

# Music, Treatises, Performers and Patrons in *Xarq al-Andalus* (Spanish Levante, 11th-13th Centuries)

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Between the 11th and 13th centuries the Levante region of *Xarq al-Andalus* was a very important focus of Hispano-Muslim culture, as shown by the documentary sources of the period that have survived. There were, indeed, highly relevant musical and literary creations as well as contributions to music theory. However, from the conquest of King James I of Aragon, the area remained under Christian rule, and many Muslim musicians and scholars had to emigrate to the south. Nevertheless, the existing sources confirm the presence of a major musical and literary culture mainly due to the patronage of the rulers. The wise men and scholars that shone in the period are a part of Spanish history, as well as a little known but significant heritage.

Known in the Arab sources as *Xarq al-Andalus* (to the east of al-Andalus), the Levante region was one of the radiating centres of Hispano-Muslim culture (11th-13th centuries), focused on the courts of Denia, Játiva, Valencia and Murcia, with an identity of its own. Those located to the south of al-Andalus (today's Andalusia) and the Upper March in Saragossa, Tudela and Albarracín were also important.

Tracing the Arab documentary sources on music tells us about the titles of the works written in the Spanish Levante by music theoreticians, and the artistic contributions of its most significant composers, musicians, poets and female slave singers between the period of the Taifas, Almoravids and Almohads (11th-13th

centuries). However, from the conquest of the area by King James I of Aragon (Montpellier, 1208-Alcira, 1276) and the flight of some of the Levante Muslims to the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada and their emigration to the other shore, there are few sources providing information about the musical activity of Mudéjars and Moriscos in *Xarq al-Andalus*.

There are five pillars and types of sources that give us an overall idea of Muslim music in the Levante area and its development: a) the biographical-bibliographical dictionaries that tell us about the life and works of its exponents; b) the music treatises of the Levante theoreticians; c) the troubadours: poets and composers; d) the female poets, composers and musicians;

e) the music iconography in Hispano-Arab art and the instruments found in archaeological excavations.

In the context of the authors and biographical sources that inform us about the most outstanding figures in music and poetry, we find Ibn al-Abbar (1199-1260), historian, wise man and poet born in Onda (Castellón). Writer of forty-five works, including *Kitab al-Takmila fi kitab al-sila* [Supplement to the Biographical Additions], one of the most comprehensive biographical-bibliographical collections on prestigious Andalusian rulers and wise men, and *Kitab al-hulla al-siyara* [Book of the Embroidered Tunic], both with information about the life and work of its treatise writers, poets and composers. Ibn al-Abbar emigrated to Tunis when the city was besieged by King James I and requested asylum from the Emir of the Hafsi dynasty Abu Zakariya, becoming his secretary and eulogist.

*The study of the life and work of the Levante biographers, historians, theorists and poets reveals that science and literature shone and brought splendour to this region*

In line with the biographical-bibliographical collections, a second Valencian writer would be Ibn Dihya (Valencia, 1150-Cairo, 1255), a linguist and expert in Islamic traditions, the author of *Kitab al-mutrib mis asgar ahl al-Andalus* [Book of the Sweet Singer on the Poets in the West of al-Andalus], a biographical work featuring poets and poems by Andalusian bards.

The study of the life and work of the Levante biographers, historians, theorists and poets reveals that science and literature shone and brought splendour to this region, and many of them enjoyed the patronage of its rulers. Despite being born in the Levante, most of them had to seek refuge in the Kingdom of Granada, the North of Africa and the East after

the Christian conquest of these lands. Taking advantage of the pilgrimage to Mecca and Medina, on their return others decided to settle and work in Eastern and North African lands.

### Music Treaties by Levante Theorists (11th-13th Centuries)

The area of the Spanish Levante is characterised by being the cradle of a range music treaties written by reputed theorists, some of which survive. The biographical profile of the authors and the study of their surviving works show their encyclopaedic knowledge of different disciplines: they were wise men and great humanists of the time. As a sign of identity, the analysis of the contents reveals the relationship of the music discipline with the mathematical sciences within Pythagoras's *quadrivium* (Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, Astronomy).

In the geographical area of the Spanish Levante and the context of the Taifas (11th century), the first dictionary of specialised terms appeared in several volumes written by the lexicographer Ibn Sida (Murcia, 1007-Denia, 1066), known as "the blind man of Murcia", a wise man under the patronage of the emirs of Denia al-Muwaffaq and Iqbal al-Dawla, cultivated men and lovers of the arts and music. Ibn Sida is the author of the *Kitab al-Mujassas*, a codex held at El Escorial Library that, in volumes II, XI and XIII, has around thirty entries on music; string, wind and percussion instruments; dance; and games and diversion in celebrations.

The first music theorist, poet, excellent lute player, composer of muwashshahs and music pedagogue in Tunis was Abu l-Salt b. Umayya (Denia, 1068-Bugia, Algeria, 1134), born under the rule of Iqbal al-Dawla. After beginning his studies in Denia under the tutelage of the reputed master Abu l-Walid al-Waqassi, he attended different centres of knowledge

in al-Andalus. The eventful life of this wise man from Denia led him to seek his fortune in the East in the year 1095, living for a time in Alexandria and Cairo until settling, finally, in Mahdiyya in 1112 under the patronage of the Tunisian Zirids.

Known in the Latin texts as Abuzale, he wrote *Risalat al-musiqa* [Epistle on Music], translated by Hanoch Avenary, where in the introduction to the disciple he includes music among the mathematical sciences. Moreover, there are chapters and important information on music theory (notes, intervals and genres) and practice (melody progression and rhythm). Another major chapter focuses on types of instruments: a) natural, man himself producing sounds with mouth, throat, hands and b) artificial, manufactured by man. Next, he explains the structure and composition of the strings and the fingering of the cordophones: lute (*al-'ud*), rebel (*al-rebab*), *qanun* (zyther-like) and *tunbur* (long handle lute with a pear-shaped body and mobile metal frets).

At an organological level, the data related to music in the works of the Levante theorists, focused on the 11th to 13th centuries, introduce: a) the structure of the four-string lute: *qadim*; 5 = *kamil*; b) the names of the strings: from the lowest to the highest; c) their length and their materials (silk/gut); d) the relation between strings and main modes; e) the chord system, the fingering and the position of the fingers on the frets to obtain the appropriate notes; f) the types of tetrachords, the tonal distances and the algebraic calculation of the proportions of the intervals, tones, semitones and microtones; g) the systems of ciphered, alphabetic-numeric notation.

The prestige achieved by the Taifa of Denia under the rule of the Emirs al-Muyahid (d. 1044-5) and Iqbal al-Dawla (1009-1081) would remain during the Almoravid period with Ibn Mardanis (1147-1178), governor of Murcia, Denia and Valencia, known in Christian sources

as “the wolf king”. Love for music led Ibn Mardanis to arrange one of the rooms in his palace, *al-Qasar al-Sagir*, to receive outstanding figures, ambassadors, holding commemorative events and music soirées, where music was one of the main protagonists. The documentary sources note that Ibn Mardanis achieved great fame among the rulers of the Andalusian courts because of the prestige of his orchestra (*shitara*) and the large number of performers, thereby contributing to the artistic splendour of the Levante, in whose court the poetry and music of its great poets and composers flourished.

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In the Almohad court of Ibn Hud al-Mutawakil (1222/8-1238), a descendant of the Saragossa Hudi dynasty in Muslim Murcia, there was one of the great wise men, the poet, philosopher, theoretician and Sufi Ibn Saba'in (Valle de Ricote, 1217-Mecca, 1271), from whom a major musical work survives, *Kitab al-adwar al mansub* [Treatise on Notes and Relation with the Modes] edited by 'Izz al-Din al-Munasirat. This manuscript has many similarities with the epistle of the musician and writer on the theory of music Safi al-Din al-Urmawi (Urmia, Iran, 1216-Baghdad, 1294). In the late 1990s I was pleasantly surprised to discover in the Islamic Library in Cairo, which is recognised for the scientific value of its codices, a handwritten copy of this codex, which belonged to the Egyptian family of Ahmad Pasha and was considered lost. It is the most comprehensive work on music theory based on the lute, a codex illustrated by numerous

vignettes about its structure, graphs and synoptic tables that show the modal system, the encrypted musical notation (alphabetical and numerical) and the calculation of interval ratios. After the taking of Murcia by Christian troops, Ibn Saba'in emigrated to Granada and visited the centres of knowledge in North Africa until settling in Mecca.

*Andalusian and Maghreb biographers and anthologists comment on some songbooks written in Xarq al-Andalus, although these have not survived*

A Valencian wrote a last musical treatise, found by the musicologist Amnon Shiloah and collected in *The Theory of Arabic Writing*, second volume, on Arabic musical manuscripts in Arab and European libraries. I am referring to Ibn 'Abd al-Mun'im al-'Abdari al-Valansi (d. Marrakech, 1229), a mathematician, astronomer and music theorist from a famous family of scientists from Saragossa and author of *Masa'il fi 'ilm al-musiqa* [Questions on Musical Science], where he establishes his musical theory based on the *Great Book of Music* by al-Farabi (872-950) and the musical analysis of certain modes. I published several articles on this treaty, which was acquired in the lands of Marrakech by a private author lost for decades, suggesting the identity of the buyer. Shiloah discovered this codex years later, when it was bequeathed to the Leyden Library after the death of its owner.

The Granada polymath Ibn al-Jatib (1313-1374), in the *Ihata fi ajbar Garnata*, and Ibn al-Abbar from Onda, in *Kitab al-Tackmila*, mention the wise man and Sufi from Granada Sidi Ibn al-Bunuh (1255-1333), author of *Ta'alif tahrir fi l-sama' al-yara' al-musammāt fi sabbaba*, a work that prohibited the reed flute, known as *axabeba*, in the Sufi rituals of the family brotherhood located in the upper part of the Albaicín neighbourhood in Granada (Cor-

tés, 2016: 21-22). The family of this famous Sufi wise man was of Levante origin and included rich Concentaina merchants who emigrated from Elche to Granada in April 1254, after the third phase of the conquest of the kingdom of Valencia, in 1244, and the territories controlled by the Emir al-Ashraq. The family boasted well-known qadis and respected jurists in Granada, leading a prestigious *zawiyya*, and a *sadili* brotherhood (*tariqa*) that had many followers.

### Levante Songbooks (12th-13th Centuries)

Andalusian and Maghreb biographers and anthologists comment on some songbooks written in *Xarq al-Andalus*, although these have not survived. The same happened with the writings in al-Andalus, codices that must have been burned for religious reasons or lost in history. The Andalusian biographer al-Ru'ayni and the Algerian al-Maqqari mention the work of Yahya al-Jaduy (Murcia, 12th century-Ceuta, 13th century), who compiled a wide repertoire of songs in three volumes, *Kitab al-Agani al-andalusiyya* [Book of Andalusian Songs], which emulated the *Book of Songs* by al-Farabi (10th century) and collected the best-known compositions performed in the courts (Cortés, 2002: 64-65). In reference to the Murcian composer Ibn Hasib al-Mursi (13th century), an expert in musical theory and practice, al-Maqqari points out in *Nafh al-Tib* that he wrote a songbook in several volumes that included many of the songs performed in al-Andalus, besides being a great lute player (al-Tanyi, 1968: 108-112; Monroe, 1989: 40-41).

Biographical sources cite Abu Bakr Ahmad al-Raquti (Valle de Ricote-Granada, 13th century) as an eminent scholar who enjoyed the protection and patronage of King Alfonso X the Wise. Known for his great knowledge in different areas of learning, al-Raquti was a



Iconography of a flautist woman in the Ibn Mardanis Palace, Murcia.

great teacher versed in musical art and a renowned lute player who founded a music school in Murcia, in the Almohad period, and another in Granada during the Nasrid period. After the Almohad loss of *Xarq al-Andalus*, and the capture by Christian armies, he fled to Granada, the last Andalusian bastion in the migratory process of the people from the Levante region.

Arabic text sources are prolific when citing the names, qualities and functions of Levante female poets, female singers, composers and conductors. In terms of female composers, Ibn al-Abbar includes in *Kitab al-Tackmila* the biography of the poetess and composer Fathuna bint Ya'far from Murcia (10th century?), a free woman who he defines as *adiva* (cultivated) and author of a compilation entitled *Kitab fi qiyān al-Andalus* [Book of Female Slave-Singers of al-Andalus] (Ibn al-Abbar, biography no. 2868; al-Marrakusi, biography no. 272; Ávila, 1989:

156, biography no. 23). Although the manuscript is lost, biographers indicate that, in structure and content, it imitated the *Kitab al-Agani* [Book of Songs] by Abu I-Faray al-Isfahani (9th century), a codex of which several copies were made in al-Andalus. The loss of the songbook means that the information provided by her biographers is scant, although they reveal that she conducted an orchestra.

The title of Fathuna bint Ya'far's songbook suggests that it was one of the current collections and repertoires in the area, probably chosen by the author and performed by female slave singers (*qiyān*), and must have included the poetic texts of the great Eastern and Levante classical female poets. These compositions, which must have passed to the other shore in the oral memory of the Moriscos, could explain why Maghreb authors compiled them, in the process of oral to written transmission, to form part of the key songbooks in the performance of the *nawbas* (Faruqi, 1981: 234-235).

## Poets, Composers and Musicians (Men and Women)

In addition to these great Levante wise men framed in the Taifa (11th century), Almoravid (1091-1146) and Almohad (1146-1269) periods, there were famous musicians, poets, composers and compilers of musical repertoires in the courts governed by the Emirs of the Banu Jahlaf and Banu 'Abd al-Aziz dynasties (11th-13th centuries). Some of them were born in the lands of *Xarq al-Andalus* and others, throughout their itinerant lives, gained the patronage and protection of their Emirs.

The text sources highlight the prestige achieved by the Levante poets, composers and musicians of both genders, authentic troubadours of the time and, in some cases, creators of the melodies with which they accompanied their poetic compositions. In medieval times,

troubadours and minstrels were the performers and transmitters of the repertoire to their audience through an orality that was the channel for disseminating the poetry recited or chanted by its poets and rhapsodists.

In terms of the poetry of the Levante troubadours, according to the researcher Mahmud Sobh (Sobh, 2009: 29): “They managed to unite their love, courtly or erotic, with the beautiful nature that surrounded them, so that they gave their poetry a new air that manifested itself in a romanticism full of passion and natural landscapes, hence the description of nature is linked to love and Bacchic poetry.”

*Poets also expressed their admiration for female singers in poems where they provide details about the instruments, types and styles of singing, the costumes and accessories of the dancers or the jewellery*

As a mark and identifying factor of the poetics of this area, it is worth noting the preference of its poets for the genres of the classical oriental *qaṣīda* and floral poetry, undoubtedly motivated by the richness of a living nature full of Mediterranean lights. Love for his land is latent in the poetry of Ibn Khafaja from Alcira (1058-1138), as these verses show by evoking the lushness of the land (Sobh, 2009: 109):

*¡Oh gente de al-Andalus, qué dichosa y bienaventurada!*

*Agua abundante y sombra extendida: cuánto río y arboleda.*

*El Paraíso de la Eternidad no está más que en vuestra morada.<sup>1</sup>*

The Valencian biographer Ibn Dihya (12th century) said of Ibn Khafaja: “His poetry is softer than the breeze and more beautiful than a beautiful maiden,” while the Córdoba-born biographer Ibn Bashkuwāl (12th century) pointed out: “He carries the banner of the poetry of al-Andalus; master of the poetic art, he has no rival in the East, or in the West.” In his nostalgia for the paradise of al-Andalus, he thus exclaimed (Sobh, 2009: 111):

*¡Qué lejos me hallo de mi paraíso de al-Andalus!*

*Alguna vez regresaré a mi tierra de Alcira, a calmar mis angustias y sosegar mi lecho, a vagar por sus valles.*

*Siempre que el viento sopla desde mi tierra, grito con añoranza, ¡Ay de mi al-Andalus!<sup>2</sup>*

Poets also expressed their admiration for female singers in poems where they provide details about the instruments, types and styles of singing, the costumes and accessories of the dancers or the jewellery, whose tinkling marked the rhythm and beats of the dancers. Ibn Zaqqaq (1096-1133), another of its great poets, wrote about a female dancer (al-Maqqari, 1855-1859: 282; Perés, 1990: 388):

*Ella cantaba y el tintineo de sus joyas le respondía*

*al cimbreade en su traje (ways) y sus collares, y el perfume que exhalaban.<sup>3</sup>*

1. Oh people of al-Andalus, how joyous and blessed! / Abundant water and vast shadow: so much river and grove. / The Paradise of Eternity lies within your dwelling.

2. How far I am from my paradise of al-Andalus! / Some day I will return to my land of Alcira, / To quiet my distress and calm my rest, to wander through its valleys. / Every time the wind blows from my land, / I scream with longing, / Woe to my al-Andalus!

3. She was singing and the tinkling of her jewels responded / When she swayed in her dress (ways) and necklaces, and the perfume they exhaled.

Ibn Sidah talked about silks and the art of brocade (*al-tiraz*), widely produced in Valencia, in the fourth part of his dictionary entitled “Chapter on silk: dresses (*al-libas*)”, where it referred to silk clothing: *aljubas* (brocades, wrought in gold, varied colours and stripes); *al-jazz* (blend of wool and silk; *al-qazz*: raw silk, less refined); *Qalamun* (fabric in varied colours and iridescent reflections that made with filaments of marine pearl collected in the Atlantic, off the coast of Portugal); and *Dibay*: brocades used by the aristocracy.

*Music, instruments and their players are also present in the poetry of ‘Abd al-Yabbar of Alzira (12th century), a poet who praised the intelligence of the Emirs of Denia, while criticising the pleasant life of the people of Granada*

The poet Abu Bakr Ibn Ruhaym (Bocairente, 11th century-Córdoba, 1126?), whose work is part of Andalusian and Almoravid poetry, is cited in Arabic sources as a master of musical composition and author of ten muwashshahs, some with kharja romance, collected by Ibn al-Khatib in *Yays al-tawsih* [Muwashshah Repertoire]. A lover of poetic and musical gatherings, the Bocairente-born poet’s knowledge enabled him to improvise melodies and emulate as many songs as he heard. These verses, which are part of the prelude to a long qaṣīda, sing to the wine and beauty of the voices of the female singers (Garulo, 2006: 494):

¡Qué hermoso día en el que plantamos para  
el vino  
los pabellones del placer con copas y cráteras!

*Los ruiseñores gorjeaban melodías  
a las que replicaban  
nuestras cantoras con sus voces.*<sup>4</sup>

Music, instruments and their players are also present in the poetry of ‘Abd al-Yabbar of Alzira (12th century), a poet who praised the intelligence of the Emirs of Denia, while criticising the pleasant life of the people of Granada. (Sobh, 2009: 308):

*Sus mentes solo se ocuparon del vino  
del Genil/  
de canciones y de escuchar el laúd el  
tamboril.*<sup>5</sup>

The influence of the music and voices of the great oriental singers of the school of Medina and Baghdad is present in this poem by the bard of Alcira, where he alludes to the composer from Baghdad Ishaq al-Mawsili and to the prestigious singer from Medina Ma’bad (Sobh, 2009: 313):

*Si liberaras a las cuerdas de sus instrumentos,  
demostrando la magia de sus bellos diez  
ritmos,  
entonces creerías que es Ishaq [de Irak] o  
Ma’bad [Medina],  
entonando las melodías de estilo  
pausado, rápido y mediano.*<sup>6</sup>

Music is also part of the poetry of Ibn al-Abbar from Onda, a wise man who studied in Valencia and was secretary to the last Almohad governor in the city, Zayd Abu b. Zayd (1195-1268), who would sign in 1238, in the presence of King James I, the city capitulation agreements.

4. What a beautiful day when we planted for wine / The pavilions of pleasure with glasses and craters! / The nightingales chirped melodies / Which the female singers replied to with their voices.

5. Their thoughts were only concerned with the Genil wine / With songs and with listening to the lute and the tabor.

6. If you free the strings from their instruments, / Revealing the magic of their beautiful ten rhythms, / Then you would believe he is Ishaq [from Iraq] or Ma’bad [Medina], / Singing the melodies of / Slow, fast and median style.

From his exile in Tunisia he lamented the loss of Valencia in an elegy (Sobh, 2009: 471):

*¿Dónde está Valencia y sus casas, sus cánticos  
y arrullos de sus palomas?  
¿Dónde la gala de su Rusafa y su puente?  
¿Dónde sus arroyos desbordantes y sus árboles  
frondosos?  
¿Dónde sus jardines fragantes y sus parajes  
deleitosos?*<sup>7</sup>

The conquest of Valencia by King James I marked the great migratory process of Muslims from *Xarq al-Andalus* to the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada and the North African lands. The deep pain that he must have felt for the loss of Valencia would lead Ibn al-Abbar to write the elegiac poem “Ay my Valencia!”, pronouncing laments and cries like knocks of despair, and remembering the female singers turned into mourners after their loss (Sobh, 2009: 477-478):

*En tu recuerdo existe lo que a toda cuestión  
impugna,  
me refiero a la sangre, no al reparto de agua,  
venga de donde venga.  
¿Cómo se pueden recuperar residencias, lares  
y lugares de cultura  
en torno a los cuales el mozárabe incendió  
su falla?  
.../....  
Antaño en estos lugares se escuchaba la  
melodía de la paloma cantora  
que ahora es plañidera que repite su llanto  
lastimando sus lamentos.*<sup>8</sup>

Among the itinerant characters who stayed for a time in the courts of *Xarq al-Andalus*

was the poet, philosopher, music theorist and composer of muwashshahs from Saragossa Ibn Yahyà, “Avempace” (Saragossa, 1080-Fez, 1139), who would take refuge for a time in Valencia, after the conquest of his city by Alfonso the Battler (1118). The same happened with Ibn al-Haddad (Guadix, 1030-Almeria, 1087), a poet admitted to the Taifa of Almeria ruled by Emir al-Mu’minin (1052-1091) and author of a musical work that linked poetic and musical rhythm. Ibn Hazm of Córdoba (994-1064) would also take refuge for a time in the court of Játiva, where in 1022 he wrote his literary work and first known treatise on love, *El collar de la Paloma* [The Necklace of the Dove], which includes some stories and anecdotes about his relationship with some female singing slaves. Ibn al-Arif (Almeria, 1088-Ceuta, 1141) was another of the poets and author of famous Sufi poems who went to the courts of Almeria, Saragossa and Valencia. Some of his Sufi poems collected in the 18th century song-books are still performed in the *nawbas* of the Andalusian-Maghreb cultivated tradition, as is the case with the Sufi Abu I-Rabi’ al-Xativi (Játiva, 1189-Alexandria, 1274), whose remains rest in a small Alexandrian mosque (CD *El jardín perdido*).

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Reviewing the Arabic texts included in the encyclopaedia of Ahmad al-Tifashi (Tiffèche, 1184-1253), chapter 11 of volume XLI on the

7. Where is Valencia and its houses, its songs and the lullabies of its doves? / Where the beauty of its Ruzafa and its bridge? / Where its overflowing streams and its lavish trees? / Where its fragrant gardens and its delightful spots?

8. In your memory there is what refutes any question, / I am referring to blood, not to the supply water, wherever it comes from. / How can we recover residences, homes and places of culture / Around which, the Mozarab ignited his torch? / [...] / In the past in these places you could listen to the melody of the singing dove / Which is now a mourner that repeats its weeping hurting its laments.



music of al-Andalus in the first centuries of Islam, *Mut'at al-asma' fi 'ilm al-sama'* [The Pleasure of Hearing in the Science of Musical Audition], I found very significant data. This included the fact that Tifashi mentioned the participation of men and women in the musical activity and singing of the oriental genre of the *qaṣīda* monorhyme and the Andalusian strophic forms of *muwashshahs* and *zajals*. Similarly, he praised the great poets and composers, the Córdoba-born al-Ramadi and Ibn Hudayl, the Saragossa-born Avempace and Ibn al-Hammara and the Levante-born Ibn al-Zaqqaq, with numerous poems sung in the Almoravid period.

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Some sources refer to the fame achieved by the Levante-born Ibn Labbana, Ibn al-Abbar, Ibn Jafaya and Ibn Zaqqaq. Ahmad al-Tifashi places the Murcia-born composer and musician Ibn Hasib among the best, pointing out that most of the songs that were heard in his time were composed by this prestigious lute player who was welcomed into the court of Ibn Mardanis. He describes him thus: "All the melodies created upon new compositions in al-Andalus and the Maghreb come from Ibn Hasib," adding that, until his era [13th century], his melodies were still performed (al-Tanyi, 1968: 109-116; Monroe, 1989: 35-44).

Of the around fifty compositions compiled by Ahmad al-Tifashi written by the most prestigious eastern and Andalusian poets, he notes that most were composed by Avempace of Saragossa and Ibn Hasib of Murcia. In terms of poetic genres, the *qaṣīda* was the most used by the Levante poets, cultured poetry of Eastern

origin and whose monorhythmic structure had long runs of verses, hence the musicians chose the most suitable for singing. Most of the compositions collected appear under the heading of *al-sawt* and *al-nashid*, singing styles typical of the Abbasid school at the court of Baghdad and Samarra. The *sawt* was characterised as a type of melismatic song, and the *nashid/inshad* was recited or chanted.

The poet and composer from Onda, Zayn al-Din al-Undari (14th century?) is described by his biographers as a teacher (*ustad*) and Sufi poet, versed in spiritual sciences and descendant of a family from Undara (Onda) living in Egypt. The texts and melodies of thirty-seven *muwashshahs* by Zayn al-Din, "the one from Onda", are collected in an unpublished anthology of *muwashshahs* entitled *Say' al-wurq al-muntahiba fi yam' al-muwassahat al-muntajaba* and written by Ahmad b. Musa al-Sajawi (15th-16th centuries), an Egyptian wise man linked to Alexandria and author of a treatise on the lute held by the National Library of Berlin (Makki, 1991: 246-248). This manuscript by al-Sajawi that features *muwashshahs* by Andalusian and Oriental poets includes, in the second volume, two hundred and thirteen compositions of this genre.

Among the *muwashshahs* of the Andalusian poets and composers that are included in this codex, which forms part of the holdings of the Ahmad III Library in Istanbul, is "the blind man from Tudela", Ibn Baqi from Córdoba, Ibn Zuhr from Seville, Muhammad b. 'Ubada from Malaga, Ibn Labbana from Valencia, Zayn al-Din al-Undari from Onda and Ibn al-Jatib from Loja. Curiously, in the margins that accompany the texts of the thirty-seven *muwashshahs* by al-Undari there are musical annotations on the ways in which those located in the codex box should be performed. The oriental and Andalusian modes in which the *muwashshahs* of the Onda poet should be performed, included in the oriental repertoire, are: *fi nagamat al-Husayni*,

*fi nagamat 'Iraq, al-Duka, al-Isbahan, al-Rasd, al-'Ushshaq, al-Zahawi, Ramal Ukbari, al-Hiyaz, al-Sika, al-Sa'id and al-Kurdaniyya.* Some of these oriental and Persian modes are part of the *nawbas* in the Andalusian-Maghreb tradition, *al-Husayn, al-'Iraq, al-Isbahan, al-'Ushshaq al-Hiyaz and al-Sika.*

Some Levante women have gone down in history for the artistic work carried out in the courts and under the patronage of princes, rulers and nobles. It was a true innovation in medieval society, taking into account the sociocultural and religious conditions that surrounded the female group in a patriarchal society and the rejection by Islamic orthodoxy of artistic manifestations.

*Literary sources highlight the fame achieved by young female slaves who were experts in the art of poetry, which they combined with playing musical instruments*

In *Al-Andalus: mujeres, sociedad y religión* (Al-Andalus: Women, Society and Religion), the researcher López de la Plata notes the role played by the religious school of the Spanish Levante (11th-12th centuries), focused on Denia, Valencia, Játiva and Murcia (López de la Plata, 1992: 97-99), highlighting the high level of training of women in religious sciences (*fiqh, kalam, hadiz*). This school must have contributed to the linguistic and literary training of its female poets, singers and composers.

Literary sources highlight the fame achieved by young female slaves who were experts in the art of poetry, which they combined with playing musical instruments. Some authors reveal the poetic brilliance that characterised a Levante slave (*yariya*) called Hind (12th century),

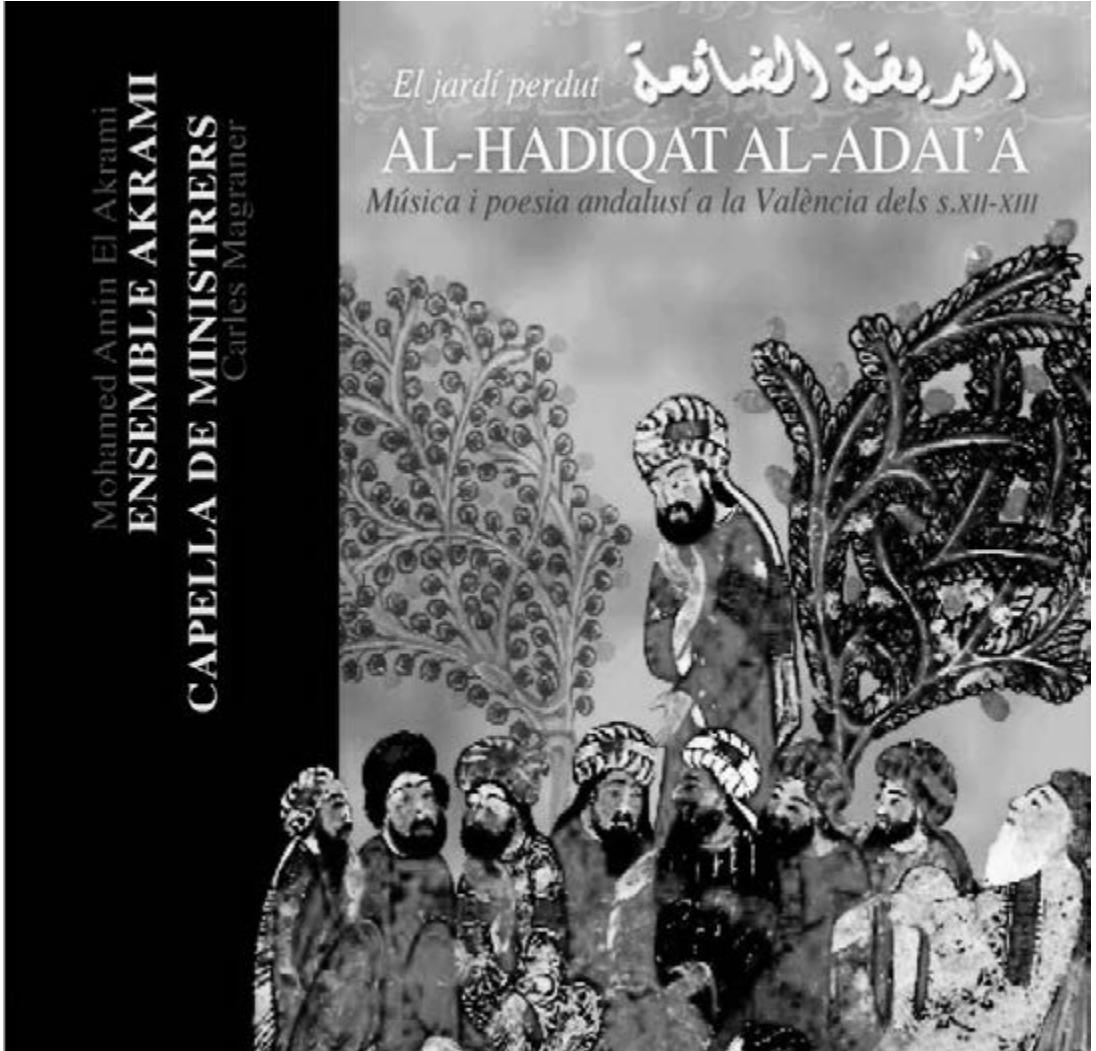
a cultured woman, a poetess and an excellent lute player who belonged to Abu Muhammad 'Abd Allah b. Maslama al-Xatibi "the one from Játiva" (Játiva, 1089-1152). There are several surviving response compositions by the Levante poet and doctor Ibn Yannaq (d. 1153) on this slave, in which she answered an invitation given by the bard to come to his house in the company of some friends and delight them with her instrumental and vocal knowledge (Ibn al-Abbar, biography no. 2877; Maqqari, IV: 293-294; Ávila, 1989: 162; Garulo, 1986: 95-96). The slave's poem responding to her invitation reveals the freedom she enjoyed in coming to his house with her lute in the company of other young men.

In the process of oral to written transmission, the compositions of some poets of both genders appear in Maghreb songbooks written from the late 17th century in the Maghreb. This is the case of the Levante poetess Amat al-Aziza al-Sharifa al-Husayniyya (1159/1153-1235), from whom the Valencian Ibn Dihya and the Algerian al-Maqqari include two compositions (Garulo, 1986: 59). This poem by the Levante poetess is sung to Andalusian-Maghreb music, *nawba Garibat al-Huseyn*, in the *Garibat al-Husayn* mode:

*Vuestras miradas hieren mis entrañas  
y mis ojos hieren las mejillas.  
Valga una herida por otra  
mas ¿cuál merece la herida del desdén?*<sup>9</sup>

The Muslim Játiva, cradle of outstanding poets, was another of the centres where renowned singers were trained and spread their teachings throughout the different parts of the Andalusian geography. The chronicles indicate that the court of Játiva had one of the most

9. Your gazes hurt me within / And my eyes hurt my cheeks. / If one wound is worth the other / Which one deserves the wound of disdain?



CD cover of *El jardí perdido* of poems written by poets from the Spanish East, performed by C.M. and conducted by Carles Magraner, with the collaboration of the Conservatory of Tétouan and directed by Professor Akrami.

recognised orchestras (*sitarat*) in al-Andalus and comprised over one hundred lutes.

### Music in the Christian and Muslim Courts

While there is abundant information on Muslim music in *Xarq al-Andalus*, from the early

11th century to the early 13th century, the information about music and its performers in the period of King James I and his court is limited with regard to the Christian sources on the vanquished ethnic-religious communities of Mudéjares and Jews. In general, they focus on indicating the names of the Moorish minstrels or the number of female Moorish minstrels who performed in some popular

festivals and the Corpus Christi processions. When I consulted the chronicles of the Crown of Aragon on 13th century Valencia, the *Llibre dels feits del rei en Jaume* [Book of Deeds of King James I], I saw that Saracen musicians appear in some stories about the *algaras*, and the types of instruments they use to warn about the enemy are mentioned (buisines and drums).

The limited information about prestigious Muslim musicians in the court of King James I (1208-1276) is similar to that produced in Granada after the capture of the city by the Catholic Monarchs (1492) in terms of the presence of Mudéjares and Moriscos. In both cases, it places them as part of the group of musicians, minstrels and puppeteers at popular festivals. We find some curious details concerning Granada and, before, the Levante region. According to Christian sources, from an edict of the City Council of Granada in 1517, the *tarcón* tax was applied to the Moriscos of Granada in the holding of *zambras*, weddings and betrothals (Fernández Manzano, 1985: 29), a tax that Muslim musicians were also charged in the domains of King James I known as the *targo* (Hinojosa, 2009: 181).

Amidst the constant changes brought about after the periodical recoveries and losses of the land owned by Muslims or Christians, it is clear that music, dance and games were forms of entertainment and diversion in the commemorations and entertainment events in the courts of the Emirs and Christian rulers. The interaction between musicians located in the border courts existed through the exchange and participation of orchestras and musicians from other communities in important festivities and commemorations.

According to the data consulted, the most reputed orchestras in the Muslim courts and that enjoyed the protection of their emirs belonged to al-Ma'mum from Toledo (11th-13th centuries), al-Mu'tamid from Seville and his son al-Rashid (11th century), al-Mu'tasim

from Almeria (11th century) and the vizier Ibn 'Abbas, Hudayl ben Razin and Husam al-Dawla from Albarracín (11th-13th centuries) and Ibn Mardanis, governor of Murcia and Valencia. Of special note is the participation of renowned minstrels in the court of Játiva (12th-14th centuries) (Cingolani, 2016: 230). The historian al-Marrakusi in *Kitab al-Bayan* mentions that Muhammad ibn Hisam ibn 'Abd al-Yabbar (Perés, 1990: 383, note 111), one of the last Omeyas, had one hundred horns (*buq li-l-zamr*) and one hundred lutes (*'ud li-l-darb*).

*The limited information about prestigious Muslim musicians in the court of King James I (1208-1276) is similar to that produced in Granada after the capture of the city by the Catholic Monarchs (1492) in terms of the presence of Mudéjares and Moriscos*

The presence of Muslim and Jewish orchestras and singers is also documented in the medieval lyric poetry of the *Libro del Buen Amor* by Arcipreste by Hita (1330), the *Poema de Alfonso XI* (1348) and the courts of Sancho García of Castile (12th century). The iconography of the *Cantigas* in the court of Alfonso X (13th century) reveals the presence of Muslim musicians, and the *Libro del Ajedrez, Dados y Tablas*, of women players. The text sources show that the courts of James I and Sancho IV of Castile had twenty-seven paid minstrels: thirteen Muslims, twelve Christians and one Jew (Herrero Massari, 2009: 13). They also inform about a celebration held on 12 June 1356 in the court of John I, a lover of music from childhood, who requested the presence of the moor from Valencia Albufeli and Moorish women minstrels, male minstrels and female dancers, which is also documented in the courts of Peter II, Peter IV, James II and John II (13th-15th centuries). In the times of James II the presence of Moorish male and female minstrels

in Játiva in May 1303 is recorded, and in 1377, in the court of Peter IV, with the presence of rebec and axabebe players. Moorish minstrels and dancers from Játiva are recorded in the Christian sources from the 14th to 16th centuries (Cingolani, 2016: 250; Menéndez Pidal, 1968b: 142-145).

As a significant factor on the Muslim influence in the medieval Christian era, Menéndez Pidal argued in *España, último eslabón entre el Islam y la cristiandad* (Spain, the Last Link between Islam and Christianity): “We know that King Pedro IV of Aragon (1319-1387) had in his palace Moorish minstrels from Játiva, where there was a famous school of Morisco music. We could say much more about the 15th century. Finally, it is not surprising that Arab chant influenced Christian chant; it would be incomprehensible if it had not influenced it.”

*We know that King Pedro IV of Aragon (1319-1387) had in his palace Moorish minstrels from Játiva, where there was a famous school of Morisco music. We could say much more about the 15th century*

With respect to Valencian Moriscos, Arab and Aljamiado sources provide details about the Moriscos and their relationship with music, chants and dances. As an example, it is worth mentioning the Morisco manuscript conceived as a manual for beginners, *Risalat al-‘ud* [Epistle on the Lute], held at the Spanish National Library (ms. no. 5397-3), (Cortés, 2010: 305-314). Moreover the *Cancionero morisco* (Morisco Songbook), published in 2016 by the Arabists Carmen Barceló and Ana Labarta, from the University of Alicante, features unpublished documents and religious and popular songs sung by Levante and Granada Moriscos. As well as these documents there is information about European travellers along the Mediterranean coast, and in Catalonia, Gandía, Valencia, Alcira, Almería, Seville and Granada (late 15th

century-17th century). Moreover, in their accounts travellers tells us about the instruments and Morisco dances they encountered (Cortés, 2017: 176-182).

## Musical Figurative Representations in Levante Art and Archaeology

The iconographic art of the *Xarq al-Andalus* school features a series of pieces that show musicians of both genders playing instruments. The presence of women who offered their musical virtuosity to those in the hall of the Small Palace of Ibn Mardanis is depicted in a stucco fragment that formed part of the dome with muqarnas and a sample of the well-known “female flutist of Murcia” (13th century) blowing a simple flute (*nai*) consisting of a tube, on display at the Museo Regional de Murcia.

The iconographic sources related to Hispano-Muslim art show the prevalence of women musicians thanks to a second female figure on a vase and which must have decorated a palace of the Murcian court, a representation that enables us to recognise the figure of a woman lute player plucking the four strings of an Arab lute (Navarro Palazón, 1986: 66-69). Another piece also from Játiva is a marble font exhibited at the Museo de Almudiel with depictions of music scenes, games, horsemen and drinkers on its sides. Some fragments of silk fabrics made in Granada and Valencia depict figures of pairs of musicians plucking their timbrels.

In the field of archaemusicology, in recent decades, archaeological digs have brought to light some flute-like wind instruments and membranophones such as Islamic goblet drums (*darbukas*) and other tubular membranophones (*kuba*) in Benetusser, Torrevieja and Alicante. These instruments reveal the importance of music, their players and instruments in Muslim times and their prevalence in subsequent periods.

It is worth adding, as an epilogue, that the systematic analysis of the artistic production in *Xarq al-Andalus* by its treatise writers, poets, composers and players of both genders enables them to be placed among the great figures of Andalusian literary and musical culture. These characters have gone down in history because of their work in the courts, many of them under the patronage of princes, rulers and noble men. Therefore, the list of this small group of wise men and lovers of the literary and musical arts makes up part of the history of Spanish music and of a legacy perhaps less known but significant nonetheless; hence the importance of studying and monitoring them in the field of musicological studies.

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