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Arabic Literature
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POETIC IMPLANTATION IN SPAIN

The Arabic poetic implantation on Andalucian soil with the coming of the Berbers and Umayyad Emirs to Spain did much to bring Hispano-Arabian poetry to great cultural heights. The poetry was to have a profound influence on the music of Spain and Europe, especially the music of the Troubadours. The purpose of this paper will be to discuss the early poetry in Spain and to see how it influenced music through form, rhythm and rhyme.

During the 54 years between the first landing of the Berbers in Al-Andaluz and the arrival of Rahman I, the Iberian Peninsula had been in a stage of fluctuation and transformation.¹ New religious laws, new social and economic institutions and new methods of agriculture had all been introduced to Spain by the Arabs. A new race had been created through marriage of Arabs to Spanish women. Inter-marriage of the 3 main races, Visigoths, Spanish and Arabs had produced the Hispano Arabs or Andalucian Arabs, as they came to be known. The Andalucian Arabs were to become the most ardent exponents of a special poetry called the Andalucian Love Poetry over the next 5 centuries.² G

Soil, climate and the rich heritage of the Phoenician, Greek, Carthaginian and Roman cultures all made valuable contributions to this special poetry. This was in part because the conquering Arabs did not destroy what they found in Al-Andaluz, rather they modified and assimilated. The Spanish natives in turn, contributed their religious ardor, passion and beauty of their land to the poetry of the new society.

It was during the sometimes ruthless reign of Rahman I that Hispano-Arabian poetry really began to flourish. Modelled on Arabic patterns and traditions, themes were mainly about martial exploits, praise for the rulers, heroes and passions. ✓

Al-Hakam, for example, had to crush many revolts at Toledo and Cordoba. He composed verses describing the bloody events. Meantime, he also had a revolt on his hands with 5 of his most beautiful women. In order to appease them, he wrote the following verses:

"Boughs of ban, swaying over the sandhills
Turned away from me, decided to eschew me,

I told them of my right, yet they persist
In their disobedience, when mine has ceased;

A king am I, subdued, his power humbled
To love, like a captain in fetters, forlorn!

What of me when those who tore my soul from my body
Are stripping me of my power and might in love!³

When the ladies later became reconciled to him, he was so elated, he likened it to a victory.⁴

The poetry nevertheless, had a certain nostalgia since the Hispano-Arabian poets found Spain to be so fertile and greatly superior to their own lands. To these new poets, Spain was a Paradise.⁵

Al-Andaluz over the next years began to attract many poets from Arabia and poetry with themes about love began to be written. Despite severe efforts to curtail this type of poetry, it continued to grow. The Syrian Arabs enriched it with nuances of Persian, Greek and Hindu love feelings. During the reigns of Harun al Rashid and al Ma'mun, this enrichment became known as "poetic sensibilidad."

Great love affairs also resulted from Hispano-Arabic poetry, the most famous of all, Al-Hakam's passionate love for Tarib, mother of his son, Abdullah. Another famous love affair was between Rahman and Gazlan.

A HISPANO ARABIAN POET - IBN ZAIDUN

Ibn Zaidun was born in Cordoba in 1003 and died 1074 at Sevilla. His poetry represented the purest of the pure classical Arabic in Al-Andaluz. He had acquired a thorough education in the literary arts and knew thousands of classical verses by memory. He soon began to

to compose his own. Both periods of his poetry showed genius, brilliance and originality. ✓

During his first period, ^{Ibn} Zaidun was deeply attached to Wallada, daughter of Khalif al-Mustakfi. She had peculiar moods and whims, free manners and disdained the veil. Her home was always filled with poets and literary people. [✓] ⁶

^{Ibn} Zaidun's relationship with Wallada began in 1031. At the outset, she appeared to be sincere. Due to court intrigues they had to be most careful of their meetings. One day, Zaidun criticized one of her verses and her ardor for him immediately cooled. She thought he was having an affair with her black maid, in order to make him jealous, she took a rival lover. Zaidun attempted to crush the rival through ridicule and wrote a famous epitre which caused the Cordoban court to laugh at the rival who happened to be the pompous vizier. Zaidun's attempts did nothing to change Wallada's attitudes. ^{Ibn Al-Balut.}

Her former love quickly turned to hate which she expressed in verses of obscenity and which revealed her utter baseness. In these verses, she accused him of 6 of the worst crimes and vices among them thievery and sodomy. ⁷ The poet of course, was thrown into prison for 500 days where he continued to write poetry of nobleness and despair. ⁸ Zaidun did manage to escape from prison and sent Wallada a long qasida in nun which has since become one of his most celebrated and most frequently quoted poems. This poem marked the end of his love poetry period. ^{It did. She returned to him after that he ridiculed her. Ibn Al-Balut.}

At age 38 his second period began as a court poet. during which he composed long qasidas. Despite the fatal attraction both Wallada and ^{Ibn} Zaidun lived past 80 years of age.

THE BERBER POETS OF GRANADA

During the Abbasid Period, Granada also had many gifted poets. Al-Ilbiri was a Berber and a mystic poet. He was eventually expelled from Granada because of his sharp criticism of the power of the Jews. He wrote poems of the zuhd and sufi type. His most famous poem, 47 verses in muta qarib meter, was one in which he incited Badis (Nagrilla's treacherous nephew's son) to rise against the Jews along with the Sinhaga Berbers. Nagrilla was a one-eyed Jewish vizier around 1016.

Al-Ilbiri was fond of antithesis in his poetry and play upon words which can be most appreciated in original Arabic. In one of his poems, he speaks of love in terms of being like a war, using Bedouin imagery.⁹

Another Berber poet of Granada was Banu Di N'-Nun. He was ordered to go to the region in Spain now known as Cuenca as commander and assumed rule of Toledo in 1035-36. Spain's beauty and events of the day inspired him to write the following poem:

Al-udu, qad tarannam
Bi abda i tathin
Wa saqqat al-madanib
Riyad al basatin.¹⁰

The poem describes the sounding of the lute with its most beautiful melodies and brooks that flow gaily through the flower gardens. The end of the poem describes the political events that were taking place at the time.

You march proudly and without saluting:
perchance you are Al-Ma'mun,
the terrifier of hosts,
Yahya ibn Di N'-nun.¹¹

Part of Banu's job as ruler of Toledo was to impose a heavy taxation on the Toledans who hated the demands of tribute they were forced to pay to King Alfonso VI.

IMAGE, THEME AND RHETORICAL EMBELLISHMENT IN HISPANO ARABIAN POETRY

The barren images of the desert poetry received rich enforcement as the Arabian conquest spread to embrace fertile valleys, forested plains, broad rivers, orchards, gardens, flowers, beautiful slave girls and the gold and crimson wines of Spain.¹² The pleasure and pain of love-making was portrayed as a drama. Drama required specific characters, the Lover, the Beloved, the Confidant, the Spy, the Slanderer and the Reproacher. A simple romance became a complicated allegory.

The Lover was really the Poet seeking a Prince's favour. The other characters would then fit neatly into the love drama of court intrigue.¹³ Poetry underwent yet another transformation and the lover became the mystic, the beloved of God.

Specific Themes

1. tears of blood - conventional acceptance, lovers weep tears of blood.
2. fire and flood - a double peril here, that confronts the poet. The fire is his burning heart, the flood, his brimming tears. Sometimes the two thoughts would cancel each other out.
3. the lightning smile - flashing teeth of the beloved.
4. the beloved's glances - are compared to arrows or swords that pierce the lover's heart.
5. lips - the lips of the beloved intoxicate or heal.¹⁴

Rhetorical Embellishment - The Art of Badi

The poets of the Abbasid period invented the new art of badi, or the rhetorical figure.

1. Jinas - two words having same root letters but with different meanings.
2. tibatq - opposite meanings of two words in the same line.
3. muqahala - a pair of contrasting ideas elaborated and balanced.
4. muwazana - internal rhymes, final pair do not quite rhyme.
5. tadmin - quoting from the Qu'ran.¹⁵

Poetry in Spain was subject to the same conventions which governed the

traditional genres with respect to the above mentioned subject matter, images and rhetorical embellishment (few named here only).

MUSIC AND POETRY IN SPAIN DURING THE ABBASID PERIOD

By the Abbasid Period, music had penetrated to all the Arabian provinces and to all social levels. Songs of the classical writers reached far and wide. At the court of Harun al-Rashid, the art of singing began to stand alone. However, the desire to achieve quick results and the fast road to fame and fortune triggered a certain decadence. Various decadent schools sprang up and pupils were no longer interested the hours of discipline and practice necessary in order to reach perfection.

Rhythm - During the Abbasid Period music was essentially rhythmic. Melodies had been classified by rhythm and there were specific rules which had to be followed in order to determine the classification. At first there were 8 rhythmic modes. The rhythm was closely connected to the meter (or main beat). The subject matter of the words guided the speed of the rhythm, lively for joy, slow for solemn or sorrowful themes.

Expression in the music corresponded to the registers of the voice the poet used, his gestures and declamations. Specific instructions on how to set verses to melody were given. Here are a few examples.

Verses of erotic nature love of country memories of lost youth first love death of a loved one	SAD MELODY
drinking eating happy reunions tavern gaities	JOYOUS MELODY
trees flowers the hunt delightful scenes	TRANQUIL MELODY

The lute was the accompanying instrument and was most preferred because of its sweet, smooth and mysterious vibrations. It permitted various shadings due to the fact that it could be plucked with a plectrum or played. The lute enabled the singer to more easily keep the rhythm accurately.

Form - Form of music for a poem became exceedingly important during the Abbasid Period. The earliest form of a song was the verse or line which consisted of two musical phrases (a b). This later developed into the quatrain in which pairs of vers were set but there could be no repetition of the melodic phrase. Some songs were preceded by a recitative.

A characteristic of folk music which grew out of the quatrain was the repetition of short phrases.

Two Persian forms beloved and adopted by most of the famous Hispano Arabian poets were the dubait consisting of two verses or lines and the rubayi quatrain which form was (a b c d).

Form was brought to an apoge of perfection during the Abbasid Period and was to have a great influence on European music of later centuries. A particular rhyme for example (aaba) in Hispano Arabian poetry was to become the popular form for early Spanish music and has been traced through the Cantigas de Santa Maria by King Alfonso el Sabio to the 17th century Tonadillas and can be found in the Coleccion de Tonadillas by Enrique Granados (1867-1916). The form a a b a was to become the basis of form for later European music as well.

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¹A.R. Nykl,

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(Baltimore: 1946), p. 15. ✓

²ibid, page 16.

³ibid, page 20.

⁴ibid, page 21.

⁵ibid, page 16.

⁶ibid, page 106.

⁷ibid, page 113.

⁸ibid, page 114.

⁹ibid, page 197.

¹⁰ibid, page 201.

¹¹ibid, page 203.

¹²A.J. Arberry,

Arabic Poetry.(Cambridge: University
Press, 1965), p. 17. ✓

¹³ibid, page 18.

¹⁴ibid, page 19.

¹⁵ibid, page 25.
