) or *qīṭ'a* (short poem). The passage should more properly be translated as follows:

I found myself at a wedding in the streets of Cordoba and al-Nakūrī, the woodwind-player [*al-zāmir*], was seated in the middle of the crowd wearing a brocade cap on his head and a suit of raw silk in the 'ubaydī style. His horse was richly decorated and was held by his servant. In the past he had performed before 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Nāṣir [= 'Abd al-Raḥmān III]. He performed on the *būq* [a type of clarinet] the verses by Aḥmad ibn Kulayb about [his beloved], Aslam, and an excellent singer sang them while he played:

Aslam, that young gazelle, delivered [*aslama*] me to passion,
An antelope with an eye that obtains whatever he desires.
An envious one slandered us and questions will be asked of that slander.
If [Aslam] desires a bribe for our union, my very soul shall be the bribe.²³

This is a delightful description of a wedding performance and an important testimony regarding the popularity of the *būq* in medieval al-Andalus, but it is not (as the Spanish translation might lead us to believe) historical evidence of the singing of a *muwashshaḥ* in the second half of the tenth century.

My purpose here is not at all to criticize the valuable contribution of translators, but rather to underline that in many texts that have already been published and translated, there are highly significant passages about the history of medieval Andalusī music that need be re-examined and, when necessary, retranslated or edited from a musicological point of view.

III. Archival collections

Some of the most exciting work in medieval Iberian studies in recent decades has been that of scholars who have tackled large archives of legal or financial documents and have extracted information that is valuable not only for the concrete minutiae of its detail, but also for the possibilities it provides for assembling a larger, more accurate portrait of various historical situations and transformations. David Nirenberg's work,

²²Tahiri, *Clases populares*.

²³Tahiri, *Clases populares*, 223 (my translation).

Communities of Violence: Persecution of Minorities in the Middle Ages (1996), for example, provides a remarkable analysis of outbreaks of violence against minority communities in late medieval Iberia drawing extensively from legal archives. In building his analysis, however, he also illustrates through the citation of dozens of court cases the intricate social, economic, and political bonds that linked minority and majority communities in a variety of geographical settings. These legal records show that these groups intermarried, converted, entered into long-standing economic relations, drank and gambled together, maintained cross-communitarian friendships, and in general interacted frequently in a wide variety of ways. Though this work does not specifically deal with music, it provides a detailed portrayal of everyday life that certainly has implications for those studying interactions among what some scholars assume to have been separate "Muslim," "Christian," and "Jewish" musical traditions.

In the field of Andalusí music, perhaps the most impressive recent contribution of this sort has been that of María del Carmen Gómez Muntané, whose meticulous examination of the financial records of the court of Catalonia and Aragon in the years 1336–1432 allowed her to create a detailed account of the role of minstrels, singers, dancers, and instrumentalists, including the length of their stay at the court and how much they were paid.²⁴ Her research shows that while there were indeed "Moorish" and Jewish performers both from al-Andalus and from other northern Iberian kingdoms who regularly performed at the Catalan–Aragonese courts, they were but a small minority of the performers at any given time and that they were greatly outnumbered by visiting performers from France, Holland, Germany, and Italy. This study thus makes it impossible to deny that the northern Iberian courts were still patronizing Andalusí music and poetry even as late as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, but at the same time should prevent exaggerated statements about Andalusí influence during this period, given the relatively small number of "Moorish" and Jewish performers and the wide diversity of other musicians at the courts at the same time.

IV. New lines of research

A number of the most interesting new lines of research involve not so much the careful exploration of a single type of archival material, but rather bringing together a wide variety of documentation including legal records, church records, financial records, travel accounts, literary texts, folklore, iconographic sources, etc. Reynaldo Fernández Manzano, for example, in an initial book,²⁵ and numerous later publications, has assembled a portrait of Morisco music in Granada from the end of the Nasrid period to the final expulsion of the Moriscos in 1609–10. His research offers a number of interesting revelations that have implications even for the study of earlier periods. Although scholars have long suspected that there might have been some sort of "guild" structure among professional musicians in al-Andalus, medieval Andalusí Arabic sources provide no actual documentation or references to support that hypothesis. Fernández Manzano, however, was able to demonstrate the existence of such an organization by examining Spanish sources. Less than six full weeks after the fall of Granada, one Fernando Morales, formerly known as Ayaya Fisteli (Ḥajjāj al-Fistālī), presented himself to the court of Ferdinand and Isabel as the head of the guild of musicians and asked that his continuation in that post be confirmed, which it was. This

²⁴Gómez Muntané, *Música en la casa real catalano-aragonesa*.

²⁵Fernández Manzano, *De las melodías del reino Nazari de Granada*.

brief incident is of particular note for at least two reasons: first of all, this "Fernando Morales" had already changed his name from Arabic to Castilian, probably indicating his conversion to Christianity, within weeks of the capture of Granada; and second, because this is the first evidence that has come down to us of a guild structure for musicians in al-Andalus, a system that certainly dates to the Nasrid period, but might possibly have roots in a much earlier period.²⁶

In 1517, when Fernando Morales died, the musicians of Granada presented the court with a petition to end the *tarcón* tax (term of unknown origin, though probably Arabic) that they had formerly paid to the head of the guild for all performances at *zambras* ("evening gatherings" – Ar. *samra*, pl. *sawāmīr*) and at weddings, arguing that since they were now Christians living under a Christian regime, they should no longer have to pay the taxes that they had previously paid under Muslim rule. Both the tax and the position of head of the guild were eliminated.²⁷

Another valuable insight comes from a series of incidents that took place in 1566 and that eventually sparked the "Morisco Rebellion," also known as the "Alpujarras War." The Crown imposed a set of new laws aimed at effacing all outward manifestations of Morisco culture including the prohibition of the Arabic language, the wearing of Morisco clothing, the use of Morisco musical instruments, the performance of Morisco music and dance, and in addition requiring the destruction of all public baths. Francisco Nuñez Muley, an elderly Morisco, pleaded with the Spanish Crown to halt these new laws in a now famous *Memorial*. He essentially argued that these outward appearances did not affect the good faith of the Christian Moriscos, noting, for example, that the Christians of the East spoke Arabic and wore Arab clothing but this did not compromise their Christian faith. He also argued that if the musical instruments played by the Moriscos were somehow tied to Islam, it would therefore be expected that the instruments of the Moriscos, the Moroccans, and the Turks would be the same, but as was well known, the instruments used by each of these groups were so different that they could therefore not be linked to the religion of Islam. This is a very valuable observation that demonstrates that the musical instruments and the music of the Granadan Moriscos were in this period so different from those of neighboring North African regions that this difference would be apparent even to Spanish Christians and could be used as an argument in defense of Morisco music as an independent tradition.²⁸

A valuable complement to the work of Fernández Manzano is the collection of musical terms culled by Rodrigo de Zayas²⁹ from the *Vocabulista* of Fray Pedro de Alcalá. During the initial period after the fall of Granada in 1492, when the Spanish Crown was still abiding by its promise to the defeated Muslims of Granada that they would be able to practice their Islamic faith freely for all eternity, the priest Pedro de Alcalá was given the task of studying Granadan Arabic and creating a Castilian–Arabic dictionary. His work is thus a remarkable snapshot of the spoken Andalusian Arabic of Granada at the end of the fifteenth century and is immensely valuable as such. Zayas extracted all of the musical terminology found in the *Vocabulista* and thus provided a invaluable resource for the study of Andalusí music. Among the more surprising revelations is the utter lack of the term *nūba* (a suite-like structure) which

²⁶Fernández Manzano, *De las melodías del reino Nazarí de Granada*, 153–4.

²⁷Fernández Manzano, *De las melodías del reino Nazarí de Granada*, 156–7.

²⁸Fernández Manzano, *De las melodías del reino Nazarí de Granada*, 163–5.

²⁹Zayas, *Música en el Vocabulista granadino*.

is considered the most fundamental unit and concept of all of the modern North African "Andalusi" traditions.

Another historical period/type of music that is just now beginning to draw the attention of scholars is that of "Mudéjar music." The concept of *mudéjar* (Muslims living under Christian rule, and by extension, artistic styles inspired by Islamic models in Christian regions) has been applied to art, architecture, and even literature for a number of decades now, but its application to music is a very recent development and is not yet widely accepted by scholars. The release of a CD in 1998 by the group *Mudéjar* led by Begoña Olavide and another recording by the group *Cinco Siglos* at nearly the same time entitled *Músicas de la España Mudéjar* has inspired the application of the term to a specific repertory of music, particularly the handful of songs that are documented in Christian sources of the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries as "Moorish songs." These include, for example, the romance *Paseábase el rey moro* which Ginés Pérez de Hita (1544?–1619?) considered a translation from the Arabic.³⁰ One of a number of different versions was notated by Luys de Narbaez in *Los Seys Libros del Delphin de Música de cifra para Tañer de Vihuela*:

Paseábase el rey moro	The Moorish king was out strolling
Por la ciudad de Granada,	Through the city of Granada
Cartas le fueron venidas	Letters were brought to him [saying]
De que Alhama era ganada	That [the city] of Alhama had been taken
¡Ay, mi Alhama! [...]	Woe, my Alhama! [...] ³¹

Equally famous is the romance *Tres Morillas* (Three Moorish girls) for which the Spanish scholar Julián Ribera y Tarragó found several historical precedents in Arabic for the two notated versions, one anonymous and one by Diego Fernández, which appear in the sixteenth-century *Cancionero de Palacio*.³² A full study of the music of Mudéjar Muslims throughout the Iberian Peninsula, parallel to the work of Fernández Manzano on the Moriscos of Granada, would be a very desirable scholarly contribution.

There are any number of topics and themes in the history of Andalusian music for which there is abundant historical documentation that cry out for scholarly attention. As an example, despite the fact that the primary purveyors of Andalusian music in the Middle Ages were female slaves trained as singers (the *qiyān* and *jawārī*), there does not yet exist a thorough study of their place in Andalusian society or of their role as cultural "go betweens" in their trajectories back and forth across the frontiers of Muslim al-Andalus and Christian Europe. Although a very small number of anecdotes have become quite well known and are often cited (those concerning the siege of Barbastro, for example), there are literally hundreds of passages pertinent to the study of these "artiste slaves" in Arabic, Latin, Castilian, Catalan, Langue d'Oc, French, German, Italian, and Portuguese.

Equally lacking are thorough studies of the various musical instruments introduced by the Arabs of al-Andalus, several of which continue to be performed in modern Spanish folk traditions even today. The Arab *al-būq* (Sp. *albogue*), for example, is attested in a variety of different Arabic and Castilian literary texts and is the antecedent of the Basque *alboka* (virtually the national instrument of the Basque country) as

³⁰Pérez de Hita, *Guerras civiles*, 252–5.

³¹Narbaez, *Seys libros del Dephin*, 48, 60–1.

³²Asenjo y Barbieri, *Cancionero musical*; Anglès, *Música de las Cantigas*; *Música en la corte*.

well as a whole family of Spanish folk instruments known sometimes as *albogue* and sometimes as *ghaita*. The study of these modern traditions could shed important light on the manufacture and playing styles of their medieval predecessors, which would be particularly welcome since several medieval sources cite the *al-būq* as the most highly appreciated musical instrument among the Andalusis. Here is a passage from the thirteenth-century Tunisian author, Aḥmad al-Tifāshī:

But the noblest instrument among [the Andalusis], and that which gives the most perfect pleasure in dancing and singing is *al-būq*. It is one of the things that is distinctive to the people of al-Andalus. It is shaped like *al-zamar* [oboe], large as *al-būq* [here: trumpet], and inserted into its head is an [animal] horn, then into the horn is inserted a reed-cane, then into the reed-cane is inserted a small tube, and it continues thus in sections until it ends in a wheat straw at the very end – that is where it is played and the real art [of the instrument] lies therein. When it is played it produces strange beautiful sounds of the most wondrous and ecstasy-provoking type. Among [the Andalusians] it is the most festive of instruments for singing and dancing in their drinking parties.³³

The Arab *rabāb* (a two-string fiddle) has left an equally impressive impact on Iberian folk music in the form of the Spanish *rabel*, documented in dozens of medieval iconographic sources, literary texts, and still very widespread, particularly in northern Spain. The wide variety of shapes and styles found, for example, in the collections of the Fundación Joaquín Díaz and the Colección Luis Delgado (Museo de la Música) in Urueña, Spain (Valladolid), attest to the richness and popularity of these traditions over many centuries. A brief search on the Internet reveals that there are numerous associations and organizations dedicated to preservation of this instrument and its repertory (*rabeladas*) throughout Spain and even in Latin America.

Certainly no study of modern playing techniques or repertory can be undertaken naively assuming these to be direct descendants of medieval Andalusī music, but careful examination of the more recent history of these instruments could greatly enlighten certain aspects of medieval images, literary references, and help solve a variety of musicological questions.

V. Comparative studies

Yet another new direction in the study of medieval Andalusī music lies in a variety of comparisons that can be made across both geographic and historical distances. The lack of any form of medieval notation of Andalusī music and the extremely small number of songs that were notated by Christians in later centuries (noted above under “Mudéjar” music) means that only certain general principles and structures of that repertory can be known, and not the individual melodies themselves; however, the large number of modern musical traditions in the Arab world said to be descended from al-Andalus makes it possible to compare modern “Andalusī” repertory with medieval European repertoires for which we do possess medieval transcriptions such as those of the troubadours, and the Gallego-Portuguese *Cantigas de Santa María* and *cantigas de amigo*. While no one individual song from the modern Andalusī repertoires can ever be assumed to have been transmitted unchanged or to have retained “medieval” characteristics, when a certain structure or feature is shared by hundreds of songs within a local repertory or across several regional repertoires, that feature can

³³Tanjī, “al-Ṭarā’iq,” 115–16; Liu and Monroe, *Ten Hispano-Arabic*, 43–4.

reasonably be assumed to have been present for a significant period of time. The challenge then is to determine which structures can usefully be compared to the extant medieval European notations.

Earlier scholars focused almost exclusively on the structures of the poems in their comparative studies, which, while useful at the level of literary form, offered little evidence regarding musical issues. Several studies undertaken in recent decades, however, deal specifically with music, including those by Leo J. Plenckers,³⁴ József Pacholczyk,³⁵ and Manuel Pedro Ferreira.³⁶ In each case these scholars have surveyed one or more of the regional modern Andalusí repertoires making observations about characteristics shared by large numbers of pieces (patterns of repetition among the different melodic units within the song, how melodic repetition relates to the poetic structure, and so forth) and have compared these features to various forms of early European music such as the *virelai*, *ballade*, and *rondeau*. Several scholars have noted the striking similarity between the musical form of many modern *muwashshah* songs from North Africa and the medieval French *virelai*, a form that emerges in France around 1300, but which is also found in the Alfonsine *Cantigas de Santa María* composed a few decades earlier. The continued study of such structural similarities may eventually lead to a clearer historical picture of the emergence of various song and dance forms and of how these various traditions interacted in the Middle Ages.

The existence of medieval Arabic treatises on rhythm such as that the tenth-century scholar al-Fārābī,³⁷ allows for East–West comparisons within the same historical period. In his studies of the rhythms described by al-Fārābī and the notations of the *Cantigas de Santa María*, Ferreira, for example, has identified striking parallels which are further reinforced by the existence of some of these same rhythms in the modern Andalusí repertoires of North Africa.³⁸

Finally, scholars might well regard the plethora of modern living traditions of Andalusí music found in North Africa, Egypt, Yemen, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, and in various Sephardic communities, as a historical resource in its own right. Much as historical linguistics have compared modern languages in the same language family and have been able to reconstruct certain characteristics of the older language forms even without direct documentation, musicologists and ethnomusicologists might embark upon the comparative study of Andalusí musical traditions across the Middle East with an eye toward identifying structures, styles, and even individual melodies with wide geographic distribution that might indicate older strata within these traditions. The difficulty, of course, is that each of these regional traditions has developed over long periods of time, with various elements of their repertory being added and others falling into disuse, so the task is not a simple one by any means. But there are many very basic questions that can and should be answered about modern Andalusí traditions which would be of great interest to the study of medieval Andalusí music: How widespread is the use of a true refrain (such as the repetition of opening *matla'*) in performance? Are there any traditions that have retained the vestiges of a *kharja* structure (i.e. where the final verses are in a linguistic register different from that of the preceding poem)? How widespread is the use of the instrumental *jawwāb* (reprise)

³⁴Plenckers, "Rapports entre le muwashshah algérien et le virelai."

³⁵Pacholczyk, "Relationship between the Nawba and the Music of the Troubadours;" "Early Arab Suite."

³⁶Ferreira, "Andalusian Music;" "Rondeau and Virelai."

³⁷D'Erlanger, *Musique arabe*; Sawa, *Music Performance Practice*.

³⁸Ferreira, "Andalusian Music;" "Rondeau and Virelai."

at the end of each verse? Are there any rhythms or melodic modes that are shared among a large number of regional traditions? Are there any individual songs found in diverse regions that have the same or similar melodies, which might indicate that they are quite old? How widespread is the three-melody *muwashshaḥ* structure (i.e., with an intermediary *silsila*, for example) in comparison with the more common binary form?

Sephardic song traditions also offer the possibility of “reconstructing” or “reviving” certain *muwashshaḥs* for which the lyrics have survived in Arabic sources, but for which the melodies are no longer found in the performance tradition. North African Jewish communities over the centuries incorporated a large number of melodies from Andalusī *muwashshaḥs* into both liturgical and paraliturgical repertoires, for example, as *piyyutim* (liturgical songs) and *baqqashot* (songs sung at night vigils). When a Hebrew text was contrafacted to an extant Arabic *muwashshaḥ*, the opening words of the Arabic song were often notated in the songbook as an indication that the new text was to be sung to that melody. Thus an Arabic text that no longer has a melody can be matched to its melody that survives with Hebrew lyrics through marginal annotations in songbooks, some of which date back several centuries.³⁹

Conclusion

Remarkably enough, the study of medieval Andalusī music is currently facing a period of very diverse and rich new directions. Major new sources continue to come to light; sources that have already been published and/or translated continue to provide new information when re-examined from a musicological perspective; archival collections of various sorts provide rich opportunities both for the gleaning of detailed information and for synthesizing those smaller finds into larger, more accurate portrayals of whole periods and traditions; a variety of topics requiring the study of many different types of documentation await study; and, finally, comparative study, particularly involving modern living traditions, holds out the promise of new insights into medieval materials.

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³⁹Seroussi, “Música arábigo-andaluza;” “Musique andalouse-marocaine;” “Andalusian Hebrew Strophic Poetry;” “Music in Medieval Ibero-Jewish Society.”

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