

# Muwashshat Class Notes

taught by Ms Amelie d'Anjou

Poetry form developed in Al-Andalus around supposedly 900ad, so 10c; earliest extant poems from 11-12c

Muwashshah said to have been created by blind man from Cabra in Al-Andalus around 900AD (MPF, *Rondeau and Virelai*), a source from 1st half of 12c names him as Muhammad ibn Mahmud al-Qabri (Cabra) al-Darir (the blind) (DFR, Musical Heritage of Al-Andalus) - but remember that Arabs like to have an attribution

Became dominant in Iberia, spread to other Islamic countries, still popular today in Syria, Egypt, N Afr. (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia), Yemen  
(were other poetic forms in al-Andalus, but this form is still written and performed)

Earliest extant- Some of earliest collected in Egypt in 12c - Dar al-Tiraz (the House of Embroidery) by Ibn Sana al-Mulk

Mwsh written in Arabic, and later in Hebrew (tend to get studied by different scholars)

Form developed post Ziryab\* (d.~860AD)

Very similar form to CSM

think they were always sung, not just a poem

aa bbb aa ccc aa etc

Typically 5 stanzas

Kharja - an exit or tag lines at the end, often in female voice (similar to envoi in *trouvere*)

Kharja is thought to be pre-existing and often in other language (colloquial Arabic or local Romance) - also thought to be its pre-existing tune that is used

all al-Mulk's muwashshat were completely in Arabic

Is the earliest mwsh that have bilinguality, later are all one language

Zajals have similar form, but use colloquial Arabic or Romance language instead of classical Arabic.

Biggest zajal author is Ibn Quzman, from Córdoba (ca. 1080-1160), also Shushtari (ca. 1212-1269)

They are probably earlier than the muwashshah, but we don't have earlier extant.

\*about Ziryab: if you read earlier stuff, Ziryab is the bomb – he invented everything, how to set the table and serve dishes, fashion, how to cut your hair, how to brush your teeth – and this from a musician! Turns out that's all from a 17c author, al-Maqqari. If you get closer to his time, he returns to a normal human. However, al-Maqqari was translated into English much earlier, so it was the info we had.

Muwashshah poem by Ibn Zuhri, 1113-1198 A.D.  
Born near Seville, worked as a physician in the court of al-Mansur in Marrakesh.  
Rhyming translation by Amelie d'Anjou  
Rhythm: tekah dum tek

Oh, cupbearer, we complain now to you  
We have called you, but you did not heed our plea!

Drinking companions I've loved for their bright face  
When I drank with them from their hands in their place  
When he roused up after drinking a whole case  
He then turned to me and an offer did ensue  
That I drink cup after cup and be carefree.

Oh, cupbearer, we complain now to you  
We have called you, but you did not heed our plea!

He's a willow branch that's bending from so tall  
One who loved him died of passion in a fall  
All a-quiver in his heart as he recalls  
Thoughts of leaving make him cry and feel blue  
Then he cries "Woe unto him; that might not be!"

Oh, cupbearer, we complain now to you  
We have called you, but you did not heed our plea!

Why was my eye blinded by your glance so soon?  
Next to you, my eye denies the light of the moon!  
If you wish, please hear my story to this tune,  
My eyes blinded by my crying which renewed  
And my body, racked by sobs, shakes like a tree.

Oh, cupbearer, we complain now to you  
We have called you, but you did not heed our plea!

Based on translations in Compton (#25), Monroe (#30), and Liu & Monroe, surviving  
tune from the oral tradition in Liu & Monroe, song #10.  
See link in discog. for a YouTube recording of the song in Arabic

For another muwashshah composed by me, see my website [ameliescodex.com/music](http://ameliescodex.com/music)  
and look under medieval/renaissance songs for The Lute Trills

## Select Muwashshat Bibliography

N.B. These are all in English. There's more stuff out there if you can read other languages.

### Important Books:

[Andalusian Lyrical Poetry and Old Spanish Love Songs: The Muwashshah and it's Kharja](#)

by Linda Fish Compton. New York University Press, 1976.

Translations of all the Andalusian muwashshat from the 12c Egyptian book Dar al Tiraz and analysis.

[Ten Hispano-Arabic Strophic Songs in the Modern Oral Tradition: Music and Texts](#)

by Benjamin M Liu and James T Monroe. University of California Press, 1989.

The authors found current songs with texts from period. Includes discussion, theory, period and current forms of texts, and music.

### Articles:

[https://www.academia.edu/31097286/Code Switching in Al Andalus Case Studies of Arabic and Jewish Muwashshahat](https://www.academia.edu/31097286/Code_Switching_in_Al_Andalus_Case_Studies_of_Arabic_and_Jewish_Muwashshahat)

2017 by Hope Safford

easy to read, 40pp double spaced, undergrad thesis with a good intro compares 2 Arabic and 2 Hebrew muwashshat

[https://www.academia.edu/39931955/Muwashshah and Kharja Gems from al Andalus](https://www.academia.edu/39931955/Muwashshah_and_Kharja_Gems_from_al_Andalus)

2001 by Sovon Sanyal

a short 9p article

[https://www.academia.edu/26738213/Musical Aspects of Dar al Tiraz The Muwashshah in the 12th Century](https://www.academia.edu/26738213/Musical_Aspects_of_Dar_al_Tiraz_The_Muwashshah_in_the_12th_Century)

by Dwight Reynolds, 2004, 17pp

about the 12c Egyptian compilation of muwashshat

[https://www.academia.edu/26738062/The Re Creation of Medieval Arabo Andalusian Music in Modern Performance](https://www.academia.edu/26738062/The_Re_Creation_of_Medieval_Arabo_Andalusian_Music_in_Modern_Performance)

by Dwight Reynolds, 2009

15pp, about modern Early Music groups trying to re-create medieval Andalusian music, and why Arab groups don't. includes a discography

[https://www.academia.edu/8005798/The Muwa%C5%A1%C5%A1a%E1%B8%A5 and the Kharja An introduction](https://www.academia.edu/8005798/The_Muwa%C5%A1%C5%A1a%E1%B8%A5_and_the_Kharja_An_introduction)

by Otto Zwartjes, 2006

a review of research on the subject; a short article with a big biblio of works publ. between 1991-2004.

### More Books, less Muwashshat:

[Hispano-Arabic Poetry: A Student Anthology](#)

by James T Monroe. Gorgias Press, 2004, reprint of 1974 U. of California Press.

muwashshat are mixed in - poetry form identified at bottom of 1st page of each poem

13 muwsht and 4 zajal of 43 total poems

### The Musical Heritage Of Al-Andalus

by Dwight F. Reynolds. Routledge, 2021.

What we know about it – 1<sup>st</sup> updated book on the subject in 100 years. Now you don't have to read Julian Ribera.

### The Dream of the Poem: Hebrew Poetry from Muslim and Christian Spain 950-1492.

by Peter Cole. Princeton University Press, 2007.

has 5 muwashshat - see glossary for authors and titles

### The Mischievous Muse: Extant poems and prose by Ibn Quzman

by James T Monroe. 2 vols. Vol 1, 1038pp, vol 2 500pp. Brill, 2017.

Mostly zajals, vol 1 is the translation, vol 2 has 16 poems he analyses. While I haven't looked at the book yet, there's a 4p review of it by Kevin Blankinship available at

[https://www.academia.edu/37523658/Review\\_James\\_Monroe\\_The\\_Mischievous\\_Muse\\_Extant\\_Poetry\\_and\\_Prose\\_by\\_Ibn\\_Quzm%C4%81n\\_of\\_C%C3%B3rdoba\\_Brill\\_2017](https://www.academia.edu/37523658/Review_James_Monroe_The_Mischievous_Muse_Extant_Poetry_and_Prose_by_Ibn_Quzm%C4%81n_of_C%C3%B3rdoba_Brill_2017)

Misc. articles and podcasts:

[https://www.academia.edu/26738097/Al\\_Maqqar%C4%B1s\\_Ziryab\\_The\\_Making\\_of\\_a\\_Myth](https://www.academia.edu/26738097/Al_Maqqar%C4%B1s_Ziryab_The_Making_of_a_Myth)

by Dwight Reynolds, 2008, 14pp

Compares the well-known 17c source of the Ziryab legend with his less-known 11c source, which has contradictory info the later guy left out. Some fun anecdotes.

"These other texts do not idealize Ziryab but portray him, in a rather matter-of-fact way, as a black slave ( 'abd aswad) who was a gifted musician, but who was also temperamental, a spoiled favourite, a lavish spender, at times publicly mocked because of his skin colour, the butt of crude sexual jokes, and frequently caught up in court rivalries."

<https://www.amar-foundation.org/004-lamma-bada-yatathanna/>

An Arabic podcast on lamma-bada, 18:33 minutes long, includes 2 early recordings from the beginning of the 20c. Follow along by reading the English transcription.

Melody is attributed to Sheikh Muḥammad 'Abd al-Raḥīm al-Maslūb, (1786 - 1895) an Egyptian singer and composer.

<https://www.amar-foundation.org/003-al-muwashshah/>

Another Arabic podcast with English transcription. What Arabs think about muwashshah today. Says literary and musical forms are different, and that a muwashshah song can use a different poem style than a muwashshah.

Includes historical recordings.

[maqamworld.com](http://maqamworld.com)

great site for learning Arabic rhythmic and musical modes

[https://www.academia.edu/1233306/Rondeau\\_and\\_virelai\\_the\\_music\\_of\\_Andalus\\_and\\_the\\_Cantigas\\_de\\_Santa\\_Maria](https://www.academia.edu/1233306/Rondeau_and_virelai_the_music_of_Andalus_and_the_Cantigas_de_Santa_Maria)

by Manuel Pedro Ferreira, 2004

compares muwashshat to the cantigas

Discography:

see last p of Reynolds 2009 paper for an annotated discography of early music groups attempting this rep.

Iberian Garden: Jewish, Christian and Muslim Music in Medieval Spain, vol.1 & 2. by Altramar. Dorian 1995, 1997/8.

Atrium Musicae, dir. by Gregorio Paniagua, also look for Eduardo Paniagua  
Jordi Savall directing Hesperion XXI, not all recordings, but quite a few, esp. more recent ones

current muwashshat tradition: are so many recordings out there from various places, incl Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Syria, Egypt

Recordings of 5 of the 10 songs in Liu & Monroe on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rqZMmKdDd38> (Fadia al Haj)  
Ayyuha s-saqi (#10 Liu & Monroe)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ijDcCsqlw08> (Ivory Consort)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xcDx142UgV4>(Arabic group)  
Man habbak (#8 Liu & Monroe)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjVFVB\\_8BLU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QjVFVB_8BLU) (Altramar)  
<https://youtu.be/mFaTX2MEZsQ?t=4> (Ivory Consort)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hzaLgY6UbEE> (Galatia)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8n7KwcTWgPU>(completely different tune, same words, native singer)  
Adir la-na (#3 Liu & Monroe) 1st 3 versions by early music groups

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r38rmgn4wFI>  
(Fadia al Haj with bad rhythm track)  
Umzuj al-akwas (#2 Liu & Monroe)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X10VWs7j0HM>  
Qad niltu hibbi (#1 Liu & Monroe) another recreationist