Which Came First, the *Zajal* or the *Muwaššaḥa*?
Some Evidence for the Oral Origins
of Hispano-Arabic Strophic Poetry

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I. The Problem

The two Andalusian poetic forms known as *zajal* and *muwaššaḥa* have often been discussed in relation to one another, not only by modern critics,[1] but also by medieval Arab scholars,[2] to such an extent, indeed, that they have been called "sister-genres" (Stern 1974:12). This is so for several compelling reasons: (1) Both forms are strophic, and are closely related in structure. (2) Both incorporate elements of vernacular diction. (3) Both contain puzzling departures from the rules of classical Arabic metrics. (4) *Muwaššaḥa* poets often functioned simultaneously as composers of *zajal*s, and vice-versa. (5) *Muwaššaḥa*s frequently contain passages quoted directly from *zajal*s, while the reverse is also true. (6) As all known medieval Arab authorities are unanimous in pointing out, both genres originated in Andalus and not in the East.[3]

From a linguistic point of view, the *zajal* is composed entirely in the vernacular Arabic dialect of Andalus, occasionally besprinkled with words or phrases in Hispano-Romance. In contrast, the *muwaššaḥa* is in Classical Arabic, with the exception of its final element, which is normally in vernacular diction, either Arabic, Romance, or a combination of both.

The two genres may further be distinguished from one another in structural terms: The *zajal* proper always has an initial refrain (*maṭlaᶜ*) of which a typically common form is a couplet rhymed AA, followed by an indefinite number of strophes, each of which contains a string of lines,

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[1] See, for example, al-Ahwānī 1957; Gómez 1972; Stern 1974.

[2] See al-Andalusī 1983:255-63; Ḫaldūn 1958:440-55; Rušd 1872:3, I.

[3] For the *muwaššaḥa*, see Bassām 1978:469; al-Andalusī 1983:255; al-Mulk 1949:39-40; Ḫaldūn 1958:440. For the *zajal*, see al-Andalusī 1983:263; Hoenerbach 1956:16; Ḫaldūn 1958:454. For both genres, see Rušd: *idem*.

usually (but not less than) three, called *ġuṣn* and rhyming together, yet differing in rhyme from one strophe to the next (bbb, ccc, ddd, etc.), followed by a final element that rhymes with the refrain (*a*) but reproduces exactly half of the refrain's rhymes. This element is called *markaz*. Furthermore, all the *ġuṣn*s in the poem are symmetrical, although they may vary metrically with respect to the *markaz*es. The latter, in turn, are also normally symmetrical. Thus, one archetypal form of *zajal* (of which subsequent developments are complications resulting from the addition of internal rhyme) exhibits the rhyme-scheme AA, bbb*a* (AA), ccc*a* (AA), ddd*a* (AA), etc.[4]

   The basic *muwaššaḥa* pattern is similar to that of the *zajal* except that its *markaz*es reproduce the entire set of rhymes found in the refrain and are symmetrical with it: AA, bbb*aa* (AA), ccc*aa* (AA), ddd*aa* (AA), etc.[5] Three further differences are: (1) About one-third of the extant Andalusian *muwaššaḥa*s lack a refrain. (2) The overwhelming number of *muwaššaḥa*s are only five strophes long, whereas *zajal*s are often considerably longer. (3) The final *markaz* of the poem, technically called *ḫarja*, is usually in the vernacular; it is introduced as a quotation and, in many cases, it can be shown that it is actually a quotation from another *zajal* or *muwaššaḥa*, normally a refrain, but sometimes a *ḫarja* from a previous poem. To further complicate matters, there exists a hybrid form, linguistically in vernacular Arabic throughout, like the *zajal* proper, but containing *markaz*es that duplicate the full set of rhymes found in the refrain, as occurs in the *muwaššaḥa*. This form which, following S.M. Stern, I shall designate the "*muwaššaḥa*-like *zajal*,"[6] in contrast to the "*zajal* proper" (*idem*) described above, further coincides with the *muwaššaḥa* in that it can be refrainless, often ends with a quotational *ḫarja*, and is usually five stophes long. Structurally the hybrid is thus a *muwaššaḥa* whereas linguistically it is a *zajal*. The fact that the *zajal* is entirely in the vernacular, whereas the vernacular element in the *muwaššaḥa* is relegated to the *ḫarja*, and that the structure of the *zajal* proper is simpler than that of the *muwaššaḥa* of itself tends to suggest that the *zajal* form is the more ancient of the two, and that the *muwaššaḥa* is a later and learned imitation.

   Nonetheless, at this juncture we are confronted with a serious problem of documentation, for we are specifically informed by one medieval Arab scholar that the *muwaššaḥa* was *invented* toward the end of the ninth century by Muḥammad ibn Maḥmūd of Cabra, a court poet of the

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[4] An alternate type is one in which the refrain exhibits an AB rhyme-scheme.

[5] For a more complete listing of rhyme-schemes, see Stern 1974:19-26.

[6] Stern 1974:170. Given the hybrid nature of this type of poem, it is a debatable point whether or not it should instead be called the "*zajal*-like *muwaššaḥa*."

Cordovan Amīr ᶜAbdallāh (*regit* 888-912).[7] Muḥammad's poems, and those of his immediate successors, have been lost,[8] so that it is not until the beginning of the eleventh century that we possess surviving texts, the earliest of which were composed by ᶜUbāda ibn Mā' al-Samā' (d. 1027).[9] In contrast, whereas we are not told who invented the *zajal*,[10] the earliest extant poems in that genre known until recently were those of Ibn Quzmān (d. 1160).

This means that *zajal* texts only surface around two centuries after the invention of the *muwaššaḥa*, and less than a century after the earliest surviving *muwaššaḥa*.[11] Following a positivistic train of reasoning, most scholars, both medieval and modern, have therefore assumed that the *zajal* is a derivative of the *muwaššaḥa*, and have sought to explain their position in terms of a process whereby the masses took over a learned and courtly genre and turned it into a more popular *gesunkenes Kulturgut*.[12] Such a hypothesis, however, ignores one important point: by no means may Ibn Quzmān or his successors be considered popular poets simply because they composed in the vernacular. Instead, they are all learned poets, just as learned as authors of *muwaššaḥa*s for, as has been pointed out previously, the line between one genre and the other was often crossed by the same poet. Nor were Ibn Quzmān's *zajal*s composed for the common people. Instead, the majority of them are panegyrics dedicated to wealthy and learned patrons, whereas the love poems he composed, while they often include popular themes, also exhibit a thorough knowledge of Classical Arabic thematic conventions and literary history.

A further factor is that the structure of the Andalusian *zajal* proper coincides arrestingly with that of the most primitive type of Romance zajalesque poetry, especially with that of Spain, Italy, and France.[13] In contrast, the classical poetry of the Arabs can provide no precise or

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[7] Bassām 1978:469; Ḫaldūn (1958:440), following al-Andalusī (1983:255), gives the name of the inventor of the genre as Muqaddam Ibn Muᶜafà of Cabra. But see al-Ahwānī 1948:19-33. Both Muḥammad and Muqaddam existed, and were contemporaries.

[8] They had already vanished by the time of Ḫaldūn, and perhaps even earlier. See Ḫaldūn 1958:441.

[9] Two poems by ᶜUbāda are published in Ġāzī 1979: I, 5-10.

[10] Ḥillī records some confusion concerning who invented the *zajal*, thereby betraying that in fact the inventor was unknown. See Hoenerbach 1956:16.

[11] Such texts could, however, have existed before they were documented.

[12] The above, generally speaking, is the view of al-Ahwānī (1957), Gómez (1972), and Stern (1974).

[13] For a recent reappraisal of the Romance material, see Pepió 1984:239-66.

convincing parallels to the *zajal*. We are therefore very much entitled to suspect that the Andalusian *zajal* may have taken over the prosodic form of a pre-existent Romance genre that was already widespread in Western Romania when the Arabs conquered the Iberian Peninsula.

This entirely legitimate suspicion has in recent times been hotly contested, often with less knowledge than intemperateness, by a number of scholars who are at best correct in stressing that the putative Romance congeners of the Andalusian *zajal* are all documented later than the poems of Ibn Quzmān.[14] The possibility therefore arises, as they seek to establish, that the Romance *zajal* could have derived from its Andalusian Arabic congener, rather than the reverse. According to such a hypothesis, we are led back to the moot question concerning the Arabic origins of Romance lyrical poetry.

In the preceding exposition, an attempt has been made to present, as briefly as possible, the results of scholarly research amounting to a vast bibliography on the subject. As with all summaries, one is fully aware that suppression of nuances may lead to oversimplification. Synthesis has, nevertheless, been necessary in the interests of clarity. The above account isolates two major questions: (1) which came first, the *zajal* or the *muwaššaḥa*? (2) which influenced the other, Romance or Arabic strophic poetry? Partisans of the Arabic thesis have, quite naturally, claimed priority for the *muwaššaḥa*, which they attempt to derive from classical Arabic poetry by hook or by crook. Subsequently, they add, the *muwaššaḥa* was taken over by the populace and transformed into the colloquial *zajal*, which was eventually acclimatized in Romance. Up to now, such scholars have had documentable chronology to back up their ideas.

In contrast, partisans of the Romance thesis, since they lack sufficiently early documentation to support their views, have assumed the existence of a Romance folk lyric from which the *muwaššaḥa* derived through its vernacular *ḫarja*. Thereafter, they assert, the *zajal* derived from the *muwaššaḥa* by the same process of popularization proposed by their rivals, for on this one issue the two antagonistic camps seem to agree. Both hypotheses leave much unexplained, particularly the perplexing question of meter, which one group views as a mere expansion of the classical Arabic quantitative system, and the other, as an adoption into Arabic of the stress-syllabic metrics of Romance.

The metrical problem needs further study; it is too complicated a matter to deal with technically and *in extenso* within the confines of this

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[14] See especially Gorton 1975; Jones 1980, 1981-82, 1983-84; Latham 1982, 1983; Semah 1984. To the above tendency, contract Gómez 1972; Corriente 1980, 1982, 1984; Haxen 1982; Monroe 1981-82, 1986; Armistead 1981-82; Armistead and Monroe 1985.

article, and will therefore be explored more fully elsewhere. Nonetheless, in a recent publication, I suggested some new and urgent reasons why it is more convincing to view the *muwaššaḥa* as a derivative of an early and truly popular *zajal* genre in vernacular Arabic and Romance, now lost, which existed orally (Armistead and Monroe 1985:212-34). This suggestion has been substantiated more fully, on the basis of internal evidence, in a second article (Monroe 1986). For the purposes of the present discussion, a summary of my arguments goes as follows: it is a characteristic feature of the *muwaššaḥa* genre that each poem ends in a *ḫarja* usually composed in the vernacular, either Arabic or Romance. In this respect, the *ḫarja* contrasts thematically and linguistically with what precedes it. Not only are we specifically told that the inventor of the *muwaššaḥa* back in the late ninth century, "quoted colloquial Arabic and Romance diction, which he called the *markaz* [= *ḫarja*], and based the *muwaššaḥa* upon it" (Bassām 1978:469), but we are also able to show that later, when examples become available, in many instances these *ḫarja*s are texts actually quoted from the refrain of a previous poem which the poet happens to be imitating in structure (*muʿāraḍa*). We therefore have solid proof that the *ḫarja* is an independent poetic nucleus out of which the *muwaššaḥa* is built. I further pointed out that since the *ḫarja* of a later poem is usually in the vernacular, and is preferentially borrowed from the refrain of a previous poem, we are dealing with a phenomenon in which *ḫarja*s are, as can often be documented, actually refrains from earlier *zajal*s. This can be proven from the moment texts surface, but it also indicates that the same process may have been going on during the undocumented period, perhaps as far back as the time when the *muwaššaḥa* was invented. Whatever the case may be, from the moment of its emergence into the glare of history, the *muwaššaḥa* rests upon the *zajal* proper rather than the reverse.

Furthermore, it would be difficult to find a logical explanation for this singular phenomenon of quotation, unless we take into account a further factor that has not been fully appreciated until recently: *muwaššaḥa*s and *zajal*s were not poems intended merely for reading or recitation. Instead, it can be demonstrated that, like their putative Romance congeners, they were essentially songs composed to be sung chorally as follows. First a soloist sang the refrain, which was repeated by the chorus. Then he sang the first strophe, ending on a word that rhymes with the refrain. This provided a cue to the chorus that the refrain was to be sung by them. After they had repeated the refrain, the soloist sang the second strophe, and so on (Stern 1974:1-6). Not only do we possess medieval evidence both internal and external for this method of performance, which I hope to provide in detail elsewhere, but it has survived until the present in public performances of the North African *zajal* (see al-Jirārī 1970). In

fact, knowledge of the performance situation explains the otherwise bewildering rhyme-scheme of the genre.

It follows that the function of the *ḫarja* in a *muwaššaḥa* is not only poetic but is also melodic in a very practical sense, for it indicates to future singers, in a culture lacking the art of musical notation, the precise tune to which a given text should be sung. Add to the preceding remarks that, in general terms, a refrain must necessarily contain at least two poetic lines, coinciding with two musical bars, and we can postulate a generative explanation for the structural difference between the *zajal* and the *muwaššaḥa*: if the commonest type of *zajal* refrain has two lines, as is the case; if a *muwaššaḥa* poet sets out to contrafact such a *zajal*; and if he begins by borrowing its refrain, as we know often happened, then the *muwaššaḥa* he builds onto his borrowed *ḫarja* must reproduce the full rhyme structure of the *ḫarja* in its preceding *markaz*es, and indeed, in its own refrain, otherwise the resulting poem will be asymmetrical (i.e.: AA, bbb*a* [AA], ccc*a* [AA], ddd*a* [AA], eee*a* [AA], fff*aa* [AA]). Thus the structural difference between *zajal* and *muwaššaḥa* can be explained if we assume that the *zajal* was not the *muwaššaḥa's* sister, but was instead its mother. It would therefore be more accurate to define the *muwaššaḥa* in generative terms, as a form that reproduces in its *markaz*es the entire structure, not of its *maṭlaᶜ*, but of its *ḫarja*.

Up to this point, I have summarized some theoretical arguments, derived from certain structural features of the texts at hand, to suggest why the *zajal* might antedate the *muwaššaḥa*, from which the latter could be derived. Nonetheless, until now, we have had little documentary proof that the *zajal* did in fact precede the *muwaššaḥa* chronologically, with which to counter the objections of the partisans of the Arabic thesis.[15] In what follows, I shall present some recently garnered evidence in support of the above arguments, "in order to respond to the 'Avez-vous un texte?' of Fustel de Coulanges and his less intelligently positivistic offspring (Rico 1975:557)."

II. The Evidence

(A) The Arab Period

(1) Ibn Quzmān and His Predecessors

In the Introduction to and within his *Dīwān*, Ibn Quzmān mentions two *zajal* poets, Al-Aḫṭal ibn Numāra and Yaḫlaf ibn Rāšid (Corriente

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[15] Due to a lack of such proof, Stern's discussion of this problem (1974:52-56) remained inconclusive, while his reasoning was circular.

1980:1-7), about whose lives nothing is known, but whom he singles out as the most illustrious among his predecessors. These names also surface within the body of his poems.[16] Lest this should be considered a poetic fiction on our author's part, let it be added that these two poets are also cited by Ḥillī (1278-1349) in his treatise on vernacular Arabic poetry (Hoenerbach 1956:16). Furthermore, S.M. Stern was able to identify a *zajal* by Yaḫlaf among the documents from the Cairo Geniza (1974:193-95). This poem reveals that the *zajal* was not an innovation introduced by Ibn Quzmān, but a traditional genre of which, with the immodesty that characterized him, he considered himself the most brilliant exponent. The above evidence tallies perfectly with what we are told by Ibn Ḫaldūn (1332-82; ref. at 1958:455), on the authority of Ibn Saʿīd al-Andalusī (1213-86; ref. at 1983:263) who was in turn relying on a lost work by Al-Ḥijārī (ca. 1106-55)[17]: "[*Zajal*s] were composed in Andalus before Abū Bakr Ibn Quzmān, but their ornaments did not appear, nor were their themes poured forth, nor did their elegance become famous, save in his age" (al-Andalusī 1983:263). Of course, since we do not possess biographical data for these two poets, the above information does not take us very far back in time, if we assume, as is reasonable although by no means certain, that Ibn Quzmān is referring to his immediate predecessors rather than to chronologically remote practitioners of the genre.

(2) Hebrew Zajals

A study of the Hebrew *muwaššaḥa* provides valuable clues for documenting the development of its Arabic parent. Nevertheless, because there can be no question linguistically of poems composed in "vernacular Hispano-Hebrew," there being no such diction, most scholars of this corpus have failed to distinguish between the *muwaššaḥa* and the *zajal* structures when classifying and editing the Hebrew corpus. Recently, however, David Wulstan (1982:259) has succeeded in identifying many examples among the religious poems of Ibn-al-Tabbān (late eleventh century) and Ibn Gabirol (ca. 1020-57) which exhibit the *zajal*, as opposed to the *muwaššaḥa*, structure. Such poems, as he points out, antedate Ibn Quzmān by at least a century. Since the Hebrew *muwaššaḥa* was deeply influenced by its Arabic counterpart, we may safely assume that the Hebrew *zajal* forms were also imitations of Arabic *zajal*s that have not survived. The above was known to S.M. Stern, who nevertheless excluded these Hebrew *zajal*s from consideration when he wrote his thesis, on the grounds that they were

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[16] Ibn Numāra is mentioned in *Zajal*s No. 4 and 64; Ibn Rāšid, in *Zajal* no. 134.

[17] Concerning Saʿīd's dependence upon Al-Ḥijārī, see al-Ahwānī 1948.

liturgical rather than secular poems (1974:77-78). But since the problem we are dealing with is primarily one of prosodic structure rather than thematic content, his arbitrary exclusion is unacceptable.

(3) Prudish Priests

In 1957, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Ahwānī singled out a passage contained in Arabic MS. 593 of the National Library of Madrid.[18] This MS. is a copy, finished and added to by a Mozarabic monk named Binjant (= Vicente), on Tuesday, October 17, 1087 of the Spanish Era (= AD 1049), of a text entitled *Kitāb ʿAbd al-Malik al-Usquf* (*The Book of Bishop ʿAbd al-Malik*). Vicente's copy bears the title *Jamīʿ Nawāmis al-kanīsat wa-l-qānūn al-muqaddas* (*All the Laws of the Church and the Holy Canon*). It has been identified as coinciding closely, but not entirely, in its wording and overall organization, with a Latin *Excerpta Canonum* attributed to Saint Isidore of Seville, although the possibility exists that the *Excerpta* may be a Mozarabic recension of an earlier Visigothic original, of which the Arabic translation copied by Vicente is a parallel but separate descendant. A passage in the Arabic version states:

> It is not permitted for clergymen to attend performances or *zajal*s in weddings and drinking parties; but rather, they must leave before the appearance of such musical performances and dancers, and withdraw from them.[19]

The corresponding passage in the *Excerpta* reads:

> Let it not be permitted for priests or clergymen to attend any performances in weddings or parties, but rather, they must arise and withdraw from there before the actual performances are begun.[20]

We therefore have an Arabic translation of a Latin text, dated as early as 1046, although the Arabic original from which our MS. was copied must be older, and perhaps considerably so. We are thus dealing, at the very least, with a reference to the *zajal* made over a century before Ibn Quzmān's death. It is also significant to note from the context that *zajal*s

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[18] 1957:59. For more on this MS., see Robles 1889:242-44; Simonet 1897-1903:720-34, 711-19; Ewald and Loewe 1883: plate 31

[19] "Lā yajūzu li-l-qalāriqīna an yaḥḍurū, l-malāhī wa-z-zajala fī-l-ʿarā ʿisi wa-l-mašāribi bal yajibu ʿalay-him al-inqilābu qabla duḫūli tilka a-aṭrābi wa-l-azfānī wa-t-tanaḥḥī ʿan-hum" (fol. 333, recto; my trans.).

[20] Migne 1862, vol. 84:583, col. A, no. 60; my trans.

seem to have been sung at drinking parties and weddings,[21] in situations involving music and dancing.[22] Most curious is the implication that *zajal* performances were considered unsuitable for priests to attend. There is, in fact, a strong satirical and obscene tendency in the *zajal* genre of a later period, not only in that of Ibn Quzmān, but also in its Hispano-Romance equivalent.[23] This feature of the genre therefore appears to be very old indeed.

(4) *Minstrels and Market Inspectors*

In 1955 (67-116), É. Lévi-Provençal published a treatise of *ḥisba* written by one Aḥmad ibn ᶜAbdallāh ibn ᶜAbd al-Ra'ūf. At that time, it was not possible for Lévi-Provençal to identify the author or to assign a date to his work. Instead, he modestly concluded that the latter was a Hispano-Arabic book on the regulation of markets, composed by an unknown inspector of the same (*muḥtasib*). Five years later, Rachel Arié produced a French translation of this treatise, but was equally unable to make any headway in dating it (1960:14-38, 199-214, 349-64).

More recently, in 1973, Pedro Chalmeta Gendrón, in his study of the Andalusian *muḥtasib*, explained how he was finally able to date the work: first, on the basis of internal evidence, and later, thanks to a reference to the author discovered by him in Ibn ᶜI<u>d</u>ārī's (second half of the thirteenth century) *Bayān al-Muġrib*. As Chalmeta points out (382), the *bayān* reports that Ibn ᶜAbd al-Ra'ūf' was promoted from the post of *ṣāḥib al-madīna* to the vizierate in 931. We therefore have a relatively early text, written approximately in the first half of the tenth century. Chalmeta's dating is very important because it makes a passage in that work of great relevance to the present study:

> Those who go about the markets [singing] *zajal*s, *azyād* [?] and other types [of song] are forbidden to do so when [people] are being summoned to

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[21] Stern (1974:80) notes Maimonides' similar disapproval of *muwaššaḥa*s, when these were also "sung at drinking parties as well as at marriage celebrations."

[22] On the dancing of *zajal*s, see Pepió 1984. There are references to dancing the *zajal* in Quzmān (*Zajal*s no. 37, 71, 103).

[23] An extreme example is Quzmān's *Zajal* no. 90. For Castilian, see Ruiz 1972:40-42, strophes 115-20 ("*Zajal* to Cruz Cruzada"). See too the remarks by Frenk 1978:309-26.

Holy War,[24] or when they are being exhorted to go to the Ḥijāz [in pilgrimage]. But [if] they exhort people to participate [in the above enterprises] in a seemly manner, there is no harm in it.[25]

As in item (3) above, where Christian priests were forbidden to attend gatherings where *zajal*s were sung, this text shows that the *zajal* was considered equally scurrilous by Muslim authorities, and consequently, incompatible with holy occasions. It also indicates that *zajal*s were actually sung in the markets rather than within a more learned setting. We thus appear to have before us a reference to a truly popular *zajal*, oral in nature and sung by minstrels in the streets, a *zéjel de juglaría*, indeed. Such a conclusion is further supported by the context in which our passage appears within Ibn ꜥAbd al-Ra'ūf's work, which is one that bans from the markets such unsavory characters as minstrels, storytellers, vendors of amulets, and jugglers (Lévi-Provençal 1950-53:112) while cuppers, hawkers of quack medicines, acrobats, pseudo-crippled beggars, and prostitutes also incur Ibn ꜥAbd al-Ra'ūf's disapproval (Chalmeta 1973:386). Chalmeta's convincing conclusion about the early existence of the *zajal* is the following (*idem*; my trans.):

> Such songs, couplets or, why not?, *zajal*s, were very popular in Córdoba, at least in the period between 925 and 950, and probably long before, since no genre or fashion has ever established itself overnight [...]. Consequently, one must assume the independent and popular existence of these *zajal*s in Córdoba, at least two centuries earlier than has usually been admitted. This is not very difficult to accept, if we keep in mind the parallel that obtains with the ballads. For centuries, the latter were handed down by word of mouth in the lands of Castile, before appearing at court, and before some literate individual, even later, bothered to write them down.

The above provides us with further evidence for the existence of the *zajal* two centuries prior to Ibn Quzmān, while it also indicates that at that time the genre flourished in the Andalusian market places within a minstrel

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[24] Note that Ibn Quzmān (*Zajal* 86) exhorts his Muslim correligionaries to go forth on a Holy War against Christendom. In other poems of his, he welcomes back the victorious Muslim armies (*Zajal*s no. 38 and 47). Compare how, in the mock-epic of Don Carnal and Dona Cuaresma, Juan Ruiz has both Moors and Christians come forth, each group singing according to its respective musical tradition, to greet the triumphal arrival of Don Amor (Ruiz 1972:334, strophes 1225-41). To the above should be added Rico's discovery that, in the seventh century, victorious Visigothic leaders were greeted by the songs of the populace upon their triumphal return from war: "cum omne plebe plaudentes manibus ymnizantesque" (1975:548).

[25] "Wa-yumnaꜥu l-laḏīna yamšūna ꜥalà l-aswāqi bi-l-azjāli wa-l-azyādi wa-ġayri-hā an lā yakūnū fī waqtin yunfaru fī-hi li-l-jihādi wa-yumšà fī-hi ilà l-ḥijāzi fa-[in] yaḥruḏūna n-nāsa ꜥala ḏalika bi-mā yuwāfiqu l-ma ꜥnà fa-lā bā'sa bi-ḏalika" (Lévi-Provençal 1950-53:113; my trans.). French translation in Arié 1960:362; Spanish translation in Chalmeta 1979:385.

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(5) *The Caliph, the Rebel, and the Muleteer*

In 1979, Chalmeta published the *editio princeps* of a recently discovered manuscript of Ibn Ḥayyān's (987-1075) *Kitāb al-Muqtabis*, vol. 5. This work is a key chronicle of Umayyad rule in Andalus, of which scattered volumes have gradually come to light and been published within this century. The fifth volume provides an account of how the future Caliph ʿAbd al-Raḥmān III, al-Nāṣir (*regit* 912-61) conquered the fortresses of the Alpujarras in Granada, which were supporting the insurrection of the infamous rebel ʿUmar Ibn Ḥafṣūn, in the year 912. We therefore seem to have a specific date for the following incident that is reported to have taken place during the campaign (64; my trans.):

> All the fortresses of the Alpujarras were also conquered, since they had joined forces with Ibn Ḥafṣūn, but Al-Nāṣir li-Dīn Allāh reduced them to submission during that campaign of his, for the signs of [divine] approval were clear, so that both his warlike and peaceful activities toward them were goodly and successful. One of the insolent fools in those haughty fortresses showered down blame and scorn upon him, saying: "Ruddū, ruddū, aban ummuh fī fummuh" ["Cast down, cast down, the son of his mother, onto his mouth"], but a muleteer in charge of the baggage who was in the ranks near [the Caliph], refuted [the fool, answering]: "Wa-llāh lā naruddu-hā illā bi-rās aban Ḥafṣūn fī ḥukmuh" ["By God, we will not cast it (i.e., 'his mouth') down, save when the head of Ibn Ḥafṣūn is in his power"]. When the latter reached [the Caliph's] ear, he said: "Let him who uttered this be elevated from his menial state; let him be admitted to the ranks of the cavalry, and granted a mount, along with such and such a sum of money." Then was he granted all the above at once, and it became the cause of his ennoblement among [the Caliph's] men, while people caused [this incident] to circulate as a rare anecdote about [the Caliph's] concern [for his supporters].

The verbal duel between the insolent rebel atop the fortress and the Caliph's loyal muleteer constitutes the earliest known poetic text in vernacular Hispano-Arabic. It thus plays a role in Andalusian letters akin to that enjoyed by the Oath of Strasbourg in Romance. Nevertheless, it presents some formidable metrical problems. María Jesús Viguera and Federico Corriente have rightly pointed out that the obviously colloquial rhymes (*ummuh/fummuh/ḥukmuh*) indicate a popular poetic composition.[26] They propose scanning these lines as an example of accentual *madīd* meter which according to them, derives from a final hemistich of classical *madīd* catalectic (_´ ˘ _´ _ / _´ ˘ _ / _´ _):

Rúddū rúddū bn úmmuh fi fúmmuh
Wállāh lā narúdduhā íllā . . .

The last line, however, does not fit into the *madīd* pattern; hence they propose editorial adjustments to make it do so:

rās abán ḥafṣūni fī ḥúkmuh.

For metrical reasons, it is thus apparent that they suppress the particle *bi-* and assume the existence of the classical inflection *ḥafṣūni*. More recently, Corriente adds (1984:25; my trans.): "Insofar as the *zajal* is concerned, and although this item of information must be accepted with caution, we have pointed out the possible existence of a proto-*zajal*, dating from the year 912, in the text of *Al-Muqtabis* (vol. V) by Ibn Ḥayyān." It is thus to be concluded that Corriente views this text as a proto-*zajal*. There are, however, some caveats to be made on the subject.

The context within which the exchange of verbal abuse between the rebel and the muleteer takes place strongly suggests improvisation. While it is not inconceivable that the rebel could have prepared his speech in advance of the occasion on which it was delivered, and that he could have revised and polished it, it is highly unlikely that the muleteer would have had time other than to improvise his response. The likeliest alternative, therefore, is that the exchange is an oral improvisation, and this assumption is confirmed by the formulaic features characterizing these three lines stylistically. The exchange of insults begins with the words *Ruddū ruddū*, which constitute an initial, incremental repetition such as is typical of oral poetry.[27] The word groups in rhyme position (*fī fummuh/fī ḥukmuh*) furthermore, are formulaic. Finally, the elements prior to the rhyme formulae, namely *aban ummuh* and *aban ḥafṣūn*, also constitute a four-syllable formulaic system. This encourages one to think that these two elements should be vowelled colloquially rather than according to semi-classical norms (*ḥafṣūn*, not *ḥafṣūni*; *aban ummuh*, not *bn ummuh*.) The entirely colloquial rendition thus produces a neat stylistic parallel, and is more consistent, from a linguistic point of view, than the reading of my predecessors (note too that no emendation of the text is required). If adopted, my suggestion means, however, that the assumption that our text is in the accentual *madīd* meter must be abandoned. One possible division of lines is the following:

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[27] Compare the following openings of traditional Spanish songs: "A la gala, a la gala...," "Ábalas, ábalas...," "Ai flores, ai flores...," "Eya velar, eya velar...," "¿De do viene, de do viene…," "¡Hagádesme, hagádesme...," "Isabel, Isabel...," "Para mí, para mí...," "Por aquí, por aquí..." (Alonso and Blecua 1964:249-62.

(1) Rúddū rúddū ában úmmuh
(2) fī fúmmuh.
(3) Wá-llāh lā narrúdu-hā´ illā´ bi-rās abán ḥafṣūn
(4) fī ḥúkmuh.

The metrical pattern of the above scans "quantitatively:"

According to Corriente's rules for accentual scansion of Hispano-Arabic strophic poetry, syllable length is replaced in the *zajal* by stress, in such a way that the normal stresses of the Hispano-Arabic dialect coincide with the long syllables of classical metrics, and rarely with a short syllable (although the latter does occur), whereas on the other hand, a long classical syllable may replace a short one, if it is unstressed (1980:76). His system is thus flexible enough to allow for just about anything, and implies eloquently that the governing principles of this prosody are accentual, not quantitative. In this spirit, I would venture to suggest that line (1) is equivalent to a single classical hemistich of *ramal* dimeter (´ ˘ ˝ - / ´ ˘ ˝ -). Here, Corriente's rules are not violated in the case of the second metron, where the first short syllable bears a secondary, weak stress, because Corriente is concerned only with primary, linguistic (rather than ictic) stresses in his system (*ában űmmuh*),[28] while line (2) is an addition of three syllables for which there is no accounting from within the classical, Ḥalīlian system of scansion. In what follows, line (3) is equivalent to an entire line of *ramal* dimeter catalectic (´ ˘ ˝ - / ´ ˘ ˝ - / ´ ˘ ˝ - / ´ ˘ ˝), while line (4) is again a trisyllabic extra-classical addition. The whole text is therefore anything but Ḥalīlian in nature. In contrast, an exact parallel in layout, meter, rhyme, and rhythm to lines (1) and (2) is found in the refrain of Ibn Quzmān's *Zajal* 10:

Ḏāba nā̋ ᶜšaq-kí la-l-ā̋ymah   8
Nujā̋ymah.   3

Corriente correctly scans this refrain as a line of *ramal* dimeter plus an

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[28] Furthermore, the rules of classical scansion permit a short syllable in this position of the *ramal* metron.

unclassical trisyllabic addition.[29]This structure has numerous parallels in Hispano-Romance poetry, among which one finds the popular Castilian *villancico* (Frauca 1921: I, 113, no. 208):

À la puèrta estă Pelàyo	8
y llòra.	3

Let us also note that our vernacular Arabic text exhibits a striking vowel harmony.[30] Taking this factor into account, the only way to obtain anything close to the *zajal* structure Corriente sees would be to break up the lines as follows:

Ruddū ruddū aban ummuh
fī fummuh.
Wa-llāh lā
naruddu-hā
illā bi-rās
aban ḥafṣūn fī ḥukmuh.

The above provides us with an AA, bbb*a* rhyme scheme only if we assume that *lā*, *hā*, and *rās* are assonant rhymes after the Spanish manner, un-Arabic though this may seem. It should also be noted that unlike the normal *zajal*, but coinciding with what prevails in popular Spanish poetry, the lines are occasionally heterosyllabic; that is to say, they are asymmetrical, despite which the above arrangement yields a harmonious and rather striking accentual beat that is almost entirely trochaic in character, except in line two where an amphibrach interrupts the rhythm to add finality to the statement. This amphibrach, which classical prosody cannot account for, is simply a typical *verso de pie quebrado* from the point of view of Hispano-Romance prosody.

Up to this point, I have analyzed the text and suggested one way in which it may be vowelled and scanned. Let me hasten to add that it may not be the only way. It does, however, provide a more satisfactory text

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[29] Compare Corriente 1980:78 with Corriente 1984:316, n.3 to *Zajal* no. 10. In the former work, Professor Corriente scans the poem as *ramal* dimeter, suppressing the troublesome addition *lalaymah*, whereas in the latter, he restores it. My reading, which differs from the one he proposes (1984:66), will be supported in detail in an article currently in preparation.

[30] If we consider the stressed vowels only, the couplet by the rebel exhibits the following symmetrical sequence: U U A U U. In contrast, the stressed vowels in the muleteer's refutation constitute an exact inversion, A A U A A, to which he adds a final element A A U U. Thus we have an opposition, on an acoustic level, that helps to convey the thematic clash between the two antagonists. While this vocalic subtlety supports my colloquial reading of the text, it also indicates that such a skillful poetic composition can hardly be a pastiche, but must be authentic.

linguistically, rhythmically, and structurally than the attempts of my predecessors. Even should my metrical rendition prove to be entirely wrong (and it is advanced only as a modest working hypothesis), one striking fact emerges from it: this text exhibits metrical features which are notoriously unclassical, yet similar to those we find in the *zajal*s of Ibn Quzmān, whose death it appears to precede by 248 years. Furthermore, if the incident reported by Ibn Ḥayyān is true, and if this text is authentic (and the stylistic features it exhibits provide strong evidence for authenticity),[31] it was composed very shortly after the *muwaššaḥa* was invented, so that it may be considered almost contemporary with that invention. Therefore, it represents an example of vernacular poetry exhibiting metrical features similar to those that surface two and a half centuries later, and are intrinsic to the popular Hispano-Romance lyric.

It is more difficult to assert with any degree of assurance that this text belongs to the *zajal* genre. To begin, it is hardly the case that it could have been sung. Although it might have been delivered in a mocking singsong of the sort used to this day by children in many cultures, a melodic rendition seems unlikely, and choral singing is quite impossible. Instead, it was probably recited.[32] Secondly, the challenge and response remind one thematically of the exchanges of invective common in Arab warfare from Pre-Islamic times and later. The fact that the exchange is brief, colloquial, and couched in Hispanic metrics also reminds one of the satirical couplets that existed all over Romania from very ancient times. For example, in the same trochaic octosyllables as our text, there is a couplet that people sang to mock the Lombard nobleman Adalbert I, Marquis of Ivrea (d. ca. 966; ref. Frenk 1979:I, fasc. 2, 28):

> Adelbertos comis curtis
> macrospalhis, gundopistis.

In Spain, we are told in the *Crónica de España* by Lucas de Tuy (1236) that upon the death of Al-Manṣūr ibn Abī ᶜĀmir at Medinaceli, after the battle of Calatañazor (1002), the Devil, disguised as a bilingual fisherman, appeared in Córdoba, on the banks of the river Guadalquivir, singing both in Arabic and in Romance (*ibid*.: 29),

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[31] I am, of course, aware that ancient and medieval historians often put words into the mouth of their characters. Nonetheless, in this case, the formulaic, repetitive, acoustic, and linguistic features of our text make this unlikely here; nor is it plausible that a learned historian such as Ibn Ḥayyān would have gone out of his way to counterfeit a colloquial text when he could have more easily composed one in Classical Arabic

[32] The Arabic text states quite explicitly that the rebel *jaᶜala yaqūlu* ("began to say"), and not that he "sang" the insulting couplet under consideration.

> En Cañatañaçor
> Almançor
> perdió ell atamor

Therefore, while our text cannot be called a *zajal* in any strict sense of the word, it is instead a satirical composition with a response that at the same time takes up the initial theme and refutes it in the same meter and rhyme. In this sense only, it bears some resemblance to the *zajal* genre, insofar as the latter, both in Arabic and Romance, has a strong satirical tendency, while the response in our text develops a theme set by the initial challenge, as the strophes of a *zajal*, or the *glosas* of a *villancico*, elaborate upon the theme of their respective refrains. In this sense, "*Ruddū ruddū. . .*" constitutes a basic, embryonic form which professional minstrels could have developed by the addition of strophes and choral singing into the full-fledged *zajal*. Hence, it seems to represent a truly folkloric composition, rudimentary in nature, parallel to the *zajal*, and out of which the latter might have been developed by professional entertainers.

(6) *What's in a Name*?

If the above text is not a true *zajal*, but is instead an example of folkloric satirical verse that may have preceded that genre, there is nonetheless further evidence for the great antiquity of the *zajal* in Andalus.

It is well known that the Muslim conquest of the Iberian Peninsula was achieved by armies composed largely of Berbers who were led by Arab officers. These Berbers, many of whom must have spoken the lost Romance language of North Africa, were settled in the poorest lands available and, in general, were treated as inferiors by their Arab leaders. They subsequently became Arabized in Andalus along with the native Hispano-Romance-speaking population.

One such Berber family, of unusual distinction, was that of the Banū Zajjālī ("Sons of the man related to the *zajal*-poet"). On the authority of Ibn al-Qūṭiyya (d. 977), Ibn Ḥayyān informs us about a personage known as Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd ibn Abī Sulaymān, al-Zajjālī (d. 843 or 846) as follows (Makki 1973:32; my trans.):

> His name was W'rškyn [?], from the Banu Iṭṭaft of the Nafza tribe,[33] and he was known as Ḥamdūn and nicknamed Al-Aṣmaʿī,[34] being so called because of his intelligence and his prodigious memory. He was the first whom the Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam [*regit* 822-52] chose and

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[33] The Nafza were a tribe of the Botr confederation. The other major grouping of Berbers was that of the Barānis. See Makkī 1973:458, n. 103.

[34] Al-Aṣmaʿī was a famous philologist who died in Marw (Khorasan) in 831.

asked to be his secretary. He was secretary to the Amīr's son Muḥammad, after him.[35] His wife gave birth to his two sons ʿAbdallāh and Ḥāmid, the sons of Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd, who were both skillful secretaries, each of whom served as secretary to the dynasty, save that ʿAbdallāh's period in office did not last, for he served for close to six months, then death hurried him off. As for Ḥāmid, his brother, the secretaryship adhered to him permanently, and he became famous in it until he died in the year AH 268 [= AD 881].

Ibn Ḥayyān continues to quote Ibn al-Qūṭiyya to the effect that (*ibid*.:33; my trans.)

[the Banū Zajjālī] were, in olden times, of the commoners of the Botr confederation of Berbers whose roots lay in the region of Tākurūnā,[36] no renown being preserved of their ancestor. Then the Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān ibn al-Ḥakam was the first to choose their grandfather, this Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd [of whom we are speaking]. [The Amīr] knew by long experience, of his insight, learning, respectability, and liberality, for which he hired him, then he promoted him up the ranks of his service, appointing him secretary and making him his confidant. Thus the family became prominent, and was attached to the illustrious men of the dynasty.

On the authority of Abū l-Walīd ibn al-Faraḍī (962-1013), Ibn Ḥayyān adds (*ibid*.:33-34; my trans.):

He was Abū ʿAbdallāh Muḥammad ibn Saʿīd ibn Mūsà ibn ʿĪs'à, al-Zajjālī, a member of the Andalusian branch of the Berber confederation of Botr, nicknamed al-Aṣmaʿī because of his concern for literature and his knowledge of philology. He was one of the most accomplished of the people of his time in these arts, who possessed an ample share of eloquence and an excellent gift for composing poetry. These Zajjālīs, who were introduced forcibly among the illustrious houses of Córdoba, had no old background in government, nor any previous intimacy with the ruler, nor any attachment to his service, for he was the first to come into prominence and to enjoy status among them [. . .].

Al-Zajjālī was a rank and file soldier in the army of the Amīr ʿAbd al-Raḥmān II (*ibid*.:34). He was a descendent of common as opposed to princely Berbers, as Ibn al-Qūṭiyya, himself a descendent of Sarah, granddaughter of the penultimate Visigothic king Vitiza, is quick to point out with just a hint of aristocratic dismay. His ancestors were members of the Andalusian branch of the Botr confederation, and had been settled in the area of Ronda. Among Ibn Ḥayyān's sources, Ibn al-Faraḍī names three ancestors of Al-Zajjālī (Saʿīd, Mūsà, and ʿĪsà), whereas Ibn al-Qūṭiyya mentions only two (Saʿīd and Abū Sulaymān). Since the *nisba* Al-Zajjālī is

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[35] This remark is erroneous, for Muḥammad al-Zajjālī died in 843 or 846, before the reign of the Amīr Muḥammad by at least six years (see Makkī 1973:460, n. 110.)

[36] There is no area of Takurūnā in Spain today. It was formerly a region near the city of Ronda, roughly one hundred kilometers west of Málaga (Makkī 1973:460, n. 110.)

an Arabic derivation, it is likely that the family adopted it in Andalus, as they became Arabized, rather than brought it with them from Barbary. It is not clear whether Muḥammad was the first to adopt this *nisba*, or whether the latter was also borne by his ancestors. If the former, then the possibility arises that his father Saʿīd may have been a *zajjāl* ("*zajal*-poet"), although the name could also allude to another type of relationship, such as apprenticeship to a *zajjāl*. In either instance, and allowing for the standard thirty years to a generation, we have solid ground to assume that the *zajal* was in existence in Andalus, at very least, around the early part of the ninth century. If the latter, on the other hand, and assuming that Muḥammad's earliest known ancestor ʿĪsà was born around ninety years before his more illustrious great-grandson, and that he also bore the *nisba* Al-Zajjālī, this would probably take us back to the mid-eighth century. In this case, it would appear that *zajal* poets must have existed in Andalus within the century after the Arab conquest of 711, for it is hardly necessary to add that where there are *zajal* poets, there must be *zajal*s. The latter inference would take us back, at most, four hundred years before Ibn Quzmān, and two centuries before the invention of the *muwaššaḥa*.[37]

(7) Mozarabic Hotheads and Muslim Taunts

Add to the above that, as early as 854, Alvarus of Córdoba, a prominent figure in the Mozarabic martyrs' revolt that shook the Christian community of that city in the mid-ninth century, complained bitterly in his *Indiculus Luminosus* that, among many other outrages to which (in his opinion) Christians were being subjected by Muslims, the latter "defile the priests of God with vernacular proverbs and obscene songs."[38] Naturally, we have no way of knowing precisely to what genre these obscene songs belonged, nor in what language they were sung, but their scandalous nature makes it not implausible that some of them may have been either satirical *zajal*s or verses of the "*Ruddū ruddū. . .*" variety. Furthermore, that early in time, before Andalus had undergone thorough linguistic Arabization on the popular level, it is very likely that some of these songs were in Romance.

(B) The Visigothic Period

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[37] For more on the descendants of Muḥammad al-Zajjālī, see Chalmeta 1979; Quzmān, *Zajal* no. 89; Lévi-Provençal 1950-53:III, 335, 382.

[38] "Sacerdotes Dei [. . .] vulgali [sic] proverbio et cantico inhonesto sugillant," (Gil 1973: I, 278; my trans.).

It is natural to expect that references to songs composed under Visigothic rule, all of which derive from Latin sources, will not mention the *zajal* by name. Put differently, since we are dealing with a period for which actual vernacular texts are lost, there can be no assurance that the references contained in our sources are to songs of the type designated after 711 as *zajal*. Nonetheless, I have gathered together certain Latin texts from this period to illustrate the obvious existence of popular songs at that time, in the hope that future research may be able to shed further light on this ancient and currently lost lyrical tradition from the Iberian Peninsula.

(1) Nuns and Laywomen

Saint Leander of Seville (536/38-600) appears to have been more than usually determined to protect the chastity of a virginal nun named Florentina. To this pious end, the goodly saint wrote a treatise in which he depicted in lurid detail (for her edification, of course) all the temptations of the flesh to which a pretty young bride of Christ could unwittingly fall victim. In one chapter of his work, he advises Florentina to avoid, at all cost, any social intercourse with laywomen, among other reasons because the latter are wont to sing unedifying songs:

> How will she associate with you; she with whom you do not draw along Christ's yoke with a common neck? To a dissimilar habit belongs a dissimilar inclination. Like an instrument of Satan, she will sing to you that which will arouse the charms of this world, and thrust you along the paths of the Devil. Flee the song of sirens, my sister.[39]

Saint Leander's warning is of special interest, for it suggests the existence in Visigothic Spain of women's songs, possibly of a type similar to those that were to surface much later, during the Arab period, in the form of the Romance *ḫarja*s and thereafter as the Galician *cantigas de amigo*. Elsewhere, the Saint insists:

> If a scandalous song should delight your ears [...], next the flesh will be stirred with the allurement of sensual pleasure.[40]

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[39] "Qui[d] tecum agit, cum qua communi collo Christi iugum non ducis? Dispar habitu, dispar affectu. Organum satanae, hoc tibi canet quod inlecebras saeculi moveat et semitis diaboli impingat. Fuge sirenarum cantus, mi soror" (Ruiz and Melia 1971:38; my trans.).

[40] "Si oblectet aures turpis cantus [...] tunc oblectatione sensibili carnis movetur inlecebra" (Ruiz and Melia 1971:40; my trans.).

(2) Craftsmen and Monks

Saint Isidore of Seville composed a set of rules for monastic life in Visigothic Spain between the years 615 and 619. In it he offers his monks the following advice:

> While they work, the monks must meditate or sing psalms, so that they may lighten their work with the pleasure of song and of the word of God. For if worldly craftsmen do not cease to sing scandalous love songs during their own work, and indeed, so employ their mouths in songs and stories, in order not to withdraw their hands from work, how much more so should the servants of Christ, who must work with their hands in such a manner as always to have the praise of God in their mouths, and with their tongues to offer Him psalms and hymns.[41]

(3) Visigoths versus Ethiopians

G.E. Von Grunebaum has pointed out the intriguing case of Saint Valerius (ca. 630-95), who died shortly before the Arab conquest and was a member of the Visigothic nobility (1956:403-5). The saint describes an unfortunate experience he survived at the hands of a certain person, whom he casts in the role of a villain, named Iustus, "of the barbarous nation of the Ethiopians," who caused scandal by singing jolly songs to the lyre[42] on festive occasions accompanied by much lasciviousness. Iustus also sang "savage incantations" in church, to which he danced until he lapsed into unconsciousness.

(C) The Roman Period

(1) Roman Revelry and the Girls of Gades

The Phoenician colony of Gades (Cádiz) was, under Roman rule, famous for its dancing girls and singers, many of whom earned their living in the streets, taverns, and even private residences of Rome. The Hispano-Roman poet Martial (ca. AD 38-ca. 103), who refers to Gades as "playful" (*Epigrams*, I:61), affirms that a distinctive feature of the fashionable dandy

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[41] "Monachi operantes meditare vel psallere debent ut carminis verbique dei delectatione consolentur ipsum laborem. Si enim saeculares opifices inter ipsos labores suorum operum amatoria turpia cantare non desinunt atque ita ora sua in cantibus et fabulis implicant ut ab opere manus non subtrahant, quanto magis servi Xri qui sic manibus operare debent, ut semper laudem dei in ore habeant et linguis eius psalmis et hymnis inserviant" (Ruiz and Melia 1971:99; my trans.).

[42] *Lira*, not "luth," contrary to what Von Grunebaum asserts. See Migne 1955, vol. 87, 414, par. 33, col. A.

was that he would be able to hum "the songs of the Nile or of Gades" (*ibid*.: III, 63); he also describes some "girls from licentious Gades," who at parties, "wiggle with studied tremors and unending eroticism, their lascivious hips" (*ibid*.:V, 78), as well as a woman "skilled in adopting lascivious postures to the rhythm of Baetic castanets, and in dancing to the tune of the music of Gades" (*ibid*.:VI, 71). Pliny the Younger (ca. AD 61-ca.113) chides a friend because, instead of accepting his invitation to a refined banquet, he went to dine at a place where he was offered "oysters, sows' wombs, sea urchins, and dancing girls from Gades" (*Epistles*, I:15). Juvenal (ca. AD 60-ca. 128) invites a friend to dinner and warns him:

> Perhaps, hoping to find here a group of girls from Gades, you already see in your imagination how they will adopt their exciting postures to the sound of the music, and how, stirred by applause, they will let themselves fall to the ground, with quivering buttocks. There are married women who attend, beside their husbands, performances of this kind (although anyone would be ashamed to describe them in their presence). [. . .] My humble dwelling is not made for such diversions. That clatter of castanets, those words that even the whore standing naked in the stinking arcade would be ashamed to utter, those obscene cries, those refined excesses, all that is to be heard and enjoyed by him who owns Lacedaemonian mosaics to defile with his own vomit. These are things that appear natural among the rich. Games of dice and adultery are only viewed with disfavor by lesser folk; if those who practice such vices are wealthy, they are considered jolly persons who know how to enjoy themselves. My dinner of today will offer you amusements of another kind. Passages by the Iliad poet will be sung, along with lines by Maro, so sublime that one won't know to whom belongs the victory. These poems being what they are, who cares for the voice of the singer? (*Satires*, XI:162)

Statius (ca. AD 45-96) mentions "the sound of the cymbals of Gades" among those heard in the streets of Rome during the Saturnalia (*Silvae*, I:6, 71). Strabo (b. ca. 64 BC) narrates how the explorer Eudoxus, upon beginning his circumnavigation of the African continent, went to Gades where he "constructed a large ship and two galleys such as those used by pirates; and in the ship he placed girls skilled in musical matters, and physicians, along with craftsmen, and finally set sail, making for India on the high sea" (*Geography*, II:3, 4). In contrast to the above license, Martial recalls with nostalgia the seemingly more chaste "choruses of Rixamae" (*Epigrams*, I:55, 16) near his native Bilbilis (in the area of Calatayud), about the exact location and nature of which nothing is known.

(2) *The Dancing Dames of Seville*

In the *Breviarium Eborense*, we are told that the two Christian martyrs, Saints Iusta and Rufina of Seville (d. ca. 287) earned their living

by selling pottery (Cumont 1927:332-33). One day, which Franz Cumont has identified as falling within the Adonic festival, "the married women of the town carried around a stone idol named Salabovem [= Salambo] there, and with a Pagan rite, after their custom, demanded gifts from street to street for the honor and use of their god, dancing all the while" (*idem*). When the two Christian women refused to contribute their clay pots as an offering to the idol, since these would be used to plant the pagan "gardens of Adonis," they were hauled before the governor Diogenianus, and incarcerated. After being subjected to torture, they were made to expiate their offense to the god, and were again imprisoned. Iusta died in jail, and her body was thrown into a well,[43] whereas Rufina was executed in the same prison, and her body was cremated in the local amphitheater. Cumont infers from the downfall of Saints Iusta and Rufina the existence of the Oriental Adonic festival in Seville, complete with women dancing publicly in the streets.

III. A Solution

It is well known that singers and dancing girls were connected to the temples of Astarte in the East, and that in such temples ritual prostitution was also practiced. From the pagan and Christian texts mentioned above, it appears that around the turn of the eras, this practice still survived in Phoenician Gades, while the Adonic festivals of Seville attest to the survival of a parallel cult even later. Toward the end of the Visigothic period, the ecstatic dancing, accompanied by song, of the Ethopian Iustus is viewed by Von Grunebaum as a survival of the tradition of Gades. When and if such songs and dances became *zajal*s, we may never know. Nevertheless, it would be rash to deny, on the basis of the evidence provided above, that very early after the Arab conquest of the Iberian Peninsula, and from one to two centuries before the invention of the *muwaššaḥa*, a type of poetry called *zajal* already existed there. Precisely what was this *zajal* like? Was it radically different in structure from the *zajal* as we know it from extant specimens? Here, the famous passage on the invention of the *muwaššaḥa* transmitted by Ibn Bassām (wrote ca. 1106-9) is not only of help, but is itself clarified by the evidence provided above. Ibn Bassām states that the inventor of *muwaššaḥa*s

> used to compose them after the manner of the hemistichs of classsical Arabic poetry (except that most of them were composed after the manner of the non-existent, hypothetical meters that are not used in classical Arabic poetry), quoting colloquial Arabic and Romance diction, which he called the *markaz* [= *ḫarja*], and basing the *muwaššaḥa* upon it, without any internal

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[43] A point which Cumont disputes (*ibid.*:337).

rhyming in the *markaz*es or in the *ġuṣn*s.[44]

The above passage implies, at the very least, that the earliest *muwaššaḥa*s had *ġuṣn*s and *markaz*es, that is to say, that they were strophic, rather than monorhymed. It also draws attention to the fact that they were based on a final *ḫarja* that was not in Classical Arabic, but in vernacular diction instead, as a consequence of which, the text implies, the meters of these poems were in most cases different from those used in the classical tradition. If we take into account that the purpose of quoting a *ḫarja* is largely musical, insofar as it informs the singers that they should sing the song to the tune of a well-known composition which the poet is contrafacting, then there is no known poetic structure capable of generating the *muwaššaḥa* through the process of contrafaction other than the *zajal* proper, as it has come down to us. Up to the present, scholars have hesitated to reach this conclusion, because there was no clear proof that the *zajal* antedated the *muwaššaḥa*. As of now, however, it is unavoidable to conclude that the *zajal* proper is a very old, traditional Andalusian form that existed orally before the *muwaššaḥa* and that this form was strophic, colloquial, and couched in non-Ḫalīlian meters. This points to a high degree of probability that both the Arab and the Romance zajalesque forms descend from a native Romance prototype and are therefore sisters. In contrast, the *muwaššaḥa* is a learned development of the popular *zajal* in Arabic and Romance, and is therefore its Arab daughter. Finally, the *muwaššaḥa*-like *zajal* is a later and learned adapatation of vernacular Arabic diction, *zajal* themes, and techniques, to the previously invented *muwaššaḥa* structure. Thus, until further notice, it would appear that the *zajal* proper came before the *muwaššaḥa* and that its orgins, at least insofar as form is concerned, are ultimately popular and Romance.

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[44] From Bassām 1978:I, 469. My translation of this rather difficult passage has been justified and defended in Armistead and Monroe 1985:212-34.

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