

Hispano-Arabic Poetry

Hispano-Arabic Poetry / A Student Anthology

by James T. Monroe



GORGAS PRESS
2004

First Gorgias Press Edition, 2004.

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Press LLC, New Jersey. This edition is a facsimile reprint of the
original edition published by the University of California Press,
Los Angeles, London, 1974.

ISBN 1-59333-115-0



GORGias PRESS

46 Orris Ave., Piscataway, NJ 08854 USA

www.gorgiaspress.com

Printed and bound in the United States of America.

for juliane

PREFACE TO THE REPRINT

This work was originally written in La Jolla where, in the then recently constituted Department of Literature at the University of California, San Diego, I held my first teaching position. The book was submitted to the University of California Press in 1968. There, its publication was delayed for several years because of certain difficulties encountered in reproducing the Arabic texts. In 1974, after those difficulties had been overcome, the book finally appeared in print. As a result of this delay, it was not possible to include in it references to certain works that appeared after 1968, even though they would have been relevant to a better understanding of the poems contained in the anthology.

Since 1968, the study of Arabic poetry in general, and of Andalusī poetry in particular, has made tremendous strides forward. New editions of *ḡināns* have appeared and, based on these, meticulous studies of genres, individual poets, and even key poems, have been published. Most importantly, the study of Arabic literature has advanced from a preliminary stage, largely textual and philological in nature, to one in which the principles of literary criticism are finally, and effectively, being applied to Arabic texts. To provide an adequate reflection of all these developments would require an entirely revised and updated second edition of *Hispano-Arabic Poetry* rather than the present and far less ambitious reprint.

Let me offer but one example of how the state of the art has changed: not only has the narrative *urjūza* by Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihi (which constitutes the first poem in this collection) been edited and studied by several scholars, but that author’s entire extant corpus of poetry, previously dispersed throughout a variety of sources, has by now been gathered together and edited, at least thrice. Of these editions, the earliest includes a detailed study, and complete

translation into English, of the author's *Diwān*.¹ Furthermore, to my own article analyzing the *urjūza*, as cited in the Bibliography attached to this work,² one must now add an essential, book-length study of the same poem authored by Francisco Marcos Marín.³

Andalusī strophic poetry has been the subject of a major debate between one group of scholars championed by Federico Corriente,⁴ who argue that this corpus is derived exclusively from the Arabic tradition, and owes little, if anything, to the local, Romance-speaking environment within which it was born and flourished, and another group of scholars (among whom I include myself), who draw their inspiration from the work of the late E. García Gómez, in maintaining that the forms and meters of Andalusī strophic poetry are Hispano-Romance in origin and, therefore, syllabic in scansion.⁵ In a recent book, Pierre Cachia sums up the discussion between these two rival groups, and concludes that “the debate has sometimes been skewed by national pride.”⁶ This seems a rather odd conclusion to reach, considering that Corriente is a Spaniard who argues for an Arabic (*i.e.*, a non-Spanish) solution to the problem, whereas I, who am a non-Spaniard, argue for a Hispano-Romance solution to it. An entirely different factor, professional in nature, and surely more relevant to the discussion than is the concept of national pride, may possibly be found in the circumstance that Corriente, although Spanish, was trained as an Arabist, whereas I, who am non-Spanish, was trained

¹ Dustin Cowell, *The Poetry of Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī* (unpublished University of California doctoral dissertation in Literature, San Diego, 1976); Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī, *Shi‘r Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī*, ed. Muḥammad ibn Tāwīt (Casablanca: Dār al-Maghrib li-l-Ta’līf wa-l-Tarjama wa-l-Nashr, 1978); Ibn ‘Abd Rabbihī, *Diwān*, ed. Muḥammad Riḍwān al-Dāya (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1979).

² See below, p. 397.

³ *Poesía narrativa árabe y épica hispánica: Elementos árabes en los orígenes de la épica hispánica* (Madrid: Gredos, 1971).

⁴ See F. Corriente, *El cancionero hispano-árabe de Aban Quzmān de Córdoba (m. 555/1160) “Iṣābat al-aḡraḍ fī ḍikr al-a’rāḍ”* (Cairo: al-Majlis al-A’lā li-l-Ṭaqāfa: Jumhūrīyat Miṣr al-‘Arabīya, 1995).

⁵ See E. García Gómez, *Todo Ben Quzmān* (Madrid Gredos, 1972), 3 vols.

⁶ *Arabic Literature: An Overview* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2002), p. 96.

as a Hispanist and, therefore, may lay some small claim to familiarity with medieval Hispano-Romance popular poetry.

The central point to be derived from the above remarks is that, when this anthology was originally compiled, I scanned its strophic poems, *i.e.* its *muwashshahāt* and *azjāl*, according to the Hispano-Romance system, following in this, the only convincing method of scansion then available for that corpus, namely that of García Gómez. Moreover, and as of this writing, I have yet to come across any valid and persuasive reasons why I should radically modify my views on this issue.⁷ This is not to imply, of course, that recent editions and translations of Andalusī strophic poetry, many of them published by Corriente himself, have not dramatically improved our understanding of that corpus. Specifically, “Poem 26” in this anthology, which corresponds to “Zajal 90” in the *Diwān* of Ibn Quzmān, has been studied in an article, soon to appear, in which a thoroughly revised translation and interpretation of the poem will be offered. It will supercede the version of that text included in this reprint, not to speak of all those found in such editions as appeared after the publication of *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*.⁸ One possible lesson to be learned from these considerations is that there may be more to poetry than its origin and scansion.

Among the reviews of this book that appeared soon after it was first published, I would like to single out one written by Andras Hamori,⁹ not only to avail myself of this opportunity to thank him publicly, if belatedly, for the extreme care with which he went over the Arabic texts and translations, as a result of which, he was able to identify a number of errors in both, but also to warn any future student who plans to use this work, that Hamori’s corrections and suggestions for improvement should not be ignored.

⁷ On this point, see James T. Monroe, “Elements of Romance Prosody in the Poetry of Ibn Quzmān,” *Perspectives on Arabic Linguistics VI*, ed. Mushira Eid, Vicente Cantarino, and Keith Walters (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), pp. 63-87.

⁸ James T. Monroe and Mark F. Pettigrew, “The Decline of Courtly Patronage and the Appearance of New Genres in Arabic Literature: The Case of the Zajal, the Maqāma, and the Shadow Play,” *Journal of Arabic Literature* 34: 2 (forthcoming).

⁹ *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 99: 2 (1979), pp. 366-373.

In conclusion, it is heartwarming to consider how much has been accomplished and learned in the field of Andalusī literature over the years that have intervened since this book's first appearance, and the present moment. At the same time, an anthology that was compiled thirty-five years ago cannot but be dated in many ways. Nevertheless, I am the constant recipient of inquiries from teachers and students of Arabic literature who ask where copies of *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*, out of print since 1989, may be obtained. I would, therefore, like to thank Gorgias Press for once again making this anthology available, despite its many and obvious shortcomings and defects, and to express my hope that it will continue to be of some use until such a time as a better compilation (for which there is an urgent need) is put together.

JAMES T. MONROE

Berkeley, California
February, 2003

Preface

All too many sources containing Hispano-Arabic poetic texts are out of print or otherwise relatively unobtainable. The purpose of this anthology is to make available in English a convenient introduction to the subject, and to facilitate the handling of the material.

In making my selection, specimens of classical poems such as the monorhymed ode (*qaṣīda*), and the *rajaz* epic rhyming in couplets (*urjūza*) have been included, as well as examples of post-classical strophic forms such as the *mukhammasa* with its five-line strophe, the *muwashshaḥa* with its varied rhymes and colloquial envoi (*kharja*), and the latter's sister form, the entirely colloquial *zajal*.

While most of the poetry included is either panegyric, erotic, floral, or bacchic, a few mystical pieces have been added in order to provide the widest possible sampling of the literary production of Islamic Spain. The poems have all been chosen according to the prestige they enjoyed among medieval Arab critics, as well as for their appeal to the modern reader. In this way it is hoped that they will offer a faithful, yet attractive picture of al-Andalus, as Spain was called by the Arabs.

The Introduction focuses on the main currents of Hispano-Arabic poetry from a historical and literary perspective, adding to this some parallel considerations on the plastic arts. Instead of approaching the subject exclusively from the traditional, line-by-line method of interpretation initiated by the medieval writers of the great commentaries, some attention has been paid to form and its relation to content. It is hoped that the suggestions found in the Introduction will illustrate the gradual development and change that Hispano-Arabic poetry underwent with the passage of time, and that this presentation will allow the poetry to be viewed from a more modern viewpoint by literary critics, so that the usual accusations about its alleged lack of originality, slavery to theme, and resistance to change will give way to a more balanced appreciation based on purely aesthetic grounds.

In the Introduction, the fifty poems included in the Anthology are referred to by means of a boldface Roman numeral enclosed in

parentheses (i.e., “(1)” signifies “poem number one” according to the order followed in the contents).

The Arabic texts are printed on the right-hand page, with the translations facing them on the left, following the style introduced recently by A. J. Arberry (*Arabic Poetry: A Primer for Students* [Cambridge, 1965]), a format that experience has shown to be very convenient in the classroom. The poems are numbered line by line to allow for rapid reference and comparison with the translations. Whenever possible, significant variants have been indicated in the footnotes.

The translations make no pretense at providing the only possible renderings of obscure and ambiguous passages, and the results of previous scholars' research have been taken into account whenever available, although they have not always been adopted. The margin of disagreement in translating Arabic poetry can often be surprisingly wide, hence it is not necessary to explain to those familiar with the problems involved why some of the translations differ at times from earlier efforts. For some of the poems, however, these translations are the first to have been attempted in a Western language.

The bibliography has been arranged in sections corresponding to the main historical periods of Islamic Spain. It is by no means exhaustive, but it attempts to supply a necessary and useful acquaintance with basic works in the field, both in Arabic and in Western languages.

Because summaries of Arabic prosody, poetics, thematics, and rhetorical figures are readily available in several manuals, the nature of Arabic poetry per se is not discussed in the Introduction, and knowledge of it is assumed. For prosody the student should consult W. Wright (*A Grammar of the Arabic Language* [3d ed.; Cambridge, 1951], Part IV, Prosody), where the subject is treated exhaustively. The main rhetorical figures and conventional themes used by Arab poets are listed by Arberry (*op. cit.*, Introduction, pp. 18–26). A treatise on Arabic literary criticism has been translated into English by G. E. von Grunebaum (*A Tenth-Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism: Translation and Annotation of the Sections on Poetry of al-Baḡillānī's Iʿjāz al-Qurʿān* [Chicago, 1950]), while an adequate coverage of Arabic poetics is that of Amjad Trabulsi (*La critique poétique des arabes jusqu'au V^e siècle de l'hégire (XI^e siècle de J. C.)* [Damascus, 1956]).

Apart from the usual dictionaries used in reading Arabic poetry, R. Dozy's *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes* (Leiden, 1881;

reprint, Leiden and Paris, 1967) is absolutely necessary for any serious philological study of Spanish Arabic texts, since it records words, meanings, and usages not commonly found in dictionaries based on Eastern sources.

The biographies of most of the poets included have been gathered together by A. R. Nykl (*Hispano-Arabic Poetry and Its Relations with the Old Provençal Troubadours* [Baltimore, 1946]), and the thematics of Hispano-Arabic poetry have been studied extensively by Henri Pérès (*La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI^e siècle* [Paris, 1937]).

JAMES T. MONROE

La Jolla, California
June 1968

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Biographical Notes

IBN ʿABD RABBIHI, Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad Abū ʿUmar, was born in Córdoba in 268/860. A freedman and court poet of the Umayyads, he was the author of *Kitāb al-ʿIqd al-farid*. He died in 328/940.

Nykl, pp. 35–42; Pérès, pp. 45, 166 ff.; Vernet, p. 103.

IBN HĀNĪ al-Andalusī, Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad, was born at an uncertain date, either near Mahdiyya in Tunis, in Elvira, or in Córdoba, *ca.* 320–326/932–937. Having been accused of heresy and of adhering to Greek philosophical ideas, he left al-Andalus and joined the Fatimid court of al-Muʿizz. He died mysteriously at Barqa in 362/973.

Nykl, pp. 28–30; Pérès, pp. 43, 46 ff.; Vernet, pp. 87–88, 175.

IBN DARRĀJ AL-QAṢṬALLĪ, Abū ʿUmar Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAṣī ibn Aḥmad ibn Sulaimān, was a Berber born in 347/958 either in Cazalla in the Algarve, or in Cazalilla near Jaén. He panegyricized al-Manṣūr and later traveled from court to court under the Mulūk at-Ṭawāʾif until he finally settled in Saragossa. He died in 421/1030.

Nykl, pp. 56–58; Pérès, pp. 177 ff.; Vernet, pp. 112–114.

ASH-SHARĪF AṬ-ṬALĪQ, Marwān ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān ibn Marwān ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān an-Nāṣir Abū ʿAbd al-Mālik, was an Umayyad prince born *ca.* 350/961. He was imprisoned and later freed by al-Manṣūr, and excelled in love poetry. He died *ca.* 400/1009.

Nykl, pp. 61–64; Pérès, p. 57; Vernet, p. 89.

IBN SHUHAID, Abū ʿĀmir Aḥmad ibn Abī Marwān ʿAbd al-Malik al-Ashjaʿī, was a poet of aristocratic origin and a close friend of Ibn Ḥazm. He was born near Córdoba in 383/992 and composed the *Risālat at-Tawābiʿ wa z-zawābiʿ*. He died in 426/1035.

Nykl, pp. 47–48; Pérès, pp. 34, 296 ff.; Vernet, pp. 114–115.

IBN ḤAZM al-Andalusī, Abū Muḥammad ʿAlī, was a distinguished philosopher, Zāhirite jurist, poet, and author of the *Ṭauq al-ḥamāma*. He was born in Córdoba in 383/994, became unsuccessfully involved

in politics, and after suffering a life of persecution because of his ideas, he died in Montijo (Huelva) in 456/1064.

Nykl, pp. 73–103; Pérès, pp. 301–302, 414–415 ff.; Vernet, pp. 112–116.

IBN ZAIDŪN, Abū l-Walīd Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Aḥmad ibn Ghālib al-Makhzūmī, was born in Córdoba in 394/1003 and died in Seville in 463/1071. He was the purest Neoclassical poet of al-Andalus and became famous for his love affair with the Umayyad princess Wallāda.

Nykl, pp. 106–121; Pérès, pp. 412 ff.; Vernet, pp. 116–117.

IBN ʿAMMĀR, Abu Bakr, was born near Silves in 422/1031 and became an intimate companion of al-Muʿtamid of Seville who eventually quarreled with him and killed him in 476/1083–1084.

Nykl, pp. 154–163; Pérès, pp. 189–190 ff.; Vernet, pp. 118–119.

AL-MUʿTAMID ʿalā l-lāh ibn ʿAbbād, Abū l-Qāsim Muḥammad, was the most outstanding poet of the second half of the eleventh century. He was born at Beja in 432/1040, became king of Seville, was deposed by the Almoravids and died in Morocco in 488/1095.

Nykl, pp. 134–154; Pérès, pp. 11, 222 ff.; Vernet, pp. 86, 117–119.

IBN ḤAMDĪS, ʿAbd al-Jabbār ibn Abī Bakr ibn Muḥammad al-Azdī, aṣ-Ṣiqillī, was born at Syracuse in 447/1058. After the Norman conquest of Sicily he joined al-Muʿtamid's Sevillian court. With the coming of the Almoravids he fled to Mahdiyya and died in Bougie in 527/1132.

Nykl, pp. 168–170; Pérès, pp. 212, 289–290 ff.; Vernet, p. 120.

ABŪ IṢḤĀQ al-Ilbīrī, Ibrahīm ibn Masʿūd ibn Saʿīd at-Tujībī, was a Granadan *faqīh* who aroused the Berbers to revolt against the Jews of Granada. He has left a *Diwān* of ascetic poems. His death occurred in 459/1067.

Nykl, pp. 197–200; Pérès, pp. 108, 444–445 ff.; Vernet, pp. 120–121.

IBN AL-LABBĀNA, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn ʿIsā ad-Dānī, was born in Denia at an unknown date. He became a court poet of al-Muʿtamid, and died in Majorca in 507/1113.

Nykl, pp. 163–165; Pérès, pp. 187 ff.; Vernet, p. 120.

IBN ʿUBĀDA AL-QAZZĀZ, Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad, was a distinguished *muwashshaḥa* poet at the court of al-Muʿtaṣim of Almería.

Nykl, p. 194; Pérès, p. 47.

IBN ARFAʿ RAʿSUH, Abū Bakr Muḥammad, was a *muwashshaḥa* poet at the court of Maʾmūn of Toledo. His life is not well known.

Nykl, pp. 201–202.

IBN ʿABDŪN, Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Majīd, was born at Evora, and served as a secretary under al-Mutawakkil of Badajoz. After the latter's fall he died in his hometown in 529/1134.

Nykl, pp. 175–179; Pérès, pp. 226–227 ff.; Vernet, p. 120.

IBN KHAFĀJA, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm ibn Abī l-Faṭḥ ibn ʿAbdillāh, was born at Alcira, near Valencia in 450/1058. He remained in his hometown all his life and became famous for his outstanding nature poetry. He died in 533/1139.

Nykl, pp. 227–231; Pérès, pp. 159–160 ff.; Vernet, p. 121.

IBN AZ-ZAQQAQ, ʿAlī ibn ʿAṭīyya Abū l-Ḥasan al-Bulughghīnī al-Mursī, was a nephew of Ibn Khafāja who, like his uncle, cultivated nature poetry. He was born *ca.* 489/1096 and died in 528/1134.

Nykl, pp. 231–233; Pérès, pp. 154 ff.; Vernet, p. 121.

AL-AʿMĀ AT-TUṬĪLĪ, Abū l-ʿAbbās (or Abū Jaʿfar) Aḥmad ibn ʿAbdillāh ibn Huraira al-ʿAbsī, “the blind poet of Tudela,” was born in that city, near Saragossa, and lived in Murcia and Seville. He died in 519/1126.

Nykl, pp. 254–256; Pérès, pp. 56, 334 ff.; Vernet, p. 122.

IBN BAQĪ, Abū Bakr Yaḥya ibn Muḥammad ibn ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān al-Qaisī al-Qurṭubī, was a famous *muwashshaḥa* poet either from Córdoba or from Toledo, although descended from a family that came from Guadix, where he died in 540/1145 or 545/1150.

Nykl, pp. 241–244; Pérès, pp. 202, 328 ff.

IBN QUZMĀN, Abū Bakr ibn ʿAbd al-Malik, was from Córdoba, and the greatest of the Andalusian *zajal* poets. He was born *ca.* 470–472/1078–1080, and died in his native city in 555/1160.

Nykl, pp. 266–301; Pérès, pp. 296, 397; Vernet, pp. 122–123.

AL-ABYAD, Abū Bakr ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Anṣārī al-Ishbīlī. A famous *muwashshaḥa* poet, he was born in Alhendín near Granada, and studied in Seville and Córdoba. He became famous for his satirical

poetry and satirized the Almoravid governor of Córdoba az-Zubair, who had him crucified after 525/1130.

Nykl, pp. 245–247; Pérès, p. 32.

IBN BĀJJA, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Yaḥya as-Saraqusṭī, Ibn aṣ-Ṣā'igh, was born in Saragossa toward the end of the eleventh century and became vizier to the Almoravid governor Ibn Tifalwīt. After the fall of Saragossa to the Christians he fled to Seville, Játiva, and finally to Fez where he died poisoned in 533/1138.

Nykl, pp. 251–254; Pérès, pp. 61, 379.

IBN ZUHR, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn Abī Marwān 'Abd al-Malik ibn Abī 'Alā', called *al-ḥafīd*, "the grandson," was born near Seville in 507/1113 and became a distinguished physician, serving at the Almohad court of Ya'qūb ibn Yūsuf al-Manṣūr in Marrakesh. He was one of the last representatives of *muwashshaḥa* poetry in its pure form, before it was reabsorbed into the classical tradition. He died poisoned in 595/1198.

Nykl, pp. 248–251; Pérès, p. 29.

AR-RUṢĀFĪ, Abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn Ghālib ar-Raffā al-Andalusī, was a distinguished nature poet from La Ruzafa de Valencia who died in Málaga in 572/1177.

Nykl, pp. 326–377; Pérès, pp. 291–292; Vernet, p. 122.

ḤĀTIM IBN SA'ĪD. Classified by Ibn Khaldūn in the *Muqaddimah* as an Almohad *muwashshaḥa* poet, his biographical data have not been compiled.

IBN SAHL, Abū Ishāq Ibrāhīm al-Isrā'īlī al-Ishbīlī, was a converted Jew who achieved fame in Seville for his outstanding love lyrics. He drowned in the Guadalquivir in 648/1251.

Nykl, pp. 344–345; Pérès, p. 141; Vernet, p. 122.

SHUSHTARĪ, Abū l-Ḥasan 'Alī ibn 'Abdillāh an-Numairī al-Fāsī, was born at Shushtar near Guadix *ca.* 608/1212 and became a mystic, who traveled to Morocco and then to the East, where he became friendly with Suhrawardī. He was buried in Damietta in 668/1269.

Nykl, pp. 352–353; Vernet, p. 141.

IBN AL-'ARABĪ, Muḥyī d-Dīn, Abū Bakr Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn Muḥammad al-Ḥātimī, was born in Murcia in 560/1165. He studied at Córdoba and Seville, went to Mecca, and settled in Damascus

where he died in 630/1240, having earned his reputation as one of the greatest mystics in Islam.

Nykl, pp. 351–352; Pérès, p. 127; Vernet, pp. 140–141.

ḤĀZIM AL-QARTĀJANNĪ, Abū l-Ḥasan Ḥāzim ibn Muḥammad ibn Ḥasan al-Anṣārī, was born in Cartagena in 608/1211. After the conquest of that city by the Christians he fled to Tunis where he served at the Ḥafṣid court and died in 684/1285.

Nykl, pp. 334–335; Vernet, p. 122.

AR-RUNDĪ, Ṣāliḥ Abū l-Baqā' ash-Sharīf, was a poet from Ronda whose life is not well known, but who died in 683/1285.

Nykl, pp. 337–339; Vernet, pp. 143–144.

IBN AL-KHAṬĪB, Lisān ad-Dīn Abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad ibn 'Abdillāh ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Abdillāh ibn Sa'īd ibn 'Alī ibn Aḥmad as-Salmānī, was born in Loja in 713/1313 and became a vizier under Yūsuf I of Granada. He continued in this post under Muḥammad V. He was a distinguished historian, was accused of heresy by his enemies, and fled to Tlemcen and Fez where he was assassinated in 776/1374.

Nykl, pp. 363–366; Pérès, pp. 11, 74 ff.; Vernet, pp. 133–135, 145–149.

IBN ZAMRAK, Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf ibn Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad ibn Muḥammad ibn Yūsuf aṣ-Ṣuraihī, Abū 'Abdillāh, was born in the Albaicín of Granada in 539/1333 and became a pupil of Ibn al-Khaṭīb as well as official court panegyrist whose poems are engraved on the walls of the Alhambra. After arranging his mentor's murder, he was himself assassinated by Muḥammad V's hired men in 795/1393.

Nykl, pp. 366–369; Pérès, p. 238; Vernet, pp. 144, 148.

YŪSUF III, Abū 'Abdillāh ibn al-Aḥmar, reigned over Granada from 810/1408 to 819/1417 when he died. He lost Antequera to the Christians but otherwise enjoyed a peaceful reign.

Vernet, p. 145.

Abbreviations

- Dozy = R. Dozy, *Supplément aux dictionnaires arabes*. Leiden, 1881.
Reprinted Leiden and Paris, 1967.
- EI*¹ = *Encyclopaedia of Islam*.
- EI*² = *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. New edition. (In progress.)
- Nykl = A. R. Nykl, *Hispano-Arabic Poetry*. Baltimore, 1946.
- Pérès = H. Pérès, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI^e siècle*. Paris, 1937.
- Vernet = J. Vernet, *Literatura árabe*. Barcelona, 1968.

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Introduction

History of Hispano-Arabic Poetry from the Islamic Conquest of Hispania to the Caliphate (A.D. 711–1009)

A crucial factor in the social and economic life of the late Roman Empire was the overtaxation of cities. As a result of it the wealthy fled to their villas and estates in the country and entrenched themselves to withstand the ever-increasing demands of the tax collector. Soon the preponderance of a local, agrarian economy over the old imperial and urban economy began to develop. Commerce was paralyzed with the decay of urban life and the symptoms of a quasi-tribal society began to perturb the smooth functioning of the centralized administrative machine. The inherent weakness of the Visigothic monarchy in the former Roman province of Hispania derived from its failure to accept the change and to adapt the older institutions to the new conditions that had been created.

By the time of the Islamic invasion (A.D. 711) Visigothic rule in Hispania had reached a stage of total exhaustion. It was neither strong enough to uphold the centralized monarchic institutions, nor could it offer a new spiritual ideal around which to rally public sentiment. This internal tension which was sapping the vigor of Hispania by the early eighth century was in turn to determine key aspects of Islamic rule.

The Arab-led invasion of Hispania was the result not of a planned effort, but of a spiritual thrust that had begun as a military adventure with no long-range goal in sight. As if by chance it succeeded, while its very lack of planning made it all the more adaptable to local conditions. After the sudden conquest was over, little had really changed. The monarchy was gone, and since the new seat of authority was in faraway Damascus the tribal society had in a sense won a battle against centralism. The conquering Arabs stayed on and married into the native nobility which had called upon them for help in the first place. These lucrative marriages plus the division of lands by right of conquest transformed the Arabs into an agrarian-based tribal aristocracy, so that the early years of peninsular Islam

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were filled with new anarchy until the independent Emirate founded by ʿAbd ar-Rahmān I (756–788) reintroduced the principle of centralism. Parallel to this there was the slow yet steady upsurge of urban life under the new regime, for medieval Islam, contrary to contemporary Western Europe, evolved into an urban civilization in which international trade revived. Merchants with their caravans, not feudal barons, were destined to become the men of action of a new order.

Hence the early history of Islam in Hispania, now called al-Andalus, was that of the gradual and repeated attempts to assert the authority of the centralizing principle, represented by the Islamized cities, over the unruly Arabized country. The cities became Islamized because of the many benefits that accrued from conversion and also because intermarriages between conquerors and conquered were performed under laws favorable to Islam, so that inevitably the Christians tended to become absorbed. The Arabs remained in the countryside, but the new converts entered the administration in the cities and fought in the army. They learned Arabic to read their new scriptures and became devout Muslims. The rapid Islamization of the converts produced the despairing reaction of those Mozarabs Eulogius and Alvarus in ninth-century Córdoba,¹ but by the tenth century not only had the Christian minority become insignificant, but also Arabism had itself been superseded by Islamism within the cities, and with it the power of the converts increased and even surpassed that of the landed Arab nobility. The new Islamic universalism found political expression in the founding of the Caliphate of Córdoba in 929. Artistically, it was expressed by a new, monumental style in architecture which was no longer intended to satisfy the needs of the agrarian world, but which by reason of its luxury and ostentation

¹ In A.D. 854 Alvarus described the situation predominant among Mozarabs as follows: "Our Christian young men, with their elegant airs and fluent speech, are showy in their dress and carriage, and are famed for the learning of the gentiles; intoxicated with Arab eloquence they greedily handle, eagerly devour and zealously discuss the books of the Chaldeans [i.e., Muhammadans], and make them known by praising them with every flourish of rhetoric, knowing nothing of the beauty of the Church's literature, and looking down with contempt on the streams of the Church that flow forth from Paradise; alas! the Christians are so ignorant of their own law, the Latins pay so little attention to their own language, that in the whole Christian flock there is hardly one man in a thousand who can write a letter to inquire after a friend's health intelligibly, while you may find a countless rabble of all kinds of them who can learnedly roll out the grandiloquent periods of the Chaldean tongue. They can even make poems, every line ending with the same letter, which display high flights of beauty and more skill in handling meter than the gentiles themselves possess" (Alvarus, *Indiculus Luminosus*, ¶ 35; quoted from W. Montgomery Watt, *A History of Islamic Spain* [Edinburgh, 1965], p. 56).

presented the external symbols of greatness to the new urban society.

The Great Mosque of Córdoba, the chief monument of that society, was begun by ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān I in the eighth century, then expanded in the ninth by ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān II (822–852). During the Caliphate al-Ḥakam II once again enlarged it between the years 961 and 968. His additions and improvements, as befitted the mature splendor of the Caliphal age, brought greater richness of decoration to the older structure. In the central nave he opened a large lighted dome to illuminate the interior, and replaced the earlier horseshoe arches with lobed ones, as well as adding the splendid mihrab made with mosaics presented to him by the Byzantine emperor. The new additions to the Mosque were carefully calculated to stir the emotion of the faithful as they entered it, for walking along the central nave in semidarkness toward the mysteriously illuminated and richly decorated chapel the faithful could catch a glimpse of the magnificent mihrab beyond and be moved to transports of religious feeling.

The last enlargement of the Mosque was made under the dictatorship of al-Manṣūr (976–1009) who merely copied the style introduced by al-Ḥakam II. Here size and mass replaced originality or quality; no longer was there a true creative force at work, and artistically as also politically the dictatorship was living off the ideals of the past.²

Hispano-Arabic poetry closely follows the social, political, and artistic development of al-Andalus. Its very name, *Hispano-Arabic* poetry is, however, deserving of a moment's attention. Was it Hispanic primarily, that is, native, or was it Arabic? To what extent is it either or both of these?

The thesis of Henri Pérès, to some extent deriving from and also espoused by some modern Spanish scholars, is that the poetry of al-Andalus was the native production of the Iberian race that had once expressed itself in Latin, was now doing so in Arabic, and would later write in Spanish. Furthermore, according to this thesis, a strong native tradition with its own peculiar features is traceable through the many cultural phases of the poetry of the Iberian Peninsula no matter what language it happens to be written in.³

This thesis contradicts the one generally in vogue among Arab

² M. Gómez Moreno, *El arte español hasta los almohades: Arte mozárabe*, *Ars Hispaniae*, III (Madrid, 1951), 1–171.

³ E. García Gómez, *Poesía áraboandaluza: breve síntesis histórica* (Madrid, 1952), pp. 17–53; H. Pérès, *La poésie andalouse en arabe classique au XI^e siècle* (Paris, 1937).

critics who claim that Hispano-Arabic poetry is a mere transplanted version of Eastern Arabic poetry, sharing a common language and literary heritage with Arabic poetry, from which it originated. Jaudat ar-Rikābī has summed up the nature of the Andalusian poet thus: "Indeed, he is certainly an Andalusian, and yet upon reading his works and especially his poetry, we cannot deny his Arabic roots and Eastern qualities, for this Andalusian had remained Eastern in his thought, Eastern in his manner of expression . . . we cannot affirm with Henri Pérès that the Muslim Andalusian represented a racial prolongation of the original peoples who inhabited the peninsula of al-Andalus. We cannot truly agree with the Orientalist in the likes of such a peremptory judgment, nor do the facts themselves agree with what he claims."⁴

As a variation to these two antagonistic theories there is that of E. Lévi-Provençal who, basing his arguments on the bilingualism common among medieval Andalusians, suggests that the latter, who often spoke Romance at home and Arabic in public, composed poetry in a language essentially foreign to them which as a result remained awkward and artificial like the learned imitations of Latin verse written by Renaissance scholars.⁵

No doubt each of these three theories has a grain of truth in it, yet they are all inadequate if applied exclusively of one another. It cannot be questioned that Hispano-Arabic poetry, being in Arabic, is essentially Arab and Eastern in its origin and literary tradition. It is an important branch of Arabic, not Spanish literature. There is certainly much artificiality in it, particularly in the early poetry of the Caliphal period, precisely the age best known to its finest historian, Lévi-Provençal, but the artificiality is no more than that encountered in other countries where bilingualism existed after the Arab conquest, so that this trait is not peculiar to al-Andalus. It is therefore questionable whether artificiality was the result of bilingualism or of the fact that Eastern poetic styles were not at first entirely mastered, during an age when poetry was still in an experimental, imitative stage that would not reach maturity until the eleventh century. Last of all, there is no doubt that native, Romance elements have appeared in the strophic forms of Andalusian poetry, namely the *muwashshaḥa* and the *zajal*, although perhaps it could be suggested that there is some danger in explaining the organic unit that is a poem through

⁴ Jaudat ar-Rikābī, *Fī l-adab al-andalusī* (Cairo, 1960), p. 46.

⁵ E. Lévi-Provençal, *La civilisation arabe en Espagne, vue générale* (Cairo, 1938).

its sources. The way in which these elements of native origin were integrated into compositions that in essence were Arabic is aesthetically as important as the elements themselves, if not more so. Thus the true nature of Hispano-Arabic poetry is a complex matter; it depends upon the form, the period, and the aesthetic use made of its constituent elements.

According to the thirteenth-century scholar Tifāshī, "in ancient times the songs of the people of al-Andalus were either in the style of the Christians or in the style of the Arab camel drivers."⁶ Since none of the earliest and only fragments of the earlier poetry have survived, this is a broad yet vague attestation to the separate but equal coexistence of two different poetic traditions. By the ninth century the Modernist and Neoclassical schools were fiercely competing in Baghdad which had reached a stage of intense cultural activity in its development, unequaled anywhere else in the Islamic world. In al-Andalus there were no first-rate poets at the time, for poetry was in a slow process of formation as a new social order arose out of the tribal jungle. Ancient poetry, used to express warlike sentiments, was adopted to defend each local faction. ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān II surrounded himself in Córdoba with a group of poets who sought to imitate the East. Modernism had been brought from the court of Hārūn ar-Rashīd by Ziryāb, the Persian singer who became an *arbiter elegantiarum* in the provincial capital of al-Andalus. He introduced innovations in music, poetry, fashions, manners, and even in the culinary art (several of his recipes are extant).⁷ ʿAbbās ibn Nāṣiḥ (d. 844) imitated the Modernist style of Abū Nuwās, while Muʾmin ibn Saʿīd (d. 880) or ʿUthmān ibn al-Muthannā adopted the Neoclassicism of Abū Tammām. Yet none of this poetry was exceptional to judge from what little has survived. Saʿīd ibn Jūdī (d. 897) wrote love lyrics, while al-Ghazzāl ibn Yaḥya (d. 864) was more famous for his handsome features and adventures with a Byzantine princess than for his poetry. He and Tammām ibn ʿAlqama (d. 896) introduced the historical *urjūza*, while Muqaddam ibn Muʿāfā al-Qabrī adapted the *musammaʿ* of Abū Nuwās to native strophic forms and invented the *muwashshaḥa*. Ibn Firnās (d. 887) constructed a flying machine and was hurt while jumping off a mountain near Córdoba with it. His poetic flights were no more successful than his aerial one. In this way Córdoba was

⁶ E. García Gómez, "La lyrique hispano-arabe et l'apparition de la lyrique romane," *Arabica*, V (1958), 113.

⁷ A. Huici Miranda, *Traducción española de un manuscrito anónimo del siglo XIII sobre la cocina hispano-magribí* (Madrid, 1966).

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introduced to the polite arts and the Muslims of the metropolis began to elaborate a cultural ideal to oppose to the vague but disruptive aspirations of tribalism. This led to the revolt of the landed aristocracy. The battle was lost by the latter and won for the principle of Cordovan centralism, while the equilibrium of forces that restored order under ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān III (912–961) was opposed to the old Arab nobility as much as it was to the non-Arab nobility, and secured the triumph of Islamism within the community of the faithful.⁸

From the tenth century on, poetry in the East was reduced to a few brilliant but isolated names as political decline set in. In the West, however, the prosperous Caliphate was now minting gold coins for the first time since immediately after the conquest. In this atmosphere culture was favored and primary figures began to appear in the literary sphere.

Mutanabbī had been known since the time of ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān III. Throughout the century cultural embassies from Baghdad continued to appear: Abū ʿAlī al-Qālī arrived in 941, Saʿīd al-Bagh-dādī in 990, and court poets such as Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi (d. 939), Ibn Hānī of Elvira (d. 972), Ibn Faraj of Jaén (976), Muṣḥafī (d. 982), ash-Sharīf aṭ-Ṭaliq (d. 1009), Yūsuf ibn Hārūn ar-Ramādī (d. 1022), Ibn Darrāj al-Qaṣṭallī (d. 1030) brought Andalusian poetry to a new level of sophistication. Poets were experimenting with every theme, from the *nauriyya* or floral poem to the historical *urjūza* and the Neoclassical *qaṣīda*. There is a parallelism in politics, social evolution, the plastic arts, and literature under the Caliphate. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbihi was the turning point from the earlier provincialism to the new sophistication. Surviving from an earlier age his poetry is still plainer and less adorned. He embodies the aesthetics of the cultured yet provincial Emirate that is beginning to experiment with Neoclassical verse. He toys with *badīʿ*, the rhetorical ornamentation of the new style, yet he uses it sparingly. In his poetry there is an Andalusian nationalism of sentiment yet at the same time a servile imitation of the East: his *urjūza* (I)⁹ is an emulation of the earlier one by the Abbasid Caliph Ibn al-Muʿtazz, yet it is about a local subject. Like the two earlier *urjūzas* written by al-Ghazzāl and Ibn ʿAlqama the poem is a novelty in Andalusian literature; it is clearly

⁸ Vernet, pp. 88–89; E. García Gómez, *Poemas áraboandaluces* (Madrid, 1940), pp. 25–27.

⁹ For the sake of convenience, the poems included in the anthology are designated by means of boldface numerals within parentheses according to the order followed in the anthology.

epic in nature, not panegyric, since the poet does not merely praise his patron directly, but rather he narrates the latter's exploits in such a way that the admiration for the hero is elicited indirectly, from the listener's interpretation of the action.

In 1915 Julián Ribera claimed that Andalusian *urjūza* poetry derived from a hypothetical Mozarabic epic, now lost, and that in turn it exerted an influence on Spanish and French epic which it precedes in time.¹⁰ It is doubtful whether a Mozarabic epic tradition ever existed, given the nonmilitary role imposed upon these people by their new Arab masters. Furthermore Ribera did not know this particular poem. Had he done so he would have recognized its Eastern derivation. It is true, however, that several of its themes, its treatment, general historicity, and even literary techniques are often remarkably similar to those found in Romance epic, and it is to be hoped that further studies will clarify the problem more fully.¹¹

Ibn Hānī³ was brought up in al-Andalus yet banished from Seville for his scandalous behavior which made him suspect of heretical views. He escaped to the Fatimid court in Tunisia and when the latter moved to Egypt he returned to the Maghreb for his family and was killed mysteriously, some claim by Umayyad agents, in 973 at Barqa. Most of his poems are panegyrics to al-Mu'izz (935-975) the fourth Fatimid Caliph. Ibn Hānī³ imitated the Neo-classical style of Abū Tammām and in his panegyrics he fully adopts *badī'*, going in it one step farther than Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi. Some Arab critics considered him to be the Mutanabbī of the West, and indeed, al-Mu'izz had hoped that his poems would outdo Mutanabbī and give lasting glory to his own Shi'ite cause. Although remarkable, the Neoclassical technique has still not been fully mastered in the poetry of Ibn Hānī³ for his word choice is at times harsh and he sometimes lapses from true poetic height. Hence al-Ma'arrī said of him that he was "like a mill grinding corn, so little sense is there in his verse."¹²

At this time in al-Andalus the best poetry that has survived was official. The poets declaimed *qaṣīdas* in which the party line dictated to them by the state chancery was put to verse. Thus the

¹⁰ J. Ribera y Tarragó, *Huellas, que aparecen en los primitivos historiadores musulmanes de la península, de una poesía épica romanceada que debió florecer en Andalucía en los siglos IX y X: Discurso leído ante la Real Academia de la Historia* (Madrid, 1915).

¹¹ See James T. Monroe, "The Historical Urjūza of Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, A Tenth-Century Hispano-Arabic Epic Poem," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, XCI (1971), pp. 67-95.

¹² *E.I.*¹, s.v. "Ibn Hānī³."

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court poets were in a sense state functionaries whose duty it was to issue bulletins of foreign policy and their art, limited as it was by these restrictions, although it handles language with superior skill, remains somewhat uninspiring. The Caliphal dignity had brought great pomp to state ceremonies, and to maintain this pomp the Caliph kept aloof from mingling with poets on too free a level. But toward the end of the century, under the dictatorship of al-Manṣūr, who was not of royal blood and could therefore mingle more intimately with his courtiers, economic prosperity favored the emergence of a new, urban poetry which was not quite so rigidly bound to expressing the official point of view. Of these new poets Ibn Darrāj al-Qaṣṭallī and ash-Sharīf aṭ-Ṭalīq were among the most outstanding.

Ibn Darrāj (d. 1030) also followed the Neoclassical school. He was possibly from the town of Cazalla either in Jaén or in the Algarve, of Berber ancestry, and a newcomer to Córdoba who became a pensioned court poet in 992. He stayed on in his position under al-Muẓaffar but his life and fortunes were affected by the civil disturbances after 1009 so that he fled first to Valencia and then to Saragossa.¹³ In his poetry the *badī'* style has finally reached maturity, but the official tone of his panegyrical poetry makes the result seem cold and artificial to the modern taste. Thus his technical skill is not matched by the content. There are in his poetry, however, faint glimmerings of a more sincere emotion to be cultivated by later poets, as when in several of his poems he substitutes the conventionalized *nasīb* with an unusual personal touch: his sorrow at parting from his wife and child. Ibn Ḥazm considered him to be the equal of the best Eastern poets, and in fact he is comparable in some ways with Mutanabbi, since he wrote several war poems narrating the campaigns of Clunia, San Esteban de Gormaz, León, Santiago de Compostela, and Cervera. Furthermore he cultivated floral poetry, the *nauriyyāt*, which had become increasingly popular in al-Manṣūr's court.¹⁴

The reasons for the development of floral poetry at this time must be sought in the rise of urban civilization. As the agrarian life of the countryside was superseded by Cordovan hegemony it was not surprising that the city dwellers should have rediscovered nature in much the same way that modern man goes to the countryside on weekends to avoid the maddening rush of city life. Furthermore,

¹³ Vernet, pp. 113–114.

¹⁴ See James T. Monroe, *Risālat al-Tawābi' wa z-zawābi': The Treatise of Familiar Spirits and Demons by Abū 'Āmir ibn Shuhaid al-Ashja'i, al Andalusī*, University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies, XV (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1971), 1–14.

under al-Manṣūr's dictatorship the ruling Umayyad aristocracy of Córdoba had been removed from positions of power and political influence; therefore it was natural for them to seek relief from their frustrated political ambitions by turning to nature and converting it into a theme of poetry. In an analogous way eighteenth-century European aristocrats sported in a pastoral setting during the declining years of their political influence. Madīnat az-Zahrā', the Umayyad royal residence in the country, in more ways than one became an early version of Versailles.

This is particularly relevant to the poetry of ash-Sharīf aṭ-Ṭalīq, the Umayyad prince who was imprisoned by al-Manṣūr for murdering his own father because of their rivalry over a slave girl. He is the only writer of love poetry from this period whose work has survived, if only in fragments. According to Ibn Ḥazm, "for his poetic skill and beautiful metaphors he was among the Andalusian Umayyads like Ibn al-Mu'tazz [d. 908] among the Abbasids." The same author calls him "the best Andalusian poet of his time" and adds that "the greater part of his love poems are dedicated to blond women."¹⁵ Being a prince, he did not need to cultivate the panegyric for a living. Although his Neoclassical technique is far more advanced than that of previous poets, it is still not entirely mature. The themes taken from the ancients and the moderns are not yet properly digested, and the allusions appear somewhat bookish, while the formal perfection he achieves does not quite harmonize with the emotion expressed, as it will in the eleventh-century poet Ibn Zaidūn whom he influenced greatly. He uses *badī'* to embellish each line, and to create a charming series of images. His masterpiece, the *qaṣīda* rhymed in *qāf* (= q) (4) contains four parts: *ghazal*, *khamriyya*, *nauriyya*, and *fakhr*. The *ghazal* presents the stock themes of Modernism crowded together in exciting new relationships that are Neoclassical in treatment. The *khamriyya* has a likewise complex use of themes quoted partly from the Eastern poet Ibn ar-Rūmī. The *nauriyya* is the forerunner of all later floral poetry in al-Andalus, particularly that of Ibn Khafāja in the twelfth century. The *fakhr* continues an embroidery on the traditional themes, so that the last line could be taken as a statement of the poet's whole Neoclassical aesthetics: "It is I who clothe in splendor the worn-out portion of their illustrious lineage with the ornaments of my resplendent poetry." Thus the Umayyad dynasty, worn out politically, turned

¹⁵ Ibn Ḥazm, *The Dove's Neck Ring*, quoted from E. García Gómez, "El Príncipe Amnistiado y su Diwān," *Cinco poetas musulmanes* (Madrid, 1945), pp. 67-93.

at last to the creative medium of poetry. The gradual development of the *badi'* style from its first faltering and sparse usage in Ibn 'Abd Rabbihi, through its still imperfect application in Ibn Hānī, to its formal mastery by Ibn Darrāj and aṭ-Ṭaliq closely parallels the political rise of the Caliphate under 'Abd ar-Raḥmān III, its splendor under al-Ḥakam II, and prolongation under the 'Āmirid dictatorship. In art the highly ornate additions to the Mosque of Córdoba, the building of the country residences Madīnat az-Zahrā' and Madīnat az-Zāhira and the palace of al-'Āmiriyya keep apace with the refinement, sense of balance, and good taste that harmoniously absorbed the literary influences proceeding from Baghdad in this as yet formative period.

Córdoba in Transition (1009–1031)

The collapse of the Caliphate and the political fragmentation under the Mulūk aṭ-Ṭawā'if profoundly altered the cultural spectrum of al-Andalus. The reasons for the sudden change are obscure. One of the many contributing factors was the unprecedented, macrocephalous growth of Córdoba, largely financed by an ever-increasing burden of taxation levied from the outlying provinces. By the age of al-Manṣūr the huge revenues needed to maintain a standing army of mercenaries and a vast bureaucracy had led to increasing discontent, and the provinces eagerly seized the first chance to throw off the Cordovan yoke. Empire had brought untold wealth to the metropolis as well as a renaissance of urban civilization and its amenities. The political division that followed distributed the benefits of that civilization more evenly throughout the major cities of the land. Whereas before poets had flocked to Córdoba, they would now be welcomed in almost every petty capital of the former empire. Localism had once again overcome the principle of centralism, although with a difference, for the earlier localism of the eighth and ninth centuries had been essentially agrarian and tribal in nature, whereas the present localism was basically urban. The petty kingdoms have thus aptly been characterized as "turbaned Italian republics" by a distinguished specialist.¹⁶ The cause of Arabism as a meaningful social force had declined along with tribalism, while the Caliphate had succeeded in cementing the different ethnic groups into a new, Islamic community under the aegis of Eastern culture. At this moment Ibn Gharsīya, a Muslim of Basque ancestry,

¹⁶ García Gómez, *Poemas*, p. 32.

was allowed to go unpunished for writing a Shu'ūbite treatise attacking the Arabs. This indicates that the cause of the latter had ceased to have political significance.¹⁷

The true sense of the age must be sought in the rise of an urban, commercial oligarchy that had replaced the old Arab aristocracy. Because it was largely an upstart, parvenu society it aped the manners of the older order, imitating Baghdad even more slavishly than had Caliphal Córdoba. Recent studies based on documents from the Cairo Geniza have revealed the extraordinary significance of the middle-class revolution that took place in the Islamic world of the tenth century. In al-Andalus as elsewhere, this middle class took over the reins of power and governed through its oligarchic leaders. In the long run, however, it failed to create new and lasting institutions adequate to the new conditions, and its blind reverence for past tradition led to its eventual downfall.

The collapse of central authority naturally reduced state revenues. This, plus the luxury of the multiple royal courts and the rising offensive of the Cid Campeador's Spain brought about an economic crisis. Gold coinage virtually disappeared, adversely affecting international trade, and the silver dirham became almost pure copper. Esoteric doctrines of a communistic nature became popular among the lower classes and riots and pogroms spread. Soon a strong popular sentiment, in the name of Islam and led by the conservative Mālikite *fuqahā* or jurists, resulted in the invasion of the Almoravids and the deposition of the petty kings.

The factors outlined above meant that in architecture the luxury materials used by the Caliphal builders, such as stone, alabaster, and marble, were replaced with cheaper materials such as brick, mortar, and stucco. The Toledan mosque today called El Cristo de la Luz was built in the sober Caliphal style, but with modest materials according to techniques newly imported from Iraq where stone was difficult to obtain. This new type of construction was inexpensive and efficient. It inaugurated a new departure in Hispano-Arabic building styles, for El Cristo de la Luz is the direct ancestor of Mudéjar architecture.¹⁸

While mosques were sober and restrained, the residences of kings were luxurious. The Aljafería of Saragossa, built by Abū Ja'far Aḥmad al-Muqtadir bi-llāh (1047–1081), shows a remarkable

¹⁷ J. T. Monroe, *The Shu'ūbiyya in al-Andalus: The Risāla of Ibn García and Five Refutations*, University of California Publications, Near Eastern Studies, XIII (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969).

¹⁸ Gómez Moreno, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

evolution whereby those elements that in Caliphal architecture had been functional have now been reduced to purely decorative themes. Intersecting and lobed arches like those added to the Mosque of Córdoba by al-Ḥakam II are to be found in the Aljafería, but reduced to a mere wall decoration made of stucco. Architecture has moved away from the functional toward the purely decorative. It has become “art for art’s sake.” Perhaps the most significant feature of this period is that elements that before had been used to embellish the public buildings of Córdoba are now adapted to serve as a luxurious setting for the private life of kings. The beauties of a building are privately located; they are to be found within doors. Palace art has been developed at the expense of the Mosque.¹⁹

The new desire for refinement was also to have a beneficial effect on the development of culture, for each king cultivated a special field of his own. Mutawakkil of Badajoz was a learned scholar reputed to have written hundreds of books, Ibn Razīn cultivated music, Muqtadir of Saragossa surrounded himself with scientists and philosophers, Ibn Tāhir of Murcia specialized in rhymed prose, ‘Abdullāh of Granada in autobiography, Mujāhid of Denia favored the study of the Koran. Poetry, however, became everybody’s patrimony and was appreciated everywhere, particularly in Seville under the Banū ‘Abbād. Verse is composed all over al-Andalus. Not only does Neoclassical poetry flourish, but the formerly subliterate *muwash-shaḥa* becomes fashionable. We are told that any peasant in Silves could improvise on any given theme at a moment’s notice. Hence the collapse of the Caliphate, rather than signaling the decline of poetry, meant the beginning of a golden age.²⁰

At first, most poets tried to remain in the old metropolis, and of these the two most brilliant members of the new literary group that had developed were Ibn Shuhaid (d. 1035) and Ibn Ḥazm (d. 1063). They were closely followed by the somewhat younger Ibn Zaidūn (d. 1070), and they brought an entirely fresh spirit to the bookish poetry of al-Andalus.

Like architecture, poetry was liberated from its social and political servitude and became largely personal in its choice of theme. Both Ibn Shuhaid and Ibn Ḥazm were close friends. The former was a young aristocrat of Arab extraction while the latter descended from a distinguished native family of converts. Their friendship symbolizes the triumph of Islamism within the metropolitan melting

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 225–226.

²⁰ García Gómez, *op. cit.*, pp. 31–32.

pot. The literary school chiefly represented by these two aesthetes was revolutionary. It consciously reacted against the pedantry of earlier generations and against indiscriminate imitation of Eastern fashions. Ibn Shuhaid propounded the refreshing doctrine that poets are born, not made; that the ability to write good poetry was a gift from God and could not be acquired from one's teachers. According to him, the nature of poetry was determined by the physical and spiritual qualities of the poet. If the body of the latter was controlled by the soul, then his resulting poetry would be beautiful, he claimed. In this doctrine there is a striking departure from the attitude that prevailed among Arab critics. The novelty lies in the application of Neoplatonic doctrines positing the preeminence of spirit over matter to the creative art of poetry. As a result, Ibn Shuhaid concluded that it was the soul of the poet that determined the beauty of his poetry, not his technical mastery of language and rhetoric. This implied that meaning was more highly regarded than form.²¹

These late Caliphal poets were both aristocratically minded and traditionalists. Their ultimate objective was to raise Andalusian letters to a higher level than that of the East, and therefore they were also nationalistic. But as classicists they scorned the semipopular form of the *muwashshaḥa* and wrote in pure literary Arabic. Each of the two wrote a masterpiece of Arabic prose: Ibn Shuhaid composed the treatise entitled *Risālat at-Tawābi^c wa z-zawābi^c*, and Ibn Ḥazm the *Ṭauq al-ḥamāma*. The former is a combined voyage to Parnassus and *Divine Comedy* in which the author visits the hereafter like Dante and interviews several of the great Arab poets of antiquity. The work offers a valuable insight into his critical theories. The latter is the *Vita Nova* of al-Andalus, a delicate analysis of the psychology of love in which the major part of Ibn Ḥazm's extant poetry is contained. It too is strongly influenced by Neoplatonic doctrines.

Ibn Shuhaid's poems are stylistically superior to those of Ibn Ḥazm. They are full of passion, tinged with a philosophical pessimism derived from the life of hardship he underwent: he witnessed the civil strife that ruined his native city and suffered from a protracted disease from which he died an invalid. He was thus made painfully aware of the enormous contrast between this world and the next, between reality and the ideal.

Ibn Ḥazm's poetry was superior to Ibn Shuhaid's in content,

²¹ J. Dickie, "Ibn Shuhaid: A Biographical and Critical Study," *Andalus*, XXIX (1964), 303-304; Monroe, *Risālat at-Tawābi^c wa z-zawābi^c*.

though inferior in style. More a philosopher in verse than a poet, he sometimes pushes his literary experiments to the extreme, as when in the *Tauq* he boasts of having compressed five comparisons into one line of poetry.²² Yet he has an extraordinary intuition for love and gets at its very essence. His life was typical of the troubled times. A wealthy young aesthete, he moved in aristocratic circles and became a politician under the last Umayyads. Banished later, he was persecuted for his loyalty to the now lost Umayyad cause which he manifested by adopting the ultraconservative Zāhirite rite in predominantly Mālikite al-Andalus. For this he was persecuted, his books were burned, and he became an embittered polemicist fleeing from court to court until he died in Montijo (Huelva) in 1063.

A recent study of Provençal courtly love poetry written by Peter Dronke offers a new perspective from which to analyze Ibn Ḥazm's poetry.²³ Dronke has shown that "courtly love" exists universally both in popular and in courtly poetry. He further shows that the popular love songs studied by Theodor Frings and characterized by the active role of the woman who laments over her love-longing—such as occurs in the German *Frauenlieder*, the Galaico-Portuguese *Cantigas de Amigo*, and in the Arabic Ḥaufī of Tlemcen—are, properly speaking, a feminine poetry that is not courtly. Courtly poetry for Dronke is essentially masculine, and therefore there are two basic archetypes in universal love poetry: the masculine and the feminine.

Courtly love poetry, that is, the masculine archetype, has existed in classical Arabic from the earliest times. It is present in Jamīl al-ʿUdhri (d. 701), ʿUmar ibn Abī Rabīʿa (d. 719), and Ibn al-Aḥnaf (d. 813) in the East. It was this tradition that under the general name of ʿUdhrite love made its way to Córdoba. It proclaimed the excellence of a sublimated sexuality produced by a morbid prolongation of desire, best exemplified by the following lines by Ibn Faraj of Jaén (d. 976):

I spent the night with her like a small camel, thirsty, yet whose
muzzle keeps him from drinking,

Thus for one such as I, there can be nothing in a garden beyond
looking and smelling the perfume;

²² Ibn Ḥazm, *El collar de la paloma*, trans. E. García Gómez (2d ed.; Madrid, 1967), p. 110.

²³ Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric* (Oxford, 1965).

For I am not like grazing animals who use gardens as mere pasture grounds.²⁴

This poetry portrays the charms of feminine beauty in order to negate sexual love. It is therefore deeply rooted in a negative and physical approach to love, which makes an ennobling virtue out of continence. In contrast, when Ibn Ḥazm says:

Are you from the world of the angels, or are you mortal?
Explain this to me, for inability [to reach the truth] has made a mockery of my understanding.

I have no doubt but that you are that spirit which a resemblance joining one soul to another in close relationship, has directed to us.

Were it not that our eye contemplates [your] essence we could only declare that you are the Sublime, True Reason. (8, C)

we are immediately aware that a philosophical superstructure has been added to the conventions of 'Udhrite poetry, for both language and ideology are entirely novel in Arabic poetry. The arguments of Dronke, also valid for Islam, claim that there are three types of technical vocabulary present in courtly poetry: the mystical, the noetic, and the sapiential.

In mystical language divine and human love are reconciled, although figuratively, for the two are not identical in orthodox theology since one is absolute and the other relative. In courtly poetry, however, what occurs is exactly the reverse of what takes place in mystical poetry. In the latter, the language of human love is given a divine meaning, while here the language of divine love is applied to a human subject.

The technical terminology of the noetic goes back to Aristotle's passage on the active intellect in *De Anima* (iii.5) which underwent a long process of elaboration in Islamic philosophy. It spells out the relationship between the active intellect of God and the passive intellect of man.

Finally sapiential language uses the symbolic figure of Sapientia; in the Greek tradition Hagia Sophia. This was a Christianized version of the Neoplatonic doctrine of union between the Intellect and the Anima Mundi; of the Sublime Reason and the human soul "at its divinest" (Plotinus, *Enneads* iii.5-2). The concept of a divine love union was transferred to the level of human love; the

²⁴ García Gómez, *Poemas*, p. 95. Trans. J. T. Monroe.

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beloved came to be identified with the active intellect and also with Sapiencia, and in this way she was related to the divine world as well as to the human. The relation, however, is not one of mere intellection, but also of love. By it the lover could aspire to reach the divine. The beloved, furthermore, received from God the power to ennoble the lover, and it became her duty to guide him along the right path. Henry Corbin sums up the Islamic manifestation of this belief as follows: "This figure [the active intellect] appears in the dominant form of a central symbol, which reveals itself to the mental vision of man under the complementary feminine form which makes a total entity of his being. . . . The union which joins the possible intellect of the human soul with the active intellect as a *Dator formarum*, Angel of Knowledge, or Sapiencia-Sophia is visualized and experienced as a love union."²⁵

It was the application of this philosophical superstructure to traditional Arabic love poetry that permitted Ibn Ḥazm to create a true doctrine of courtly love in al-Andalus two centuries before the poets of Provence. His system stresses the ennobling power of love, and in it the spiritual takes precedence over the material, this being one reason why his poetry is so devoid of the rhetorical ornamentation found in earlier poets. Not only does his style correspond closely to the ethics of Neoplatonism, but in contrast with the essentially negative, materially based, and morbid attitude of 'Udhrite love he postulates a positive, spiritualized doctrine. This is the very basis of the *Tauq*, in which he quotes Neoplatonic traditions and expresses the belief that love is the attraction of souls now divided, yet which were once united in another world, and adds that love has no other aim than love itself. What counts for Ibn Ḥazm is not the physical beauty of bodily form so much as the spiritual harmony of character traits uniting lovers.

The main features of his system are: (1) True love is rooted in the soul. (2) It is eternal. (3) There is a desire for harmony in love. The lover agrees with the beloved in everything, delights in talking with her, is tormented by her absence. He fears avoidance and communicates with the eye, "the soul's well-polished mirror," if all else fails. (4) Love desires secrecy. (5) Union is the ultimate bliss. He does not deny sexuality as do the 'Udhrite poets; instead he enhances the spiritual. (6) Separation is the worst evil and can lead to death. (7) True love is ever faithful, despite infidelity on the part of the beloved. (8) The lover must submit to every whim of the

²⁵ *Avicenne et le récit visionnaire* (Tehran, 1952), II, 309.

beloved. (9) Continence is praised, but not enjoined as a virtue in itself:

Furthermore, is one between whom and me there lies only the distance of a day's journey really far away,

When the wisdom [Sapientia] of God the Creator joined us together? This mutual proximity is enough [for me]; I want nothing further. (8, H)

The union of souls is more important than that of bodies, although the former does not necessarily exclude the latter. In this way 'Udhrite love was transformed into a positive spiritual doctrine, and love poetry in al-Andalus became more humane and refined.

The most outstanding love poet of the period was Ibn Zaidūn who flourished during the last days of the Caliphate and then under the oligarchic republic of Córdoba proclaimed after the former was abolished in 1031. His stormy love for the bluestocking Umayyad princess Wallāda inspired the better part of his literary production. When Ibn Zaidūn speaks of love, he is entirely personal. His beloved is a real woman and not the conventionalized figure portrayed in the traditional erotic prelude to the Arabic ode, or *nasīb*. After a few brief months of requited love he was replaced in his lady's affections by the less literary Ibn 'Abdūs. Ibn Zaidūn wrote the latter a scathing satire to which he signed Wallāda's name. The epistle was divulged in Córdoba and his influential rival had the poet cast in prison. He managed to escape to Seville which had become a haven for poets as well as the new cultural capital of al-Andalus. The various episodes of Ibn Zaidūn's love for Wallāda are immortalized in poetry that fuses the consummate mastery and technical perfection attained by Caliphal poets, with the depth of meaning and tenderness of sentiment contained in Ibn Ḥazm's courtly love doctrine; a happy marriage of form and content.²⁶

His poetry, linguistically perfect, is at the same time restrained. It has attained full maturity and independence from Eastern tutelage. The brilliant colors and glittering decoration of at-Ṭalīq are toned down and reduced to sober and masterly contrasts between black and white which distract less from the depth and sincerity of meaning. Likewise, his language which is simple and natural like Ibn Ḥazm's, is yet embellished enough to reach an elevated poetic tone that is sometimes lacking in his philosophical contemporary.

Ibn Zaidūn's Nūniyya (9), or ode rhymed in Nūn, is a master-

²⁶ Ibn Zaidūn has been studied and partially translated by A. Cour, *Un poète arabe d'Andalousie, Ibn Zaidūn* (Constantine, 1920).

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piece of the art of persuasion and contains not only the description of his beloved's physical beauty, but also the expression of his own innermost conflicts and personal feelings. In it he uses the clever repetition of the rhyme word *nā*, "our," to suggest to his beloved that his feeling for her is mutual, and gives added stress to this impression by the abundant use of reciprocal verb forms. The pronoun *nā* which in conventional love poetry is merely a *pluralis majestatis* here acquires a subjective function difficult to explain logically for the grammatical distinction between *nā*, "our," and *kum* "your," is erased in the Nūniyya by an all-encompassing "our" that includes the "your." Its synthetic rather than antithetic value suggests the unity in diversity which was the basic idea underlying Ibn Ḥazm's courtly love poetry. The fusion and confusion of *nā* with *kum* is therefore a linguistic expression of the Neoplatonic fusion of souls. The poet's rare quality of using even the sound of the rhyme syllable to evoke the main theme of his poem is proof of his skill.

In Ibn Zaidūn's poetry nature, which in the presence of Wallāda is cheerful, grows sad in her absence. In this too, form and decor are functional and are subservient to content:

Indeed I remembered you yearningly as you were in az-Zahrā²⁷,
when the horizon was clear and the face of the earth was
shining,
And the breeze had a languor in its evening hours as if it had
pity for me, and so languished out of compassion.²⁷

Nature is thus made to reflect the lover's inner emotional state in a way reminiscent of Renaissance poetry. All the conventions of courtly love outlined by Ibn Ḥazm appear in Ibn Zaidūn, although not as philosophical abstractions, but rather personalized by his own very real sorrow. Under the hardship of separation the Nūniyya expresses a noble attitude on behalf of the poet, for he never blames Wallāda, but merely hints delicately and indirectly at his own sorrow and her betrayal. Similarly, although he desires union with her, he sets spiritual love above the physical:

Make open display of loyalty even if you do not generously
accord me a love union; yet a dream image will satisfy us and a
remembrance will suffice us. (9, l. 48)

The idea of love being a union of souls is expressed in line 6; as a religion it appears in line 9, while fidelity is the main theme of the poem, for neither distance (l. 11), nor another woman (l. 19), nor

²⁷ Arabic text and English translation in A. J. Arberry, *Arabic Poetry: A Primer for Students* (Cambridge, 1965), pp. 114–115.

impatience (ll. 38–39) can alter the poet's affection. The few reproaches are so delicately phrased that they sound more like compliments, and in this way Ibn Zaidūn lives up to the recommendations made by Ibn Ḥazm on the subject of betrayal.

Now that there was no longer a political structure to serve, poetry, like architecture, was transferred to the personal sphere. Through the union of Neoplatonic doctrines with the tradition of Arabic verse a more humane Neoclassical verse was born. In the hands of true poets the latter reached impressive heights of perfection. In a brief span of time Ibn Shuhaid had mourned the death of the old order, while Ibn Ḥazm, as a philosopher, had sought refuge in thought against the turmoil of civil war. Ibn Zaidūn, as a poet, adapted this thought to Arabic poetry. Now poets could produce a creative lyrical outburst through the cultivation of true human emotion.

The Mulūk at-Ṭawāʾif (1031–1091)

Under the enlightened protection of the Banū ʿAbbād, Seville had become a paradise for poets. One of the earliest extant anthologies of Andalusian poetry, entitled *Kitāb al-Badīʿ fī waṣf ar-rabīʿ* was compiled in Seville under the *Mulūk at-Ṭawāʾif* by Abū l-Walīd al-Ḥimyarī. A poet's residence, a sort of literary academy, was established in that city, and poets enjoyed the privilege of weekly audiences with the king during which they vied with one another in reciting their odes, and were promoted or demoted according to their success. A register of pensioned poets also existed.²⁸

The eleventh-century political scene had favored the rise of religious indifference at court, which contrasted with the past. Under al-Manṣūr the orthodox Mālikite jurists had been allowed to expurgate the library of al-Ḥakam II. Their influence had repressed poetic genius. Now the latter became uninhibited. At the same time the better poets of al-Andalus had mastered the complex techniques of Arabic versification. A tradition had been established and it was in the hands of a new generation of masters. The fall of the Caliphate, resulting as it did in the crumbling of the political world left the individual alone. His personal emotion now became a subject worthy of poetic treatment.

Of the new generation one of the most skillful poets was Ibn ʿAmmār of Silves (d. 1086). He was a close friend of al-Muʿtamid

²⁸ E. García Gómez, *Un eclipse de la poesía en Sevilla: La época almorávide* (Madrid, 1945), p. 13.

and led an adventurous life, dying tragically at the hands of his own sovereign and former boon companion. Ibn ʿAmmār came to Seville during the reign of al-Muʿtaḍid (1042–1069) whom he praised in a panegyric that won him lasting fame among Arab critics and came to be considered his masterpiece (10). It shows his ability to combine themes taken from different types of poetry, in this case the *nauriyya* and the *khamriyya*, into a new unity. This he does in a way that appears natural despite its contrived artifice.

He begins his poem with a bacchic scene (l. 1) which by borrowing elements from floral poetry creates an illusion of doubly heightened sensuality and permits a more complex interplay of metaphor. The latter reaches a stage where it ceases to be merely metaphoric and becomes truly symbolic. Compared with the poetry of aṭ-Ṭaliq, Ibn ʿAmmār has gone a step further in complicating his imagery for whereas the one merely juxtaposes the floral and bacchic passages, the other fuses them together and thereby creates exciting new relationships between old clichés.

The opening words: "Pass round the glass for the breeze has arisen" derive from bacchic poetry. But they also evoke the joyous carousing that meets the king's victory and generosity. The word *inbarā*, "has arisen," is placed in a rhymed, and therefore stressed position. In this way the idea that the poem's main theme is somehow related to the breeze and its rising is introduced. At the very end of the poem the poet will conclude: "Hence, if you find the breeze of my praise to be fragrant, I have found the breeze of your favor to be even more fragrant!" (l. 37). From this it becomes clear that the breeze which at first appears as a bacchic element possesses a dual symbolic value denoting praise and generosity, and this breeze that connects praiser and praised is the central symbol of the poem.

The words "and the stars have slackened the reins of night travel" (l. 1) are an example of the rhetorical device known as *ḥusn at-taʿlīl* (ingenious assignment of cause).²⁹ They imply that the stars are like camels who are resting after a long night journey. This metaphor allows the poet to allude to the *raḥīl* or journey theme of the traditional Arabic *qaṣīda*, but the way in which this is done is typical of the *badiʿ* style. The stage is thus set for dawn's appearance which occurs immediately following: "The dawn has

²⁹ A convenient list of the rhetorical figures common to Arabic poetry may be found in Arberry, *op. cit.*, pp. 21–26, and also in G. E. von Grunebaum, *A Tenth-Century Document of Arabic Literary Theory and Criticism: Translation and Annotation of the Sections on Poetry of al-Baḥillānī's Iʿjāz al-Qurʿān* (Chicago, 1950).

bestowed on us its camphor, after the night has claimed back [its] ambergris;" (l. 2). The *muqābala* (pair of contrasting ideas elaborated in a balanced compound) is heightened by a *ṭibāq* (two words of opposite meaning in a line, here "dawn" and "night") as well as a *takāfu*³⁰ (two words of opposite meaning used in a metaphorical sense in the same line, here "camphor = whiteness" and "ambergris = blackness"). The basic *muqābala* is therefore a complex one containing two other rhetorical devices used to elaborate the central antithesis. Furthermore the poet has succeeded in awakening four senses in the compact space of two lines: taste (glass), feeling (breeze), sight (stars), and smell (camphor, ambergris).

If the first two lines are bacchic in content, the following two are floral. The garden is compared with a woman and a boy, this being an inversion of the usual theme found among previous poets who compare a woman to a garden (cf. Ibn Zaidūn). By inverting the commonplace the poet succeeds in giving freshness to a banal theme. The comparisons in lines 3 and 4 are both triple ones (garden = woman; flowers = embroidered robe; dew = pearls, and likewise garden = boy; roses = cheeks; myrtle = cheek down), while the piling together of metaphor serves to capture the garden's essential beauty in a few stylized and brilliant strokes. The technique of compressing several metaphors into a single line had a long tradition in previous Arabic poetry that goes as far back as Imru' al-Qais,³⁰ but its use here serves to reduce the garden to its essential qualities. In this way the poet is enabled to capture the feeling of floral poetry succinctly, to condense a whole theme into two lines with a technique that could well be called *pointilliste*, which would be used very much in *muwashshaḥa* poetry of this period. In line 5 the garden is compared with a green robe and the river in it with a limpid wrist. This allows the poet to make another association deriving naturally from what came before, for he picks up the image of the wrist and shows in lines 6 and 7 that its function is to brandish a sword and to give generous gifts. Furthermore the idea of water immediately suggests two functions; the ripple on its surface conjures up the wavy marks on a steel blade while its flowing abundance evokes the notion of generosity to the Arab mind. Then the wind is once again introduced (l. 6), and by blowing on the water as it will later blow the fragrance of the poet's praise and of the king's favor, is here preparing the listener's mind for the plea for generosity with which the poem culminates. The wind appears again in line 16; in line 34 it is plainly a

³⁰ *Mu'allāqa*, l. 54.