

## TROUBADOUR POETRY: AN INTERCULTURAL EXPERIENCE

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**ABSTRACT:** *This is a reading of the intercultural experience of the medieval poetry known as the Troubadour poetry. It's a study of the origin, meaning, music and structure of the lyric love poetry which appeared in medieval Spain, in the period from (3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H / 9<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD), with special reference to the Muwwashah and the Kharja. It expanded to southern France, then to northern France. The early troubadour was a wandering singer or minstrel who traveled from place to place singing for gaining his living. But the French troubadours were mostly of noble birth that wrote and sang for the upper-class audience. The troubadours wrote their songs and poems of a metrical form mainly on themes of courtly love. Their poetry was influenced by Arabic poetry and it became a literary phenomenon that historians of Western literature and culture could not ignore. This paper highlights the primary role played by the Arabs in medieval poetry issues and it alludes to some salient elements of intercultural communication between the East and the West.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, scholars and historians of medieval Arabic literature divided the Arabic and Islamic culture and literature of medieval Spain into three major components. Scholars made divisions of that culture but Gerard Wiegers made the clearest division as follows:

- I. Works on religion (*fiqh*, *tafsir*, prayer books, pious miscellanies, religious polemics magic, popular medicine, and treatises).
- II. Works intended for practical use (letters, medicine, and itineraries).
- III. Literature of entertainment (*adab*).<sup>1</sup>

The interest of this paper is in literature of entertainment or Belles-letters (*adab*) mainly its most popular genre known as the Troubadour poetry. By nature of things, the Arabs of Spain were fond of song writing.

Their songs were widely known as they were sung publicly on various social occasions and celebrations including, for example, their marriage ceremonies, summer night festivals and other happy cultural events. Such songs were widely known as they were sung publicly in open places, yards and streets.

### **ARABS, MEDIEVAL MUSIC AND ANDALUSIA:**

Baghdad of the Abbasides became the main center for music. Many men and women gained popularity and fame for their creativity in this field. Of the famous musicians of the time were Qamar Al Baghdadia, Ibrahim Al Musuli, his son Ishaq and his student Abul Hassan Ali Ibn Nafi' (Known as Ziryab). The later musician immigrated to the Maghreb and Andalusia bringing with him the oriental music and thus adding flavor to the existing music of Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia known as 'Andalusian music'. His music played an important role in developing the musical theory and practice in medieval Spain.

The Arab musicians of Andalusia and their Arabic music contributed to the human civilization in general and to that of Europe in particular. European composers and singers learnt much from the Arabic music. For example, the Arabs introduced oriental music; they brought about and developed types of musical instruments including the *'ud* (A musical instrument identical to the lute). They laid the foundation of an organized musical art in Europe; they opened schools of music in different major Spanish cities including Seville, Toledo, Valencia and Granada.<sup>2</sup>

The most important legacy in the field of music left to Europe by the Arabs is the measured music. Before the close of the twelfth century the *Cantus mensuratus* or measured song was unknown to the Europeans; the Arabs introduced their *iqā'* (pl. *iqā'at*) or rhythm, which had been known to the Arabs even as early as the seventh century.

The medieval 'hocket' is a combination of notes and pauses which is derived from the Arabic *iqā'at*." In his book, *A History of Arabian Music to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century*, H. G. Farmer tells the story of Zalzal (al-Darab), the great singer of Baghdad who introduced a new type of *'ud* called the *'ud al-shabbut* or the perfect lute. Then, Hitti's *History of the Arabs* mentions that Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Nafi' known as Ziryab, another musician from Baghdad developed the Zalzal lute known as al-shabbut, by adding a fifth string to it, and also by making other replacements.

In simple words, as a result of Arabic creativity and contributions, a mixture of Arabic and Latin cultures generated in Spain. It reflected upon other types of arts and literature including the popular love song. "The Hispano-Arab poetry imbibed the native genius as well as it polished techniques from the Arabs."<sup>3</sup>

## ARABS AND THE POETRY OF ANDALUSIA:

The Arabs were known for their ancient poetry. Pre-Islamic suspended odes survived to represent examples of the Arabs mastery of poetry writing and reciting; poetry was their most celebrated literary genre. By the ninth century, Arabic poetry, like all other literary genres, was influenced by the native Arabic philosophical traditions like those of the Mu'tazilites (group of rationalists in Islamic theology) and of the Greek philosophy, mainly that of Aristotle. Thus, the Arabs began to realize the systematic study of poetry. Hence, Walid Hamarneh writes: "the first attempt to develop a systematic study of poetry started around the end of the ninth century, and by the tenth century the study of poetry became a prestigious activity to which whole treaties and books could be devoted."<sup>4</sup> By that time, Arabic poetry of medieval Spain was mixing with the Western culture; it was flourishing with new meanings, concepts and music. Thus a new hybrid of poetry emerged. On such intercultural experience Boas writes: "In the homogeneous culture of Moorish Spain there must have been a constant exchange of themes, concepts and stylistic devices between courtly and popular poetry."<sup>5</sup>

Arabic literary history and culture witnessed outstanding love poets, love stories and thus love poetry. For example, "Qays Ibn al-Mulawwah, known as *Majnun* or the 'Mad One', was the prototype of the hero of courtly romance and an *exemplum* for the Sufi mystic."<sup>6</sup> Also there are many *Hubb 'Udri* poets of the 7<sup>th</sup> century Arabia. Thus the love and mystic poetry of Andalusia was not new to the Arabs though it was seen as something unique and thus it was widely celebrated, especially in the West. One of the best examples of that type of poetry can be seen in poems by Muhyieddin Ibn Arabi (549-624 A.H. / 1165-1240 AD), a medieval Andalusian mystic poet. In (585 A.H. / 1201 AD), he visited Mecca where he met with a beautiful young lady. She infatuated him, thus he composed poetry in good praise of her. Then he found it advisable to write a commentary on the poems in a mystic sense. The outcome was mystical in the form of *The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*<sup>7</sup> and the *Dhakha'ir*. The most beautiful lines in *The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* are the following:

My heart has become capable of every form:

it is a pasture for gazelles and a convent for Christian monks,  
And a temple for idols and the pilgrim's Ka'ba and the  
tables of the Tora and the book of the Koran.

I follow the religion of Love: whatever way Love's  
camels take, that is my religion and my faith.

We have a pattern of Bishr, the lover of Hind and her sister,  
and in Qays and Lubna and in Mayya and Ghaylan.<sup>8</sup>

Roger Boase mentions that “those two books [*The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* and the *Dhakha'ir*] have been compared to the *Vita nuove* and the *Convivio* of Dante.”<sup>9</sup> Dante Alighieri (649-705 A.H. / 1265-1321 AD) was born and lived after Ibn Arabi. Like Ibn Arabi, he praised lyric the poem, he established himself as the leading and the only significant critic of the Middle Ages.

When the Arabs conquered Spain they brought with them all their ways of life, culture and civilization to be mixed up with the Spanish society and culture and thus, by time, a hybrid of the Hispanic and Arabic cultures was generated. In simple words, for centuries, Hispano-Arabic love and mystic poetry continued to appear. The contribution of the Arabs and the evolution of the Hispano-Arabic poetry on love theory passed through three phases: First is the period (A. H. 3-6 / AD 9-12). Second is the period (A. H. 6-8 / AD 12-14), and third is the period (A. H. 9-11 / AD 15-17).

I- First phase witnessed the greatest variety in form and content. It began with two essays by Al-Jahiz, litterateur and wit of Baghdad and Basra. He wrote *Risala fi il-<sup>C</sup>shq wa 'n-Nasa'* (Essay on Love and Women), and *Risalat al-Qiyan* (Essay on Singing Slave Girls). Another essayist was al-Khara'iti's who wrote *I'tilal al-Qulub* (The Malady of Hearts).

In the middle of the (4<sup>th</sup> century A.H. / 10<sup>th</sup> century AD), were published Marubani's *Kitab ar-Riyad* (The Book of Gardens) and *Kitab al-Mutayyamin* (The Book of those Enslaved by Love). In the (5<sup>th</sup> century A.H. / 11<sup>th</sup> century AD), el-Husari wrote *Kitab al-Majun fi Sirr al-Hawa al-Maknun* (The Book of the Well-Guarded Concerning the Secret of Hidden Passion). Ibn Hazm wrote *Tawq al-Hamama* (Neckring of the Dove). Jaafar Ibn Ahmad as-Sarraaj compiled *Masa'ib al-Ushshaq* (The Calamities of the Lovers).

II- Second phase witnessed the poetry reaching a certain internal maturity. The kind of material appearing in the earlier books continued and the same themes are treated but two distinct attitudes among the authors gave rise to two kinds of work, the straight literary tradition and the ethically oriented work. Ibn al-Jawzi wrote *Dham al-Hawa* (Love Forced

Himself In), then Mughltai wrote *al-Wadih al-Mubin fi Dhikr Mn Estushhida min al-Muhibbin* (The Clear and Obvious in the Mention of the Martyred Lovers). Ibn al-Qayyim wrote *Rawdat al-Muhibbin* (The Garden of the Lovers), a well organized, carefully thought treaties that formulated a coherent Islamic doctrine on human love. Al-Kisa'I wrote *Rawdat al-Ashiq wa Nuzhat al-Wamiq* (The Garden of the Passionate Lovers and the Promenade of the Tender Lover). Fahd wrote *Manazel al-Ahbab wa Nuzhatu al-Albab* (The Camping Places of the Beloved and Promenade of the Hearts). Abi Hajala wrote *Diwan al-Sababa* (Book Verses of Ardent Love).

III- Third phase (9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H. / 15<sup>th</sup> –17<sup>th</sup> centuries AD): Troubadour and Provencial poetry retreated. This phase is not the concern of this paper.

The Arabic strophic love poetry started in the 9<sup>th</sup> century in Baghdad of the Abbasides. The Romantic poetic tradition of love and lovers was a mainstream of the literature books on the theory of love. The ethically and religiously oriented subtype of work on love represented by some writers was to participate in the writing of love theory. But love poets wanted to confront the idea passed from the Qur'an, Hadith (Sayings, behaviour and pious anecdotes of Prophet Muhammad), and the four Orthodox Caliphs.

A number of the literary works on love cited in this paper serve as a reply to the claimants that Arabic language and literature cannot produce poetry of courtly love. To prove the influence of Arabic poetry upon the Western Romantic lyric, parallels must be established between courtly poetry composed in Muslim Spain or may be elsewhere in Muslim countries (e.g. Levant, Egypt and Iraq) and that poetry which was composed in the Province or elsewhere in Europe. This, of course, includes the various types of channels of communication that existed in the Islamic world and Christian Europe, and also the poets from Southern France could have gained a direct and/or an indirect access to Arabic poetry. This is necessary if the intention is to prove that the similarity between Arabic and troubadour are not a matter of coincidence or mere chance. The parallels between them are of three kinds:

I. Formal and stylistic elements.

II. Common elements and motifs.

III. Analogies between the concepts of love in both lyrical traditions.

### **ARABS AND THE POETRY OF THE TROUBADOUR:**

The troubadour poetry was to spread over Spain and France in the period between 3<sup>rd</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H / 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. There are two stories of the origin of the Troubadour poetry in Medieval Europe:

First: It is that courtly love which was the product of the interaction between Christianity and a primitive Germanic / Celtic / Pictish matriarchy. This insured the survival of pre-Christian sexual *mores* and veneration for women among the European aristocracy. The story appears in the following:

- I- The privileged status of women in pagan Europe.
- II- The Gothic spirit of chivalry.
- III- A subterfuge to avoid an ecclesiastical censorship.

Second: It is that of the Arabic origin in Spain where the Islamic culture, poetry and philosophy of the Arabs in Muslim Spain showed great influence on the Troubadour poetry. According to Roger Boase, there are several factors that may prove the Arabic influence as follows:

- I- Scholarship and culture of the Islamic world.
- II- Etymology of the Troubadour.
- III- Arabic music and Troubadour music.
- IV- Rhyme and poetic forms.
- V- Etymology of 'trobar'.
- VI- Poetic themes.
- VII- The concept of love in poetry.<sup>10</sup>

In this context, many theorists attempted to refute what is called the "Arabist" theory, but their efforts have gone astray as the story appeared over and over again and it became a story that is hard to deny. In defense of the Arabist theory, I argue that the original meaning of the word "Troubadour" is "Tarab" which is an Arabic word meaning the transport of joy. This meaning led some scholars to believe that the word constitutes the original meaning for Troubadour. "Tarab" as well conveys the idea that Arabic poetry offers. In addition to sorrow, and frustration, it is an expression of radiant joy for life. In other words, the Arabic love poetry is as old and genuine as Arabs ever composed poetry. It has always been as one of their major themes ever since they composed poetry in the pre-Islamic period. This appears in whatever available of the Arabic suspended *Odes*. Of the early Arabic poetry, the most notable type of love poetry is their courtly love poems.

There are two points of view on the question of courtly love as scholarship on this issue is divided into two camps: supporters of the theory of the Western origin of courtly love and supporters of the theory of Eastern origin of the genre. Defenders of the Western origin of troubadour poetry refer it to some Medieval Latin texts written by clergymen. They confused themselves by mixing between the Goliard poets<sup>11</sup> and the Troubadour poets. Goliard poetry was written in vernacular Latin. Its surviving manuscripts are collected in a book entitled *Carmina Burana*.<sup>12</sup> and its housed in Cambridge University. The most famous of the Goliard poets was Goliard.<sup>13</sup> Some sources say that Goliard poetry borrowed from Ovid as he wrote poems in praise of love and lovers to embody human spirit, and some

others believe that “[Goliard Poetry] may perhaps owe something to Latin translations of Plato.”<sup>14</sup> Other supporters of the Western origin argued that the troubadour lyric might have been adopted from some prose texts and poetry of Andreas Capellanus (6<sup>th</sup> century A.H. / 12<sup>th</sup> century AD),<sup>15</sup> especially his love poem *De amore*, or *On Love*. It’s a kind of manual and guide book on lovemaking in the courtly style. On the other hand, the anti-Arabic theory suggests the possibility of attributing textual similarities to direct interaction between Latin-Romance languages and Arabic. Moreover, they argue that, courtly love and the poetry in praise of women could not come from a culture that, according to them, so despised and possessed women, and thus the origin of modern poetry would not be found starting from the Arabic culture! They also referred the origin of the troubadour poetry to religious descent. It is worth mentioning that those scholars built their judgment either on clichés and stereotypes or on fanatic beliefs. In simple words, they offered a subjective judgment. Thus, the possibility of some Arabic origin or influence was effectively banished. Meantime, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century, the Knight Templars, a military-religious group of Crusaders founded in Jerusalem in 1118 and they were charged with protecting the Holy Sites in Jerusalem. They are considered one of the major groups that brought Islamic mystical ideas and beliefs into Europe until Jerusalem fell to the hands of Muslims in 1187.<sup>16</sup>

The troubadour poetry was written in vernacular Spanish-Arabic. Unlike any Western lyrical poetry, the troubadour poetry is famous for its Arabic *muwashshah* and *kharja*. Maurice Bowra argues: “It may have some remote connexion with the arrival of Cathars from the East in the beginning of the eleventh century. ... Courtly love has more affinities with Persian epics, like that of Nizami ([524-586 A.H]/1140-1202 [AD]).”<sup>17</sup> Originally speaking, Cathar or Catharist is someone who maintains dual religious theology. This kind of people was common in the medieval time and cultures. Bruce used the term to describe scholars who came from the East with dual religious theology.<sup>18</sup>

The origins of the Troubadour poetry is still subject to debate and surmise. In support of the assumption of the Arabic origin starting by saying that troubadour poetry has much in common with the Hispano-Arabic poetry of Medieval Spain or *Al-Andalus*. It is mainly poetry of courtly love and deep passion. Love poetry existed ever since man composed and sang poetry.

Love poetry among the Arabs was well known in pre-Islam Arabia. There are many pre-Islamic Arabic stories of courtly love that still exist in Arabic literature. Islam never stopped poetry of love, and the Muslim states witnessed a tremendous revolution from the scholars of Basra and Kufa who made a major contribution to the preservation of the Arabic language and literature after they mingled with other nations of the conquered lands.

These scholars recorded the Arabic lexicon and poetry from Najd in the middle of Arabia, and also proposed grammatical rules and created orthographic diacritics to assist in the correct pronunciation of the Quran. They also made dictionaries and analyzed the prosody of poetry. The most remarkable pioneer in these fields was Al Khalil Ibn Ahmad Al Faraheedi (d. 175 A.H. / 791 AD) from Basra. His student, the Persian scientist Abu Bishr Amr Ibn Othman--nicknamed Stbawaih-- (d. 177 A.H. / 793 AD) followed him. Baghdad quickly developed into a center for this work and scholars from Kufa and Basra such as Abu Hanifa, Al Mufadal Al Dhabbi, Al Kis'al , Al Fir'a and Ibn Al-Sukait traveled to Baghdad and settled there helping to develop it into the main forum for discussion. Interestingly enough the Caliph and poet Abdullah Ibn Al Mu'tazz (d. 296 A.H. / 912 AD) reported in his book 'Tabaqat Al-shu'ara' (Categories of Poets) that at the end of the third Hijri century (10<sup>th</sup> century AD), there were more than 130 poets in the Abbasid state. This number excludes women poets and other writers who played important roles in the literary life of Islamic society. Of the well-known women poets excluded were: Rabi'a bint Ismail Al Dawiya who led an ascetic, mystical life; Princess Ulayya bint Al Mahdi whom Al Husari described as "equal to numerous noblemen in reasoning and decorum; she also has good poetry and wonderful singing." Princess Al Abbasa bint Al Mahdi whose writing is infused with extreme imaginativeness; and finally, A'bida Al Juhaniya described by Al-Sayyuti as an "eloquent and gentle poet and writer."

I stand with the scholars who say that the roots of the troubadour poetry come from those Arabic origins. Bowra writes: "It has been claimed that it [the troubadour] learned much from Arabic poetry composed either in Moorish Spain, which was in easy reach of southern France, or in Syria, where it attracted the attention of the first Crusaders."<sup>19</sup> Bruce MacLennan states that "it is not too surprising that half of the surviving songs of the first known troubadour, William of Poitiers, agree with a certain form of Arab mystical poetry (the *zajal*) in their detailed metrical structure and conventional expressions."<sup>20</sup>

The early troubadours traveled from place to place playing their music and singing their poems to gain their living. When they became a phenomenon, their poetry spread strongly into southern France. The southern French troubadour wrote their poems in the vernacular Spanish Arabic language of medieval southern France or *langue d'oc*. In describing that poetry, some scholars like Bruce MacLennan interchangeably uses the terms Province, *Langue d'oc*, Poitou to describe the troubadour.<sup>21</sup>

The earliest French troubadours was William of Poitier ([455-661 A.H. / 1071-1127 AD), and of the famous French troubadours were Bernard de Ventadour ([?- 579 A.H.] / ?-1195 AD) and Guiart Riquier ([?- 678 A.H.] / ?-1294 AD).<sup>22</sup> In the (6<sup>th</sup> -7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H / 12<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD), the



troubadour phenomenon flourished and spread to the northern parts of France introducing new form and content of love poetry. By then, troubadour poetry began to be written in the language of medieval northern France or *lingua d'oil*. This new type of poems was called *trouveres*. Of the *trouveres* were the French born king of England Richard the Lion-Hearted ([541-583 A.H.] / 1157-1199 AD) and his faithful friend Bondel de Nesles ([534?-584? A.H.] / 1150?-1200? AD).<sup>23</sup>

The Troubadour poetry was devoted to praising the woman lover and to express her male lover's submission to her that reaches a point of idealization of the lover. The troubadour remains a symbol of faith, loyalty and unconditional submission to the beloved. Even after the troubadour phenomenon was over, poets continued to celebrate them and their love poems. For example, in the nineteenth-century, the Romantic poet Walter Scott celebrates the troubadour in a short poem entitled "The troubadour." There, he describes a troubadour, singer and musician, regardless of anything living around him, marched to the battlefield in defense of his country, "with helm on head and harp in hand" idolizing his beloved to the end of his life. The first stanza of the poem reads:

Glowing with love, on fire for fame,  
A Troubadour that hated sorrow  
Beneath his lady's window came,  
And thus he sung his last good-morrow:  
'My arm it is my country's right,  
My heart is in my true love's bower;  
Gayly for love and fame to fight  
Befits the gallant Troubadour.<sup>24</sup>

The most notable Arabic contribution to the literature of Europe was in "*zajal*" (strophic poetry in dialect), "*kharja*" and "*muwashshahat*" (plural of *muwashshah*). These were luminous confirmations of the bilingual Muslim Spain. The *muwashshahat* were invented in (c. 300 A.H. / c. 900 AD) by Muqaddam ibn al-Mu'afa. It flourished in the Almoravid period (475-529 A.H. / 1091-1145 AD); one can say that Almoravid period was the golden age for the *muwashshah*. The best-known Almoravid strophic poets and songwriters were Tutili and Ibn Baqi. Philip Hitti mentions that the best known among the Arab songwriters was Abu al-Abbas (510 A.H. / 1126 A. D.) a blind poet of Toledo. He was one of the well-known composers of *muwashshah* (Hitti, 561-2). Also there was the popular song called the *zajal*; it was popular in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century A.H. / 12<sup>th</sup> century AD; it was mastered by Abu Bakr ibn Quzman.<sup>25</sup>

By time, both *muwashshah* and *zajal* have become types of song indicative of the influence that the Andalusian and Provincial poetry had upon one another.<sup>26</sup> Both *zajal* and *muwashshah* won the admiration of the Christian neighbors. They gave birth to *villancio*, which became a very

popular verse in the Spanish City of Castile. From what is available, the *zajal* was written only in the Arabic dialects of Spain, and Ibn Quzman the famous *zajal* poet was so brilliant that he earned the undisputed title of 'leader of the *zadjaleen* or *zadjalists* or (imam al-*zadjdjal*). In his *zadjal* Ibn Quzman used the Arabic dialect of southern Spain as it was spoken by the educated people of his time; vocabulary of that language was much enriched with borrowings from the classical language, but always deprived of grammatical inflections (i'rab).

On the other hand, the Arabic love poems established itself swiftly and flourished in Andalusia, then it spread into southern France and other parts of Europe including German-speaking land of Rhine and Danub (534 A.H / 1150 AD) and Palermo and Sicily and southern Italy (604-634 A.H. / 1220-1250 AD). Afterwards, they exerted influence upon the Italian sonnet, the poetry of the Iberian Peninsula and England. Bowra explains:

In England where the ruling classes spoke Norman French, about ([634 A.H.] / 1250 [AD]) there is a sudden outburst of vernacular of what looks like spontaneous song. ... What had begun in southern France became a truly European movement, and France did what she was to do more than once in later centuries by setting a standard of poetry which caught the imagination of other countries and inspired such emulation in them that to write in any other manner looked dowdy and provincial.<sup>27</sup>

Among the great number of the troubadour poets were Ibn Hazm and Said ibn Judi. Abu Muhammed 'Ali Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi (d. 1064) wrote one of the most interesting and famous books of that time; his book *Tawq al-Hamama* (Necklace of the Dove) or (Ring of the Dove) was a symbol of courtly love. The book was written in 1022 in south of Valencia.<sup>28</sup>

#### **ARABIC MUWASHSHAH AND KHARJA:**

The poetry of the troubadour reveals characteristics unknown before them anywhere in Europe; their origins come from the Orient. The Troubadour songs enjoy established roots that were obeyed, in a remarkable way, by all those who wrote or sang it. In his book, *Love Songs from Al-Andalus*, Otto Zwartjes mentions that the origins of *muwashshah* and *kharja* go back to the pre-Islamic Arabic *Ode* or *qasid*[a]. It's one type of a variety of Arabic strophic poetry. For instance, the Abbasid strophic poetry is called *musamat*; it's the internal rhyme (tarshi<sup>c</sup>). Then there is the *muzdawaj* which is a poem with a hemistich rhyme scheme aa bb cc, etc. with an exception of the segments aaa bbb ccc, etc. Then comes the *muwashshah*. It is for laudatory and erotic poetry, and it begins with an introductory strophe (matla<sup>c</sup>) [taam] or complete. In the *muwashshah* there is a *kharja*. It's the

last line of the *muwashshah* when the *muwashshah* is a love song only. Of the other related Arabic song types common in the Andalusian culture was the *zajal*, the *muzannam*, and the *qasida zajaliyya*. It is interesting that the main features of the Troubadour poetry are already visible in what is called *muwashshah* and *kharja*. They are essential for the form and the spirit of that medieval type of poetry and love-song. It was expanded and enriched by some gifted men from the East. They differed greatly from one another in terms of their temper, technique, imagery, outlook, clarity and obscurity. However, they fall into a coherent group without being called as constituents of a movement. Their similarities are more marked than their dissimilarities.

Following the rhyme, one can say that there are two types of *muwashshahat*: Rhymed and unrhymed.

First: The rhymed Troubadour poetry. It is identical to the Arabic poetry in its rhyme, rhythm and meter. It can be divided into two types:

I. The *muwashshahat* which are rhymed, and where its *qafl* does not differentiate it from other types of classical poetry. Therefore, this kind of *muwashshahat* is considered as weak and unfavorable; it is called the *mukhamassat*.

II. The *muwashshahat* which are rhymed and its *qafl* and verses contain a word or perhaps a diacritical mark that differentiates it from pure and classical poetry. Therefore, it is favorable.

Following the *qafl* itself *muwashshahat* can be divided into two types:

First is the *muwashshah* where its *qafl* rhymes as the verses themselves so that all verses are identical to the *qafl*. Second is where *qafl* differs clearly from its verses so that it sounds unlike the *qafl*. The second part is always the work of the distinguished Troubadour poets.

Following the music *muwashshahat* can be divided into two types:

I. What can be put into music without any interruption. It constitutes the majority of the Troubadour poetry.

II. What cannot be put into music except by adding a new supportive word to the text. This type is uncommon and unfavorable Troubadour poetry.

Second is the unrhymed *muwashshahat*. It has no relationship with the Arabs by any means. This type of poetry was easy to write and thus much of it was available among the Troubadours.

The form of the *muwashshah* was traditional in some aspects, such as the Romance *kharja*. Many of the Almoravid poets cultivated classical and strophic poetry with equal facility. They belonged to a group headed by two masters already mentioned as Tutili and Ibn Baqi.

*Zajal* is a poetic genre that appeared almost in the same period as the *muwashshah*. In simple words, it is a variety of the *muwashshah*. In an explanation of the *Zajal*, in his essay “Moorish Spain” Emilio Gracia Gomes writes: “There is some evidence for the belief that it was invented by the famous philosopher and musician known as Avempace (d. [522 A.H.] / 1138 [AD]).”<sup>29</sup> Its chief characteristic being that it is written entirely in the vernacular. The *muwashshah* is a popular genre. It treats the same subject as the various kinds of poetry, i.e. love, praise, marthiya (mourning), hija’ (invective), mujun (frivolity), and zhud (asceticism). Similarly, Ibn Khaldun (iii. 390): “In this genre [*zajal*] one makes erotic or panegyric verses as in the *qasida* or poem.

What distinguishes the *muwashshah* from the poem (*qasida*) is its “*kharja*.” The difference appears clearly when one contrasts it with its sister genre of the “*zajal*.” The *muwashshah* mainly contains “*madihs*” or panegyric rendered in the “*majlis*” or the audience-room of the prince. Also in honor of the prince those “*madihs*” were composed. They contain a “*khamriya*” (wine song) in the drinking-sessions of court society and the “*ghazal*” (love songs) which are made for singing-girls to sing on the same occasions. The poet, in the *muwashshah* form, very often recited the “*madih*.” In almost all cases the *muwashshah* was sung, in the presence of the prince. However, the *muwashshah*, like poetry in general, was not only an ornament of courtly life, but also a product of art, to be enjoyed and judged as such.

It was believed that the only differences between *muwashshah* and *zajal*, lay in the language, the advocates of the “Arabic” origin of the strophic poetry defended the priority of the *muwashshah* written in classical language, its exchange for the vernacular gave rise to the *zajal*. The supporters of the popular and Spanish origin may say that in the beginning, *zajal* was the first vernacular for the classical. This means that the *zajal* appears in history later than *muwashshah*.

Arabic Andalusit *muwashshah* is known as strophic poem written in classical Arabic; sometimes its *kharja* comes in vernacular, while the *zajal* is all in vernacular and it is the same vernacular dialect of Arab Spain. There is a small but important contrast between the structure of the two. The fundamental scheme of the *muwashshah* is as follows:

AA bbbAA cccAA

Or

AB cccAB dddAb

That is to say the structure of the *smit* corresponds exactly to that of *matla’*. Accordingly, if the *matla’* has a more complicated scheme, the *smit*, too, will follow suit:

ABAB ccABAB dddABAB

Or

ABCB dddABCB eeeABB

It is noteworthy that there is no exception to this rule. On the other hand, the characteristic structure of the *zajal* is:

AA bbbA cccA

or in the case of a more complicated scheme of rhymes:

ABAB cccAB

Thus, the *smit* reproduces half of the element of the *matla'*. Moreover, the scheme of *zajal* is much more rigid than that of the *muwashshah*: besides the fundamental form AB cccA – on which is composed the overwhelming majority of the poems – there occur only very small variations. Above all, the *zajal* does not share with the *muwashshah* that very characteristic of the *kharja*. It is panegyric in which it expresses in a condensed phrase the phrases of the person celebrated in the main portion of the poem.

The second characteristic is eroticism where the *kharja* is in a sentimental and melancholic tone expressing the feeling of separation that the lovers experience.

The third characteristic is “dala” which is the style of “coquetry.” In many cases the *kharja* is written in vernacular Arabic, but most of *kharjas* are in a language provided with more or less superficial vulgar gloss. The use of vernacular Arabic is not the most extravagant of the conventions of the *kharja*.

There are some Spanish *kharjas* in Arabic *muwashshah* and they have remarkable features as they were written in Spanish dialects spoken in medieval Spain or al-Andalus. Those dialects were vernacular languages besides vulgar Arabic. They were spoken by all classes of society. There also existed Arabic *muwashshah* with Spanish bending.

The main characteristics of the *kharja* were well understood by Ibn Sana' al-Mulk, who gave a good exposition on the subject following some Andalusian authority. *Kharja* is the name of the last “gufl” (closing part) of the *muwashshah*. If it employs the classical form of the language, in the same way as the rest of the strophes and gufls that precede it, the *muwashshah* is not a *muwashshah* any more in the true sense of the word. The only exception is the case of a panegyric, where the person to be praised is named in the *kharja*. In this context it is permitted that the *kharja* should be in classical language. Sometimes, the *kharja* is in classical language even if it does not contain the name of the person eulogized. In this case, its expression should be erotic and moving, enchanting, alluring, and germane to passion. This has not been achieved in more than two or three *muwashshahat*, e.g. Ibn Baqi's *Laylun Tawil* (A Long Night).

Strophic forms similar to the *zajal* are to be found in various parts of the West: closely associated forms in Spain, northern France (where they

are called *virelais*), Italy and England. In the mid-thirteenth century, some Italian poets employed the schemata of Arabic Spanish poetry in their "*lauda*." In general, there were forms related to more distant fashion in the poetry of the Troubadours in southern France.

## CONCLUSION

The Hispano-Arabic school of poetry had exerted influence upon and participated positively in building the forms and meanings of the troubadour poetry. The centers of that culture in the 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries were not only in Cordova (Cordoba) but also in Toledo, Seville, Grenada and other provincial cities.

The Umayyad emirate, which gave the first unitary order to the Arab peninsula, at first looked naturally upon its homeland, Syria, as a model. Accordingly, the cultural influences from the East continued (in the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Abbasides influences from Iraq were particularly stressed, despite the rivalry of the two dynasties: Umayyad and Abbasides) in the already mentioned circulation of ideas, persons and things in every part of the medieval Muslim world. At the same time the Arabic-Spanish state came into contact with Byzantium.

The most notable Arabic contribution to the literature of Europe was in *zajal*, *muwashshahat* and *kharja*. Undoubtedly, they were luminous confirmations of the bilingualism of Muslim Spain. These discoveries opened a new phase in the controversial question of the Arabic influence on the forms and spirit of the Iberian and Provençal lyric poetry, mainly the troubadour poetry. The troubadour phenomenon could be explained in two ways: either in postulating that all these forms were invented once and for all and then disseminated from one single center, or in admitting the possibility that similar forms were invented independently more than once.

In the oral poetry in Romance in Muslim Spain about the year 900, there existed new series of schemata. In the second half of the twelfth century there appeared in northern France the "*virelai*" on a different scheme. The majority of the scholars concerned are inclined to think that the same form may have been invented twice over independently. Moreover, the supposition that the "*zajalesque*" form passed through Arabic before reaching northern France is based on an affirmation of the fact that it never existed in its complete form in Romance before it was perfected by the Arab poet Muqaddam Ibn al-Mu'afa.

The means by which the content of Arabic poetry might have been transmitted to the troubadours can be classified under two ways: indirect contacts and direct contacts. The indirect transmission of poetic ideas would presuppose that these first came to the knowledge of part of the population

which lived in close symbiosis with the Muslims, the Mazarabs and the Christians living under Islamic rule and the inhabitants of the Christian kingdom of the north. Among these communities there were many bilingual groups who did act as agents for the transmission of elements of Islamic civilization to Spain.

The second method of possible division is of course through direct contact with Arabic poetry. As far as the content of the troubadour poetry is concerned, the Arabic theory has two aspects. Some critics believe that troubadour poetry and courtly love were such out-of-the-way phenomena in the development of Western culture that it was necessary to suppose that they may have been borrowed from somewhere and Arabic poetry seemed a likely source.

Another possibility is to give up trying to find a complete explanation for courtly love (which is the essence of the poetry of the troubadour) by reference to Islamic sources and limit oneself to defining a certain number of motifs which the troubadours might have taken from Arabic poetry.

The cultural supremacy of the Islamic world in the period immediately preceding the rise of the troubadour lyric is indisputable, and the importance of the Arabic scholarship as a medium for the transmission of Greek classical texts is widely acknowledged and the mastery of the Arabs in composing poetry. Those are good reasons for supporting the Arabist theory. The contacts between Arabic poetry and the Romantic poetry of Muslim Spain arose from the symbiosis of Arabic and Romance dialects in the Iberian Peninsula. What had begun in southern France in the ninth century became a truly European movement and it is that at no other time in European literature, with its vast array of love-poetry has particular system been in favor. The troubadour represents a splendid witness to the high age of Arabic and Islamic culture in medieval Spain. It is interesting that from (mid-6<sup>th</sup> century A.H./ mid-12<sup>th</sup> century AD) until our present day the concepts of the romantic love dominated Western thinking. The phenomenon of the troubadour poetry is still worthy of elaborate studies.

## END NOTES

1. The word *Adab* is originally an Arabic word. It means courtesy or appropriate behavior. This may range from showing respect for someone elder to doing the right thing at the right time. It implies keeping attentive to one's actions and their effects on others. In other contexts, it means literature of entertainment. *Adab* is one of the key words used by mystics and Sufi poets.

2. S. M. Imamuddin. Some Aspects of the Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Muslim Spain 711-1492 AD in Medieval Iberian Peninsula Texts and Studies, Vol. ii, Edited by C. Marinescu, Jose Millas-Vallicrosa and Hussain Mones. (Netherlands; Leiden: E. J. Brill., 1965), 197.
3. H. G. Farmer. A History of Arabian Music to the 13<sup>th</sup> Century. (London: Oxford University Press, 1929), 121.
4. Walid Hamarneh. Arabic Theory and Criticism: Guide to Literary Theory & Criticism. (New York: John Hopkins University Press, 1997), 6.
5. Roger Boase. The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love: A Critical Study of European Scholarship. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1977), 64.
6. *ibid*, 65.
7. *Tarjuman al-Ashwaq: A Collection of Mystical Odes* by Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi (560-638 A.H. / 1175-1254 AD). It was written in Andalusia in (585 A.H. / 1201 AD). It consists of sixty-one sections of poetry. All of it is in good praise of the young woman whom the poet met with in Mecca and felled in love with. Though *The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq* is the only extant manuscript of his one hundred and fifty works, I noticed that in his introduction to scribed Ibn 'Arabi, in *The Tarjuman al-Ashwaq*, Reynold A. Nicholson described Ibn 'Arabi as "the most celebrated of all Muhammedan mystics."
8. Muhyi'ddin Ibn Arabi,. The Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq: A Collection of Mystical Odes in Oriental Translation in Fund New Series, Vol. XX. Edited with Translation by Reynold A. Nicholason. (London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1911), 67.
9. Roger Boase. The Origin and Meaning of Courtly Love, 66.
10. *Ibid*. 62-63.
11. The Goliard poets are vagabonds, and wandering scholar-poets. They appeared in the (5<sup>th</sup> century A.H. / 11<sup>th</sup> century AD), but their glory was in the (6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries A.H. / 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries). Their first appearance was in Germany, then France and England. They described themselves as followers of the legendary Bishop Golias. They are wandering scholars mainly students and rebelled clerics and clergymen including unfrocked priests and runaway monks. They stood against the church and its principles; they reacted against medieval ascetic ideals of the rigorous church. By their irresponsible life they were seeking freedom against the rigorous rules of the church. They sought freedom of speech in lascivious singing about love, wine, and women, and in their praise of debauchery and careless life. They wrote satirical Latin verse in celebration of conviviality and sensual pleasure. Like the early Troubadours they traveled from place to place and walked from house to house singing to gain their own living. Meantime, they were unlike Troubadours who appeared in



Spain and southern France, and who had many of them of noble birth especially the Troubadours of southern France, also they differ from the Goliards in that the majority of their songs and music were designed and written for upper class audience.

12. *Cambridge Songs: Carmina Cantabrigiensia*. Some of the Goliard lyrical poems are still alive from a (7<sup>th</sup> century A.H. / 13<sup>th</sup> century) edition that was placed at Cambridge University in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The original copy was found in Benediktbeuern near Munich in Germany in 1803. In 1998 Jan Ziolkowski edited it and gave it the name of Cambridge University. It appeared in a book entitled *Cambridge Songs: Carmina Cantabrigiensia*. This collection included 83 lyrical songs, poems and short plays.

13. Goliath is a name perhaps derived from Goliath. The medieval archpoet Goliath is the mystical patron who was celebrated as the lord of vagabonds. He stood against the church and exalted the delights of wine, love and song. Thus he was supported by other clerics and lay people. He employed his talents to secure favors for himself and his friends. Only ten poems of his survive. His book *The Confessions of Goliath* (c. 544 A.H. / c. 1160 AD) is regarded by medievalists as source book. It's a book of mock confession in which he employed scriptural quotations in a pagan poem.

14. Maurice Bowra. Medieval Love-Song. (London: University of London; the Athlone Press, 1961), 8.

15. Capellanus was Andreas Capellanus, literally, "Andreas the Chaplain" commonly known as Andreas. He wrote his book *The Art of Courtly Love* at the request of the Countess Marie of Troyes, daughter of Elianor of Aquitaine. The book portrays conditions at Queen Eleanor's court at Poitiers in the period (554- 558 A. H. / 1170-1174 AD). In addition to the poems of medieval courtly love and Romance, and human sexuality, there is the book sociology, anthropology and archeology. Some scholars argue that the book became well known among the Troubadours of southern France.

16. For more about the Templers and their role in the East and their relation to the culture of the East see William Anderson, *Dante the Maker*. London: Riutledage & Kegan Paul, 1980.

17. Maurice Bowra. Medieval Love-Song, 9.

18. The Cathars called themselves Christian, but the Church reconsidered many of their beliefs as heretical. However there were competing, more orthodox movements within the Church. They had the God of Love and the Creator (or God Arrogant), who had created the material world, which was considered evil. It is said that they contrasted their Church of Love with the Church of Rome: AMOR vs. ROMA.

19. Maurice Bowra. Medieval Love-Song, 8.

20. MacLennan, 25.

21. The term Province is given to the region of southern France. It is the land located east of the Rhône. Languedoc is located west of Province. Languadoc is part of Poitou, a region in west central France.
22. Durrell, 443 quoted in Bowra, 20
23. *ibid.* 443.
24. Abdelwahed, Said I. Twenty English Romantic Poets: Selected with an Introduction. Cairo: Dar Al-Nahda Al-Arabia, 1998, 85.
25. *Encyclopedia of Islam* mention that "Ibn Kuzman was in no sense a troubadour singing of courtly love, that '*ishk al-muruwwa* which he in fact derides. Like Abu Nuwas and Francois Villon, he led the life of a needy bohemian, reckless troper, and an epicene rake (*khali, zani, lawwat*). ... Ibn Kuzman's delinquencies and his incorrigible passion for wine led to his being accused of impiety and irreligious and thrown into prison." (Encyclopedia of Islam CD-ROM, 3).
26. Hitti, P. K. History of the Arabs. 10<sup>th</sup> ed. Edited by Walid Khalidi. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 144.
27. Maurice Bowra. Medieval Love-Song. 143.
28. *Tawq al-Hamama fil-Ulfa wal-Ullaf*, commonly known as *Tawq al-Hamama*, by Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi was written in around (406 A. H. / 1022 AD) in Valencia to represent one of the most famous and celebrated book of love and lovers. The one volume manuscript contains thirty coherent chapters that treat thirty moments of love or situations related to love, lovers and their anecdotes. Most of Ibn Hazm's examples are taken from real life experience and his book is replete with stories told in his own poetry. Most of the stories told in the book introduce an invaluable picture of love among the aristocracy in the Medieval Andalusian courts and palaces, and in the meantime, the book criticized and condemned sodomy and the heterosexual fornication.
29. Gomes in Benard Lewis, ed. Islam and the Arab World: Faith, People, Culture. (London: Alfred A. Knopf; NY: American Heritage Publishing Co., 1976), 233.

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