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Original Research Article

Andalusi music: *Convivencia* from an Afro-Asian perspective

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ABSTRACT: Andalusi music traces its origins to the development of distinct musical and poetic forms (*nubat*, *zejel*, and so on) on the Iberian Peninsula since the ninth century. Andalusi music continues to be performed in various Mediterranean countries, predominantly Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. This article examines how Andalusi music links the precolonial imaginary, the colonial past, and postcolonial narratives of Spain within an Afro-Asian context. By focusing on performative commonalities across a vast region that have origins in al-Andalus, this article explores the concept of *convivencia* (coexistence) in relation to the intercultural rhetoric of Andalusi music. The article also considers its interaction with other modal systems such as *haul* from Mauritania, music associated with the Mande Empire in West Africa, the Middle Eastern and North African *maqamat*, Persian *dastgah*, and Hindustani *raags*. In the course of this exploration, the article broadens the understanding of the historical and contemporary circulation of music across continents. In addition, this article explores the afterlives of Ziryab, an African musician and a contested founder of Andalusi music, whose legacy emphasises the significant role of Africa in the musical development of al-Andalus.

KEYWORDS: al-Andalus, African, north Africa, *Convivencia*, Ziryab, maqam, nuba, historical circulation of music, border-crossing

Introduction

As a citizen of Villena, a small town in south-eastern Spain, I have observed the enduring presence of Andalusi culture through historical monuments such as Atalaya Castle (originally constructed by an Almohad *taifa* in the twelfth century and later ornamented by the Christian Inquisition in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries) and Santa Maria's Church (initially a mosque before it was converted to a church). The remnants of Andalusi culture across the Mediterranean region of Spain continue to resonate in the living tradition of the *nubat* musical and poetic system in North Africa. This cultural legacy is also evident in the music performed during the Moros y Cristianos festival in Villena, also known as *música festera*.

Música festera exhibits significant poetic and musical similarities with Andalusi traditions, a reflection of the historical circulation of the culture of al-Andalus across the Mediterranean region. These commonalities include the use of the Andalusi *nubat* in postcolonial North African countries — primarily Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya — the occurrence of *muwashshah* and *zejel* poetry in the Arabic Levant (Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, among others), and their resemblance to *jarchas mozarabes* in Spain.[1]

The musical connections between north African and southern Spanish traditions prompted me to re-evaluate the sonic representation of Andalusi music from the multiple geo-cultural perspectives of the Mediterranean, Maghreb, pan-Arab, Asian, and African worlds. These connections have provided valuable insights into the transcontinental dissemination of Andalusi music over the past two decades.

Historical context of Andalusi music

In the course of its existence from 711 to 1492, al-Andalus became a centre of knowledge and cultural exchange, exerting a profound influence on European music. These are, the influence of *kharchas* on North European music in the late Middle Ages and the impact of *cantigas*, as seen in the Galician-Portuguese *Cantigas de Santa María* from the thirteenth century, and their continued presence in the Iberian Peninsula (López-Bara 2006). *Andalusi* music also maintained cultural ties with other Muslim kingdoms in Africa (the Almohad, Almoravid, Hassani, Mande, and so on) and the Middle East (notably the Abbasid Caliphate).

It is widely believed that Ziryab, an African musician from the Abbasid court of Baghdad, arrived in Córdoba in 822 CE and played a pivotal role in shaping Andalusi music. According to Poche (1995), he contributed to the development of a musical system integrating poetry, known as the *nubat*, a complex musical form organised according to melodic modes. While historical accounts suggest the existence of 24 *nubats*, only 10 to 13 modes, and 5 to 7 rhythmic structures have been preserved in North African countries.

However, other scholars contest Ziryab's role in creating the *nubat*. Reynolds (2009, 2020) and Davila (2009, 2013) argue that historical sources from the ninth to fourteenth centuries, including the writings of Abd Rabbih (d. 940), Ibn al-Qutiyya (d. 977), Ibn Hayyan (d. 1076), Ahmad al-Tifashi (d. 1253), and Ibn Khaldun (d. 1402), do not attribute the invention of the *nubat* to Ziryab. Reynolds (2009, 155) further asserts that while Ziryab was an important figure, he was primarily engaged in local artistic competition rather than in the systematic development of the *nubat*.

The expulsion of Muslims and Jews from the Iberian Peninsula in the late fifteenth century, which was intensified by Spanish colonialism (1492–1976),

1. These poetic forms later influenced the development of romances and couplets on the Iberian Peninsula and in Latin America.

led to the migration of Andalusi musicians to North Africa. Prior to and during the colonial period, Andalusi music was transmitted orally and preserved by musicians in royal courts, Sufi *tariqas*, and musical associations. The colonial encounter between Orientalist scholars and Western musicologists in Spain resulted in the formalisation of Andalusi music during the late colonial period and beginning of postcolonialism. Previously performed in informal gatherings, it was institutionalised through large orchestrations resembling contemporary Western symphonic ensembles, thereby transforming its practice within north African states.

From a historical viewpoint, Wright (1992, 555) notes that no physical evidence of Andalusi music notation has been found, making its study reliant on oral traditions and cultural reconstructions by scholars in postcolonial states. While Wright's scepticism reconsiders the speculative nature of Andalusi music's history, oral traditions remain crucial for its preservation. This article contributes to expanding the understanding of musical reinvention across national boundaries, emphasising historical relationships by means of performance studies. This article is primarily informed by musicological analysis, historical sources from scholarly literature, contemporary studies of the afterlives of al-Andalus, particularly in relation to nostalgia and coexistence, and interviews with Andalusi musicians from North Africa.

Nostalgia and coexistence: The afterlives of Andalusi music in contemporary history

The modern interpretation of al-Andalus often carries nostalgic connotations. Shannon (2016, 8) defines nostalgia as a means of constructing cultural representations within modern nation-states. Rather than a simple recollection of the past, al-Andalus functions as a contemporary phenomena intertwined with modernity's processes and contradictions. Shannon (2015, 104) argues that Andalusi music, as performed today across the Mediterranean region, simultaneously reinforces and transcends national and cultural borders.

Nostalgic discourses frequently intersect with nationalist and pan-Arab narratives while also emphasising intercultural legacies reflected in contemporary musical collaborations. Machin-Autenrieth (2020, 2021) explores critical debates on colonialism, immigration, and integration between Spain and Morocco. His research addresses topics such as the integration of Moroccan musicians in Spain, intercultural flamenco-Andalusi projects, and Spanish colonialism in Morocco (1912–1956). Similarly, Paloma Elbaz (2021) introduces the concept of "sonic al-Andalus," which encapsulates cultural circulations and the interplay of belonging and cosmopolitanism. Examples include the Jewish-Tunisian, DJ Sharouh, who incorporates Judeo-Arabic melodies into performances in Madrid, and Moroccan jazz musician Jauk Elmale, who integrates traditional Amazigh rhythms into his compositions (Paloma Elbaz 2021, 344). These cases illustrate how sonic al-Andalus

sustains the enduring influence of Andalusi musical heritage historically and in the present.

Scholarship on nostalgia, coexistence, and sonic al-Andalus has facilitated a reconsideration of citizenship and the narratives surrounding musical circulation, particularly through linguistic, poetic, and musicological relationships. By prioritising performance studies, this article underscores the significance of musicological narratives in broadening historical and contemporary understandings of musical circulation.

Ranade (2008, 9) posits that interconnected musical styles emerge from a *performative exchange* that does not follow a fixed trajectory but instead evolves continuously. This concept is exemplified in the *muwashshah*, a poetic and musical form originating in al-Andalus that remains integral to contemporary Egyptian and Syrian music. Ranade further asserts that performative exchange, which encompasses music, philosophy, and other ideas, provides a meaningful space for re-examining *convivencia* (coexistence) through music. This notion, initially introduced by Western scholars in the twentieth century (Americo Castro 1970, 1985; Blas de Infante 1982), has since been appropriated by both Spanish and non-Spanish scholars (Al-Jayikh 2022), leading to contrasting interpretations — some advocating historical interculturalism, others emphasising cultural influence rather than coexistence (Calderwood 2023; Machin-Autenrieth 2020).

In an attempt to broaden the concept of coexistence, Reynolds (2020, 5) emphasises that the afterlives of al-Andalus are foregrounded by many scholars because Spain forms a bridge between Western and Eastern cultures. Reynolds continues by saying that the notion of *convivencia* is focused on the coexistence of monotheist cultures, though without addressing historical evidence of other communities coexisting in al-Andalus, such as Amazigh or sub-Saharan Africa communities coming from the Mande or Songhay empires, among others. In agreement with Reynolds, through an in-depth musicological study, this article describes the clear interaction between al-Andalus, Haul, and the Mande Empire. Thus, the possibility of focusing on musicological analysis opens new perspectives on the afterlives of al-Andalus and its notion of coexistence.

Similarly, for Paloma Elbaz (2021, 338), "the sonic heritage of Al-Andalus is evoked as a temporal disconnection to the contemporary fractured state of othering non-homogenous cultural elements in this region," such as addressing the contribution of musical identities (Sephardic, west African communities, Amazigh, Spain beyond Andalusia) outside formal narratives of al-Andalus by nostalgic nationalism or interreligious promotion by many Spanish institutions as Instituto Cervantes of Fundacion Tres Culturas (Shannon 2016, 5). Musicological analysis reveals certain commonalities in the use of musical modes, instruments, song structures, and performing techniques to build interconnected musical idioms in which the idea of coexistence and influence is evident.

Ziryab and musical commonalities in the afterlives of al-Andalus

The amalgamation of musical commonalities included in the sonic space of al-Andalus recalls the contested collaboration of African musicians in the foundation of Andalusi music, centred on Ziryab (Davila 2009). As Machin-Autenrieth (2021, 494) notes regarding the multiple projections of Ziryab by musicians across the Mediterranean, and his being cited as the so-called founder of Andalusi music by certain scholars, Ziryab becomes an inspirational figure creating both tension and a sense of coexistence among musicians and academics. Thus, Ziryab becomes a conglomerate of histories and perspectives on al-Andalus through music, and a figure upon which to build narratives of music circulation.

As previously mentioned, in North Africa, the continuum of Andalusi music has been characterised by multiple representations of the *nubat*, such as the rise of large orchestras and music schools (Gharnatta, Al-Alaa, Malouf, and so on) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; ways of preserving the *nubats*, with musical transcriptions and orally; the preservation of Andalusi poetry, and the creation of new poetry based on Andalusi poetic forms such as *zejel* and *muwashshah*, as in Syria (Shannon 2016); the dissemination and institutionalisation of Andalusi music by postcolonial states in Morocco (Calderwood 2018), Algeria (Glasser 2019), Tunisia (Davis 2004) and Libya (Ciantar 2016); the interaction between Andalusi music practices and subaltern agents (Sufi communities) during the colonial and postcolonial periods; the use of the *nubat* as the foundation for the creation of a new musical style such as *chaabi*; and the contested notion of improvisation or fixed music for the development of the *nubat*.

The notion of *convivencia* in Andalusi music reflects a symbiotic relationship between territoriality and cultural circulation among the countries where Andalusi music yet represents a valuable connection with disparate worlds from the ninth to the fifteenth centuries. The notion of *convivencia* firstly connects the "al-Andalus imaginary" with a broader body of musicological and interdisciplinary knowledge in an Afro-Asian context. In relation to the transnational contextualisation of the afterlives of music, Ranade (2008, 11) expresses his concern regarding the possibility of analysing the circulation of music without it becoming centralised in one specific area of research, thus becoming Indo-centric or "somewhere-else centric." Ranade notes that "the only excuse is my personal incapacity to exhaustively explore the multiple, connected and wider areas" (Ibid., 12). In accordance with Ranade on the personal limitations involved in studying such cultural circulation, this article describes the interconnectivity of al-Andalus within an Afro-Asian context; however, due to my own limitations, I focus on a comparative study with clear emphasis on Andalusi music and its commonalities across the Sahara, North Africa, West Africa, the Middle East, and the Indian Ocean. I observe Andalusi music as an interconnected cultural world of "creating and borrowing" in relation to the historical and performative aspects within the Afro-Asian context.

Andalusi music from a historical perspective in the Afro-Asian context: Music scales, lament and musical instruments

Andalusi music provides historical evidence of cultural circulation in the Afro-Asian context, such as that of the study of musical scales, musical instruments, and the notion of lament in poetry.

Musical scales or the circulation of musical variations within the same mode in the Afro-Asian context

Modal systems are characterised by melodic motifs and musical variations, with musicians learning multiple variations within each mode in order to develop resources for improvisation and accompaniment. The study of musical scales reveals notable similarities between the modal traditions of al-Andalus and other musical systems across the Islamic world. For instance, the Esfahan mode appears in Andalusi music, the Persian *dastgah* system, the *haul* modal system of Western Sahara (as *leboer*), and within the *maqamat* tradition, particularly in the Nahawand and Rast modes, the latter distinguished by its use of quarter tones.

The shared nomenclature of different *nubats* underscores a historical interconnectedness. For example, the Moroccan Hijaz al-Mashriqi mode, meaning "the Hijaz scale from the East," directly relates to the Middle Eastern *maqamat*. Similarly, Andalusi *nubats* such as *Sikah* (found in Algerian and Libyan Malouf) and *Rast/Rasd* (present in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) demonstrate clear connections to *maqam* traditions.

Comparative studies of the *nubat*, Persian *dastgah*, and Hindustani music further emphasises these relationships. One important example is the Hussaini mode. According to Karomat (2006, 62), the Raga Hussaini (based on the major scale or Ionian mode) directly influenced the later development of Hindustani *ragas*, which, in turn, were derived from the twelve Persian *dastgah*. Historical sources support this connection: Ranade (2008, 32) notes that, between 1556 and 1605, Pundarik Vitthal identified sixteen *ragas* as Persian in origin, including *Husaeni*. Later, in 1620, Vyankatmakhi also mentioned Persian *ragas*, such as Hussaini (Ibid.).

One of the significant modes in Andalusi music, due to its historical associations with medieval Spain — particularly in Visigothic and Roman liturgical chants — and later with the broader Islamic world, is the Raml al-Maya mode (comparable to the Dorian mode in Greek modal theory). Raml al-Maya exhibits similarities with the Entamas/Kar mode of the *haul* modal system in Western Sahara and Mauritania, the Bayati mode in *maqam*, the Segah mode in the Persian *dastgah* system, and the Kafi and Hussaini *ragas* in Hindustani music.[2]

2. The similarities between the above-mentioned modes can be heard in these recordings: https://ragajunglism.org/ragas/thaat/#kafi; https://ragajunglism.org/ragas/hussaini-kanada/; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JJDVgEGBwZ4 (Kar); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WycUyJbrXtc (Segah); and https://youtu.be/iAViOCgtE3A (Ram al-Maya).

From a historical perspective, if one considers the evolution of melodic motifs rather than strict musical scales, the Raml al-Maya mode transcends al-Andalus, circulating across a vast geographical space. Rather than being confined to a specific region, it has served as a foundational reference point for musical exploration, constructing musical idioms across multiple cultural and geographical contexts. Consequently, Raml al-Maya illustrates the dynamic interaction between localised traditions and a broader transregional cultural circulation within the Afro-Asian musical landscape.

Further emphasising the importance of melodic development in the *nubat* tradition, Moroccan maestro Chaachoo (personal communication, 8 May 2020) identified four Andalusi modes in al-Alaa (Andalusi music in Morocco) that correspond to the Dorian mode in D: Raml al-Maya, Isfahan, Rasd, and Mashriqi. These modes differ primarily in their characteristic phrase endings: Raml al-Maya resolves on F and G, Mashriqi on F, Isfahan on E and G, and Rasd, which tends towards a pentatonic structure, on E. Chaachoo (Ibid.) further asserts that these Dorian-related modes in Andalusi music reflect not only clear influences from the East but also shared commonalities with Visigothic liturgical chants from the Iberian Peninsula, predating the establishment of al-Andalus.

This analysis describes the deep interconnections between Andalusi music and other modal traditions across the Islamic world and beyond, illustrating how musical structures have historically traversed geographical and cultural boundaries.

Youssef, from the Algerian Groupe Yafil (email correspondence, 30 April 2019), notes that the many Algerian *nubats* have a Dorian-related aspect such as the *nubats* Hsin, Araq, and Raml al-Maya. The use of Dorian-related modes also conforms to a historical connectivity with the revival of ancient Greek knowledge in the Islamic world since the ninth century. Ranade (2008, 13) mentions that Ibn Misjah (715 CE) provided eight basic melodic frameworks known as *asbi* that are probably related to the eight Greek modes. Yore (2012, 269) also notes that the "al-Kindi and al-Farabi based the first maqam music theory on Greek music theory." Thus, the relationship between Greek, Persian, and Hindustani music became interconnected with the revival of Greek philosophy, involving the standardisation of modal systems, namely, *maqam*, *ragas*, and *dastagh*, during the twelfth to thirteenth centuries. Yore mentions that the notion of *maqam* was systematically classified in Turkey during the thirteenth and fourteenth century in the course of the creation of the Ottoman Empire:

We can see that Safiyü'd-Din Urmevî (1224–1294) in the 13th century, as well as Selahaddin es-Safedî (1296–1363) and Abdulkadir Merâgî (1353–1435) in the 14th century systematically classified the *maqams* which had been made before them in their books (2012, 267).

Similarly, Karomat notes the gradual development of Hindustani music from the eleventh to the eighteenth centuries. From the eleventh century, the influence of Arabic, Persian, and Turkic cultures started to consolidate its position in North

India, and resulted, in particular, in a creation of new genres in Indian literature, art, and music. However, the first important fruits of the assimilation were attained during the Delhi Sultanate in the thirteenth century and reached their peak later in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries during the time of the Great Mughals (Baburids; Karomat 2006, 62).

According to Qureshi (1986, 49), the most favoured Hindustani *ragas* in Qawwali are *kafi*, *shahana*, *bahar*, *bageshri*, and *jaijaivanti*. On the other hand, Qureshi mentions that the tonal inventory is based on the *bilaval* (major scale), *khamaj* (mixolydian), *kafi* (Dorian or Raml al-Maya), and *kalyan* (Lydian) *ragas*. In sum, the notion of musical scales can be extrapolated to the use of musical variations in Raml al-Maya in different modal systems across the Afro-Asian world. The Islamic expansion provided a reconsideration of the Greek modes by creating various modal systems in which many of the scales are similar, although they contain different musical idioms.

Melisma, poetry, and lamentation: The musical and lyrical content of recurrent themes (the tragic love of Heer Ranjha, devotional love to God, and wine intoxication)

The intrinsic interaction between music and poetry is essential for the understanding of Andalusi music (Monroe 1971; Reynolds 2020). In relation to the historical interconnectivity between al-Andalus and other Muslim kingdoms as concerns the creation of poetic forms, during Al-Hakam II's reign (961–976), the caliph bought "Kitáb al-Agání" by Al-Isfahání for a thousand gold dinars. Many of these poems were sung in al-Andalus (Chaachoo 2012, 20–21). As a result, based on the popularity of Al-Isfahání's collection of poems sung by many Andalusi artists, the first books on the melodic treatment of songs appeared in Ibn Saʿid's "Risála fi ta'líf al-alhán" (Epistol on composing melodies; Ibid.).

The lyrical content of many musical styles based on the above-mentioned modal systems contains an extensive repertoire of recurrent themes such as devotional love to God, intoxication by wine, and romance by Rumi in Persia, Khosrow in India, and the Princess Wallada in al-Andalus, among other poets. The use of poetry has in common the notion of lament in relation to the pain induced by love, spiritual pain, and gratitude to God by way of a melismatic style of singing. Melisma refers to the use of vibrato over the singing; thus, there is a trembling effect in the vocal component which characterises many musical styles in the Afro-Asian context.

As an undergraduate student in 2001, my Persian singing teacher, Toraj Kiaras, always affirmed that the use of melisma in Persian singing originated prior to the advent of Islam; however, the origins of melisma remain unclear. From a sociological perspective, the lament is perhaps related to the expression of pain in love, either devotional or mundane. In al-Andalus, the notion of tragic love through melismatic ways of singing expanded among different forms of poetry, such as Sephardic (romance, *cantigas*, and *coplas*) and Arabic *mwashajah* and *zejel*.

In relation to the notion of tragic love as a form of lament, one of the main features is the circulation of songs relating to missing the "loved one" (*ghazal*, *qawwali*, and romances in Andalusi music or *lyen* in Haul Mauritanian music), with the "loved one" being either a human lover or God as the ultimate lover in a tragic, mundane romance. As an example, during my collective research with Reza Khota and Mark Aranha about the tragic love of Heer Ranjha in India and its historical relationship with other artistic expressions during the precolonial period, Professor Madan Gopal mentioned to Aranha that the final message of Heer is not to sing to Ranjha but to God. According to Sheeraz (2013, 171), Heer Ranjha was a Punjabi story (from Pakistan) that perhaps belongs to "Behlol Lodhi's era during the second half of the fifteenth century. Later, it was revitalised by the Sufi poet, Wari Shah in the eighteenth century" (Ibid.). Ranjha was accustomed to playing the flute in his solitude while enjoying nature and his loved one even after death. In Heer Ranjha's story, the transformation of human love into love of God is palpable. The final message of the Heer and love-devotional songs remains "God's shelter is bigger than any tragedy."

As an example of this type of devotional love linked to tragedy in al-Andalus, the Sephardic song, "Llave" (key), narrates the expulsion of Jews from Spain by the Catholic kings; yet God's mercy is the final message behind any tragedy. This Sephardic lament has been transmitted through generations from its Spanish home to elsewhere until the present day. One of the remarkable interpretations of "La yave de Espanya" is found on Flory Jagoda's album, *Memories of Sarajevo*.[3] The lyrical content asks: "Where is the key that our grandparents gave us with pain from their house in Spain. They said to our children this key is the heart of our house in Spain" (author's translation).

At the time of al-Andalus (711–1492), the creation of the *muwashshah* (in classical Arabic) and *zejel* (in various languages, from Andalusi-Arabic dialect, Latin, and Sephardic to Castilian) developed a type of poetry linked to music and related to similar notions of lament. *Muwashshah* and *zejel* arose as the result of coexistence (*convivencia*) in a multi-linguistic environment. It is evident that the lyrical content of the *zejel* was intrinsically linked to the devotional and romance-type of poetry occurring in the Islamic cultural world and, later, with the troubadours' creative resources (Alharthi and Khrisat 2016, 172).

Although the divide between the Arabic and European on the Iberian Peninsula was unclear during al-Andalus, their historical and cultural relationship is evidenced by the interest of Charlemagne, the Roman Emperor during the ninth century, in Islamic knowledge since the creation of al-Andalus:

> Charlemagne tried to emulate and compete with Baghdad and Cordoba. He too invited scholars from abroad to his court and established schools. This revival was chiefly mastered by three influential scholars; Theodolfus (d. 821), Claudius (d.c.

3. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHtv_aqOoy8

> 839) and Agobardus (d. 840), all of whom had contacts with Muslim learning as they were Goths born or educated in Spain or Southern France. In addition to his friendship with the Abbassid Caliph, Harun Al-Rashid, the renowned Chanson de Geste revealed that Charlemagne spent seven years in Spain (Saoud 2004, 7).

The popularity of poetic laments using melismatic singing is perhaps related to the interconnectedness of the Islamic world as a result of pilgrimage routes to Mecca, whereas musical styles have been influenced by historical accounts of storytelling and tragic love stories across this vast interconnected region, not only through the Islamic expansion but through the influence of other cultural and religious movements from Europe, Africa, and Asia.

The cultural circulation of musical instruments from al-Andalus in the Afro-Asian context

Historical evidence for Andalusi musical instruments relies on paintings, archaeological evidence of instruments such as whistles, and poetic descriptions by Andalusi writers from different periods(Fernandez Manzano 1984; Navarro de la Coba 2020a). As regards one of the earliest poetic descriptions of musical instruments, Cortes Garcia (2009, 35) emphasises the descriptions of the oud by Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi, that is, Abu ʿUmar Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Abd Rabbih (Córdoba, 860 — Córdoba, 940), in which the poet expresses the joy of listening to the oud at dawn. Like many other instruments used in Andalusi music and performed in many regions in the Islamic world, the oud is an instrument brought from elsewhere to the Iberian Peninsula and represents the interconnectedness of the Islamic world. Concerning the popularisation of the oud in al-Andalus, Navarro De la Coba (2020b, 59) remarks on the prevalent appearance of women playing the oud, such as al-Mughira, a carved ivory pyxis held in the Louvre in Paris (Galan y Galindo 2011, 18) and the Bote de Davillier (Sazatornil Ruiz 2011: 353–368).

As part of the historical accounts of the manufacture of instruments, Siloah (1979, 210) provides pictures and descriptions of a series of instruments found in al-Andalus: such as the various types of ouds with short neck (*ud*, *mizhar*, *kiran*, *barbat*, ʿ*artaba*, and *urtuba*), ouds with long neck (*tunbur*, *tinbar*, *dirridj*), wind instruments (*nay*, *yara*, *iran*, *hayra*ʿ*a*), double-pipe clarinets (*mizmar*, *zammara*, *zamkhara*, *kussab*) and percussion instruments (*tabl*, *kabar*, *kuba*, *duff*), among others. Cortes Garcia (2009, 37) includes the *qanun* and *rebab* from Abu L-Salt b. Umayya al-Dani's (Denia, 1068–1134) book, *Risalat fí l-musiqa*.

According to Siloah's account of musical instruments used in al-Andalus, several of these instruments are still used to perform Andalusi music in North Africa, such as the long neck oud, *qanun*, *nay*, and *duff*. These instruments are also combined with Western instruments, such as violins and viola, in Arab orchestras. This type of orchestration was popularised in Egypt during the twentieth century and later spread throughout North Africa, the Arab Gulf, and the Middle East. The influence of these so called "Arab" orchestras spread throughout various parts of the Islamic

world, leading to the creation of further musical styles, such as *asli* music in Malaysia and Tanzanian *taarab*, among others.

There are also percussive instruments that reveal the interconnectedness of al-Andalus and other parts of the Islamic world. For instance, in the Alhambra in Granada, Fernandez Puertas (2018, 142) examined paintings of men sitting on the floor while performing on a framed drum, performing on instruments such as the Mauritanian *tbal* and others linked to the Indo-Persian instrument, the *nagara*. Concerning the contemporary existence of certain percussive instruments used in Andalusi music, Ariza Rodriguez (2004, 521) notes the appearance of ceramic drinking vessels ornamented with women playing a percussion instrument similar to the *duff*. They play the instrument standing, holding it near their shoulders. Historically, the *duff* suggests a relationship with Mesopotamia and Egypt, possibly being related to the *tar* and the *riqq*. These small, framed drums, similar to the *duff* or *riqq*, have become popular in many countries across North Africa, the Middle East, and even outside the Afro-Asian context, as with the Brazilian *pandeiro*.

Given the gendered connotations of playing percussion in many countries in the Islamic world, it is interesting to note the appearance of women playing a percussion instrument similar to the *duff*. Nevertheless, there are other exceptions too, such as female oud players in many North African countries or *tbal* percussionists in Western Sahara.

Another example of cultural circulation from al-Andalus to other parts of the Islamic world is the *kuba*, a bi-membranophonic percussion instrument included in Siloah's (1977) classification of Andalusi instruments. In the course of informal discussions with Navarro de la Coba (March 2020), we agreed that it may be possible to link the existence of these bi-membranophones with instruments in various parts of the Asia, such as the *gendang*, which is mostly used in gamelan music, the *pakhavack* in Pakistan, and the *dholak* in India.

In relation to the appearance of the *kuba* in al-Andalus, Navarro de la Coba (Ibid.) remarked to me on the existence of a percussion instrument like the *kuba* that features on the 'pila de Xativa' (Spain), a font carved in pink marble from the eleventh century. Navarro de la Coba continued by saying that, in the thirteenth century, the jurist Shafi al Nawawi banned the *kuba* due to its perceived links with homosexual practices (Cortes Garcia and Gonzalez Berlanga 2012, 171). As a result, this bi-membranophone disappeared from Spain; nonetheless, other percussive instruments such as the *daff* (*pandereta*), oud (*bandurrias*) or *tbal* (*tabala*) survived.

The appearance of similar instruments played in various parts of the Islamic world from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries provide revealing information about the interconnectedness of music across this vast region. It is also important to note that performative aspects and musical structures still in existence reveal possible commonalities among multiple musical idioms from al-Andalus to other parts of the world.

Performative aspects and musical commonalities: Song structure and performing techniques

As a "living history," music reveals commonalities of performance techniques and song structures across the Afro-Asian region. As an example of similar song structures, many songs have a free tempo section, and a later section where rhythm is introduced. The free tempo introduction is characterised by the musical exploration of a mode known as *taksim* in the *maqamat* system. In other musical styles, the free tempo introduction is known as *mawal* (related to vocal improvisation in Haul and Andalusi music), *istijbar*/*msalya* (related to instrumental improvisation in Andalusi music), or *alap* (in Hindustani music). One of the common relationships between Andalusi and Hindustani music theory involves the use of a free tempo introductory component representing an exploration of a musical mode that establishes a "mood," which may be related to a certain time of day. There are other common musical features in the *alap* and *mawal*, such as the call-and-response interaction between an instrument and the vocal component.

In relation to performance techniques used for string instruments across the Afro-Asian region, I examine certain flamenco guitar techniques, such as *alzapua* (with flamenco guitar) and the use of a plectrum with the oud; the *ataque* and *picado*, which appears in the Mauritanian *tidinit*, and the sitar and the Persian *darbar*; another common lute-technique used with many instruments, from north-west Africa to India, *golpe* (tapping of the wood), in the *tidinit*, *ngoni*, *gumbri*, sitar, *sarod*, and flamenco guitar, among others; and the strumming techniques (or *rasgueos*) commonly used in various parts of Africa and Asia. *Alzapua* involves playing rapid notes, and even chords, with the thumb in flamenco guitar. It clearly resembles the use of the plectrum with the oud. The use of *alzapua* for both these instruments resembles ways of constructing short melodic phrases in a rather tetrachordal form. Thus, *alzapua*, as a performance technique, provides a cultural and historical linking in the approach to flamenco guitar and the oud, from its historical relationship with Andalusi music to its cultural circulation (or *convivencia*).

Picado refers to the use of the index and middle fingers to play rapid notes. *Picado* is also used with the Mauritanian *tidinit* and the Iranian *setar*. In Haul music for the *tidinit*, *picado* is called *lefguea*, which reflects the various possibilities of playing a melodic variation as different types of *picado*, such as *barm* (rapid tremolo with thumb and index) and *barmasaba* (rapid tremolo with the index finger). The different ways of creating a *picado* is reliant on the performance skills of the musician in Haul music. Similarly, the method of *picado* is found in the different ways of creating melodic variations, such as in the Malian *ngoni* (as with *barmasaba* or *barm*) and in the general use of *barmasaba picado* with the Iranian *setar*.

The *ngoni*, *setar*, *kora* and the Turkish *baglama* uses *golpe* (tapping the wood) and *ataque* (quick strumming) to accompany vocal sections; this also resembles the use of sympathetic strings with the Indian *sitar*. *ataque* (quick strumming) and *golpe*

provide multiple ways of starting and resolving a melodic phrase. Similarly, there are other common techniques for resolving the strumming phrases, such as the *elmenfaga* — a way of strumming backwards with the index finger and concluding with the thumb — in Haul music; this is often also used in flamenco music.

Use of such performance techniques in different parts of the world demonstrates an evident interconnectedness in creating musical idioms in the Afro-Asian context. These performance techniques and modal systems are used by musicians as a way of narrating stories and "emotional moods." Such techniques may be presenting to us the story of a cultural coexistence beyond the socio-political aspects commonly studied in this context.

The afterlives of Ziryab: Musical circulation and postcolonial nationhood

The afterlives of Ziryab reflect an awareness, both historical and contemporary, of the complex record of Andalusi music's circulation in the Afro-Asian world. Ziryab serves as a metaphor for re-evaluating the development of postcolonial nationhood in Africa and the ways in which national narratives have emphasised musical borders rather than musical circulation and cross-border exchanges. Consequently, incorporating Andalusi music into the broader study of African musical circulation contributes to a more expansive understanding of how musical cultures are reinvented both within and beyond national boundaries. As Solomon (2012, 216) notes, "the boundaries of multi-ethnic or multi-lingual postcolonial African states correspond largely to old colonial agendas and administrative divisions, rather than to the actual lived social and linguistic geography of given regions." This suggests that the continuity of Andalusi music has been shaped not only by the colonial partitioning of the African continent but also by the subsequent formation of postcolonial states in north Africa.

Regarding cultural interactions among African countries which enhances the sonic representation of certain musical styles beyond state borders, efforts to develop a shared cultural renaissance have been evident since the 1960s in the early independence movements of Africa. However, following liberation, "unity of action" against colonialism did not translate into a "unity of identity" within the Maghrebi movement. Instead, nationalist narratives framed precolonial Andalusi music in distinct ways, leading to its differentiation across north African countries. In Morocco, Andalusi music is known as *al-ala*; in Algeria, as *san'a* and *gharnati*; and in Libya and Tunisia, as *malouf* (which includes the *malouf* tradition from Constantine, Algeria).

Postcolonial nationalism in the Maghreb — much like in other parts of the continent — has been shaped by chauvinistic narratives that have dissolved the unity of the anti-colonial Maghrebi movement and transformed postcolonial discourse into multiple forms of patriotic historiography. The study of Andalusi music emphasises sonic representations of African musical traditions that transcend contemporary national borders. Moreover, it invites comparisons with other

transnational reinventions of precolonial musical cultures, such as Haul music in Western Sahara and Mauritania, Bugandan music in Uganda, and mbira musical traditions, which share features across Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi, and Mozambique.

As in other African contexts, Andalusi music embodies an attempt to reclaim a precolonial historical narrative, one that predates the impositions of colonialism. The precolonial imaginary thus plays a crucial role in negotiating nationalist history and cultural innovation in the postcolonial present. In other words, Andalusi music seeks to link precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial narratives in the music histories of north African nations. The continuity of Andalusi music manifests in various forms, including that with royalist overtones of "authenticity" in Morocco, the emergence of new orchestrations and institutionalisations of Andalusi music in the twentieth century, and the dichotomy between preserving *nubat* through musical transcription versus through oral transmission. Additionally, the enduring nature of Andalusi *muwashshah* traditions, the interaction between Andalusi musical practices and subaltern agents such as Sufi communities during both the colonial and postcolonial periods, and the adaptation of *nubat* as a foundation for new popular music styles, such as *chaabi* in Algeria, all illustrate its dynamic evolution over time.

In Tunisia, while *malouf* was historically associated with the elite and was considered the most refined national musical tradition during the early years of independence, subsequent decades have witnessed the fusion of traditional music with globalised genres such as hip-hop, reggae, and electronic music, particularly in the wake of the 2011 Arab Spring (Laine, Suurpää and Ltifi 2017, 61). In alignment with their observations of Tunisia's transcultural musical landscape, Moreno Almeida (2016, 121) argues that Moroccan *taqlidi* rap reinvents Moroccan identity by integrating Gnawa and Andalusi musical elements. As a result, *taqlidi* appeals to diverse audiences, including conservatives, the youth, progressives, and underground music communities (Ibid.).

Another significant transformation in Andalusi musical practices has been the rise of *mizwid*, a form of Sufi *malouf*, in Tunisia over the past decade. Jankowsky (2017, 860) notes that while Sufi music was previously marginalised by the postcolonial state due to its perceived complicity with French colonialism, it has since become one of Tunisia's most popular musical genres. Performed on the *mizwad* (a type of bagpipe) and *darbouka*, *mizwid* has recently been adapted to electronic music, which replaces traditional instruments with digital sounds. The emergence of *mizwid* draws attention to how postcolonial states exercise agency in either suppressing or promoting subaltern musical communities within the historical preservation of Andalusi music.

Notwithstanding ongoing musical innovations, the construction of Arabness and Africanness continues to be shaped by precolonial philosophical and cultural frameworks. The transnational nature of *nubat* across north African countries

underscores the historical interconnectedness of al-Andalus and contemporary musical traditions. This trajectory ultimately evokes the legacy of Ziryab, the African musician who migrated from Baghdad to Córdoba and profoundly influenced the Andalusi musical tradition.

The afterlives of Ziryab in African postcolonialism

The afterlives of Ziryab expresses awareness for the complex history of the musical circulation of Andalusi music within an Afro-Asian context historically and at present. Ziryab also becomes a metaphor for reconsidering the development of postcolonial nationhood in Africa and how such national narratives emphasise music borders rather than music circulation or border crossing. As a result, the possibility of including Andalusi music as part of the study of cultural circulation of African music contributes to the understanding of musical *cultures'* reinvention within and beyond national boundaries that have undergone processes of decolonisation in the African continent. As Solomon notes (2012, 216), "the boundaries of multi-ethnic or multi-lingual postcolonial African states [which] correspond largely to old colonial agendas and administrative divisions, rather than to the actual lived, social and linguistic geography of given regions." Thus, the continuum of Andalusi music has been affected by the geographical partition of the African continent by colonial powers and later through the creation of postcolonial states in North Africa.

Regarding the cultural interaction between African countries that enhances the sonic representation of certain musical styles beyond state borders, throughout early processes of independence in the continent since the 1960s, there has been always an attempt to develop a cultural renaissance that connects African countries culturally. However, the 'unity of action' against colonialism did not result in a 'unity of identity' in the Maghrebi movement by building a distinctive form of nationalist narrative of precolonial Andalusi music after colonialism. As a result, in Morrocco, Andalusi music is known as Al-Ala; in Algeria as san'a and gharnati, in Libya and Tunisia it is called Malouf (including Malouf from Constantine, Algeria).

The study of Andalusi music addresses the sonic representation of African music beyond present borders in African states and in relation to other reinventions (or revitalisations) of pre-colonial musical cultures crossing borders such as Haul music (Western Sahara and Mauritania), Bugandan music in Uganda, or mbira musical culture with similar musical features in southern Africa (Zimbabwe, Zambia, South Africa, Malawi and Mozambique) among others.

As in other African countries, Andalusi music marks the recuperation of precolonial history before the existence of colonial tropes, thus, the pre-colonial imaginary plays a key role in the negotiation of patriotic history and cultural innovations in a postcolonial present. In other words, the representation of Andalusi music aims to link the precolonial, colonial and postcolonial narrative of many North African countries and their music history. Thus, the continuum of Andalusi

music has been characterised by multiple representations of the nubat such as the royal overtones of 'authenticity' in Morocco; the rise of new orchestrations and institutionalisation of Andalusi music during the twentieth century; the dichotomy between ways of preserving the nubats through musical transcriptions or orally transmitted; the continuum of Andalusi *muwashshah*; the interaction between Andalusi music practices and subaltern agents (Sufi communities) during the colonial and postcolonial period; or the use of the nubat as the foundation for new forms of popular music like the chaabi in Algeria, among others.

Although Malouf has been directed to the elites In Tunisia as the most elevated and refined music from the country since the beginning of independence, traditional music has been fused and created new forms of music influenced by globalised musical styles (Hip Hop, Reggae, Electronic music and so on) after the '2011 Arab Spring' (Laine, Suurpää and Ltifi's 2017, 61).

In line with Laine, Suurpää and Ltifi's point on the transcultural phenomena of Tunisian music during the last decade, Moreno Almeida (2016, 121) claims that Moroccan *taqlidi* rap uses various musical styles by reinventing Morocannes through Gnawa and Andalusi music, thus, somehow, *taqlidi* attracts different types of audiences (conservative, youth, progressives or underground).

Another significant change of Andalusi musical practices has been the rise of mizwid (Sufi Malouf) during the last decade in Tunisia. Jankowsky (2017, 860) notes how Sufi music, once repudiated by the postcolonial state for being an accomplice to French colonialism, has become one of the most popular music genres, known as *mizwid*, (performed by mizwad a type of bagpipe and darbouka) after the Arab Spring. At present, mizwid has been popularised through the use of electronic music substituting the mizwad and percussion. Through the rise of mizwid, one can observe how postcolonial states have their own agency to remove or promote certain subaltern communities in the historical preservation of Andalusi music.

The construction of Arabness and Africaness continues being fed by philosophical or cultural pillars of precolonial tropes and ongoing musical innovation. The transnational aspect of the nubat among various North African countries portrays the historical interconnectivity between Al-Andalus and current musical styles which emphasises the legacy of an African musician, Ziryab, who moved from Bagdad to establish himself in Cordoba.

Conclusion

Andalusi music embodies an interconnected cultural world shaped by historical expansions, musical exchanges, and the reinvention of traditions. Its influence spans modal systems, poetic themes, and performative techniques across the Afro-Asian world. Musicological analyses reveal commonalities in modes, instruments, song structures, and performance techniques, reinforcing in the process the concept of *convivencia*. Ultimately, the circulation of Andalusi music underscores the enduring interconnectedness of musical traditions beyond geographic and temporal

boundaries, offering valuable insights into historical coexistence and cultural synthesis. In the north African context, the sonic representation of Andalusi music extends beyond contemporary national borders, prompting a reconsideration of broader conceptual frameworks, including those of pan-Arabism, Maghrebi identity, the Arab Spring, and African musical traditions.

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