

DECONSTRUCTING A MEDIÆVAL LEGEND: GUIDO D'AREZZO, THE "ARABIAN
INFLUENCE," AND THE ROLE OF "HISTORICAL IMAGINATION"

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This document is a tribute to the courageous and passionate scholars who have tirelessly striven to bring the truth of Arab cultural influence to an often-resistant academic community. Among these are Julián Ribera y Tarragó (1858-1934), Henry George Farmer (1882-1965), and María Rosa Menocal (1953-2012). Gratitude for the work of R. G. Collingwood (1889-1943), whose concept of “historical imagination” provides the framework for this thesis, is also expressed.

On a personal note, I am grateful to my parents, Rhimo & Rachid, for their life-long encouragement of my intellectual curiosity and musical ability; and to my sister, Farah and her family, for their treasured companionship and support.

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Abstract of Thesis Presented to the Graduate School of the University of Florida in Partial
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Music history is replete with unchallenged legends. Some of these legends stay alive because they serve a purpose for a particular population; others bolster ideological points of view. What happens when new evidence emerges that threatens long-held beliefs? The "legend" of 11th-century monk Guido d'Arezzo and his purported "invention" of solmization perfectly demonstrates the conundrum of maintaining a legend in the face of substantial documentation of Arab influence on cultural and scientific innovations during the Middle Ages. Pioneering Arabist scholar Henry George Farmer brought these findings to light in the early 20th century, meeting resistance from Eurocentric scholars seeking to preserve the *status quo*. This issue is examined through the lens of "historical imagination," a concept articulated by R. G. Collingwood. How can coherent visions of the past be constructed so that "truth" can be discerned? And what is the consequence of suppressing conflicting visions?

SUMMARY OF ARGUMENT

Overall Strategy

The foundation of this thesis is built on exploring the role of “historical imagination” in constructing narratives of the past. Using Guido d'Arezzo's “discovery” of solmization as an example, I will evaluate this legendary discovery vis-à-vis the likelihood of influence of Arabic music theory on Guido, given the prevailing flow of knowledge from the East during the 11th century. The optimal strategy will be to concurrently present Arab influence theory as plausible while questioning Guido's “originality.”

Tripartite Approach

A discussion of historiography is the first element in the thesis. A basic presumption is that historical narrative is neither a “straight line” process nor a wholly objective endeavor: factors such as bias (e.g. Eurocentrism) and author agenda affect the narrative--and indeed, these factors are inevitable! A corollary is that the degree of reliability of sources has a major impact on discerning historical “truths” (cf. the questionable value of the work of Mariano Soriano Fuertes due to his ultra-nationalism).

As R. G. Collingwood points out, the mere process of selecting or ignoring facts is *in itself* an interpretive function and an exercise in “historical imagination.” Like the landscape-painter, the historian “is always selecting, simplifying, schematizing, leaving out what he thinks unimportant and putting in what he regards as essential.”¹ This activity goes beyond mere interpolation to a “web of imaginative construction” comprised of *both* the fixed “nodal points” and “what the historian constructs *between* them.” Added to this factor is the additional challenge

¹ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, rev. ed., ed. by Jan van der Dussen (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 236.

of access to data due to the time lapse since the period in question, the Middle Ages. The literature shows that historical accounts stemming from divergent interpretations result in inevitable academic disputes.

The second component, Guido's "invention" of solmization, is presented as a case study of constructing an historical narrative when all the facts are not available or when some facts or issues are overlooked. Guido d'Arezzo, an 11th-century Benedictine monk, is credited with introducing the technique of solmization (along with other musical innovations).² David Hiley writes that the "purpose of the system was to facilitate the memorization of unfamiliar melodies."³ The "method," as Guido termed it, associated the notes *ut, re, mi, fa, sol, la* to syllables drawn from an allegedly existing hymn, *Ut Queant Laxis*. Scholars over the centuries have demonstrated their own biases in selecting/omitting details and interpreting Guido's legacy: Claude V. Palisca writes that "Guido's reputation as a theorist and pedagogue has rested as much on legend as on the works he left behind,"⁴ noting that many of the innovations attributed to the monk may not have been correctly attributed: including neumatic notation, the "Guidonian" hand, and the system of hexachords and mutations.⁵ Palisca observes that "several centuries after his death his accomplishments were progressively inflated, such was the reverence for his name."⁶

² Richard Taruskin takes this a step further: not only referring to Guido as a "legend in his own time" but stating that he "by now is something of a myth, a musical Prometheus." Richard Taruskin, *The Oxford History of Western Music*, vol. 1. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 100.

³ David Hiley, "Solmization," *Oxford Companion to Music*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 26, 2014, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t114/e6302.

⁴ Claude V. Palisca, ed., *Hucbald, Guido, and John: Three Medieval Treatises*, trans. Warren Babb (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1978), 49.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Palisca, 49.

Elements of doubt concerning the Guido “legend” are present beyond mainstream Western scholarship: generations of Arabist⁷ scholars have advocated the notion of Arab influence on Guido. Their premise is based on the significant infusion of knowledge which spread from East to West during the time of the Middle Ages: originating in Baghdad and migrating to Islamic Spain. The chain of transmission continued from al-Andalus throughout Europe by means of many channels, primarily via visiting scholars and monks who carried both utilitarian and scholarly knowledge back with them; translated books made their way into European monastic libraries. European scholarship was inevitably affected by this infusion of knowledge: literally a transformation of learning and a “source of Renaissance.”⁸

How could Guido have been *unaffected* by this knowledge surge? Some scholars, e.g. Palisca, maintain Guido's “originality” and absence of external influence. Henry George Farmer, however, takes his place in the lineage of Arabist scholars who have called into the question the presumption of Guido's independent “invention” of solmization--by invoking the possibility of Arab influence. The Farmer-Schlesinger debate crystallizes the conflicting East-West viewpoints toward Arab influence and points out an immovable and chauvinistic “Eurocentric” outlook.

⁷ Arabist or Orientalist? In Edward Said's afterword to his seminal book *Orientalism*, he notes that the term “Orientalist” once “represent[ed] the erudite, scholarly, mainly academic specialist in the languages and histories of the East.” Albert Hourani pointed out to Said in a 1992 letter that his book “had the unfortunate effect of making it almost impossible to use the term ‘Orientalism’ in a neutral sense.” Hence the use of the more archaic but less confusing term “Arabist” in this thesis, with its dual meaning of “specialist” in Arab culture and advocate for that culture (www.m-w.com). Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 340.

⁸ Referring to the subtitle of the John R. Hayes anthology cited below. Richard H. Hoppin credits Baghdad and Cordoba for their “contributions to the ‘renaissance’ of the twelfth century in Western Europe.” Richard H. Hoppin, *Medieval Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1978), 14.

Conclusion? A Return To Historiography

The Mediæval period was a rich time of dissemination of knowledge, in large part due to the translations and original scholarship generated by the House of Wisdom in Baghdad and propagated in Islamic Spain (al-Andalus and Catalonia). Because of the widespread and indisputable wave of Arab influence during the Middle Ages, in numerous fields ranging from agriculture to mathematics to astronomy, it is unlikely that Guido (who was educated and lived within the monastic system his entire life) would have been unaware of aspects of Arab music theory.

The monastic system served as a powerful and effective mode of transmission throughout Mediæval Europe; through acquisition of works for libraries, direct teaching by monks (e.g. Gerbert d’ Aurillac in Reims), and travel to other monasteries to gain knowledge. However, it is impossible to identify the exact work, author, or teacher responsible for implanting a seed in Guido's subconscious. Since this *is* impossible, perhaps the question needs to be re-framed: not asking simply “was Guido in Catalonia?” or “was Guido a student of Gerbert?” but rather “what can we assume was the extent and impact of Arab influence on Guido?” and, further, “how was this influence manifested in his creative output?”

Larger questions emerge: What are the ramifications of upholding the Guido legend in the face of contradictory evidence? Even if it may serve a function in church lore, it denies acknowledging the contributions of Arab knowledge, keeping Western culture insular. How does this period of history symbolize a recognition of the continual “flow” of influence between the East and West through time: realizing that points of “common ground” and mutually beneficial influence exist at certain periods (as exemplified by the *Convivencia*, the time of co-existence of

Muslims, Christians, and Jews in al-Andalus) and acknowledging that the “cross-currents” flow both ways, with the dominant culture ultimately imposing their culture on the Other (cf. Bruno Nettl, *The Western Impact on World Music: Change, Adaptation, and Survival*, 1985)?

OVERVIEW

This thesis takes as its starting-point the largely unchallenged assumption that Guido d'Arezzo, an 11th-century Benedictine monk, independently “invented” the musical technique of solmization. As legend goes, Guido “discovered” this technique as a convenient method of helping monks sight-read and eventually memorize a large repertoire of hymns and chants. What is now known as solfège (or, more commonly, the “do-re-mi” system) was originally correlated to syllables and notes from a hymn to John the Baptist entitled *Ut Queant Laxis*. Pope John XIX was so impressed that he summoned Guido to Rome.

For centuries, Arabist scholars have questioned the validity of Guido's “discovery” as wholly original. As Henry George Farmer first pointed out in 1925, the likelihood of “Arabian influence” on Guido's work (and that of other music theorists) had been documented over the past centuries: from Franciszek Meniński (1680) to Jean-Benjamin Laborde (1780) to Guillaume André Villoteau (1809). This roster of scholars maintained that comparable systems had previously existed in Arab musical practice. A sense of ambiguity pervades recent scholarship, with the language of uncertainty scattered throughout the literature: not only in regard to the dating of the hymn and the disputed authorship of Paulus Diaconus, but also with regard to Guido's precise role in solmization. Many of the numerous musical innovations attributed to the monk have been questioned or discredited.

The thrust of this thesis is to verify the probability that Guido learned of prior solmization systems from the Arab world and that this knowledge was incorporated into the development of his theory. The key to establishing Arab influence on Guido--however that may have occurred--resides in the rich cultural climate in “Moorish” Spain. Monasteries in Catalonia and places of

learning throughout al-Andalus served as conduits for the stream of knowledge issuing from Baghdad's "House of Wisdom" (*Bayt al-Hikma*). A "revival of learning" representing the "classical tradition, including Islamic additions"¹ found its way into European monasteries and libraries, making advances in science and medicine possible--along with enrichment in philosophy and literature--eventually creating the intellectual groundwork for the European Renaissance. The lifework of Pope Sylvester II, born Gerbert d'Aurillac,² exemplifies the efficacy of the monastic network for educating both monks and young laypeople and transmitting the knowledge that was springing from the Arab world.

What is at stake in deconstructing the Guido legend? Not merely ascertaining the "truth" of his alleged discovery or overturning a long-held belief, but authenticating the extent of Arab influence on Mediaeval Europe and addressing larger issues of historiography that are integral to such a re-appraisal. It is less concerned with discrediting Guido's contributions to music than with acknowledging the inevitable aspect of speculation entailed in the process of historiography which can propagate legends at the expense of fact. R. G. Collingwood has addressed critical aspects of "how we tell the story" through his concept of "historical imagination": using historians' own biases, subjectivity, and interpretations as the raw material to construct historical narratives that achieve a sense of continuity through interpolation.³ There are, however, inherent drawbacks to Collingwood's schema--including reliability of accounts in the case of extreme bias and the inevitability of insoluble academic debates. A further consequence is the omission of

¹ David C. Lindberg, *The Beginnings of Western Science: The European Scientific Tradition in Philosophical, Religious and Institutional Context, Prehistory to A.D. 1450*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), 200.

² Also known as Gerbert of Aurillac.

³ Collingwood, 240-241.

important facts, events, and persons. In the context of this project, failing to acknowledge Arab influence where it in all likelihood existed simply reinforces (in Edward Said's words) "Western superiority and Oriental inferiority"⁴ and represents an incomplete, and unfair, historical record.

⁴ Said, 42.

HISTORIOGRAPHY

Sources are the historian's raw material. In the language of historical method they are the surviving evidence of man's¹ past activity. One class of sources is intended from the first to convey information; evidence of this kind the historian calls "tradition." Another class of sources, while not so intended, is none the less favorably adapted to this end; evidence of this kind the historian calls "remains." To collect, criticize, arrange, and interpret such raw material is the historian's task; the systematic formulation of the processes involved is historical method.²

This statement succinctly summarizes the art and science of historical narrative: sources, as if archaeological artifacts, are first gathered and then organized and interpreted. During this process, the historian brings his/her own background and viewpoints to the raw material, adding a personal dimension that is unavoidably incorporated into the narrative. Thus the process of constructing historical narrative is neither a "straight line" nor a wholly objective endeavor: factors such as cultural bias (e.g. Eurocentrism) and author agenda may affect the narrative. As R. G. Collingwood points out, the mere process of selecting or ignoring facts is, in itself, an interpretive function and an exercise in "historical imagination."³ In dealing with the Middle Ages--a period of history a millennium in the past--historical imagination is especially crucial in order to "fill in the gaps" (as Collingwood terms it, interpolation). Does the exercise of historical imagination imply that historical narrative is less than wholly "objective"? What *is* the impact of personal bias or ideology on the reliability of historical narratives? How do academic disputes

¹ Authors' gender-specific usage will be retained.

² Proceedings of the Music Teachers National Association, XXVIII (1933), 105-116, in Oliver Strunk, "Sources and Problems for Graduate Study in Musicology," *Essays on Music in the Western World* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1974), 9.

³ Collingwood, 235.

result from conflicting versions of the “truth”? What is the effect on pedagogy, and how can readers learn to be discerning in evaluating sources?

In addressing the issue of “changing attitudes to music of the past,” Glenn Stanley contrasts the varying approaches taken throughout periods of history:

Medieval and Renaissance writing on music was informed by a view of the musical past. That view depended in large part on an uncritical acceptance of ancient legend and chronicle, biblical authority and theological doctrine; thus it was not a historical view in any modern sense of the word.⁴

Stanley cites an opposing approach through the example of

‘querelle des Bouffons,’ the long-running 18th-century argument about the relative merits of contemporary Italian and French music. As late as 1780, when La Borde's *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (the most important French music history of its time) was published, the dispute shaped historical thinking in France.⁵

With the addition of the “critical” dimension, the role of personal interpretation comes to the fore: Stanley insists that “the approach to general historiographical problems is *inevitably* conditioned by the *aesthetic views* of the art historian”⁶ [emphasis added].

In terms of “covering” the scope of historical issues, Michael Stanford draws an analogy of history to geography (a stretch of the past/a stretch of country):

a fully historical account would omit nothing. But that is impossible. Therefore, in history as in cartography, there has to be a reduction in scale...there have to be decisions about what can be left out and what must be kept in...what determines the choice of features to be ‘mapped’ in historiography? I think it is historical importance.⁷

⁴ Glenn Stanley, “Historiography,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 29, 2012, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/51674.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Michael Stanford, *An Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 58.

Stanford thus reinforces Collingwood by pointing out the necessity of “leaving things out,” i.e. being selective. But what *are* the criteria for establishing “historical importance”? Inherent in the task of historical narrative are a number of pitfalls and roadblocks--obstacles to the clear reporting of historical events. The passage of time and absence of technology only exacerbate this difficulty. Ideally, narratives about the past are straightforward, objective, and unbiased; interpretations are separated from facts. But even the selection of which “facts” to include presupposes an editorial stance: as Stanford puts it, “what can be left out and what must be kept in.” A further disadvantage results from lacunae in factual knowledge (Collingwood addresses the process of “filling things in”); a disadvantage that is propounded with each preceding century, as information sources become increasingly more unreliable, and verification virtually impossible.

Historians’ handling of data--what to leave out and put in--becomes problematic when these additions and omissions indicate bias (or perhaps mere disinterest, or even ignorance) that interferes with telling the “complete” story. Or do these editorial procedures simply reflect the authors' perception of (in Stanford's phrase) levels of “historical importance”? Reading and evaluating texts thus become reminiscent of the game “What’s missing from this picture?” What *isn't* being told? And what, on the other hand, *is*?

Assessing Sources

The multitude of sources consulted for this thesis provides a tangible example of this quandary. In taking the route of advocating for the certitude of the Arab influence on European culture (including music), a curious phenomenon has come to light. How could it be that certain respected authors acknowledge and even applaud Arab (or Islamic) influence, and others patently

ignore it? Two random selections from my university library confirm this: in scanning the index of a book entitled *Medieval Monasticism*--where I would have expected to find references to Gerbert d'Aurillac/Pope Sylvester II as well as al-Andalus--nary a trace could be found. The Catalonian monasteries of Cuxa and Ripoll are mentioned only in passing, as part of the "monastic revival of the early eleventh century, which followed the ravages of the Muslim conqueror al-Mansur."⁸ All credit for scholarship is squarely given to Western thinkers, with no mention of the Arab role in translation of the classics. This is somewhat ironic, since the book opens by stating that Christian monasticism had its origins in the Middle East: specifically, the deserts of Egypt and Palestine! C. H. Lawrence deems this 3rd-century manifestation a "primitive form...a way of life adopted by solitaries, or anchorites, living in the desert."⁹ The author is to be credited, however, with addressing the critical theme of East-to-West cultural influence. The desert tradition was, in his words, "transmitted to the West" during the 4th century "through various channels": migration of refugee bishops and individual ascetics, "accounts brought back by pilgrims and pious sightseers," and literature of Egyptian monastics, particularly the *Life of St. Antony* by Athanasius, which was "quickly translated into Latin."¹⁰ This work, according to Lawrence, was "read with passionate interest in Christian circles in Rome and Milan and at Trier"¹¹ and spurred on the development of Western monasticism.

⁸ C. H. Lawrence, *Medieval Monasticism: Forms of Religious Life in Western Europe in the Middle Ages*, 2nd ed. (London: Longman, 1984), 102.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 12.

In contrast to Lawrence's avoidance of topics concerning al-Andalus, *The Making of the Middle Ages* is replete with references: from Avicenna to Catalonia to Cordoba to Gerbert to Islam to Ripoll.¹² R. W. Southern literally builds his book around the accomplishments of Gerbert (later Pope Sylvester II), offering this vigorous endorsement:

The works which he wrote, the methods of teaching he devised and the pupils he taught at Rheims¹³ became the most important factor in the advancement of learning in northern Europe during the next two generations--particularly in enlarging the scope of the study of logic and in forwarding that reconquest of Greek thought which was the foundation of the medieval intellectual achievement.¹⁴

Southern clearly and unambiguously indicates the extent to which Arab influence was a factor in Gerbert's significant contributions: "Between Silvester¹⁵ II and Innocent III *every generation* saw some fresh addition to the scientific knowledge which Latin scholars *owed to Arabic sources*"¹⁶ [emphases added]. Southern boldly refers to this trend as a "one-way traffic of ideas"¹⁷ which began in the 11th century: bringing scholars *from* England, France, and Italy *to* centers in Spain, Sicily, and Southern Italy "in search of knowledge"¹⁸ [emphases added]. In light of Southern's enthusiasm for Gerbert and the Spanish milieu, it is curious that Lawrence would completely neglect "Eastern" influence in discussing Mediaeval monasticism; to what can this omission be

¹² Norman F. Cantor claims that "the two most influential and widely read books on medieval history published in the past half century were [Marc] Bloch's *Feudal Society* and *The Making of the Middle Ages* by the Oxford don R. W. Southern." Cantor notes Southern's "refined neoromantic sensitivity." From Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: William Morrow, 1991), 158.

¹³ Also spelled Reims.

¹⁴ R. W. Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1953), 11.

¹⁵ Alternate spelling of Sylvester.

¹⁶ Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 66.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

attributed? On the other hand, could Southern's phrase "one-way traffic of ideas" be an indication of the disparities existing between Europe and the Eastern world during that time in history?

As a "bracket" to this exercise, I am struck by the bias (or predilection?) inherent in my *own* reactions to these two books, coloring my assessment of each one's usefulness: Lawrence was disappointing, but Southern was gratifying. Why? Because the latter supports my point of view, and does so elegantly! Even the words I have used to describe each book (note, for example, their implicit disapproval of Lawrence) are an outgrowth of my personal response.¹⁹ This small insight is a reminder that the author is, in effect, "in the middle," mediating the event or phenomenon of history to his/her intended audience. Even as the mediator applies bias to the subject-at-hand, so too does the reader or listener in responding to the mediator!

These two examples from the literature demonstrate how--even when "facts" are verifiable--historical narratives can "spin" these facts (or omit them) to serve agendas of a political or ideological nature or promote a particular agenda. It then becomes imperative to discern the narrator's intention as well as carefully examine *how* facts are used to promote various viewpoints. Beverley Southgate bluntly states one of the less benign functions of history:

during decades of world-wide political upheaval, historians, albeit more prosaically, have been persuaded to provide no less fanciful epic backgrounds as underpinning for political power, and imperial manipulations have continued.²⁰

¹⁹ cf. Collingwood's preference of Tacitus over Suetonius, note 73.

²⁰ Beverley C. Southgate, *What is History For?* (London: Routledge, 2005), 64.

She proceeds to cite both Napoleon and Augustus in regard to “myth-making,” noting each one’s insistence that “the historical record support his own position.”²¹

The Search For Truth

It has been instructive to assess each author’s point of view, agenda, and implicit bias in the process of gathering research sources. As demonstrated by the Lawrence/Southern example above, the range of content varies widely on nearly every subject related to this study, resulting in a “sliding-scale” of interpretation: e.g., Ripoll was enormously important/not very important; Guido d’Arezzo is the sole originator of solmization/Guido was not the “inventor” but only the “perfector” of solmization.

The skeptical reader may justifiably ask, “Well then, what IS the truth?” How can all of these authors come up with such varying conclusions, presuming that all had access to a pool of comparable information sources? (Noting, of course, that technology has significantly expanded the information pool; and that the multi-lingual researcher has a built-in advantage in attaining breadth of data, especially derived from primary sources). The *truly* skeptical reader may simply come to the conclusion that the very concept of “objectivity” is a fallacy! That is, given (roughly) the same raw material, five authors will produce five vastly different accounts. The primary reason, as discussed above, is that each author brings to this material his/her own background and mindset, along with individual purposes and motivations for writing. While the ideal of academic objectivity is desired, it may not always be achieved--despite the scholar’s best intentions.

²¹ Southgate, 64.

Stanford, cited above in connection with the history/geography analogy, confronts the issues of truth and objectivity in his section on “The Problem of Objectivity.”²² He opens with an example from Franco-era Spain that illustrates the pliability of “historical fact.” Stanford muses: “...in history argument often turns on questions of objectivity, rather than on truth.”²³ He then observes that

historians are trained to be thorough in their searches, accurate in their note-taking and conscientious in their citation of reference. As A. E. Housman said, for the scholar accuracy is not a virtue; it is a duty. Nevertheless, few historians have satisfied every reader of their unquestionable objectivity.²⁴

Stanford proceeds to define the implications of the objectivity/subjectivity binary:

that our ideas, judgements and statements should be formed wholly from the object (whatever it may be) under consideration. Their truth or falsity should be independent of what anyone thinks or feels. By contrast, subjective ideas, judgements and statements arise from the nature of the knowing subject; their truth or falsity is not independent of what he or she *thinks or feels*....But is it always possible to confine ourselves to the object, or (as it may be put) the facts²⁵ [emphases added].

Philip K. Hitti’s book *The Arabs: A Short History* provides a case-in-point regarding viewpoint, bias, and objectivity. This book, first published in 1943 under the sponsorship of Princeton University Press and intended for a general readership, is an abridgment of his scholarly title *History of the Arabs*. In the book’s introduction, MIT historian Philip Khoury (who terms Hitti’s scholarly version “magisterial”) frankly addresses the author’s subjective approach to writing his *Short History*. Khoury notes that Hitti’s narrative “comes to a sudden close in the

²² Stanford, 50-53.

²³ *Ibid.*, 51.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*

fifteenth century and is not taken up again...until the advent of the twentieth century.”²⁶ Khoury does not hesitate to rhetorically ask, “Why does Hitti pass over the four centuries of history when the Arabs lived under Ottoman Turkish rule?”²⁷ Khoury offers a dual explanation: first, that--since the Turks “controlled the machinery of imperial government” during this period--Hitti felt that “there was no Arab history then”²⁸ (as quoted by Albert Hourani). Khoury cites a second, more complicated reason for Hitti's omission: the burgeoning political identities for “educated Arabs” fostered at the American University of Beirut (which Khoury deems a “hotbed of early Arab political unrest”).²⁹

So much for Hitti's omission; what of his inclusions? Khoury is forthright about identifying Hitti's emphases, observing that “what Hitti relishes most of all are the vast array of cultural and scientific achievements that occurred during the first eight centuries of Islam and that were transmitted largely through the medium of Arabic.”³⁰ Khoury “waxes eloquent” on this topic, explaining that the Arabs were “inheritors of the great cultural traditions associated with Greece Rome, and Persia, and the creators of a new civilization defined by Islam.” This “inheritance”

enabled the Arabs, among other Muslims, to cover learning and knowledge from earlier periods of history and to make new advancements and discoveries on their own. Equally important, they were to transmit much of their accumulated learning and knowledge to Europe mainly through Muslim Spain, thereby *assisting in no small measure the birth of the European Renaissance*. The Middle Ages, by Hitti's lights, were the halcyon days for the Arabs, the era in which they took their place

²⁶ Philip K. Hitti, *The Arabs: A Short History* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 1943), *xii*.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, *xvi*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁹ *Ibid.*, *xvii*.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, *xiv*.

on the center stage of world history, never to do so in quite the same way again³¹
[emphasis added].

Hitti's book omits Ottoman Turkey and emphasizes Muslim Spain. Can his book then be considered “objective”? Probably not. But can it be considered well-researched and reputable? With the author's credentials as the “father” of Middle Eastern studies in the United States...probably so. Khoury does not shy away from the matter of subjectivity and personal involvement exhibited by this respected scholar and mentor:

Hitti, like other historians, has increasing difficulty maintaining a healthy distance from his subject....He exercised the right of all historians: to define his subject as he saw fit. And, like all historians, his own personal background, life experiences, intellectual formation, and formal training contributed to that defining process.³²

It becomes apparent that any historical inquiry entails a certain degree of bias and subjectivity. Inevitably, one is forced to ask if objectivity is attainable or even desirable. As Khoury notes, Hitti does not approach his material with an objective eye; on the contrary, he selectively presents information that challenges decades, even centuries of assumptions about history. It is indeed subjectivity that can fuel the passion of such an undertaking. The fact that Hitti was of Lebanese ancestry adds a personal element to his mission. Is it obligatory that personal backgrounds and convictions be suppressed when working in the academic realm? What is the impact on discovering “truth”?

³¹ Hitti, *xiv-xv*.

³² *Ibid.*, *xix*.

Ideological Positions

Anwar Chejne confronts the issue of the opposing stances of scholars with regard to their attitudes toward Arab/Islamic influence on the West. On one side is his own outlook as an Arabist, which he describes in a humorous anecdote:

Perhaps my enthusiasm for al-Andalus did not sit well with the colleague [a Latinist], for he said: "You sound like Ribera."³³ I replied: "I am flattered, indeed, but may I ask how I sound like Ribera?" He said: "Well, Ribera saw Moros all over Spain."³⁴

Chejne ripostes that "the charges against Ribera are unfair" and places this scholar in the company of Spanish Arabists known as *Banu Codera*; other associates were Miguel Asín Palacios, Emilio García Gómez, and Juan Vernet. According to Chejne, Don Francisco Codera (the mentor of this group) "set Spanish Arabism on a solid foundation; he viewed Arabic culture favorably but *not without the objectivity* demanded of scholarship"³⁵ [emphasis added]. Chejne credits *Banu Codera* with being "conversant in Spanish and Western cultures" and thus equipped to provide "incisive insight[s]" into the interaction of Arabic and Western cultures."³⁶ On the other hand, Chejne observes:

there appears to be a great resistance on the part of medievalists to recognize that Islamic culture was a vital force in European life; a force so real that it is no longer a subject of speculation. The tendency to ignore Islam...is prevalent among the majority of Hispanists.³⁷

³³ Referring to Julián Ribera y Tarragó.

³⁴ Anwar Chejne, "The Role of al-Andalus in the Movement of Ideas Between Islam and the West," in *Islam and the Medieval West: Aspects of Intercultural Relations* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1980), 110. The same "charges" have been levelled against Mariano Soriano Fuertes!

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 110.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 111.

To support this accusation, Chejne notes that the Hispanists whose scholarship is cited in Juan Luis Alborg's "massive work," *The History of Spanish Literature*, have a "tendency" to trace themes to French, English or Italian origins, but "hardly ever to a native or Arabic model."

Chejne does not hesitate to deem this a "kind of prejudice." Literary scholar/philologist María Rosa Menocal does not mince words in pointing out the dilemma in Arabist scholarship:

One of the principal manifestations of the anti-Arab prejudice in medieval studies is that the standards of "proof" are quite different for anyone positing Arabic influence from what they would be if one were making the same claim for a Latin or Greek source.³⁸

Menocal's culminating publication on this theme, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, is a full-out assault on Western bias. In her discussion of the origins of Provençal poetry, she explains that "the possibility that their background may have been the Arabic component of Europe in the Middle Ages was...effectively banished [from philological thought]."³⁹

Eurocentrism (coupled with a lack of understanding of the aesthetics of traditional Arabic music) may also be found in John Richardson's section "Conjectures on Eastern Music" in *A dissertation on the languages, literature, and manners of eastern nations*, in which he comments:

Their stile is apparently not very remote from that which prevailed in Europe before the eleventh century; when Guido and others began to improve the Italian taste. Simple melody seems to be their only object; without any idea of composition in score, or of harmonic accompaniment.⁴⁰

³⁸ María Rosa Menocal, "Pride and Prejudice in Medieval Studies: European and Oriental," *Hispanic Review* 53 (1985): 71.

³⁹ María Rosa Menocal, *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 83.

⁴⁰ John Richardson, *A dissertation on the languages, literature, and manners of eastern nations, originally prefixed to a dictionary, persian, arabic, and english: to which is added, part II, containing additional observations, together with further remarks on a new analysys on ancient mythology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1778), 208.

Kathleen Schlesinger's rebuttal to Henry George Farmer's 1925 essay on Arab influence also demonstrates an attitude of Eurocentrism, as she attributes advances in music theory solely to the Greeks: refusing to acknowledge Arab innovations (see below).

When Bias Goes Too Far

Upholding ideological positions lends power to a narrative, but can result in a loss of credibility: where does fact end and ideology begin? In the process of doing research for this thesis, it became necessary to discard sources due to lack of adequate documentation of sources and obvious and extreme bias. The proliferation of ideologically-based Web sites and the ubiquity of less-than-reliable Wikipedia articles contribute to this problem. Unfortunately, potentially promising arguments supporting my search for proof of Arab influence on Guido often do have dubious sources (whether a book or Web site). Guido's study in Catalonia was affirmed by Soriano, whose reputation for accuracy is widely questioned but whose patriotism is not. A statement that “Guido d'Arezzo a été l'élève de Gerbert d'Aurillac”⁴¹ would have been welcome news had it originated in an article located on JSTOR rather than a Web site dedicated to the history of Reims. A site entitled “Muslim Heritage” repeats Soriano's claim and emphatically states that “Hunke established that these Arabic syllables were found in an eleventh century Latin treatise produced in Monte Cassino, a place which had been occupied by the Muslims a number of times, and was the retiring place of Constantine the African [the great Tunisian scholar].”⁴² Who is “Hunke,” and how reliable is this source? A Google search revealed that Sigrid Hunke was the author of *Shams al-'Arab Tasta'a 'ala Al-Gharb* [Allah's Sun Over the Occident], published in 1969 by Commercial Office Publishing in Beirut. Red flags went up

⁴¹ histoiredereims.hautetfort.com/archive/2007/08/04/liste-des-eveques-de-reims.html.

⁴² www.muslimheritage.com/topics/default.cfm?ArticleID=406.

immediately (was this self-published?); they stayed firmly up when the only source of information on Hunke was found in Wikipedia. The information provided: she was a "German scholar" with a Ph.D. in religious studies from Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität in Berlin and served in the German Sciences Service of the SS. Her tutor, Ferdinand Clauss, was affiliated with the *Neue Rechte*. She wrote this publication following two years spent in Tangier, Morocco; the quote from her book appearing in the Wikipedia write-up is: "the influence exerted by the Arabs on the West was the first step in freeing Europe from Christianity."⁴³ Her religion is listed as pagan Unitarian (not affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Association). This information is not reassuring, especially when *Shams al-'Arab Tasta'a 'ala Al-Gharb* is not cited in any mainstream publications. I can only conclude that Hunke's work (*unlike* Hitti's) is both non-objective *and* unreliable.

H. B. Cotterill, a translator of Homer's *Odyssey*, refers to the issue of bias directly when discussing classical writers "to whom we are indebted for our knowledge."⁴⁴ He differentiates between categories of writers (identifying the binaries of ecclesiastical/pagan, along with writers of contemporary accounts and those from the past), cautioning about reliability; and is prescient in anticipating Collingwood's very similar arguments two decades later:

It will be remembered that some of these writers were ecclesiastics, or even Fathers of the Church, while others were pagans or were for other reasons strongly biassed, so that *it is often impossible to feel quite sure of their facts* or of their estimates of character. Those writers who relate contemporary events are naturally the most graphic and the most interesting and might be expected to furnish the most *accurate details*; but it is just such writers who were most *swayed* by personal and political influences. On the other hand, those who

⁴³ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sigrid_Hunke.

⁴⁴ H. B. Cotterill, *Medieval Italy during a thousand years (305-1313), a brief historical narrative with chapters on great episodes and personalities and on subjects connected with religion art and literature* (London: George G. Harrap, MCMXV), 173.

compiled historical and biographical accounts of days long past were wont to interweave a considerable amount of *legendary matter*, which they sometimes evolved from their own inner consciousness, as was the case with Agnellus of Ravenna, who...when facts failed him, in order that there should be no lacuna in his Lives of the Pontiffs, relied on God and the prayers of the brethren to inspire his imagination⁴⁵ [emphases added].

Historical Imagination

A central theme in this thesis is that of “historical imagination.” This pivotal concept is brilliantly explicated in a chapter of Collingwood's posthumous 1946 compilation, *The Idea of History* (a revised edition was published in 1993). This richly-textured essay was first presented in verbal form, serving as Collingwood’s inaugural lecture as Waynflete Professor of Metaphysical Philosophy at Magdalen College of Oxford University on October 28, 1935 (what a heady experience that must have been for his audience!). Collingwood, who was an historian as well as an archaeologist specializing in Roman Britain, opens his lecture/essay modestly:

at particular periods of history, particular philosophical problems are, as it were, in season, and claim the special attention of a philosopher anxious to be of service to his age.⁴⁶

Collingwood identifies theology as the “most fruitful philosophy of the age” in the Middle Ages, replaced by physical science in the 17th century. Since the time of Descartes, he maintains, the “habit of thinking historically” has dominated human thought.⁴⁷ Collingwood quickly dispenses with what he terms the “common-sense theory” of history which relies on authority and memory, boldly asserting: “every historian...does tamper...with what he finds in his authorities...he selects

⁴⁵ Cotterill, 173.

⁴⁶ Collingwood, 231.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 232.

from them what he thinks important, and omits the rest...he interpolates...things which they do not explicitly say...he criticizes them (as regards) misinformation or mendacity.”⁴⁸



Figure 3.1 Robin George Collingwood (1889–1943)⁴⁹ (Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004)⁵⁰

The historian thus becomes his “own authority” through these processes of selection, construction, and criticism⁵¹ (this concept comes into play with regard to bias). As Collingwood describes it, historical narrative is forged through a dynamic relationship between the precedent of authorities *along with* the historian's perception of the issue--which mobilizes the need for interpolation and inference and opens up a broad sense of empowerment:

⁴⁸ Collingwood, 235.

⁴⁹ By Walter Stoneman, 1934.

⁵⁰ Online edition, October 2008, accessed September 21, 2013, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/32503.

⁵¹ Collingwood, 236.

His picture of the subject, though it may consist in part of statements directly drawn from his authorities, consists also, and increasingly with every increase in his competence as an historian, of statements reached inferentially from those according to his *own* criteria, his *own* rules of method, and his *own* canons of relevance. In this part of his work he is never depending on his authorities in the sense of repeating what they tell him; he is relying on his *own* powers and constituting himself his *own* authority; while his so-called authorities are now not authorities at all but only evidence⁵² [emphases added].

At this point, Collingwood does not provide criteria for “competence” and does not distinguish between opinion and fact. However, this passage is useful inasmuch as it helps explain the staggering number of viewpoints represented in historical (as well as other) studies. It also hints at the difficulty of “objectivity” in conducting these studies, a point which was addressed above.

Another of Collingwood's tenets is that history does not “depend” on memory; and that “the historian can rediscover what has been completely forgotten” even though “no statement of it has reached him by an unbroken tradition from eyewitnesses.”⁵³ Further, the historian

can even discover what, until he discovered it, no one ever knew to have happened at all. This he does partly by the critical treatment of statements contained in his sources, partly what the use of what are called unwritten sources...⁵⁴

These deceptively simple statements are actually quite radical, with significant repercussions for anyone grappling with an historical issue or evaluating another's treatment of one. Through these statements, Collingwood accomplishes several things at once: first, confirming the inevitable “incompleteness” of the historical record; second, acknowledging that memory is neither adequate or even *necessary* in creating historical accounts; and third, delivering enormous power

⁵² Collingwood, 237.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 238.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

to the historian, who must fully unleash his/her intuition in constructing these accounts, while enjoying the freedom of working in an atmosphere of autonomy.

Collingwood offers a simple, and perhaps obvious, example of “incompleteness” to illustrate the “constructive way”--the process of “interpolating statements implied by authorities”⁵⁵ --and thus segue into the concept of historical imagination:

our authorities tell us that on one day Caesar was in Rome and on a later day in Gaul; they tell us nothing about his journey from one place to the other, but we interpolate this with a perfectly good conscience.⁵⁶

Such interpolation, Collingwood reasons, is not “arbitrary or fanciful” but (referring to Kant) “*a priori*.”⁵⁷ He explains that “what is in this way *inferred* is essentially something *imagined*”⁵⁸ [emphases added]. It is *a priori* imagination, he continues, “which, bridging the gaps between what our authorities tells us, gives the historical narrative or description its continuity.”⁵⁹ The imagination thus “does the entire work of historical construction.”⁶⁰ By offering the rather simple example of Caesar's travels from Rome to Gaul, Collingwood sets the stage for what some might find a startling hypothesis. Rather than merely “connecting the dots” between Event A and Event B, as presented in this example, the historian has a larger task: not only the creation of “a web of imaginative construction stretched between between certain fixed points provided by the statements of his authorities,”⁶¹ but, in actuality, the very establishment of the fixed points

⁵⁵ Collingwood, 240.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 241.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 242.

themselves: “the supposedly fixed points between which the historical imagination spins its web are not given to us ready made, they must be achieved by critical thinking.”⁶² He then uses the analogy of a detective who constructs an imaginary picture of how a crime was committed.⁶³

Collingwood's Oxfordian audience must have been mentally reeling at this point. Within minutes, the scholar has jumped from “connecting the dots” to actually “establishing the dots”!

But an even more startling concept is in store:

I am now driven to confess that there are for historical thought *no fixed points* thus given: in other words, that in history, just as there are properly speaking *no authorities*, so there are properly speaking *no data*⁶⁴ [emphases added].

The field of history thus becomes completely open-ended: his next comments indicate that historical problems “remain settled only until [the historian] or some one else decides to reopen them.”⁶⁵ (This may explain the periodic re-examination of the issue at hand, from Meniński to Farmer). Collingwood also proclaims that “every new generation must rewrite history in its own way.”⁶⁶ Thus, no problem is ever permanently “settled,” and the historian has the privilege and responsibility of fashioning a “web of imaginative construction” comprised of *both* the “nodal points of fabric” and “what he constructs between them.”⁶⁷ The resulting construction, according to Collingwood, “actually serves as the touchstone by which we decide whether alleged facts are genuine.”⁶⁸ The narration of history becomes, in effect, a dialogue both between the researcher

⁶² Collingwood, 243.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴, *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

and the material, as well as between the researcher and the reader--each bringing his/her own set of backgrounds and biases to the table. Collingwood, by my reading, does not discount the role of bias (or preference): "if I am told...I prefer Tacitus to Suetonius, I confess that I do." The reason? What Tacitus "tells him" can be incorporated into a "coherent and continuous picture of [his] own."⁶⁹ In the same way that I was disappointed with Lawrence and pleased with Southern, because one failed to meet my expectations and one succeeded, those who read the present account (with its own predispositions and biases) must be able to make sense of it--to find it coherent. Does the writing of history thus ultimately represent an exercise in persuasiveness rather than fact-verification?

Of the countless scholars who have explored Collingwood from the vantage points of political philosophy, aesthetics, and education, in addition to history, Leo Treitler links the concept of historical imagination with music in an essay entitled "History, Criticism, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony." He discusses Collingwood as one of three historians who embraced a "particularist approach" with its emphasis on history as a "mode of understanding."⁷⁰

Point/Counterpoint: Disputes, Rivalries, Agendas

The 20th-century "*cantigas* controversy" outlined by Amnon Shiloah⁷¹ demonstrates the fierce disputes that can and *have* emerged over points of historical interpretation. Not unlike political debates, partisans assess the "evidence," make their claims, and promote their agendas--with onlookers "taking sides." The controversy in question involves J. Ribera y Tarragó and

⁶⁹ Collingwood, 245.

⁷⁰ Leo Treitler, *Music and the Historical Imagination* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989), 40.

⁷¹ Amnon Shiloah, *Music in the World of Islam: A Socio-Cultural Study* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), 80-81.

Higinio Anglès, both termed “eminent Spanish scholars” by Shiloah.⁷² Ribera had used the occasion of the 700th anniversary of the birth of Alfonso el Sabio to publicly promote his theory about Arab influence on the development of the Troubadour genre in Provence. The basis of this theory rested on a collection of poems by ibn Quzmān along with a similarity in rhyme schemes between the *cantiga* and *zadjal*.⁷³ Ribera further upheld that Alfonso set texts of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria* to “the music of Arabs.” Shiloah cites Ribera's own observation that this theory “evoked furious polemics.”⁷⁴ Anglès “took exception to the idea of Arabian musical influence on the cantigas” and proceeded to undertake a “monumental” 21-year study of Alfonso's *Cantigas* before reaching the conclusion, according to Israel Katz, that “Spain had had indigenous music long before the Arabs and was never supplanted by Arabic musical idioms.”⁷⁵

On the other “side” of the argument, Shiloah writes that Henry George Farmer, his own mentor, was a “strong supporter of Ribera's thesis.”⁷⁶ Farmer, dubbed by Shiloah as “the celebrated expert on Arab music,” was a “fervent champion of the thesis stressing unequivocally that ‘many of the forms and dance forms of the minstrelsy of medieval Europe can be traced to the Arabs’.”⁷⁷ Where is the “truth” to be found in these disputes? What is the balance between fact and interpretation? Is bias--or “historical imagination”--the primary factor behind academic arguments of this nature, when absolute certainty in the historical record cannot be attained? This

⁷² Shiloah, 80.

⁷³ Usually spelled *zajal*.

⁷⁴ Shiloah, 80.

⁷⁵ Israel Katz, “Higinio Anglès and the Melodic Origins of the ‘Cantigas de Santa Maria’: A Critical View” (Symposium on Alfonso X of Castile the Learned King, Harvard University, November 17, 1948), 259; cited in Shiloah, 81.

⁷⁶ Shiloah, 81.

⁷⁷ H. G. Farmer, “Clues to the Arabian Influence on Musical Theory,” *JRAS* (1925): 62; cited in Shiloah, 81.

thesis will examine another academic dispute in depth, that between Farmer and Kathleen Schlesinger.

“The Labyrinth Of Language”

Writers who tackle historical topics, especially those from distant epochs, are cautious about asserting undeniable “truths.” Accounts of Mediæval history are thus replete with the language of uncertainty. Much of the literature employs the technique of “presuming” that a particular outcome is plausible--a “connect-the-dots” exercise that, in effect, invites the reader to make a “leap of faith” along with the author. This technique depends on an approach of logic and an appeal to “reasonableness” in filling in the blank areas of the historical canvas--in effect, to help achieve Collingwood's criterion of coherence. Farmer’s 1925 article “Clues for the Arabian Influence on European Musical Theory,” for instance, is peppered with words and phrases such as “highly probable,” “every likelihood,” “is evident,” and “one may conclude” (full excerpts below).

These “benign” examples are contrasted with what Southgate terms “linguistic abuses” in the section of her book on “The Labyrinth of Language.” After acknowledging the traps presented by translation and the “constantly changing meanings of words and phrases through time,”⁷⁸ she directly confronts the linguistic abuses of the Third Reich. Her source is Victor Klemperer, a survivor of World War II, whose notes and diaries documented the “ways that language was brought into service for totalitarian purposes.”⁷⁹ The Nazi “appropriation” of

⁷⁸ Southgate, 141.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 144.

language imposed new meaning on the words “people,” “historic,” “saviour,” “unique,” and “total” in addition to the use of superlatives and euphemisms.⁸⁰

The inevitable role of the language of uncertainty in historical reconstruction is frankly admitted by Princeton scholar Natalie Zemon Davis in her book on al-Hasan al-Wazzan (popularly known as Leo Africanus), published not in the scholarly press but for the general public. She explains the techniques she used in telling the story of Leo Africanus:

My strategy is to start with the persons, places, and texts that good evidence affirms or suggests he knew, and build from additional sources about them what he would have been likely to see or hear or read or do. Throughout I have had to make use of the *conditional*--“would have,” “may have,” “was likely to have”--and the speculative “perhaps,” “maybe.” These are my invitations to the reader to follow a plausible life story from materials of the time. Al-Wazzan’s writings carry the main body of my tale, not just their content, but their author’s strategies and mentality as they can be *deduced* from his manuscripts and their language⁸¹ [emphasis added].

Constructing The Guido Narrative

Following Collingwood's dictum that “the criterion of historical truth...is the idea of history itself: the idea of an imaginary picture of the past,”⁸² how can this narrative of the Guido question and Arab influence best be constructed? This observation of Collingwood's must be kept in mind:

the historian himself, together with the here-and-now which forms the total body of evidence available to him, is a part of the process he is studying, has his own place in that process, and can see it only from the point of view which at this present moment he occupies within it.⁸³

⁸⁰ Southgate, 145-146.

⁸¹ Natalie Zemon Davis, *Trickster Travels: A Sixteenth-Century Muslim Between Worlds* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006), 13.

⁸² Collingwood, 248.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

Using the latitude afforded by Collingwood, this thesis will explore and verify the phenomenon of Arab influence on Mediæval Europe along with the specific topic of this influence on Guido d'Arezzo's development of solmization. In simplest terms: since the Arab world had a demonstrable and indisputable effect on European science, medicine, and scholarship largely as a result of translation activity and availability of libraries in Andalusian Spain and transmission of this knowledge to the West, is it not reasonable to presume that advances in Arabic music theory would also be disseminated? Indeed, how could they not? A parallel concern is investigating the frequent unwillingness of the scholarly community to acknowledge Arab influence where it in all likelihood existed; for such disregard reinforces Western hegemony and ultimately contributes to an incomplete, and unfair, historical record.

GUIDO IN THE MEDIÆVAL MILIEU

It is essential to place Guido d'Arezzo within his historical/geographical context, that of Mediæval Europe. What and when were the “Middle Ages?” What was occurring during that period of world history? In terms of this project, one of the key factors that emerged following the fall of the Roman empire was the rise of Christianity, spurring the development of monasteries and the practice of pilgrimage. A critical concept is that of concurrent Eastern ascendancy: the spread of Islam, growth of trade routes, and the preservation and transmission of classical knowledge.

A Time Of Transition

Social anthropologist Jack Goody positions the Middle Ages as the successor period to Antiquity following the collapse of the Western Roman Empire in 476; *The Timetables of History* identifies the start of the subsequent period, the Renaissance, as the year 1400.¹ For the purposes of his own study focusing on Arab history, Konrad Hirschler defines the era as the late 5th/11th century² to the early 10th/16th century (the latter associated with the increasing importance of the Ottoman Empire).³ C. H. Lawrence succinctly summarizes the state of Europe during this period, with the Roman Empire in the West succeeded by “a cluster of unstable Germanic barbarian kingdoms.”⁴

Hirschler discusses the thorny issue of nomenclature, with its specter of alterity:

¹ Dating of historical events, unless otherwise indicated, is drawn from Bernard Grun and Eva Simpson, *The Timetables of History: A Historical Linkage of People and Events*, 4th rev. ed. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005).

² Much of the literature uses dual *Hejira*/A.D. or C.E. dating. *Hejira* refers to the “flight of Muhammad from Mecca in a.d. 622”; from Mediæval Latin, from Arabic *hijra*, literally, “departure” (www.m-w.com, “hegira”).

³ Konrad Hirschler, *Medieval Arabic Historiography: Authors as Actors* (London: Routledge, 2006), x.

⁴ Lawrence, 19.

The terms ‘Middle Ages’ and ‘Medieval’, which are the terms most currently employed for the period...are obviously neither neutral in a geographical nor in a chronological sense. For the European context they generally exclude certain regions, such as the Baltic and the Slavic parts, implying distinctively what is perceived to be the centre of Europe. Furthermore, the terms imply clear periods of break, which are mainly linked to the function of the Middle Ages as the scorned or romanticized Other of modernity.⁵

Beyond the use of “Middle Ages” and “Medieval” in reference to Europe, Hirschler questions the application of these terms to the Arab world: “...one finds only rarely reflections on what period of Arab history can be seen as ‘Medieval’ and what the characteristics of such a ‘Middle Age’ would be.”⁶ He also assesses the customary division of “the traditional periodization according to ruling dynasties” (cf. Appendix A: Timeline on pp. 157-158) as “not very helpful, although it reflects to a large degree the schemes chosen by Medieval Arab historians themselves. It is highly questionable to what degree changes of dynasties marked far-reaching shifts in the society as a whole.”⁷ As an alternate to dynasty-based periodization, Hirschler reports that M. G. S. Hodgson (*The Venture of Islam*, 1974)

follows closely the approach of Rise (development of Islam during the first/seventh century, Golden Age (height of the Umayyad and ‘Abbasid caliphates until the fourth/tenth and fifth/eleventh centuries) and Decline (periods thereafter). As it stands, his proposition introduces merely the equivalent for the differentiation between Early, High and Late Middle Ages current for the European context.⁸

⁵ Hirschler, *ix*.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ *Ibid.*

A Shift Of Influence

Goody emphasizes the shift of influence that transpired in feudal Europe, citing the 1963 book by B. H. Slicher van Bath (*The Agrarian History of Western Europe A.D. 500-1850*):

Seen as part of world history, the West was reduced to a forgotten corner of the world whose centre was now in the eastern Mediterranean basin, namely, the Byzantine Empire, and later also the Arab countries.⁹

Norman F. Cantor similarly argues that the 7th-12th centuries represented a tripartite division in the region:

The expansion of Islam was a decisive factor in medieval history. It divided the Mediterranean world into three civilizations and power blocks: the Byzantine, the European, and the Islamic.¹⁰

Lawrence assesses the cultural climate: “During this troubled period the West produced little in the way of historical writing that could be compared with the literary histories of antiquity.”¹¹ Goody sets the West squarely in opposition to the East: “disastrous decline” in the West and “continuity” in the East.¹² He singles out Eastern commerce and education, quoting Bryan Ward-Perkins's article “Specialised Production and Exchange” in *The Cambridge Ancient History* (2000) with regard to the former:

When Rome collapsed as a polity, so did the overall economy which depended upon it, but with different results in the west and in the east. Especially the ‘fifth century is a period of growing prosperity in the east and of marked economic decline in the west’.¹³

⁹ Jack Goody, *The Theft of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 68-69.

¹⁰ Norman F. Cantor, *The Civilization of the Middle Ages*, rev. ed. (New York: Harper, 1994), 131.

¹¹ Lawrence, 19.

¹² Goody, 69.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 71.

In contrast, the East “was more connected with Asian trade, with huge Roman cities like Palmyra and Apamea being constructed in the Levant and western Asia.”¹⁴ Goody notes that Venice and Amalfi enjoyed a revival of trade with Asia and Africa,¹⁵ with Amalfian merchants trading with Constantinople, Cairo, Antioch, “and even Cordova¹⁶ as early as the tenth century.”¹⁷ Goody makes the point that Amalfi's “diverse population included Jewish and Muslim communities as well as Christian, all participating in the commercial activity: this was a multicultural society.”¹⁸ He verifies that “southern Spain, like parts of Italy, remained integrated in the Mediterranean trading network, due to its Islamic connections”--citing “traffic between Andalucia and the African mainland.”¹⁹

Of Goody's second factor, education, he writes that higher education continued “in towns such as Carthage, Athens, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria.”²⁰ He cites V. Gordon Childe (*What Happened in History*, 1964), who reports that “at Alexandria and Byzantium scientific and literary texts were studiously copied and preserved.”²¹ The section on Arab influence will explore the re-kindling of classical learning and knowledge transfer that took place between Baghdad and Cordoba, thereafter transmitted throughout Europe. Of this phenomenon,

¹⁴ Goody, 70.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 75.

¹⁶ Also spelled Cordoba or Córdoba; although Cordoba is the preferred spelling in this thesis, authors' individual usage will be honored in direct quotes from their works. Goody uses an alternate spelling for the region, Andalucia.

¹⁷ Goody, 76.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 71.

²¹ *Ibid.*

Goody refers to P. M. Asín's Dante study, *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, which documents the “considerable communication with Islamic cultures,”²² including Norman Sicily, having a king who “spoke Arabic and kept a harem as well as being a patron of Islamic literature and learning”--with the “works of Aristotle and Averrhoes [*sic*] translated and distributed to European institutions.”²³ Yet even more influential, according to Asín, was Mediæval Spain, which “followed a Muslim style of living.”²⁴

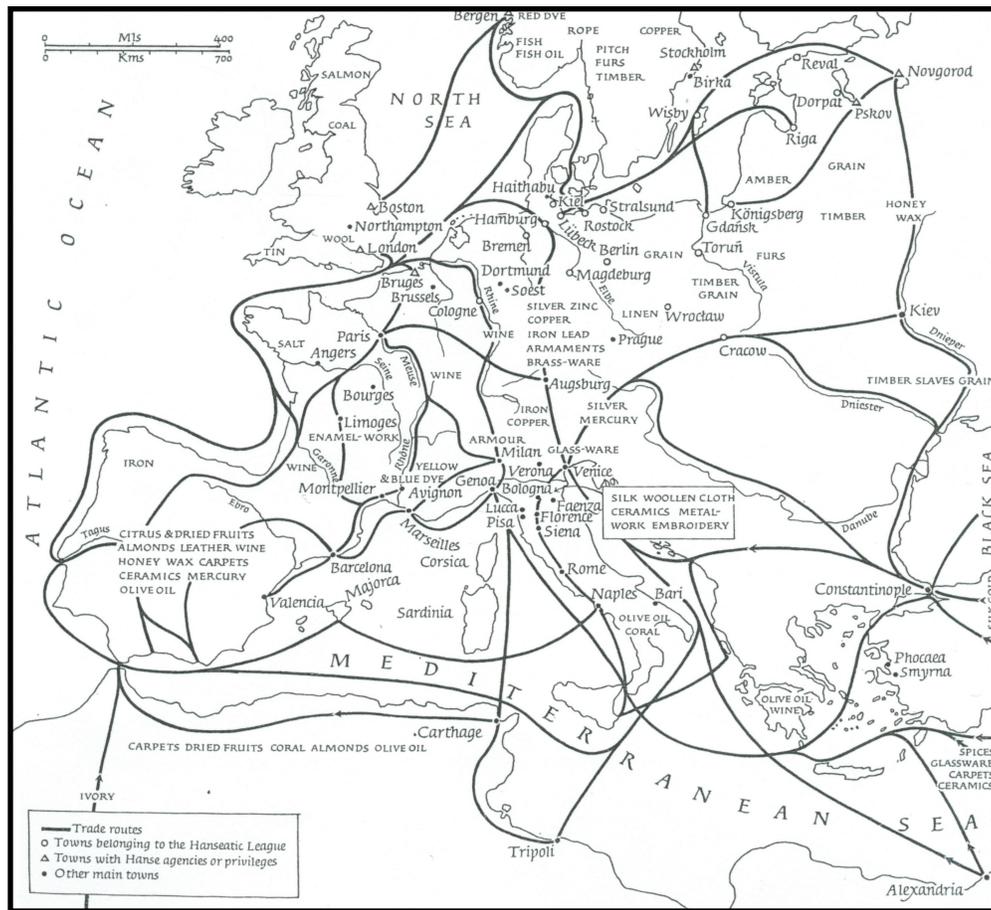


Figure 4.1 Medieval Trade Routes²⁵

²² Goody, 237.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Geoffrey Barraclough, ed., *Eastern and Western Europe in the Middle Ages* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 127.

Interpreting The Middle Ages: Myth And Mystique

Cantor, then of New York University, compiled a fascinating study of noted Mediævalists in his book *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century*.²⁶ Observing that “the insights and anxieties of the medieval mind are so close to our own”²⁷ (in large part due to the impact of two World Wars), Cantor proposes that the scholars who have specialized in this period “fashioned their interpretations of the Middle Ages out of the emotional wellsprings of their lives” based on their responses to “vast social and political upheavals...especially during the dark times from 1914 to 1945,”²⁸ thus adding an important component to the “mix” of the sources for potential author bias. Cantor theorizes:

Creating a medieval world picture and projecting themselves into it were one therapeutic recourse by which sensitive and benign twentieth-century people sought to regain their sanity and get control of the feelings in the evil times of slaughter and madness.²⁹

Cantor adds, “we have continued to draw upon the medieval sources for comfort and inspiration and direction in our lives.”³⁰ Among the scholars analyzed in Cantor’s study are Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, Marc Bloch, Erwin Panofsky, and Oxfordians Clive Staples Lewis (known to the general public as author of the *Narnia* series) and John Ronald Reuel Tolkien (author of *The Lord of the Rings*), Johan Huizinga, and Richard William Southern. This august roster can be viewed, in R. G. Collingwood's framework, as scholars exercising their “historical imagination”!

²⁶ Norman F. Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages: The Lives, Works, and Ideas of the Great Medievalists of the Twentieth Century* (New York: William Morrow, 1991).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 42.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 43.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ *Ibid.*

Cantor terms Southern's *The Making of the Middle Ages* a “breakthrough book” that “opened the way for a much deeper and more complex understanding of the Middle Ages.”³¹ Written for undergraduates and the “educated public,”³² it remained the “single most widely read and influential book written on the Middle Ages in the twentieth century.”³³ Southern would attract a cult-like following in academe, as evidenced in the dedication in *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200*: “And to our Shining Example, Sir Richard Southern.”³⁴ But Cantor places Southern's *opus* on a higher plane: “*The Making of the Middle Ages* was much more than a very great book of historical scholarship. It was a revelation, the Gospel According to St. Richard, a liberation, an epiphany.”³⁵ Cantor's analysis captures the power of Southern's book to engage with its readers by tapping into common currents of thought via his narrative:

Every seminal book is made as much by its audience as by its author; so far we can agree with the “reader response theory.” The important books respond to a demand, usually lying just below the surface. They articulate what many people want to have raised to consciousness at that moment. Great books release feelings, express yearnings, respond to existing wishes and hopes. That was true of Southern's book: He articulated the intellectual rebellion and imaginative stretching of an emerging generation of medievalists, like myself, and humanists in general.³⁶

³¹ Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, 338.

³² *Ibid.*, 339.

³³ *Ibid.*, 338.

³⁴ Sally N. Vaughn and Jay Rubenstein, eds., *Teaching and Learning in Northern Europe, 1000-1200* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2006), v.

³⁵ Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, 347.

³⁶ *Ibid.*

Cantor's observations regarding scholars' attraction to the Middle Ages is one that resonates. The Mediæval period is an endlessly intriguing one; in the course of my reading, I noticed that the word "unknown"--whether in English or Latin (*ignoto, ignotem, ignotam*)--appeared and re-appeared as a leitmotif across the centuries: from Guido's own use of the phrase in his *Epistola de ignoto cantu* ("unknown song" or "unknown melody") to Richer of Reims to Henry George Farmer in "Clues" to the *Grove* article on Guido by Claude V. Palisca and Dolores Pesce (an unconscious echo?).

The Latin word *ignotus*, of course, is reminiscent of the word "ignorance" commonly used as a translation of the Arabic word *Jāhiliyya*, the term referring to the pre-Islamic period in Arab history. While "ignorance" is often a pejorative phrase, implying lack of intelligence, its base meaning is that of "not knowing"--hence "unknown." Perhaps imagining a world as *tabula rasa*--literally an "erased tablet" or "blank slate" awaiting discoveries to be made--is one of the most powerful factors that has put this student under the "spell" of the Middle Ages. One ponders how knowledge was acquired and shared, constructing a body of learning that would be continually built upon by succeeding generations but that would remain the "bedrock" of civilization and worthy of re-visiting and paying homage.

Guido D'Arezzo In Context: The Rule Of St. Benedict

We turn again to Cantor, who expands on Goody's assessment of Western decline vis-à-vis Mediæval education:

The once-great Roman empire, its beautiful cities, its capable governments and law courts, its deeply learned schools and libraries, descended into the twilight of the Dark Ages of the sixth and seventh centuries, in which literate civilization

survived only in a handful of ecclesiastical centers, mostly walled Benedictine monasteries.³⁷

This network of monasteries, founded by St. Benedict of Nursia at Monte Cassino in 529, would provide an optimal infrastructure for education and the housing/reproduction of manuscripts as well as transferral of information among locations and people via travel and pilgrimage. Yet inadequacies were rampant. In *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Orders*, Heinrich Fichtenau provides detailed background on European monastic education. He writes that few of the libraries of “great monasteries” owned more than 500 volumes due to the great expense of books; some monasteries acquired only one new book per year.³⁸ He explains that the focus of these collections was on sacred, not classical texts; further, the Rule of St. Benedict prescribed reading, rather than writing or copying texts (note, however, that monastic scriptoria widely existed for these functions).³⁹ A further danger to libraries was the ever-present threat of fire. As a result of these limitations, monastic libraries were “hardly suited to transmit the literary inheritance of antiquity and to preserve the educational values of the west.”⁴⁰ He frankly concludes, “scholarship was impossible.”⁴¹ Fichtenau reflects on the great value attributed to the library in Cordoba⁴² in light of these inadequate monastic libraries (although he assigns little page-space to Arab/Islamic influences elsewhere in his book!).

³⁷ Cantor, *Inventing the Middle Ages*, 20. This passage marks Cantor's sole occurrence of the disfavored phrase “Dark Ages.”

³⁸ Heinrich Fichtenau, *Living in the Tenth Century: Mentalities and Social Order*, trans. Patrick J. Geary (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 288.

³⁹ Fichtenau notes that the Rule required the reading of only one book per year, usually during Lent!

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 289.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁴² Reputed to hold 40,000--or 400,000--volumes! Sources vary widely.

One by-product of these meager libraries was the insufficiency of the monastic curriculum. Gerbert d'Aurillac, for example, was forced to relocate from the Auvergne region of France to Catalonia because the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy)--the complement to the trivium (grammar, logic, and rhetoric) in the "seven liberal arts"--was not taught at his monastery of residence. Fichtenau confirms that "the second half of the educational program, the *quadrivium*, was taught only in a few schools and often only in part."⁴³

Fichtenau takes issue with Richer of Saint-Rémi [Reims], a contemporary chronicler and one-time student of Gerbert, who claims in his *Historia* that in Italy, "music and astronomy had been entirely unknown before Gerbert" and that "Gerbert had 'made them known everywhere'."⁴⁴ Fichtenau interprets Richer's phrase as merely "rais[ing] the level of instruction."⁴⁵ Jason Glenn, however, corroborates the Richer quote, confirming that "the pope wanted the young Gerbert to stay in Rome since music and astronomy were unknown in Italy."⁴⁶

Although included with the "liberal" rather than "practical" arts, proficiency in arithmetic and astronomy would meet immediate needs in monastic communities, namely those of accurate time-keeping on a daily basis (for observing the daily office, or rota of prayer occurring throughout the day: e.g. lauds, vespers, and compline)⁴⁷ and correct observation of the stars (in order to calculate the Christian feast days).⁴⁸ As Fichtenau explains, the study of these disciplines

⁴³ Fichtenau, 298.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 296.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ Jason Glenn, *Politics and History in the Tenth Century: The Work and World of Richer of Reims* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 50.

⁴⁷ The Islamic practice of *salat*, observed by both clerics and laypersons, also conforms to the rhythm of the day: from the early prayer of *fajr* to the fifth and final prayer of *'isha*.

⁴⁸ Fichtenau, 299.

had an “edifying function” since they “led back to the formal orders established by the creator.”⁴⁹ These disciplines, and the practices they supported, also imposed “order in a disorderly world.”⁵⁰ The quest for order would be manifested in the study of music theory, where “one learned a discipline close to mathematics, and once again one found edification in evidence of the divine origins of the tonal orders.”⁵¹

“The Great Age Of The Wanderer”

Travel was another by-product of inadequate monastic libraries and curricula, coupled with the impetus for religious pilgrimage (who can forget Chaucer's immortal phrase “than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages”?). Nicos Poulantzas sets forth the claim that “people have never moved about as much as they did in the Middle Ages”:

On the road were to be found knights, peasants traveling during the rotation period of crops and fields, merchants, clerics either undertaking a regular trip or running away from their monasteries, students, pilgrims of all kinds, crusaders--it was the great age of the wanderer.⁵²

Monastic migration was commonplace in the Middle Ages, contributing to the phenomenon of the “wandering scholar,” the monk “in search of education.”⁵³ María

Rosa Menocal asserts:

in the Middle Ages the European speaker of Arabic was most likely also a speaker of Romance; Arabic was the language of much of the advanced learning and philosophy of Europe for some time and a twelfth-century Englishman who could

⁴⁹Fichtenau, 298.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 299.

⁵² Nicos Poulantzas, *State, Power, Socialism* (London: Verso, 2000), 102.

⁵³ Fichtenau, 294.

not get his hands on good translations of Arabic texts in London was likely to set off to Toledo to get help in doing them himself.⁵⁴

Promising monks flocked to monasteries and cathedral schools in major centers of learning (such as Ripoll and Vic in Catalonia and Reims, near Paris, where Gerbert later taught). Richer writes that “at Adalbero's request [Gerbert] brought in throngs of students to be instructed in the liberal arts.” Richer verifies that as part of Gerbert's curriculum enrichment “he established the knowledge of music, which for a long time had been unknown in Gaul.”⁵⁵

⁵⁴ Menocal, “Pride and Prejudice,” 61.

⁵⁵ “*Inde etiam musicam, multo ante Galiis ignotam, notissimam effecit.*” Richer of Saint-Rémi, *Histories*, Vol. II, Books 3-4, *Dumbarton Oaks Medieval Library*, ed. and trans. by Justin Lake (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 69. Glenn's translation uses “unfamiliar” rather than “unknown” (Glenn, 50).

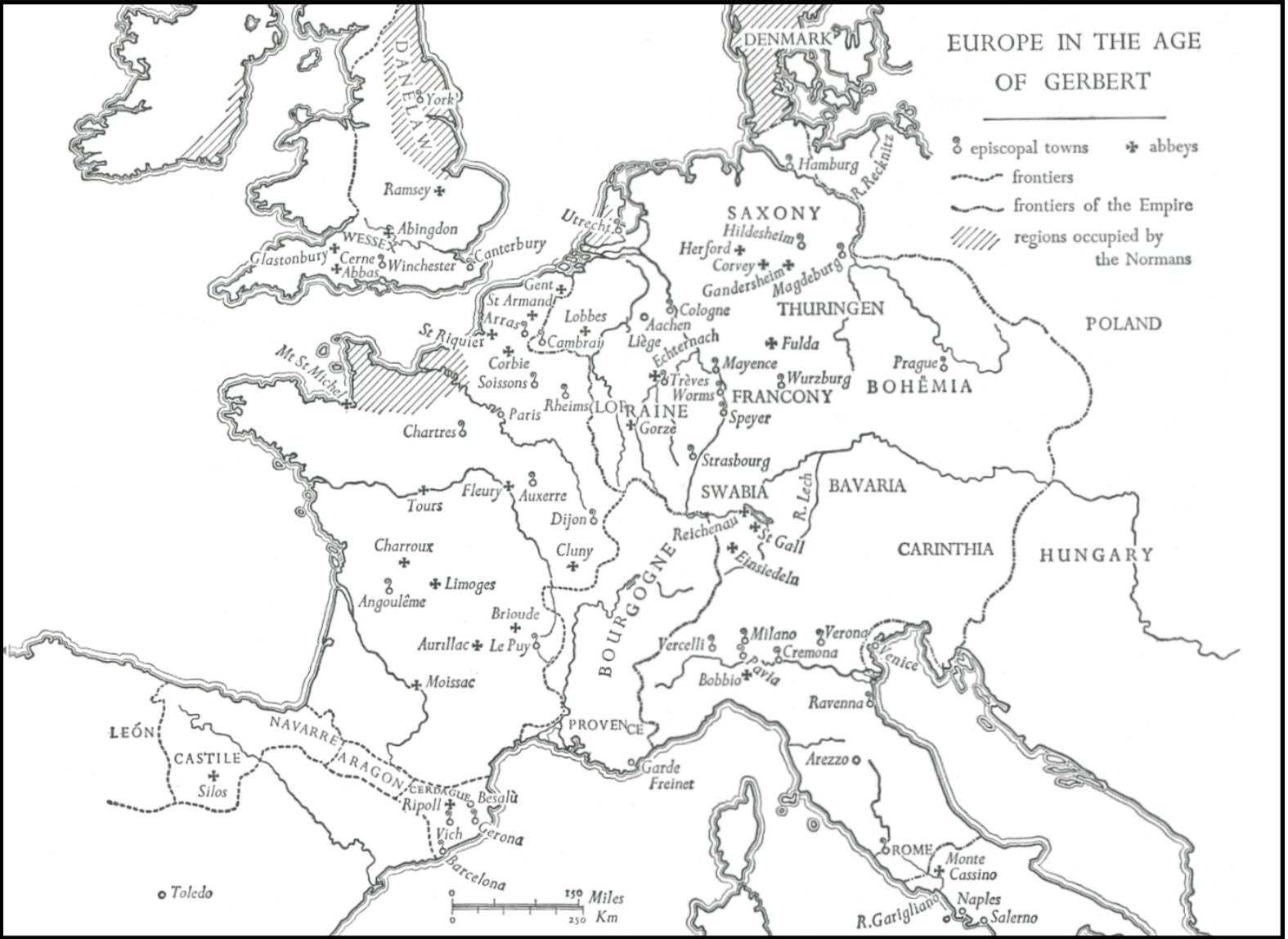


Figure 4.2 Europe in the Age of Gerbert⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Philippe Wolff, *The Cultural Awakening*, trans. Anne Carter (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968), 304-305.

Guido D'Arezzo And Mediaeval Music

Guido d'Arezzo would rise from monastic obscurity to enduring fame with the introduction/re-discovery/perfection of the theory of solmization, developed in response to the need to help young monks learn and memorize the repertoire more easily, which, Marion S. Gushee writes, “had previously depended almost exclusively on oral repetition and prodigious feats of memory.”⁵⁷ Anna Maria Busse Berger writes that this task was a formidable one, citing Kenneth Levy, who adds his own calculations to those of Michel Huglo--concluding that the chants, introits, graduals, alleluias, tracts, offertories, communions, and Office Propers would total 75-80 hours of material, “correspond[ing] to the selection of Beethoven's instrumental works plus the full Wagnerian canon.”⁵⁸

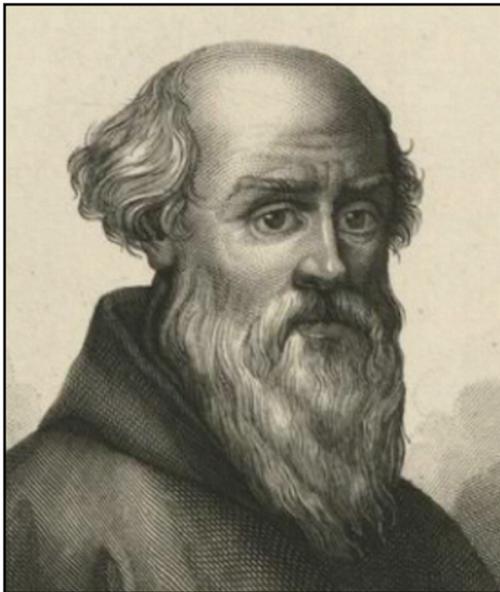


Figure 4.3 Guido d'Arezzo. (The New York Public Library for the Performing Arts / Music Division. Joseph Muller Collection of Music and Other Portraits)⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Marion S. Gushee, “The Polyphonic Music of the Medieval Monastery, Cathedral and University,” in James McKinnon, ed., *Antiquity and the Middle Ages: From Ancient Greece to the 15th Century*, Music and Society (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 144-145.

⁵⁸ Anna Maria Busse Berger, *Medieval Music and the Art of Memory* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 49.

⁵⁹ Digital ID: 1225690. Record ID: 486590. Digital Item Published: 9-28-2004; updated 1-11-2012.

The Primacy Of Gregorian Chant

What is known as “Gregorian Chant” has its genesis in a legend, that of Pope Gregory I (“The Great”). Both *The Oxford History of Western Music* and *A History of Western Music*, indeed, title their sections on this subject “The Legend of St. Gregory.” Gregorian Chant would supersede earlier chant “dialects” reflecting local and regional rites: Gallican, Mozarabic, Benvenutan, and Ambrosian.⁶⁰

Liturgical chant was “free rather than metered in rhythm”⁶¹ and was designed to be sung as “solo and unison plainsong.”⁶² “The simplest chants,” according to *A History of Western Music*, “are the formulas for intoning prayers and Bible readings, such as the Collect, Epistle, and Gospel. Here the music’s sole purpose is to project the words clearly, without embellishment.”⁶³ Melodic styles for chant are syllabic, neumatic, and melismatic.⁶⁴

The three divisions of music as theorized by Boethius are *musica instrumentalis*, *musica humana*, and *musica mundana*.⁶⁵ Albert Seay explains their similarity to the “duple” system of Johannes Scotus Erigena (“in part derived from Martianus Capella”) and Erigena’s followers Remigius of Auxerre and Regino of Prüm: *musica naturalis* and *musica artificialis*. “Natural” music, they stipulated, must be “sung to the eight tones of ecclesiastical music, the eight modes used as a way of ordering plainchant.” Seay quotes Calvin M. Bower:

⁶⁰ J. Peter Burkholder, Donald Jay Grout, and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 8th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2010), 28.

⁶¹ Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca, 35.

⁶² “Gregorian Chant,” *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. rev., *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed February 7, 2014, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/opr/t237/e4493.

⁶³ Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca, 54.

⁶⁴ Kenneth Levy, et al., “Plainchant,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed February 7, 2014, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/40099.

⁶⁵ Albert Seay, *Music in the Medieval World*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 20.

The first principle of natural music was the tone, the mode; and all music developed from and according to this principle and ultimately returned to it. The modes were present in music sung to the praise of God, and music sung in divine praise on earth was a reflection of the divine praises eternally sung in the celestial realm.”⁶⁶

As described in *Musica enchiridis* (“Music Handbook”), the anonymous 9th-century treatise once attributed to Hucbald of St. Amand, the church (ecclesiastical) modes were Dorian, Hypodorian, Phrygian, Hypophrygian, Lydian, Hypolydian, Mixolydian, and Hypomixolydian.⁶⁷ Also referred to by number, from first to eighth, the odd-numbered modes were called “authentic” (“cover[ing] a range from a step below the final to an octave above it”) and its paired, even-numbered “plagal” (“that has the same final but is deeper in range”).⁶⁸ According to *A History of Western Music*, “each chant was assigned to a particular mode, and learning the modes and classifying chants by mode made it easier to learn and memorize chants.”⁶⁹ Tonaries (books of chants) would be organized on this principle (cf. note 189).⁷⁰

Peter Jeffery has identified aspects of Gregorian Chant relating to Arab musical history, theory, and practice. He traces the “development and spread of the modal system” in the early history of Christian chant, stating:

The earliest musicians who certainly used the eight-mode system were Syrian hymnographers who wrote in Greek, monks at Palestinian monasteries during the late seventh and early eight centuries. The most prominent of these was John of Damascus (*ca.* 570-*ca.* 750), whom tradition credits with the compilation of the

⁶⁶ Seay, 21.

⁶⁷ Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca, 42.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 41.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 43.

Great Octōēchoes or Paraklētikē, a liturgical book of hymns arranged according to the eight modes.⁷¹

In fact, Jeffery maintains that “it is now clear” that the eight modes “may date from a century or more before John” due to their occurrence in the Jerusalem Iadgari⁷² [“the earliest true chant book”]⁷³ dating to the sixth/seventh century.⁷⁴ He refers to Heinrich Husmann, who has singled out eight modes “actually identified with eight particular maqāmāt” in West Syrian and Byzantine-Melkite chant.⁷⁵

Jeffery’s discussion of melodic embellishment of chant as manifested not only in Byzantine chant but in the Eugenic chant of Toledo and French *machicotage*, citing Rudolf F. Brandl’s writing on the *skeletos*, or skeletal melodic outline, bears an uncanny parallel to vocal performance practice in the Arab tradition: “it is sung always in an expanded, ornamented form that varies with each performance and social context.”⁷⁶ It is within, and only within, this context that *tarab* (a state of enchantment) may occur, in large part due to improvisations and ornamentations.

⁷¹ Peter Jeffery, *Re-Envisioning Past Musical Cultures: Ethnomusicology in the Study of Gregorian Chant* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 107-108.

⁷² Jeffery, 108.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 105-106.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 111.

Guido's Life And Work

Who was Guido d'Arezzo,⁷⁷ where and how was he educated, and what (if this can be determined) influenced the development of his theories? It is not surprising that ascertaining “facts” about Guido's life is problematic due to the passage of time and sketchiness of documentation. Sources differ on matters ranging from his year of birth to monastic residence to travels. The *Grove* article by Palisca and Pesce places Guido's birth *ca.* 991/992, in part based on research by Hans Oesch that has dated the *Micrologus*⁷⁸ to 1025 or 1026; since Guido stated in a letter that he was 34 when he completed it, his birthdate is presumed to be around 991 or 992.⁷⁹ The usual estimated range is 990-999; Joseph Smits van Waesberghe places the *Micrologus* around 1028-1032, moving Guido's birth year forward to 994-998.⁸⁰ *Grove* lists his year of death as “after 1033,” but most sources indicate the year as 1050.

It is generally agreed that Guido's early education took place at the monastery of Pomposa, on the Adriatic coast near Ferrara.⁸¹ A few sources, however, suggest a monastic setting outside of Italy. Théodore Gérold writes:

⁷⁷ Guido d'Arezzo is also referred to in the literature as Guido of Arezzo, Guido Aretinus, Guido Monaco, Guido von Arezzo, Guido, and Gui.

⁷⁸ Guido's *Micrologus* is “the earliest comprehensive treatise on musical practice that includes a discussion of both polyphonic music and plainchant.” Claude V. Palisca and Dolores Pesce, “Guido of Arezzo [Aretinus],” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 20, 2012, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/11968.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

⁸¹ *Ibid.* Subsequent biographical information is drawn from the Palisca and Pesce *Grove* article unless otherwise indicated.

Né vers 995, Gui fut élevé au monastère bénédictin de Saint-Maur-des-Fossés.⁸² Il se rendit ensuite à Pomposa, près de Ferrare. Des intrigues ayant été ourdies contre lui, Gui échangea ce monastère celui d'Arezzo.⁸³

The “intrigues” that were “hatched” against Guido are unspecified (presumably connected to his musical innovations); but the true intrigue is the possibility that Guido had once resided in a monastery in the Paris suburbs, in the vicinity of Reims. Sources agree that Guido collaborated on an antiphoner⁸⁴ with Michael at Pomposa, which provoked the “envy and scorn” of their fellow brothers. “Around 1025,” this situation prompted Guido's move to Arezzo, which lacked a monastery but where Bishop Theodaldus (or Tedald) invited him to train singers for the cathedral; the bishop also commissioned the *Micrologus*. Guido was called to Rome by Pope John XIX “around 1028” in conjunction with the antiphoner. Due to health concerns, Guido left Rome and relocated to a Camoldolese monastery, most likely Avellana near Arezzo--having turned down the Pomposa abbot's offer of residence. It was “immediately after the trip to Rome” that Guido crafted the *Epistola de ignoto cantu* to Michael of Pomposa, elaborating on the mnemonic system.

Palisca and Pesce mention no further travels. Françoise-Joseph Fétis, however, refers to Mariano Soriano Fuertes, whose 1855 book *Historia De La Música Española*

⁸² Strunk concurs on Guido's education at St. Maur-des-Fossés. W. Oliver Strunk, *Source Readings in Music History from Classical Antiquity through the Romantic Era* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950), 117. The introduction to the Guido readings in the 1998 revision edited by Leo Treitler omits any mention of St. Maur-des-Fossés. Hans Oesch mentions only Pomposa but cites the “music treatise of Odo of Saint-Maur des Fossés.” In *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 6 (Detroit: Thomson/Gale, 2003), 563.

⁸³ Théodore Gérold, *La Musique au Moyen Age*. Paris: Librairie Ancienne, 1932), 79.

⁸⁴ *Antiphonarium*: a “book containing all the chants for mass” or “chants for the office (the Liturgy of the Hours).” Giulio Cattin, *Music of the Middle Ages I*, trans. Steven Botterill (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 191.

affirme que Guido, obligé de s'éloigner de son monastère, à cause de l'animosité des autres moines contre lui, voyagea dans toute l'Europe pour dissiper sa tristesse, et qu'il acquit en Catalogne ses connaissances en musique.⁸⁵

The “animosity” refers to the jealousy that developed at the monastery in Pomposa; although the matter of “dissipating sadness” may be a stretch of “historical imagination.” The important point is the establishment of Guido's travel outside of Italy, specifically to Catalonia, and his “acquiring knowledge of music” there. The Catalonia connection is also cited by Oesch in the chapter “Zeugnisse aus Deutschland, England und Spanien,” which includes sections on “Der Aufenthalt in Bremen,” “Guido von Canterbury,” and “Guido in Katalonien.” In the third section, Oesch recounts Soriano's claim that Guido “escaped the monastery” due to “der Animosität seiner Mitbrüder.”⁸⁶ Oesch cites Georg Lange in conveying Soriano's belief that solmization was “borrowed from the Spaniards” (“Solmisationssilben von den Spaniern entlehnt ist”) and, further, that the system can be compared to that of the Arabs (“einem Vergleich des Systems der Araber”).⁸⁷

Fétis also refers to Guido's sojourn in Bremen (...“du séjour de Guido à Breme, sur l'invitation d'Hermann, archevêque de cette ville”), prompted by the need to leave the monastery (“...fut contraint de faire de longs voyages”).⁸⁸ Samuel D. Miller writes: “Travels took him to

⁸⁵ Françoise-Joseph Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique*, 2 éd. (Bruxelles: Culture et Civilisation, 1963), 147; babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/ptview=image;size=150;id=uva.x001576835;page=root;seq=163;num=147.

⁸⁶ Hans Oesch, *Guido Von Arezzo; Biographisches Und Theoretisches Unter Besonderer Berücksichtigung Der Sogenannten Odonischen Traktate*. Bern: P. Haupt, 1954, 63.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸⁸ Fétis, 147.

Canterbury, Rome, and Bremen,”⁸⁹ but gives no sources for this information (if Miller consulted Oesch, he chose to omit Catalonia from Guido's travel itinerary).

Table 4.1 is useful in entertaining Soriano's claim that Guido spent time in Catalonia. To have an influence on solmization, his “method,” it would have to be at least a few years before being summoned to Rome, i.e. before 1028. Miller surmises that he developed the method in 1025 (he would have been 30-34 years old). One source said he left Pomposa in 1025, but that he had already been working on the Antiphoner with Michael there. Two sources locate him in Arezzo in 1025. An “educated guess” would center around the year 1020. He would have been 25-29 years old, and would have been at Pomposa for a very long time already (if he entered at age 10-14, in 1005).

⁸⁹ Samuel D. Miller, “Guido D'Arezzo: Medieval Musician and Educator,” *Journal of Research in Music Education* 21 (1973): 240. jstor.org/stable/3345093.

Table 4.1 Guido's Life and Work: A Chronology

Event	Grove ^a	van Waesberghe ^b	Oesch ^c	Palisca ^d	Miller ^e	Cath. Encyclop. 1 ^f	Cath. Encyclop. 2 ^g
Birth	990-999	994-998	991		995	995	992
First educ.	Pomposa					St. Maur des Fosses	Pomposa (left 1025)
Pomposa						2nd, 5th (short)	
Rome	1028			1032	1028***	4th (1024-33)	1028
Arezzo	1025			after 1023		3rd, 6th (1033-36)	1025, 1028?***
Micrologus	after 1026	1028-32	1025-26	1026-29	1029		1025-26
Antiphoner	1030			1030			
Epistola	after Rome		1028-29	1032	1030		1029
Solmization		*1025/6-1028/9		*1026/9-1032	1025-28****		
Died	after 1033				1040	-----1050, Avellano near Arezzo-----	

^a Entry by Claude V. Palisca

^b Joseph Smits van Waesberghe, *De musica-paedagogico* (1953)

* between Micrologus and Epistola

^c Hans van Oesch, *Guido von Arezzo* (1954)

^d Claude V. Palisca, *Hucbald, Guido, and John on Music* (1978)

* between Micrologus and Epistola

^e Samuel D. Miller "Guido d'Arezzo: Medieval Musician and Educator," *Journal of Research in Music Education* (1973)

*** "Travels took him to Canterbury, Rome, and Bremen"

**** Sequence: solmization--Rome---Epistola

^f *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, entry by Joseph Otten (1910)

^g *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., entry by Hans Oesch (2003)

** "Guido must have returned to Avellana from Rome"

Guido Introduces/Invents/Re-Discovers Solmization

Jeffery notes the “wide gulf” that existed “between the academic study of theory and the practical training of liturgical singers.”⁹⁰ He muses:

When a young monastic or clerical singer, having just left the world of the laity to enter that of the clergy, began to learn the medieval chant repertory, how much “preparation” had he already received from the culture he was first raised in, outside of the ecclesiastical institutions?⁹¹

Citing Erich Reimer, Jeffery underscores the distinction between the *musicus* (student of theory) and *cantor* (“who is said to sing without understanding”).⁹² Fichtenau similarly makes the distinction between *musica* (music theory) and *cantus* (performance), with *musica* of great interest to monks “since choral singing was a major activity.”⁹³

Guido is believed to have developed the system of solmization in order to help the monks at Pomposa learn and remember the Gregorian chant repertoire more easily.⁹⁴ Palisca and Pesce explain that “the function of the hymn melody was to supply easily remembered phrases of melody or ‘neumes’ (as he referred to them) for each step of the central part of the gamut, namely the notes *CDEFGa*.”⁹⁵ Guido's own words provide the most eloquent and compelling narrative. In *Epistola de ignoto cantu*, also known as “Letter to Brother Michael Concerning

⁹⁰ Jeffery, 72.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

⁹² *Ibid.*, 72.

⁹³ Fichtenau, 299.

⁹⁴ Clyde Brockett writes in *Grove* that Odo of Arezzo compiled a tonary in Arezzo “in the late 10th century.” Guido would cite this and other tonaries in his treatises. Michel Huglo and Clyde Brockett, “Odo,” *Grove Music Online*, *Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed August 21, 2013, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/20255?q=odo&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit. Cattin defines a tonary as a “liturgical book...in which chants...are arranged in musical (rather than liturgical) order, according to key-note. The *incipit* of the piece's text is shown” (Cattin, 200).

⁹⁵ Palisca and Pesce, “Guido of Arezzo.”

How to Sing an Unknown Chant,” Guido describes his visit with the Pope, who "repeatedly looked through our Antiphoner as if it were some prodigy, reflecting on the rules prefixed to it.” Guido proceeds to explain to Michael “a most excellent method of finding an unknown melody, recently given to us by God.” The full excerpts read:

Sed quia ad praesens venire non possum, interim tibi de inveniendo ignoto cantu optimum dirigo argumentum, nuper nobis a Deo datum, et utillimum comprobatum.^{96 97}

Namque postquam hoc argumentum cepi pueris tradere, ante triduum quidam eorum potuerunt ignotos cantus leviter canere, quod aliis argumentis nec multis hebdomadibus poterat evenire.^{98 99}

Guido illustrates this by using the melody taught to choir boys:

⁹⁶ “As I cannot come to you at present, I am in the meantime addressing to you a most excellent method of finding an unknown melody, recently given to us by God and found most useful in practice.”

⁹⁷ Guido was not the only Mediæval churchman to invoke divine intervention for their musical innovations. James McKinnon cites the “early mediæval legend that Gregory composed the chant under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit” (as is depicted in contemporary artwork) but roundly dismisses this as “an outright mistake,” in part due to “confusion” surrounding “popes named Gregory.” McKinnon, in fact, claims that Pope Gregory I had a “lack of interest in liturgy” and “forbade deacons to sing in church.” James McKinnon, “Early Western Civilization,” in James McKinnon, ed., *Antiquity and the Middle Ages: From Ancient Greece to the 15th Century*, Music and Society (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990), 19.

⁹⁸ Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum, www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/9th-11th/GUIEPI_TEXT.html.

⁹⁹ “For after I began teaching this procedure to boys, some of them were able to sing an unknown melody before the third day, which by other methods would not have been possible in many weeks.” Strunk, *Source Readings*, 124. James McKinnon’s editing of Strunk’s translation in Leo Treitler’s revised edition: “After I began teaching this procedure to boys, some of them were able before the third day to sing an unknown melody with ease, which by other methods would not have been possible in many weeks.” Oliver Strunk, ed. *Source Readings in Music History*, rev. ed., ed. Leo Treitler (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998), 217.

IN NATIVITATE S. JOANNIS BAPTISTAE
Hymnum in II Vesperis

Hymn.
2.
U

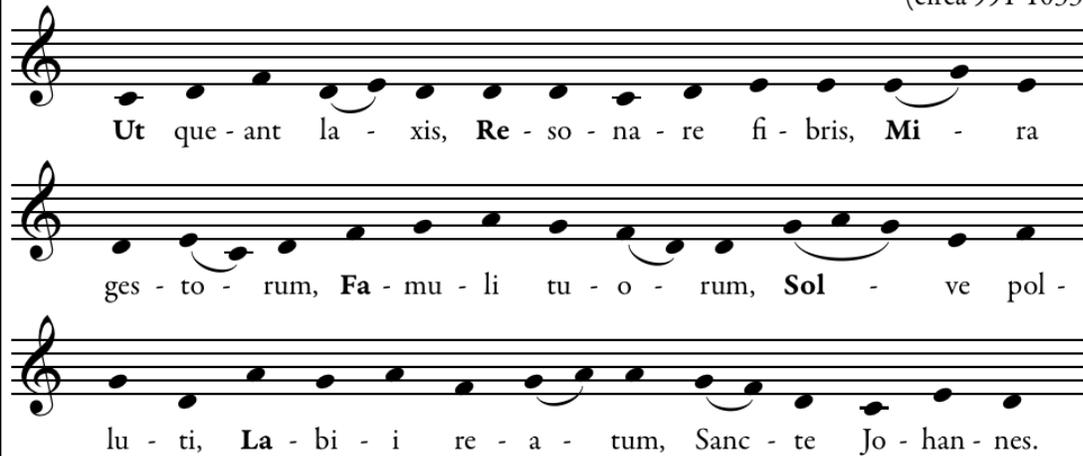
T que-ant laxis re-soná-re fíbris Mí-ra gestó-
rum fámu-li tu-ó-rum, Sól-ve pollú-ti lábi-i re-á-tum,
Sáncte Jo-ánnes. 2. Núnti-us célso véni-ens Olýmpo,
Te pátri mágnum fó-re nasci-tú-rum, Nó-men, et vítae
sé-ri-em ge-réndaе Ordi-ne prómit. 3. Ille promíssi
dúbi-us supérni, Pérdi-dit prómptae módu-los loqué-
lae : Sed re-formásti géni-tus per-émp-tae Organa vó-
cis. 4. Véntris obstrúso récubans cubí-li Sénsé-ras Ré-
gem thá-lamo manéntem : Hinc pá-rens ná-ti mé-ri-tis
u-térque Abdi-ta pándit. 5. Sit décus Pátri, genitaé-
que Pró-li, Et tí-bi cómpar utri-úsque vírtus, Spí-ri-
tus semper, Dé-us únus, ómni Témpo-ris aévo. Amen.
V. Iste puer magnus coram Domino.
R. Nam et manus ejus cum ipso est.

Figure 4.4 Ut Queant Laxis¹⁰⁰ (The Liber Usualis, Solesmes)

¹⁰⁰ Catholic Church. 1962. The Liber usualis. Tournai [Belgium]: Desclée, p. 1504.

Ut Queant Laxis (Hymn to St. John the Baptist)

Guido of Arezzo
(circa 991-1033)



Ut que - ant la - xis, Re - so - na - re fi - bris, Mi - ra
ges - to - rum, Fa - mu - li tu - o - rum, Sol - ve pol -
lu - ti, La - bi - i re - a - tum, Sanc - te Jo - han - nes.

Translation:

So that your servants may, with loosened voices, resound the wonders
of your deeds, clean the guilt from our stained lips, O Saint John.

Figure 4.5 Ut Queant Laxis¹⁰¹ (Copyright © Creative Commons Public Domain Declaration)

Guido then summarizes the advantages of his “method”:

Vides itaque, ut haec symphonia senis particulis suis a sex diversis incipiat vocibus? Si quis itaque uniuscuiusque particulae caput ita exercitatus noverit, ut confestim quamcumque particulam voluerit, indubitanter incipiat, easdem sex voces ubicumque viderit, secundum suas proprietates facile pronuntiare poterit... Ergo ut inauditos cantus, mox ut descriptos videris, competenter enunties, aut indescriptos audiens cito describendos bene possis discernere, optime te iuvabit haec regula.^{102 103}

¹⁰¹ Version by Matthew D. Thibeault, October 31, 2008.

¹⁰² Thesaurus Musicarum Latinarum, www.chmtl.indiana.edu/tml/9th-11th/GUIEPI_TEXT.html.

¹⁰³ “Do you not see how, in this melody, the six phrases begin each with a different note? If, trained as I have described, you know the beginning of each phrase so that you can at once and confidently begin any one you wish, you will be able to sing these notes in their proper qualities whenever you see them.... To sing an unknown melody competently as soon as you see it written down, or, hearing an unwritten melody, to see quickly how to write it down well, this rule will be of the greatest use to you.” Strunk, *Source Readings*, 124-125. “Do you not see how the six phrases each begin with a different note? If you, trained as I have described, know the beginning of each phrase so that you can begin any one you wish without hesitation, you will be able to sing these six notes in their proper qualities whenever you see them.... This rule will be of great use to you either in the competent singing of an unknown melody as soon as you see it written down, or in the accurate transcription of an unwritten melody immediately upon hearing it.” Strunk/Treitler, *Source Readings*, rev. ed., 217-218.

Although Guido's *Epistola* has been exhaustively analyzed and widely quoted, little attention has been given to three aspects: Guido's admission of "envy" (*invidia*) and being subsequently "banished"¹⁰⁴ (*exulatum*); his refusal to personally take credit for the technique, instead deferring to higher sources ("divinely inspired charity"); and the wording used to describe the technique. Guido indeed appears to "distance" himself from its development--in the interest of exhibiting purity of motivation?--instead stating that "our actions are good only when we ascribe to the Creator all that we are able to accomplish." Admirable piety? Or is this a little "cageyness" thrown in to deflect criticism or further envy? After all, who could find fault with a gift which "grace divinely bestowed"?

It is crucial to note that Guido does not go beyond terming this technique anything more than simply a "method" or "procedure,"¹⁰⁵ and does not point to an "invention" or "discovery" (which would most likely be expressed as *inventum*, which covers both concepts); neither is there any attribution to a teacher, curriculum, monastery, literary source, or other external influence for this technique.

"Introduced" Or "Invented"? No Consensus

20th-century scholarship has investigated various aspects and inconsistencies of the Guido legend, with the authorship of Paulus Diaconus widely disputed. Farmer quotes Lange, who theorized that the hymn may have been manipulated to fit the "ut-re-mi" progression due to "the somewhat bombastic style of the language of the hymn...coupled with the glaring vocal arrangement of the syllables."¹⁰⁶ Palisca and Pesce are openly skeptical about the hymn:

¹⁰⁴ Strunk, *Source Readings*, 121.

¹⁰⁵ The words *argumentum/argumentis* are used; these are translated by Strunk as both "method" and "procedure."

¹⁰⁶ Henry George Farmer, "Clues for the Arabian Influence on European Musical Theory," *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1925): 76.

Although the text of the hymn *Ut queant laxis* is found in a manuscript of c800 (*I-Rvat* Ottob.532) and by an old tradition is ascribed to Paulus Diaconus, the melody in question was unknown before Guido's time and never had any liturgical function. It is probable that Guido invented the melody as a mnemonic device or reworked an existing melody now lost.¹⁰⁷

Berger speculates that the melody was “possibly invented by [Guido] specifically for the purpose of committing pieces to memory”¹⁰⁸ and places *Ut Queant* in the tradition of “didactic songs” that were “used to bring the church modes to mind.”¹⁰⁹ David Hiley comments that “the melody Guido uses may well have been composed by him for the purpose in hand, for it is unknown elsewhere at this time. Its well-known peculiarity is that each line begins with a successively higher note of a hexachordal series C-C-E-F-G-a...providing a “point of reference for any chant.”¹¹⁰

The connection of the hymn to Church lore is pointed out by Stuart Lyons: “The notion that Guido had used a musical setting written or used by Paul was attractive to the medieval Church and gained currency after the invention of the ut-re-mi solmisation system. It is now, however, generally contested.”¹¹¹ Stefano Mengozzi interjects a new aspect into the discourse: “By the early 1800s, the critical assessments of the Guidonian contribution to music theory had acquired a more overtly political and nationalistic color.”¹¹²

¹⁰⁷ Palisca and Pesce, “Guido of Arezzo.”

¹⁰⁸ Berger, 90.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 94.

¹¹⁰ David Hiley, *Western Plainchant: A Handbook* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 467.

¹¹¹ Stuart Lyons, *Music in the Odes of Horace* (Oxford: Aris & Phillips, 2010), 111.

¹¹² Stefano Mengozzi, *The Renaissance Reform of Medieval Music Theory: Guido of Arezzo between Myth and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 255.

The esteemed Paul Henry Lang comments on Guido's contribution, while qualifying the use of the word “inventor”:

Guido was the inventor of the use of a set of syllables to denote the individual tones of the scale. “Inventor” is again somewhat misleading, because such systems (later called solmization) were ages-old and the earliest Chinese, Egyptian, and Greek records testify to their use. But Guido’s invention had a decisive effect on the development of musical instruction in the Occident.¹¹³

It is worth noting the elements of either certitude or uncertainty that are manifested in accounts of Guido's theory. In discussing Guido's advancements in music theory, Gérold is careful with his wording: Guido merely “coordinated” (*coordonné*) the efforts of his predecessors in notation; in referring to solmisation, Gérold terms it an “invention” but hedges a bit, stating that “*elle n'a pas été complètement développée par Gui.*”¹¹⁴ In writing of Guido's development of the staff, Christopher Page first states that Guido “gathered up existing techniques of notation,”¹¹⁵ inferring that Guido was conversant with this practice. Nan Cooke Carpenter uses the phrase “Guido *evolved* a system of solmization” [emphasis added] and cites Dom Grégoire Suñol, who wrote in 1935 that “Guido perfected a system already in current practice.”¹¹⁶ Palisca and Pesce write that “he is remembered today...for *propagating* a method of sight-singing” [emphasis added], and comment: Whether Guido went beyond this application of the hymn’s stepwise rising series of melodic incipits to devise a method of solmization cannot be established from known documents.”¹¹⁷ Nonetheless, David E. Cohen states that “Guido's method was quickly

¹¹³ Paul Henry Lang, *Music in Western Civilization* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1941), 85.

¹¹⁴ Gérold, 70-71.

¹¹⁵ Christopher Page, “The Geography of Medieval Music,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Medieval Music*, ed. Mark Everist (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 330.

¹¹⁶ Nan Cooke Carpenter, *Music in the Medieval and Renaissance Universities* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), 23.

¹¹⁷ Palisca and Pesce, “Guido of Arezzo.”

adapted, elaborated, and formalized by subsequent teachers and theorists in the 11th and 12th centuries.”¹¹⁸

While Richard L. Crocker and David Hiley acknowledge that Guido “provided the solmization that came into general use,” they add that “the same formation was arrived at almost at the same time by Hermannus Contractus (1013-54) in Reichenau in eastern Switzerland.”¹¹⁹

Charles Burnett concurs: “Hermann the Lame wrote three such mnemonics to remember musical intervals and to illustrate his own notation system: *E (e) voces unisonas aequat...*, *Ter tria sunt modi...*, and *Ter terni sunt*.”¹²⁰ Miller notes the parallels with classical theory: “The Greeks used a system of four syllables: *tah, ta, toh, and teh* [which ‘corresponded respectively to the four notes of the basic tetrachord’]....[Hugo] Riemann first cited the possible relationship between Guido’s and the Greeks’ system.”¹²¹ Gustave Reese refers to Aristeides, confirming the Greeks’ use of the syllables *tah, tā, toh, and teh*¹²² and asserts that “solmisation...was...rediscovered in Europe in the 11th century.”¹²³ He also states (citing Farmer and Lange): “Solmisation systems similar to the Western one exist, or have existed, among the East Indians, Persians, and

¹¹⁸ David E. Cohen, “Notes, Scales and Modes in the Earlier Middle Ages,” in *The Cambridge History of Western Music Theory*, ed. Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 342.

¹¹⁹ Richard L. Crocker and David Hiley, *The Early Middle Ages to 1300* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 282.

¹²⁰ Charles Burnett, *The Introduction of Arabic Learning into England*, The Panizzi Lectures, 1996 (London: The British Library, 1998), 86.

¹²¹ Miller, 243.

¹²² Gustave Reese, *Music in the Middle Ages* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1940), 24.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 149.

Arabs.”¹²⁴ Curt Sachs, indeed, reports that the scale of the Far East “is usually presented in the form *kung* (do), *shang* (re), *chiao* (mi), *chih* (sol), *yū* (la), *kung* (do).”¹²⁵

Here, two points become salient: first, that Guido's need for a mnemonic device was painfully evident. Miller observes: “During Guido's time, music was taught and passed on by rote. Teacher and pupil subjected themselves to hours of memorization drill. Guido deplored the manner in which chant was learned and sung...”¹²⁶ Although Miller does not use the phrase “oral tradition,” it clearly applies to this pedagogical system. By inference, I would maintain that the customary Arab manner of musical instruction (which had its roots prior to Guido's time and, in fact, exists to this day in the Arab world) virtually mandated the development and implementation of mnemonic techniques--ones that would definitively pre-date Guido and *Ut Queant*. Reese's tacit “endorsement” of Farmer and Lange with regard to extant Oriental systems serves to bolster this argument. And although Reese does not explicitly refer to the Arab role in transmission of Greek culture, the reader may, I believe, not recklessly presume that even if Guido was not directly influenced by a specifically “Oriental” solmization system in his formulation, the likelihood that the Greek syllables could well have been part of the “mix” of the knowledge base of al-Andalus, henceforth transmitted to Western Europe, indicates the importance of the Arab role as a *sina qua non* in the availability of such knowledge.

¹²⁴ Reese, 149.

¹²⁵ Curt Sachs, *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World: East and West* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1943), 121.

¹²⁶ Miller, 243.

Guido's Sources?

The “originality” of Guido's innovation is open for discussion. *Were* there existing models of solmization? Edith Gerson-Kiwi writes in *Grove*:

This was a mnemonic device of great technical and psychological insight; yet it was not Guido’s personal invention, nor was it confined to the West. Counterparts can be found in those civilizations of the East in which notes as single entities form the basic material of music, as in East Asia.¹²⁷

Gerson-Kiwi traces non-Western forerunners of Guido's system; for example, with regard to his “model song,” *Ut Queant Laxis*, which “supplied the basic material of the solmization system.”

She notes: “Model songs of this kind are still used by Arab and Hindu singers and instrumentalists, and are a constant point of mental reference for them while improvising.”¹²⁸

She explains that solmization systems “serve as aids in the oral transmission of music, and may be used either for direct teaching or as a means of memorizing what has been heard.” But a solmization system,” she continues, “is not a notation: it is a method of aural rather than visual recognition.”¹²⁹

Gerson-Kiwi cites specific instances of analogous solmization systems in China, Korea, Japan, India, and Bali. In discussing Arab solmization, however, she “turns the tables” on Farmer by citing two of his examples in “Clues” and *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence*--Meninski’s *Thesaurus linguarum orientalium* (1680) and, 100 years later, in J.-B. de

¹²⁷ Andrew Hughes and Edith Gerson-Kiwi, “Solmization” [“Ancient and non-European Systems”], *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed September 13, 2013, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/26154.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Gerson-Kiwi, “Solmization.”

La Borde's *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne*--but claims that these schemes are "imitations" of the Guidonian system!¹³⁰

The following section will include a discussion of Chapter V of Farmer's *Historical Facts*--"The Syllables of Solfeggio"--which cites Arabist scholars Franciszek Meniński and Jean-Benjamin Laborde along with Guillaume André Villoteau (1809), who maintained that comparable systems *had* existed in Arab musical practice centuries before; thus casting doubt on the role of 11th-century Benedictine monk Guido d'Arezzo in "inventing" solmization by means of syllables from the hymn *Ut Queant Laxis*.

¹³⁰ Gerson-Kiwi, "Solmization."

ARAB INFLUENCE

Prior to exploring the possible sources of “Arabian influence” on Guido d’Arezzo, a wide-ranging set of preliminary background information will place the discussion into context. In considering the “how” and “why” of Arab/Islamic influence on Mediæval Europe, it is first necessary to literally map the terrain and identify the multitude of cultural and extra-cultural influences simultaneously existing at the time: the concentration of Arab scholarship, originating in Baghdad and then migrating to al-Andalus and Catalonia; the West's intellectual demand for both classical and Oriental knowledge and the conduits that made transmission of knowledge possible; and the incorporation of this knowledge into Mediæval and Renaissance Europe. The absence of even one of these elements in this chain of occurrence would have either weakened the phenomenon of Arab influence or simply made it immaterial.

In the most reductionist overview, my reading and thinking lead me to propose the following schema:

1. Classical learning is amassed and expanded during the ‘Abbasid dynasty in Baghdad (centered in the *Bayt al-Hikma*, “House of Wisdom”)
2. This body of knowledge migrates, along with living experts such as Ziryāb, to al-Andalus and Catalonia; academies and authoritative libraries are established in Cordoba
3. The availability of travel brings Western scholars and monks to Iberia; on returning to European monasteries in particular, these travellers orally transmit knowledge gained from the “East”
4. “Discoveries” from Eastern traditions are incorporated into the Western knowledge base, in effect “bridging” East and West and generating “cross-currents” of influence.

this schema and sets the stage for the specific question-at-hand through a segue into the critical role of Gerbert d'Aurillac (later Pope Sylvester II). Aspects of bias or agenda frequently occur in these accounts, and a discussion of this factor will be included in this chapter as well as the concluding one.

“Light From The East”: The Role Of *Bayt Al-Hikma*

Majid Fakhry traces back the “first medical, astronomical, and alchemical translations” to the Umayyad caliphs who reigned at Damascus from 661-750. Upon the succession of the ‘Abbasids in 750 and transfer of the dynasty to Baghdad, “the first known translations of Indian and Greek works on medicine, astronomy, and mathematics” occurred during the reign of al-Mansur (754-775); under his great grandson, al-Ma'mun (813-833), the famed House of Wisdom was founded in 830 with the intention of acquiring and translating “the chief monuments of Greek philosophy and science.” The esteemed Hunayn bin Ishaq and a team of translators produced editions of Galen, Hippocrates, and Aristotle in Arabic or Syriac.² Allied activities incorporated the talents of scribes and bookbinders; a research institute complemented the translation efforts.

“The Ornament Of The World”³

Contemporaneous with the “Mediæval” period in Europe, al-Andalus represented a luminous period of cultural flourishing from 711 to 1492 in what is now southern Spain.⁴ This era is sometimes referred to as the *Convivencia*, a time of co-existence among Christians,

² Majid Fakhry “Philosophy and History,” in *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*, ed. John R. Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 86.

³ The phrase is derived from a poem written in 955 by a nun, Hroswita of Gandersheim (c. 935-c. 1001/3); the full line of the poem is: “The brilliant ornament of the world shone in the sun.” Menocal chose this phrase for the title of her 2002 book on al-Andalus.

⁴ Chris Lowney, *A Vanished World: Medieval Spain's Golden Age of Enlightenment* (New York: Free Press, 2005), 189.

Muslims, and Jews. Al-Andalus reached its “apogee of splendor” during the reign of Abdurrahman III (912-961): Cordoba, Granada, and Seville were “brilliant centers of scientific, literary, and musical culture,” attracting scholars from all over Europe.⁵ Egon Wellesz summarizes the importance of al-Andalus not only as a *treffpunkt* but a wellspring:

The more important impress of Islamic civilization on Europe was due to the presence of Muslims in the Iberian peninsula, Sicily, and elsewhere. Spain, which was in Muslim hands, more or less, from the eighth to the fifteenth century, became the centre from which this new culture radiated to the rest of Europe. Indeed it is to this land that we must turn for some of the influences which directly affected the Renaissance.⁶

Considerable advances in knowledge proliferated in the rich culture of al-Andalus: potent developments influencing Europe were the introduction of modern arithmetical notation in 975 (including the concept of *sifr*, or “zero”) and the translation of the treatises of al-Farabi into Latin. The exquisitely illustrated oversized book entitled *The Genius of Arab Civilization* (with its compelling subtitle, *Source of Renaissance*, which echoes Wellesz's assertion), already cited above, substantiates this bold claim with chapters on contributions of Arab culture in numerous fields: literature, philosophy and history, architecture and art, music, exact and life sciences, mechanical technology, and trade and commerce. This landmark book represents one of the first comprehensive surveys of Arab influence for a general audience. Many readers have doubtlessly been surprised to discover that Arabs not only introduced the concept of zero but also algebra (*al-jabr*), trigonometry, the compass, lute (from *al-'ud*),⁷ hospital, and pharmacy.⁸ Due to the

⁵ Gilbert Chase, *The Music of Spain*, 2nd rev. ed. (NY: Dover, 1959), 15. Chase favors this alternate spelling of Cordoba.

⁶ Egon Wellesz, *Ancient and Oriental Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), 465.

⁷ Ali Jihad Racy, “Music,” in *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*, ed. John R. Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 157; also verified by Thomas Walker Arnold and Alfred Guillaume, *Legacy of Islam* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 359.

⁸ John R. Hayes, ed. *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 182; 186; 262; 157; 208; 213.

Arabs' extensive trade network, numerous maritime terms have their origin in the Arabic language: admiral, sloop, monsoon, and caliber.⁹

R. W. Southern describes this time of translation as a “great period of acquisition” ending in 1204, representing a “great wealth of new knowledge”; he uses the images of “exploration” and “opening out a world.”¹⁰ It is worth noting David C. Lindberg's important observation that this “time of translation” was in itself a “Renaissance”¹¹ of sorts, a re-activation of the kind of cultural exchange that occurred centuries earlier during the “flowering of Roman intellectual life in the latter days of the Roman Republic.”¹² Lindberg credits Varro, Cicero (106-43 BC), Lucretius, Vitruvius, Celsus, Seneca, and Pliny the Elder with contributing to this “intellectual enterprise”¹³ and asserts that “there was no problem of scholarly access” between Greek and Roman culture: citing bilingualism, travel or study abroad, and availability of Greek teachers.¹⁴ At the same time, he differentiates between the mindsets of the two cultures: the “subtleties of Greek metaphysics and epistemology” as opposed to the Romans' preference for “subjects of practical value and intrinsic appeal.”¹⁵ Or, more simply, the Romans were more utilitarian¹⁶ and less theoretical, excelling in engineering and administrative functions.¹⁷ The “conditions that had

⁹ Ragaei and Dorothea El Mallakh, “Trade and Commerce,” in *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*, ed. John R. Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 262.

¹⁰ Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 68.

¹¹ Mirroring the title of the Hayes volume, yet looking *back* to the roots of this knowledge from an earlier era!

¹² Lindberg, 139.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 146.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 135.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 136.

avored scholarship and learning” would weaken toward the end of the 2nd century A.D., following the death of emperor Marcus Aurelius.¹⁸ This period brought political turmoil, economic problems, and barbarian invasions.”¹⁹ Lindberg emphasizes the impact of the division of the Roman Empire into eastern and western halves: “the Latin West gradually lost its vital contact with the Greek East” (which would come to be known as the Byzantine Empire); as a result, “*intellectual continuity between East and West was significantly weakened*”²⁰ [emphasis added]. Boethius (480-524) was one of two Roman translators to preserve Greek philosophical literature: particularly Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, and Porphyry.²¹ In addition, Boethius wrote Greek-inspired works on the liberal arts, including arithmetic and music.²² Lindberg writes that “Roman Britain and northern Gaul quickly lost contact with the classical tradition, but schools and intellectual life continued to exist (if not to thrive) in Rome, northern Italy, southern Gaul, Spain, and North Africa.”²³

The Latin writings of Boethius (who was put to death in 524) would exert a significant influence on Gerbert d’ Aurillac more than four centuries later: not in Gerbert’s native France, but in a Benedictine monastery in Islamic-influenced Catalonia. This remarkable process thus exemplifies the stream of transmission that brought Greek thought through Roman translators to Islamic Spain, and thence to Western Europe.

¹⁸ Lindberg, 146.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 147.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*, 148.

²³ *Ibid.*, 152.

The Flourishing Of Music

Abu Hasan Ali Ibn Nafi (known as Ziryāb, 759-857) migrated to Cordoba from Baghdad (via Tunisia) in 822 and, as Mahmoud Guettat explains, established a “specifically Andalusian²⁴ musical school in the great classical tradition of Baghdad.” Guettat deems Ziryāb's impact as a “turning point for Andalusian music, completing its ‘reorientalization’.”²⁵ Having studied ‘ud with Ishāq al-Mawsilī in Baghdad, Ziryāb improved on the construction and technique of the instrument in al-Andalus (including the addition of a fifth string, “as red as blood,” between the second and third strings).²⁶ Ziryāb introduced “all the instruments used in the Islamic East”-- nearly forty musical instruments--such as ‘ud, nāy, duff, rabāb, and būq.²⁷ Guettat notes that musical instruments were manufactured in Andalusia, with Seville especially noted for “perfection.”²⁸

²⁴ “Andalusian” refers specifically to the historical region of al-Andalus; Habib Hassan Touma cautions about the confusion with Andalucía, a southern province of modern Spain. Habib Hassan Touma, “Andalusian *Nūba* in Morocco,” in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*; Vol. 6, *The Middle East*, Virginia Danielson, Dwight Reynolds, and Scott Marcus (New York: Routledge, 2002), 455.

²⁵ Mahmoud Guettat, “The Andalusian Musical Heritage,” in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*; Vol. 6, *The Middle East*, ed. Virginia Danielson, Dwight Reynolds, and Scott Marcus (New York: Routledge, 2002), 442.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 448.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 445 (citing Tifāshī).

²⁸ Guettat, 444.



Figure 5.2 Ziryāb and his 'ūd²⁹ (Copyright © Creative Commons Public Domain Declaration)

²⁹ As depicted in “Hadīth Bayād wa Riyād,” a 13th-century Arabic love story, the sole manuscript of which is kept at the Vatican Library (catalogued as Codex Vat. Arabo 368).

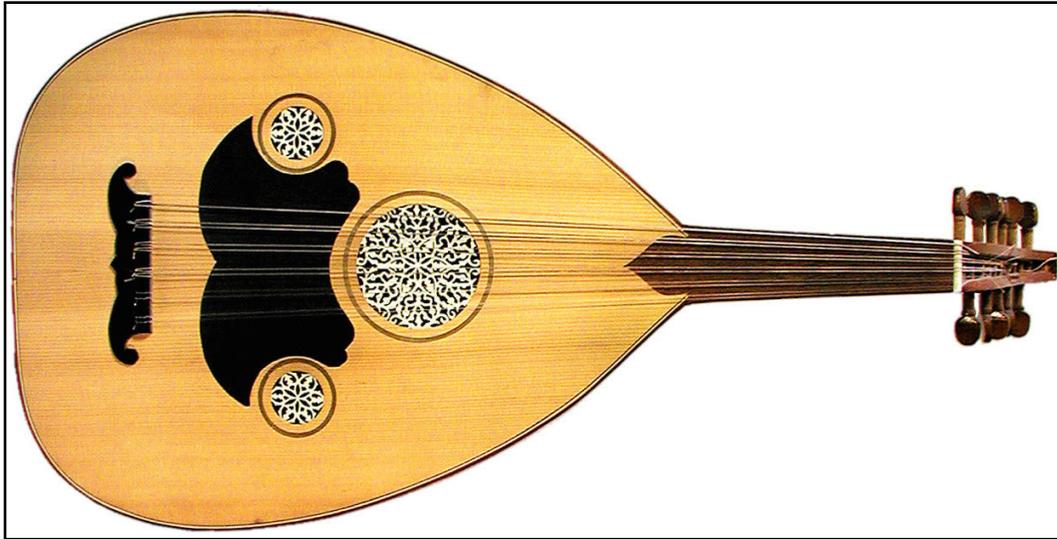


Figure 5.3 A Modern-Day 'ūd

This infusion of new instrumentation had a major impact on the cultural climate of al-Andalus and later on Europe--and these imports might well serve as a “doorway” into corroborating the common aesthetic of Western Mediæval music and indigenous Arab music. John Haines, writing in 2001 under the aegis of “Re-Examining Performance Practices,” comments on the contemporary “revival” of Arab instrumentation. His observations bear quoting in full:

The uninitiated customer browsing for recent recordings of medieval monophonic music may be surprised by an eruption of Arabic sounds: antiphons and responsories undulating in a manner more reminiscent of Koranic³⁰ recitation than the sober tones of conventional interpretations, troubadour and trouvère tunes declaimed to the accompaniment of an 'ūd (Arabic lute) and pulsing with the beat of various North African drums, or French courtly dances filtered through a Moroccan *bendir* (frame drum). Our curious customer might rightly enquire where the interpretation of medieval music using an Arabic style originated.³¹

Despite the fact that Haines's colorful and sensuous phraseology (“undulating” and “pulsing”) brings to mind a belly-dance performance in a smoky cabaret, his observations are spot-on.

³⁰ The currently used term is “Qur'anic.”

³¹ John Haines, “The Arabic Style of Performing Medieval Music,” *Early Music* 29 (2001): 369.

Haines proceeds to explain this phenomenon of Arab instrumentation as an expression of Orientalism³² due to this overlay of exoticism; I prefer a bolder explanation: a revival of instrumentation that was *there from the start* but had been lost.

Along with new instrumentation, new musical genres emerged. These included *nawba* (or *nūba*), *muwashshah*, and *zajal*; the latter two, closely allied to literary expression, emerging near the end of the 9th century, fifty years after Ziryāb's death.³³ Mounah A. Khouri describes these genres as “new and lively creations that rose from the fusion of Arabic and Provençal cultures” and emphasizes that their refrains indicate that they were “meant to be sung.”³⁴ She characterizes the *muwashshah* as “more courtly” but points out that the *kharjah*, or envoi, is “usually in Romance or pungent, colloquial Arabic.”³⁵ Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi describes the *zajal* as a “more folkish version that used the vernacular language”³⁶ (Owen Wright observes that “many of the *Cantigas* are in the *zajal* form”³⁷). Guettat cites the “great poets of the time” who contributed to the “golden age of the *muwashshah* and the *zajal*”: Ibn Bājjā (Avempace), Ibn Zuhri (Avenzohar), and Ibn Rusd (Averroes), who studied aesthetics and the effect of music on the soul. Habib Hassan Touma provides an insight on the “flexible” nature of the genre and the opportunity for creativity in performance, in keeping with the time-honored Arab technique of improvisation:

³² cf. references to Said, below.

³³ Haines, 448.

³⁴ Mounah A. Khouri, “Literature,” in *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*, ed. John R. Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 67. Sachs confirms the vocal character of the genre: he writes that the “*nūba* may best be described as a cantata in nine parts of the same tonality” (291).

³⁵ *Ibid.*

³⁶ Lois Ibsen al-Faruqi, “The Andalusian Tradition,” in *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*, ed. John R. Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 174.

³⁷ Owen Wright, et al., “Arab Music,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed June 15, 2012, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/01139pg1.

for the Oriental musician, who would never perform a composition ‘true to the notation,’ a certain freedom is granted in performing the *muwashshah*: the fewer the ornamentations indicated in the transcription, the richer the melodic embellishments... during the course of the musician’s improvisation.”³⁸

The cycle of 24 *nawbāt*, or *nūbāt*, corresponds to each hour of the day.³⁹ The story behind the word *nawba* is an interesting one: Subhi Anwar Rasheed writes in *Mujaz Tarikh Al Musiqā Wa Al Ghinae Al-'Arabi*, published in Baghdad in 2000, that the term literally means “turn.” The term *nawba* was used to designate whose turn it was to entertain the third ‘Abbasid Caliph, Al-Mahdi Ibn Abi Ja'afar Al-Mansur (775-785). It was, hence, the poet's “nawba,” the dancer's “nawba,” the singer's “nawba,” etc. Under Harun Ar-Rasheed, Caliph from 786 to 809, the meaning of the term widened and started to be assigned to the actual program performed by an artist. It was not a “turn” anymore, but rather the structure of the repertoire performed.⁴⁰

Guettat outlines the structure of each *nūba* suite as constructed on a principal *tab*⁴¹ and encompassing “several vocal and instrumental pieces in different rhythmic and dynamic phases” in preparatory and “main” sections. Each of the five rhythmic phases or vocal cycles in the “core” of the *nūba* (in Morocco, for example: *basīt*, *qāyīm wa-nisf*, *btāyhī*, *draj*, and *quddām*) “unfolds” in varying tempos, from *tasdīra*, “fairly slow” to *qafīl*, “very fast.”⁴² Songs are derived from the classical *qasida* form and post-classical strophic forms including the *muwashshah* and

³⁸ Habib Hassan Touma, *The Music of the Arabs* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996), 182.

³⁹ Racy, 157: Zaryab [*sic*] is credited with compiling a repertoire of twenty-four *nawbat*.

⁴⁰ Hicham Chami, “The Moroccan Nawba: Definition, Structure, and Historical Context,” *Tarab: The Arabic & Eastern Music Newsletter* 2 (2004): 16-18.

⁴¹ Louis Soret (cited in Chami) defines *tab'* as “the melodic mode, which influences the melodies, developments, therapeutic properties, character, and expression of the Nawba, as well as the occasions and hours of the day when it is to be performed.”

⁴² Guettat, 450.

zajal.⁴³ My reading of Arabic-language sources expands on the description of these genres with regard to the *nawba*: *zajal* is a form of poetry in the conversational language with no regard for grammar or syntax. This kind of poetry had first become prevalent and used in Andalusia as a result of the presence of a large number of non-native Arabic speakers living in this Arabic-speaking society. The lyrics in a *muwashah*⁴⁴ are written in classical Arabic (*fus'ha*) as opposed to colloquial or regional Arabic (*'ammiyyah*), and often deal with the subject (unrequited love), or wine, used as a metaphor for religious intoxication (common in Sufism). The structure of the *muwashah* varies in sophistication. It is performed by a chorus alternating with a soloist who is accompanied by a *takht* [literally, “platform”; the traditional instrumental ensemble comprised of 'ud, qanun, kamanja, nay, and riqq]. The *muwashah* is often composed using a complex rhythmic mode, or *iqaa*.⁴⁵

Touma's *Garland* article mentions that the Andalusian vocal repertoire has been “transmitted orally for more than twelve centuries” and comprises 1,200 pieces in Morocco, more than 900 in Algeria, and about 350 in Tunisia.⁴⁶ He does not mention that the original repertoire of 24 *nawbāt* has deteriorated to fewer than 11 due to the very primacy of this oral tradition coupled with a lack of documentation which is common in the Arab world; leading to an irretrievable cultural legacy. In *The Rise of Music in the Ancient World: East and West*, Curt Sachs cites his own 1933 article, “Die Marokkaner,” in describing his experience of “one of the eleven *nūbas* still performed in Morocco.”⁴⁷ This account is notable not only for the observer's

⁴³ Guettat, 454.

⁴⁴ Alternate spelling of *muwashshah*; also spelled *muwassa'*.

⁴⁵ Chami, 17.

⁴⁶ Touma, “Andalusian *Nūba* in Morocco,” 455.

⁴⁷ Sachs, 291.

sensory prose (“the cracking sound of lute strings under the beat of the quill plectron”) but for his obvious enchantment and a predilection for establishing cross-cultural connections. His awareness of the precarious state of this genre is also compelling:

Why does this music captivate us so much more than any other Oriental style? Things foreign can touch us only if under the unwonted surface we sense familiar traits. Do we recognize the melody, the powerful impetus of the Magnificat which over and over appears throughout the endless work? There is more than that. The longer we listen, the more distinctly we feel that *this is the last living witness of that great music which half a millennium ago was played in Andalusia*. The seven or eight hundred years of Moorish domination in Spain do not only mean the acme of Islamic civilization, *which could not fail to set its seal on the medieval culture of Europe*⁴⁸ [emphases added].

Periodizing The Music Of Al-Andalus

If al-Andalus thrived during the European Middle Ages, where did it fall within the scope of Arab cultural history? The era of al-Andalus is incorporated into several thematic periodization models (which generally begin with pre-Islamic period, known as *Jāhiliyya* or “age of ignorance”). Although this observation may be an obvious one, the Andalusian era is distinctive within each model not only for its separation from the original “home ground” of the Arabian peninsula but indeed from the traditionally delineated Arab world itself--to what was a “foreign” European continent. The following scholars have characterized the period of al-Andalus within their models⁴⁹:

⁴⁸ Sachs, 291.

⁴⁹ Peter Crossley-Holland, “The Arabic World,” in *Pelican History of Music*, Vol. 1 (London: Penguin, 1960); Henry George Farmer, *A History of Arabian Music to the XIIIth Century* (London: Luzac, 1929); Simon Jargy, *La Musique Arabe* (Paris: Presses Universitaires De France, 1971); Habib Hassan Touma, *The Music of the Arabs* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1996); Hans Hickman, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Kassel: Baerenreiter, 1949-1951).

Table 5.1 Periodization of Music in al-Andalus

Scholar	Thematic Characterization
Peter Crossley-Holland	Islamic Spain (701-1492)
Henry George Farmer	‘Abbasids: Golden Age (750-847) Disintegration (847-945) Falling Apart (945-1258)
Simon Jargy	Renewal/Regeneration (750-1463)
Habib Hassan Touma	Revival in Cordoba (822-1492)
Hans Hickman	Expansion and Proliferation Age (830-1492)

These models are similar in concept, emphasizing the positive and aesthetic aspects of Andalusian culture--yet not indicative of specific stylistic elements. Farmer provides a tripartite division of the period (reminiscent of M. G. S. Hodgson's Rise/Golden Age/Decline model presented in the previous section).

Mobility And Transmission

The same elements of mobility and communication that enabled the spread of “Eastern” knowledge from Baghdad to what is now Spain also enabled its migration (principally person-to-person) throughout Mediæval Europe, particularly via the well-established Christian monastic network.

In an obscure book entitled *Transport and Communication in Early Medieval Europe, AD500-1100*, Albert C. Leighton traces the movement of objects and ideas central to the Mediæval ethos. Leighton covers the “how” in his discussions of land and water transport during this period; but the “what” is more intriguing, as it covers a wide gamut of commercial,

scholarly, and personal concerns. He delineates the categories of “who” and “what” were transported: people, animals, goods and materials, information and ideas, disease.⁵⁰

This simple outline encompasses a vast array of living beings, inanimate objects, concepts, and even microbes. The category of “people” refers both to individuals/small groups and large groups. The former would include pilgrims, messengers, merchants, migrants, or vagabonds--or a combination of the above.⁵¹ The religious pilgrim was particularly critical in the arena of “international contact.” Leighton writes:

In his wanderings he was often the unwitting carrier of ideas, techniques, and even germs. After his return he was a man apart. He had seen and could describe holy sights and scenes....He had communicated...with the natives in the lands he had traversed....He...might very well have brought back a useful foreign tool, in addition to the relics which were probably his main concern.⁵²

Although the Prologue to Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* (late 14th century) proclaims that in “Aprille with his shoures soote” [sweet showers], “Than longen folk to goon on pilgrimages,”⁵³ the practice of religious pilgrimage in the Iberian peninsula dates back to the 9th century, when pilgrims began making the arduous journey along El Camino de Santiago to Compostela in Galicia (in what is now northwestern Spain) to venerate the remains of the apostle St. James the Greater. Conrad Rudolph estimates that half a million pilgrims a year travelled this

⁵⁰ Albert C. Leighton, *Transport and Communication in Early Medieval Europe, AD500-1100* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1972), 13-47.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ Geoffrey Chaucer, *The Canterbury Tales*, ed. Walter W. Skeat (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), 7.

route during the 11th and 12th centuries.⁵⁴ He also notes that the popularity of this pilgrimage was due in part to the “exotic image of Spain held by northern Europeans.”⁵⁵

While many authors devote attention to the role of the Roman Catholic church in promoting travel during the Mediæval period--primarily through pilgrimage or monastic study--Leighton singles out several other functions of travel beyond that of merely moving human beings from one place to another for devotional or educational purposes. He succinctly states: “The Church had much to gain by fostering communication.” Citing a Biblical verse from Daniel 12:4 (“Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased”),⁵⁶ Leighton details the Church's use of messengers to convey documents and correspondence throughout Europe--giving the example of St. Boniface, who “used priests to carry his numerous letters from Germany to England and Rome” in the 8th century. St. Boniface, in turn, received books from an abess in England and inquired about the holdings of the library of Abbot Duddo.⁵⁷ In the case of religious relics, the order of delivery from Germany to Rome was reversed; in a rather macabre anecdote, Leighton relates that Einhard (a Frankish scholar and biographer of Charlemagne) arranged to have the bodies of the martyrs Marcellinus and Peter stolen and transported over the Alps to Germany.⁵⁸ In 1050, the mortuary roll of Count Wilfred of Cerdana was carried from his monastery in the Pyrenees throughout France, visiting 133 religious houses. The log of this

⁵⁴ Conrad Rudolph, *Pilgrimage to the End of the World: The Road to Santiago de Compostela* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁵⁶ Leighton, 42.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 32.

⁵⁸ Leighton, 44.

journey reveals dates and specific locations, making it possible to reconstruct the route.⁵⁹ In the realm of non-material transport, Leighton cites scientific discoveries such as the astrolabe and notes the spread of heresies through oral transmission, due in large part to the lack of literacy of the “traders and travellers from the lower social classes” who “were the most likely carriers.”⁶⁰ In speculating on the possibility of Gerbert d’Aurillac’s direct experience of al-Andalus, Oscar G. Darlington states: “Gerbert might easily have visited Cordova, since diplomatic relations between Cordova and Christian European rulers were not infrequent at this period. Abderrahman sent aid to Sancho, King of Leon in 959, and even exchanged ambassadors with the emperor, Otto I.”⁶¹

Jonathan Lyons points out the linkage between Catalonia and al-Andalus:

Catalonia enjoyed good trade relations with the Western Caliphate, based in the imperial city of Cordoba. Muslim traders were a common sight in Catalanian markets, and cultural trends, ideas, and inventions passed easily enough across this border between Muslim East and Christian West.⁶²

Marco Zuccato cites Josè Millàs Vallicrosa’s “monumental” work *Assaig d’història de les idees físiques i matemàtiques a la Catalunya medieval*, which “showed that important astronomical and astrological works had filtered from al-Andalus to Catalonia as early as the tenth century.”⁶³

⁵⁹ Leighton, 45.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

⁶¹ Oscar G. Darlington, “Gerbert, the Teacher,” *The American Historical Review* 52 (1947): 462.

⁶² Jonathan Lyons, *The House of Wisdom: How the Arabs Transformed Western Civilization* (New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2009), 36.

⁶³ Marco Zuccato, “Gerbert of Aurillac and a Tenth-Century Jewish Channel for the Transmission of Arabic Science to the West,” *Speculum* 80 (2005): 742.

Moving from al-Andalus outward, Joseph O'Callaghan notes that as monks emigrated, a revival of monasticism occurred in the Christian states of Iberia. He writes that emigrés founded Sahagún, San Pedro de Cardeña, and San Miguel de Escalada.⁶⁴

“The Course Of Civilization Is From East To West”⁶⁵

Anwar Chejne refers to al-Andalus as a “melting pot and a laboratory” which “brought East and West much closer together.”⁶⁶ The kinesthetic wording of his essay, “The Role of al-Andalus in the *Movement of Ideas Between Islam and the West*” [emphasis added] is reminiscent of the flow of water (suggesting the metaphor of currents). It also implies a gradual but continuous “stream” of intellectual impact of Islamic thought on the West; even though this process may be understood as a “one-way traffic of ideas”⁶⁷ (in Southern's words), at least during this time in history, the flow of ideas would be reversed at later stages of history (and then reversed!). Western agents would be crucial in their role as transmitters of the knowledge gleaned from Eastern sources. Without the infrastructure of the Mediæval monastic system in Christian Europe, for instance, there would no ready repositories of this new knowledge as well as monks who would be “sent” to Spain to partake of its intellectual climate.

Likelihood Of Arab Influence

Norman Daniel writes that “the eleventh century, which saw a considerable revival of interest in new methods of thoughts, was not a revolutionary age; it began a process of

⁶⁴ Joseph F. O'Callaghan, *A History of Medieval Spain* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975), 186.

⁶⁵ Paulus Orosius, quoted by Bernard F. Reilly, *The Medieval Spains* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 61.

⁶⁶ Chejne, 113.

⁶⁷ Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 66.

indebtedness to the Arab World.”⁶⁸ Research indicates a number of avenues for the transmission of Arab influence: translation, authorship of treatises, education that involved travel from areas of Europe into Spain (and back again), and travel to the West by scholars from the Arab World.

The literature is replete with examples. Charles Burnett writes:

The earliest of these texts [translated into Latin] are translations of Arabic works on medicine, made by Constantine the African (d. after 1087) who, having emigrated from ‘Carthage’ (i.e. Tunis) to Salerno, settled in the Benedictine monastery of Montecassino.⁶⁹

The passage cited, from a treatise on the therapeutic value of music, mentions the ‘*ud* and *iqā*’ (rhythm). This article, while concerning texts “referring to music,” includes works on medicine as well as philosophy and astrology, since musical content was often embedded in these treatises. Daniel also cites Constantine the African, who translated works from the Arabic versions of Hippocrates and Galen.⁷⁰

Thomas Walker Arnold and Alfred Guillaume are enthusiastic about the likelihood of Arab influence on European music:

There is...a distinct possibility that European musical theory, like every other branch of learning in medieval Europe, was influenced by Muslim writers. Between the eighth and eleventh centuries many Greek treatises on music were translated into Arabic, and important original works were written in Arabic by Al-Kindi, Al-Farabi, Avempace, Avicenna, and others.

When students from the north began to visit Toledo, these Arabic works gradually became known in Europe in Latin translations, and *it is a curious coincidence* that this period (the first half of the twelfth century) is the period in which a new principle appears in northern music--the principle that the notes have an exact time-value or ratio among themselves, instead of the fluid time-value of plain-song. The inventor of this ‘measured music’ is sometimes stated to have been

⁶⁸ Norman Daniel, *The Arabs and Medieval Europe* (New York: Longman, 1979), 144.

⁶⁹ Charles Burnett, “European Knowledge of Arabic Texts Referring to Music: Some New Material,” *Early Music History* 12 (1993): 2.

⁷⁰ Daniel, 143.

Franco of Cologne; but he himself speaks of measured music as *a thing already in existence*, and it seems to have been known to Al-Khalil as early as the eighth century, as well as to Al-Farabi (tenth century), who, under the name of Alpharabius, was translated into Latin and widely read among northern musicians⁷¹ [emphases added].

Arnold and Guillaume expand on the importance of translation:

Of the Arabs, the two encyclopædias by al-Farabi (d. 950) were translated into Latin by Johannes Hispalensis and Gerard of Cremona (d. 1187) as *De scientiis* and *De ortu scientiarum*. Avicenna (d. 1037) was also known in Latin by his *Compendium of Aristotle's De anima* which was done by Johannes Hispalensis....Of special value was the *Great Commentary on Aristotle's De anima* by Averroes (d. 1198) which was latinized by Michael Scot⁷² (d. 1232).⁷³

The authors highlight the benefit of education and of direct contact with the milieu of Cordoba:

Of far greater importance was the transmission of Arabian theory *viva voce*. Ibn al-Hijari (d. 1194) says that during the Umayyad rule in Spain (8th-11th centuries) ‘students from all parts of the world flocked...to learn the sciences of which Cordoba was the most noble repository’....European students could have benefited from the Arabic fount direct, without the intermediary of Latin translations.⁷⁴

Which Arab writers were the most influential? Arnold and Guillaume single out the following:

1. al-Khalil (d. 791), *Book of Notes* and *Book of Rhythms*
“...probably it was al-Khalil’s theories that ibn Firnas (d. 888) introduced into Spain (the ‘first who taught the science of music in al-Andalus’)”
2. al-Kindi (d. c874), *The Essentials of Knowledge in Music*
“...earliest extant works on the theory of music in Arabic showing the influence of the Greek writers”
3. al-Farabi (d. 950), *The Grand Book on Music*
“...the greatest of all the Arabic theorists”

⁷¹ Arnold and Guillaume, 17-18. Arnold is technically a “Sir,” as are Jack Goody and R. W. Southern. However, honorifics, including knighthoods, academic degrees, and professional credentials, are omitted from the notes and bibliography for consistency.

⁷² Charles Burnett cites Scot as the “philosopher” of Frederick II in Sicily (“European Knowledge,” 8).

⁷³ Arnold and Guillaume, 369.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 371.

4. al-Isfahani (d. 967), *Great Book of Songs*
Greek treatises translated into Arabic (Aristotle, Euclid)
5. Ibn Sina or Avicenna (d. 1037), *Shifa*⁷⁵ and *Najat*
“...most important after al-Farabi”⁷⁶

Ali Jihad Racy summarizes the mutual influences that occurred during contact of the Islamic Near East with Europe at the time of the Crusades in the 11th-13th centuries and during the Islamic occupation of Spain (713-1492):

This contact had a widespread impact on both Islamic and European traditions. The westward movement of scientific scholarship into the Muslim universities of Spain is known to have influenced the Christian West and to have promoted the translation of Arabic works, including commentaries on Greek sources, into Latin. Although it is difficult to assess precisely the nature and extent of the Near Eastern musical impact upon medieval Europe, such scholars as Julian Ribera, Alois R. Nykl, and Henry George Farmer have argued that substantial influence existed in areas ranging from rhythm and song forms to music theory, nomenclature, and musical instruments.⁷⁷

Many of the instruments imported by Ziryāb would be adapted by Europeans during the Renaissance (the lute, for example, was derived from the 'ud, or *al-'ud*,⁷⁸ a fretless stringed instrument). Wright confirms this:

There is abundant lexical and iconographic evidence for the European acquisition of a wide range of instruments, the lute (*'ūd*), rebec (*rabāb*) and nakers (*naqqāra*) being only the most obvious. Depictions of these and others are provided by the miniatures of the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*, which represent Christian and Moorish musicians at the court of Alfonso el Sabio (1252–84).⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Farmer credits Ibn Sina for “dealing with” the concepts of magadizing and organizing in *Shifa*, “under the names of *tad'if* and *tarkib*” (“Clues,” 64).

⁷⁶ Arnold and Guillaume, 362-365.

⁷⁷ Racy, 157.

⁷⁸ cf. note 22 in the final section.

⁷⁹ Wright, et al., “Arab Music.”

Guettat states that the doctrines of Averroes “evidently had a significant impact on the greatest masters of Spanish music.”⁸⁰ He also observes, significantly, that “this poetic and musical art spread throughout the Arab-Islamic world and *influenced the repertoire of the Catalan and Provençal troubadours* in both form and content”⁸¹ [emphasis added]. Menocal pursues this concept in an anecdote about an Arabic lesson centered on the word *taraba* (note that *tarab*, or enchantment, is a key concept in Arab music). Her (unnamed) professor was introducing the verb *taraba*, meaning “to entertain by singing”--stating that this verb “had a Romance cognate.” Menocal writes: “Without batting an eyelash the professor let on that this was the word from which troubadour came.” She admits that she

had never heard of such an etymology for the famous Provençal verb *trobar* and its related words, such as troubadour. In fact, I was floored by it since as a budding philologist I knew that this particular etymology, that of *trobar* and troubadour, was one of the most hotly disputed and most studied ones in the field. The suggestion, quite casually offered by someone who was an authority figure, that its root might be Arabic, seemed absolutely mind-boggling to me.⁸²

Khouri echoes Menocal's discussion:

there is a considerable likelihood that the Andalusian *zajal* and *muwashshah* were the precursors of the songs of love and chivalry of medieval Europe....The love traditions of Jamil and 'Umar thus made their way into Provençal courtly love, and it is even possible that the word *TRouBadour* derives, via the Provençal *TROBar*, from the Arabic root *TaRiBa*, which conveys the idea and joys and song.⁸³

⁸⁰ Guettat, 443.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 448.

⁸² Menocal, “Pride and Prejudice,” 62.

⁸³ Khouri, 67.

Al-Faruqi enumerates the impact of “the musical tradition of Moorish Spain” on Mediæval Europe: particularly the range of musical instruments of Arab origin and the interaction between the minstrels of Arab Spain and their European counterparts, the troubadours. She asserts:

There are indications that song texts, poetic/musical structures, performance styles, vocal production, performance contexts, and well as costumes and makeup of the European minstrels were all affected by the Andalusian tradition. Even the “morris” dancers of the distant British Isles are thought to have derived from “Moorish” models.⁸⁴

She identifies the “specific lingering influences on modern Spain vis-à-vis the flamenco music of the Spanish Gypsies: ornamental melodic style, improvisatory rhythmic freedom, intervals, segmental structure, repeated excursions and returns to a tonal center.”⁸⁵

Gerbert: Nexus Of Transmission

As Lindberg traces the ongoing attempts to preserve the continuity of ancient learning, the concept of “straight-line” transmission falls by the wayside. He convincingly navigates through the factors that worked for and against the propagation of Greek knowledge. Among the critical developments he describes are: the schism between the Eastern and Western Roman empires, growth of Christianity, rise of monasticism, and advances in Islamic science. Through these monumental periods of history, Lindberg keeps the thread of Greek learning at the forefront--its fall into disfavor and later re-discovery. This “thread” is especially vital because it suggests a collective *intellectual* unconscious (in Jungian terminology) that kept the thirst for Greek learning alive in the West even as it experienced suppression at certain times. In a profoundly ironic “twist,” this knowledge base would in effect be “delivered back” to a receptive audience in the Western world as a gift from the Eastern world! A crucial “ambassador” from the

⁸⁴ Al-Faruqi, 175.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

West was instrumental in this process: Gerbert d' Aurillac (later Pope Sylvester II), 950-1003, who was a key figure in transferring knowledge from East to West, including implementation of the astrolabe and abacus. Burnett modifies this claim: the “earliest Latin astrolabe” was “probably constructed by an Arabic maker but inscribed by a Catalan scholar” in the tenth century.⁸⁶

Michel Huglo writes in *Grove* that Gerbert, a native of Aquitaine, had entered the monastery of Aurillac reformed by Odo of Cluny *ca.* 925.⁸⁷ As mentioned in the previous section, Gerbert was forced to leave his monastery in the Auvergne because the quadrivium was not taught. Most scholars confirm that he was in residence at the Benedictine Monastery of Santa Maria de Ripoll in Catalonia from 967-970, studying math and astronomy. Ripoll is significant in part due to the “influx of Mozarabic monks” noted by Philippe Wolff.⁸⁸ Wolff also states that Ripoll owned a manuscript of the musical work of Boethius;⁸⁹ Jonathan Lyons claims that the monks of Ripoll “enjoyed access to relatively large collections that included Arabic texts and their translations.”⁹⁰

Huglo fills in subsequent details of Gerbert's life: Adalbero, archbishop of Reims, “summoned him, probably in 972, to teach the subjects of the Quadrivium (geometry, arithmetic, astronomy and music) at the episcopal school at Reims, where he probably wrote his treatise and his letters commenting on Boethius. He was elected Abbot of Bobbio and, in 999, pope, taking

⁸⁶ Burnett, *Introduction*, 3.

⁸⁷ Michel Huglo, “Gerbert d'Aurillac,” *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 22, 2012, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/10913.

⁸⁸ Wolff, 160.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 187.

⁹⁰ J. Lyons, 37.

the name Silvester II.”⁹¹ These modest details do little to convey Gerbert's extraordinary role in the acquisition and transmission of Arab knowledge to Europe, primarily accomplished through the monastic network. R. W. Southern makes an unusual statement about Gerbert's time-and-place: “If Gerbert had been born in Bukhara instead of Aurillac, and if he had taught in Baghdad or Isfahan instead of at Rheims, he would have found himself in a society intellectually much more congenial to him than that of the West.”⁹²

Scholarly assessment of Gerbert's pivotal importance is unequivocal: Huglo writes that “his influence in the history of thought was such that the 10th century has been called the ‘century of Gerbert’.”⁹³ Huglo cites Gerbert's “comments on Boethius's *De musica institutione* and his treatise on the division of the monochord and the measurement of organ pipes. Marcia L. Colish deems Gerbert the “leading scientific thinker of the tenth century”⁹⁴ and cites “his importation of scientific advances from Muslim Spain.”⁹⁵ Southern is so impressed by Gerbert that he “bookends” the monk's 972 arrival in Reims as the first element in framing “the formation of Western Europe.” Southern's enthusiastic endorsement:

the scholar Gerbert, a young man at the height of his powers and bursting with intellectual life, having absorbed the scientific learning of Italy and the Spanish

⁹¹ Huglo, “Gerbert d'Aurillac.” Huglo omits any mention of Gerbert's travel to or residence in al-Andalus; although undocumented stories (e.g. the “highly coloured version” by William of Malmesbury cited by Wolff) tell of Gerbert disguising himself as a Muslim to gain entry to the magnificent library of Cordoba. Darlington writes that “the great question in Gerbert's academic record is whether he visited Moslem [*sic*] Spain as a student (462). He cites Ademar de Chabannes (988-1030) as the “only writer born in the tenth century to mention Gerbert's studying at Cordova” (462). Darlington indicates the need for further research: “If Gerbert toured the peninsula while living upon the patronage of the count of Barcelona, some ravelings of evidence must have got into the writings of Arabian or Jewish scholars” (462).

⁹² R. W. Southern, *Western Views of Islam in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1962), 10.

⁹³ Huglo, “Gerbert d'Aurillac.”

⁹⁴ Marcia L. Colish, *Medieval Foundations of the Western Intellectual Tradition, 400-1400*, Yale Intellectual History of the West (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), 163.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 164.

March, felt himself called to the study of logic and moved from Rome to Rheims for that purpose. The works which he wrote, the methods of teaching he devised and the pupils he taught at Rheims became the most important factor in the advancement of learning in northern Europe during the next two generations...⁹⁶

Gerbert exemplifies the Mediæval seeker of knowledge who went beyond his customary culture to draw from the well of Eastern thought. He was motivated to relocate from the monastery in his native Aurillac, France to study the quadrivium, that essential component of a classical education. Gerbert also exemplifies the pattern of transmission that was at the heart of Mediæval learning--he moved on from Catalonia to Reims and also travelled to Rome. James Hannam writes that in Reims, Gerbert “introduced some of the knowledge of the Arabs to a Christian audience.”⁹⁷ And what of music? Richer, a student of Gerbert and later his chronicler, explains: “By demonstrating the arrangement of the different musical genera on the monochord, by separating their consonances or harmonies into whole tones and semitones, major thirds and quarter-tones [*ditonis quoque ac diesibus distinguens*], and by methodically breaking down these tones into their constituent sounds, he restored a complete understanding of this art.”⁹⁸ It is helpful to bear in mind that the nomenclature of Mediæval disciplines does not necessarily correspond to current usage. F. E. Peters writes: “What we call ‘science’ the Greeks and Arabs regarded as one component in the broader category of ‘philosophy’, a structured body of disciplines that began with logic and proceeded through the physical and mathematical sciences.”⁹⁹ Frantz Funck-Brentano clarifies the classification of music: “Under the direction of

⁹⁶ Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 11.

⁹⁷ James Hannam, *The Genesis of Science: How the Christian Middle Ages Launched the Scientific Revolution* (Washington, D.C.: Regnery, 2011), 20.

⁹⁸ Richer of Saint-Rémi, 73-75.

⁹⁹ F. E. Peters, “A Guide to Further Reading,” in *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*, ed. John R. Hayes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983), 281.

Gerbert, Robert [the Pious]¹⁰⁰ learned logic — that is to say, philosophy, mathematics, and grammar, i.e. Latin, and *music, regarded at that time as a science*¹⁰¹ [emphasis added].

Intermezzo: The Prevalence Of Bias

Southern, author of *The Making of the Middle Ages*, is indeed well-rounded and inclusive in his historical perspective. He can thus perhaps be forgiven for his Orientalist turn-of-phrase when citing “the works of Moslem¹⁰² scholars” known by “strange names” such as Albumazar, Alfragani, Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroës,¹⁰³ although this hints of alterity. There is no question, however, that Southern is generally even-handed in giving attention to Arab influence in his account. His section on Catalonia in “The Church and the World” capably provides background information on an often-overlooked chapter in history--the more “exotic” realm of al-Andalus usually claiming the limelight. It is thus surprising to this reader that Eurocentrism emerges in Southern’s account:

Most of the developments in thought and experience which we shall have to describe later in this book drew their strength from the native tradition of Latin Europe, and owed little to the science which became available in the translation of our period. The work of translation and even of comprehension is after all only a first step; it remained to be seen to what use these translations would be put.... This story belongs to the thirteenth and later centuries.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ ...Whose father, Hugh Capet, had “given him a brilliant education at the school of Reims, under the direction of Gerbert.” Robert would ascend to the throne in 996, at the age of 26. Frantz Funck-Brentano, *The National History of France* (New York: AMS Press, 1967), 66, www.archive.org/stream/middleages00funcuoft/middleages00funcuoft_djvu.txt.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² “Muslim” is the currently preferred usage. Southern also refers to the Prophet by an outdated name, Mahomet.

¹⁰³ Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 67.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

If one can overlook Southern's somewhat dismissive tone, his point about utilitarianism is a sound and insightful one: not only hearing and learning, but applying the information. Southern credits "Latin Europe" as being receptive to the translated works; ergo they did not fall on "deaf ears."

It would only be fair to examine the "flip side" of bias, namely that of the Arabist. The example of Philip K. Hitti's book *The Arabs: A Short History* has already been cited in the section on historiography. The author was born into a Maronite Lebanese family and emigrated to the United States, and his book reflects aspects of his personal background. Khoury's introduction, as noted above, explains Hitti's avoidance of the Ottoman era and uncovers his agenda in "pass[ing] over" four centuries of Ottoman Turkish rule in his account (i.e. "what is left out"). The reasoning is clear:

Hitti probably harbored such sentiments towards Turkish rule, and he may have acquired them at the American University of Beirut, a hotbed of early Arab political unrest. The fact that he was a Christian from Mount Lebanon, which already enjoyed considerable autonomy but not full independence from Ottoman rule, may have discouraged him from seeing anything good or worthy in the Turks and their governance. Because he could not recount this period with pride and glory, he chose to skip over the four-hundred-year history of the Arabs in the Ottoman Empire.¹⁰⁵

Khoury continues: "Hitti, like other historians, has increasing difficulty maintaining a healthy distance from his subject."¹⁰⁶ This simple statement is the academic equivalent of the child in the folk tale who cried out, "The Emperor has no clothes!" Khoury effectively shatters the myth that scholarly writing is intrinsically objective and unbiased, and echoes the concepts of R. G. Collingwood: [Hitti] "indeed exercised the *right of all historians*: to define his subject as

¹⁰⁵ Hitti, *xiv-xv*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, *xix*.

he saw fit. And, like all historians, his own personal background, life experiences, intellectual formation, and formal training contributed to that defining process”¹⁰⁷ [emphasis added]. Is Khoury's declaration a *caveat emptor* for the reader? Is there indeed a place for unapologetic bias in the academic press?

One more passage--with its undisguised attitude of superiority--must be presented to balance Southern's Eurocentrism. Sir Richard, meet Professor Hitti:

No people in the early Middle Ages contributed to human progress so much as did the Arabs....Arab scholars were studying Aristotle when Charlemagne and his lords were reportedly learning to write their names. Scientists in Cordova, with their seventeen great libraries, one alone of which included more than 400,000 volumes, enjoyed luxurious baths at a time when washing the body was considered a dangerous custom at the University of Oxford.¹⁰⁸

Hitti adds that for several centuries, the Arabic language was “the language of learning, culture and progressive thought throughout the civilized world.”¹⁰⁹

These passages by Hitti are a tonic against the brand of scholarship Edward Said vilifies in *Orientalism*: “the mass of material...shot through with doctrines of European superiority, various kinds of racism, imperialism, and the like, dogmatic views of ‘the Oriental’ as a kind of ideal and unchanging abstraction.”¹¹⁰ Epitomizing this genre of scholarship is Said's academic adversary Bernard Lewis, whose 1972 essay “Islamic Concepts of Revolution” (hinging on the metaphor of a camel) is deemed “full of condescension and bad faith.”¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ Hitti, *xix*.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

¹¹⁰ Said, 8.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 315.

Farmer's "Arabian Influence" Theory

Henry George Farmer published two influential works specifically pertaining to the "Arabian influence" on non-Western music (a fuller discussion follows below). His essay "Clues for the Arabian Influence on European Musical Theory" was published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in 1925. Following several scholarly challenges, Farmer expanded the original 20-page essay into a full-length book, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence*, five years later. "Clues" references several European researchers who had written about the influence of Arabic music on facets of non-Western music theory, specifically solfeggio; in Farmer's words, "The claim that the Arabs introduced the *solfege* is one of old standing." He footnotes a series of sketchy citations, here reproduced verbatim:

La Borde, *Essai sur la musique*, i. 182. Andres, *Orig. d'ogni Lett.* ix, 122. Dalberg, *Über die musik der Indier*, 112. Pocock, *Flowers of the East*, 41. Crichton, *Hist. Arab.* Kiesewetter, *Musik der Araber*, 22. Salvador-Daniel, *La musique Arabe*, 8. Soriano-Fuertes, *Hist. Mus. Espan*, i, 80. See also a recent examination of the question in the *Quart. Mag. of the Inter. Mus. Society* (July-September, 1900).¹¹²

Not on this roster (but mentioned in the text) is Pigeon de Saint-Paterne,¹¹³ "an interpreter of Oriental languages to Louis XVI" who "gave material for this claim from an Arabic MS. presumably in the Bibliothèque Royale, now the Bibliothèque Nationale"¹¹⁴ (regrettably untraceable by Farmer). Pigeon is acknowledged as the source of information for Laborde's 1780 multi-volume work *Essai sur la musique* (see below). Also omitted are Franciszek Meniński and

¹¹² Farmer, "Clues," 66-67.

¹¹³ Pigeon is attributed as "bibliothécaire de l'abbaye de Saint-Victor" in the archive.org version of *L'uvre du chevalier Andrea de Nerciat* and author of a memoir, *sur l'État des Sciences et Arts chez les Arabes*, in the Project Gutenberg version of *Histoire littéraire d'Italie*.

¹¹⁴ Farmer, "Clues," 66.

Villoteau,¹¹⁵ who would be cited in the 1930 volume. The consolidated reference list thus reads (listed chronologically, with complete titles):

- Meninski: *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium* (1680)
- Laborde: *Essai sur la musique Ancienne et Moderne* (1780)
- Dalberg: *Über die musik der Indier* (1802)
- Villoteau: *Description Historique, Technique Et Littéraire, Des Instrumens De Musique Des Orientaux* (1812)
- Andres: *Dell'Origine Dei Progressi E Dello Stato Attuale D'Ogni Letteratura* (1822)
- Pocock: *Flowers of the East* (1833)
- Crichton: *History of Arabia I* (1834)
- Kiesewetter: *Musik der Araber* (1842)
- Soriano-Fuertes: *Historia de la música española desde la venida de los Fenicos hasta el año de 1850* (1855)
- Salvador-Daniel: *La musique Arabe* (1863)

The Quest For Meniński

Farmer's 1930 title, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence*,¹¹⁶ includes a chapter entitled "The Syllables of Solfeggio." Expanding on his material on this subject presented in "Clues," Farmer introduces two additional sources not cited in the earlier work: Meniński and Villoteau. Farmer poses the question:

What is the Arabian claim for the origin of the syllables for solmisation? Laborde was certainly the source for some of these claims, as I have pointed out, but there

¹¹⁵ See memory.loc.gov/diglib/ihas/loc.natlib.ihas.200155658/default.html for material on Villoteau's *Description de l'Egypte*.

¹¹⁶ Henry George Farmer, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence* (London: W. Reeves, 1930).

was another source, *a century earlier*. Meninski,¹¹⁷ in his *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium*¹¹⁸ gives, under Durr-i-Mufassal (“Separated Pearls”), which equates with *notae musicae*, the following solmisation scheme as being in use in the Orient.¹¹⁹

The following page reproduces a chart with the heading Durr-i-Mufassal:¹²⁰

<i>Durr-i-Mufaṣṣal.</i>					
Alif	(A)	Lām	Mīm	Rā	(A) ... (la) ... (mi)... (re).
Bā	(B)	Fā	Pā	Mīm	(B) . . (fa) ... (be) ... (mi).
Jīm	(J)	Ṣād	Fā	Dāl	(C) ... (sol) ... (fa) ... (ut).
Dāl	(D)	Lām	Ṣād	Rā	(D) ... (la) ... (sol)... (re).
Hā	(H)	Lām	Mīm		(E) ... (la) ... (mi)...
Wāw	(W)	Fā	Dāl		(F) ... (fa) ... (ut) ...
Zā	(Z)	Ṣād	Rā	Dāl	(G) ... (sol)... (re) ... (ut).

Figure 5.4 Durr-i-Mufassal¹²¹

Tracking down the original Meniński has been an exercise in itself. It is, however, a necessary one, since many authors who refer to Meniński do so via the Farmer reference rather than going

¹¹⁷ François Mesgnien (later named Menin, then Meniński), was born c1623 in Lorraine. Bernard Lewis refers to Meniński as “a well-known European scholar” (112). Meniński served as an interpreter for Emperor Leopold and accompanied his ambassadors to the Ottoman court. Meniński’s massive multi-volume dictionary of Turkish, Arabic, Persian, and English was “the fruit of seven years of work.” In turquie-culture.fr/pages/turc-et-langues-turques/biographies/meninski-lorrain-polonais-et-orientalist.html.

¹¹⁸ Franciscus à Mesgnien Meninski, *Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium Turcicae, Arabicae, Persicae, Praecipuas Earum Opes à Turcis Peculiariter Usurpatas Continens Nimirum Lexicon Turcico-Arabico-Persicum: Non Solum Vocum Tam Simplicium Quam Coniunctarum Copia Maxima Refertum, Sed Etiam Innumeris Phrasibus Locupletatum; Quarum Quae Turcis Usitatae Aut Communis Usus Sunt, Latine, Germanice, Italice, Gallice, Polonice; Quae Non Adeo Vulgares, in Libris Tamen [et] Literis Non Infrequentes, Latine Et Italice; Quae Porro Rarius in Usum Veniunt, Nec Nisi in Libris Profundioris Doctrinae Inveniuntur, Latine Tantum Explicantur; [et] Grammaticam Turcicam Cum Adjectis Singula Ejus Capita Praeceptis Grammaticis Arabicae Et Persicae Linguae Opus Interpretibus Praecipue, Aliisque Earundem Linguarum Studiosis Ad Intelligendum Omne Genus Literarum.* (Wien: Selbstverlag, 1680). The Hill Museum & Manuscript Library Web site displays the title page of a similar tome by Italian Arabist Giovanni Battista Podestà: *Cursus grammaticalis linguarum orientalium. Scilicet Arabicae, Persicae et Turcicae* (Vienna, 1691). www.hmml.org/exhibits10/orientalia/9.htm.

¹¹⁹ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, 76.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 77.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*

back to the original source. Since Farmer did not supply a page reference (or even a volume number)--a puzzling omission--substantial time has been devoted to either determining the appropriate volume of the available six from inter-library loan or attempting to locate a digital version. A lengthy search on WorldCat finally did unearth digital versions of the complete set of Meniński's work, courtesy of Bayerische Staatsbibliothek digital. The chart, as reproduced by Farmer, appears this way in the original (p. 2042 of volume 2):¹²²

ا ل م ر	<i>a la mire , alemire.</i>	A la mi re.
ب ف پ م	<i>be fa pe mi.</i>	B fa b mi.
ج ص ف د	<i>ge so fa do, vel de.</i>	C sol fa ut.
د ل ص ر	<i>dal le so re.</i>	D la sol re.
ه ل م	<i>helemi, helāmi.</i>	E la mi.
و ف د	<i>waw fa do.</i>	F fa ut.
ز ص ر د	<i>ze sa (so) re do.</i>	G sol re ut.

Figure 5.5 Meniński: "Separated Pearls"¹²³

WorldCat has paired Meniński with another author, John Richardson (1740/1-1795), whose work entitled *A dictionary; Persian, Arabic, and English. To which is prefixed a dissertation on the languages, literature, and manners of eastern nations* was published in England in 1777. While the UF catalog has no listings for Meniński, several versions of Richardson are available as an e-book, and a reference to "Separated Pearls" was quickly located:

¹²² reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/de/fs1/object/display/bsb10635930_00119.html

¹²³ *Ibid.*

The Arabians and Persians, it may be here observed, have a gamut or musical scale, which they call *Durri mufessel* (Separate pearls); whence the old mode of teaching vocal music in Europe by what is vulgarly called Sol-fa-ing, seems to have been borrowed; their notes being named A la mi ré; B fa pé mi; C sol fa ut, &c.¹²⁴

Francis Johnson revised and reissued Richardson's volume as *A Dictionary, Persian, Arabic, and English* in 1852--not without soundly rebuking his predecessor in the preface: "...it was very defective in its stock and choice of words, It was little else than an abridgment of the Oriental Thesaurus of MENINSKI, printed in four folio volumes at Vienna in 1680."¹²⁵ This volume omits Richardson's essay.

Laborde's Contribution

Not part of the three-century lineage of Meninski-Richardson-Johnson was Jean-Benjamin de Laborde (1734-1794), originally cited in Farmer's 1925 "Clues" article. Michael Fend writes that Laborde produced 20 books on musical, historical, and literary subjects. Fend notes:

They have been severely criticized by 19th-century scholars for their factual inaccuracies and structural shortcomings. Nevertheless, his four-volume *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* (1780) remains an extremely valuable source of information on 18th-century music, as well as that of earlier periods and its historiography. The *Essai* was apparently a side-product of La Borde's extensive travels through France, Switzerland and Italy collecting material for his other books....In the *Essai* La Borde and his collaborators assembled information on the music of many non-European countries, including Samoa and China, and sought to describe the social context in which music was performed.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ Richardson, 285.

¹²⁵ ia700304.us.archive.org/31/items/dictionarypersia00johnuoft/dictionarypersia00johnuoft.pdf.

¹²⁶ Michael Fend, "La Borde, Jean-Benjamin de," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 6, 2012, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/15760.

In *Historical Facts*, Farmer does not quote directly from Laborde but rather summarizes his assertion (“on the authority, presumably, of Pigeon de Saint-Paterne”) that “solmisation was to be met with among the Arabs.”¹²⁷ On the same page, Farmer supplies a reproduction of Durr Mufassal “as given by Laborde” and copied (with “blunders”) by R. G. Kiesewetter and Mariano Soriano Fuertes:

<i>Durr Mufaṣṣal.</i>					
Alif	(A)	Mīm	Lām	(A)	... (mi)... (la).
Bā	(B)	Fā	Sīn	(B)	... (fa) ... (si).
Jīm	(J)	Ṣād	Dāl	(C)	... (sol)... (do).
Dāl	(D)	Lām	Rā	(D)	... (la) ... (re).
Hā	(H)	Sīn	Mīm	(E)	... (si) ... (mi).
Wāw	(W)	Dāl	Fā	(F)	... (ut) ... (fa).
Zā	(Z)	Rā	Ṣād	(G)	... (re) ... (sol).

Figure 5.6 Durr Mufassal¹²⁸

Laborde’s original graphic in *Essai sur la musique ancienne et moderne* is entitled GAMME ARABE. As cited in Farmer, this chart appears on p. 182 of Laborde’s essay “De la Musique Des Arabes,” which begins on p. 175:

La gamme Arabe est nécessairement liée a ce qui précède, et on sera sans doute étonné du rapport que se trouve entr’elle et la gamme Italienne. Ce rapport est si frappant, qu’il suffit d’avoir des yeux pour s’en convaincre, en ne faisant attention qu’aux lettre initiales de chacun des mot. La gamme, comme on sait, est une table

¹²⁷ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, 77.

¹²⁸ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, 77.

sur laquelle on apprend les justes intonations des notes de la Musique. Les Arabes l'appellent *dourr mofassal*, c'est-à-dire, *perles séparées*.^{129 130}

G A M M E A R A B E.						
ا	م	ل	alif	mim	lam	A. mi la
ب	ف	س	be	fe	fin	B. fa fi
ج	ص	د	gim	fad	dal	C. sol do (a)
د	ل	ر	dal	lam	re	D. la re
ه	س	م	he	fin	mim	E. fi mi
و	د	ف	waw	dal	fe	F. ut fa
ز	ر	ص	zain	re	fad	G. re sol.

Rapports des lettres Arabes aux notes de notre musique.

Ainsi la lettre ا alif répond à la note la ,
 ب be fi,
 ج gim ut,
 د dal re,
 ه hé mi,
 و waw fa,
 ز zain sol.

Figure 5.7 Laborde, "De la Musique Des Arabes"¹³¹

¹²⁹ www.archive.org/details/essaisurlamusiqu01labo.

¹³⁰ "The Arabic mode is necessarily linked to what above precedes it. One would undoubtedly be surprised at the relationship between Arabic modes and Italian ones. The relationship is so striking, it suffices to open your eyes, by only merely paying attention to the initial letter of each word. The scale, as we know, is a table where you learn the notes and just correct intonation of the musical notes. The Arabs call it *dourr mofassal*, that is, pearls separated."

¹³¹ www.archive.org/details/essaisurlamusiqu01labo.

Nous croyons avoir assez clairement expliqué le rapport qui se trouve entre nos notes et les intervalles du mode Arabe. Ainsi l'intervalle le plus bas, nommé indistinctement *iek* ou *alif*, sera l'intervalle du *la*; celui de *dou* ou *be* sera celui de la note *si*, etc.

Les Arabes n'ont point de notes proprement dites, mais des lettres initiales qu'ils placent dans les interlignes de leurs modes, pour indiquer au Musicien, l'intervalle dans lequel il doit commencer les différents tons qu'il doit parcourir, la tenue des sons, les pauses, la vitesse ou la lenteur qu'il doit employer dans les différents morceaux de chant, et enfin le ton par lequel il doit finir.^{132 133}

Pigeon is acknowledged at the conclusion of the chapter (“Nous devons à M. Pigeon de S. Paterne, Interprète pour les Langues Orientales, ces détails sur la Musique des Arabes; et nous saisissons avec empressement cette occasion publique de lui en témoigner notre reconnaissance]).”^{134 135}

An earlier chapter (pp. 19-20) refers to an intriguing Egyptian system,¹³⁶ based on the planets:

¹³² www.archive.org/details/essaisurlamusiqu01labo.

¹³³ “We believe we have sufficiently shown the relationship between our notes and the intervals of the Arabic mode. Thus, the lowest interval, called indiscriminately *iek* or *alif*, would be the interval of the LA (A), the one of Be would correspond to the note Si...

“The Arabs have no notes per se, but they place the initial letters between the lines of their modes, to inform the musician of the range within which he/she must start, the different tones he could cover, the holding notes, breaks, and other features to be employed in various pieces, and finally the tone in which the piece must end.”

¹³⁴ www.archive.org/details/essaisurlamusiqu01labo.

¹³⁵ “We are indebted to Mr. Pigeon de S. Paterne, Interpreter for Oriental Languages, for these details of the Music of the Arabs; and we take this opportunity to eagerly and publicly express our appreciation and gratitude to him.”

¹³⁶ cf. Lang's mention of “ancient” Chinese and Egyptian systems (Lang, 85).

Avant de représenter ici cet arrangement, il faut observer que ces mêmes Egyptiens faisaient correspondre les sons qui composaient leur échelle musicale (comme seraient nos syllabes si ut re mi fa sol la) à l'ordre des planètes, de la manière suivante:

si	ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la
Saturne	Jupiter	Mars	le Soleil	Venus	Mercure	Lune

Si l'on forme de ces sons, en commençant par si, un ordre de quarts, on aura la semaine, telle que les Egyptiens l'ont instituée, & dans laquelle le si, ou Saturne, répond au premier jour, que est notre Samedi; le mi, ou le Soleil, au second jour; le la, ou la Lune, au troisième; et ainsi de suite, comme dans l'exemple suivant, ou, en répétant plusieurs fois les sons de l'échelle précédente, on trouve toutes les quarts qui constituent la semaine.^{137 138}

{	SAMEDI		DIMANCHE		LUNDI
	<i>SF</i>	<i>ut</i>	<i>re</i>	<i>MI</i>	<i>fa sol LA</i>
	Saturne, Jupiter, Mars, le Soleil, Venus, Mercure, la Lune..				
{		MARDI		MERCREDI	
	<i>fi</i>	<i>ut</i>	<i>RE</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>fa SOL la</i>
	Saturne, Jupiter, Mars, le Soleil, Venus, Mercure, la Lune.				
{		JEUDI		VENDREDI	
	<i>fi</i>	<i>UT</i>	<i>re</i>	<i>mi</i>	<i>FA sol la (SI, &c.</i>
	Saturne, Jupiter, Mars, le Soleil, Venus, Mercure, la Lune, (Saturne, &c.				

Figure 5.8 Music Scale of the Egyptians¹³⁹

¹³⁷ www.archive.org/details/essaisurlamusiqu01labo.

¹³⁸ “Before here representing this arrangement, it should be noted that these same Egyptians matched the sounds that composed their music scale (as would our syllables ut re mi fa sol la) to the order of the planets, in the following manner:

si	ut	re	mi	fa	sol	la
Saturn	Jupiter	Mars	Sun	Venus	Mercury	Moon

“If we order these sounds, starting with B, in fourths, we end up with the week as the Egyptians have established it, and in which the B, or Saturn, is the first day, which is our Saturday; the E, or the Sun, the second day; the A, or the Moon, on the third... and so on, as in the following example, and, by repeating the sounds of the previous scale, we find all the fourths which constitute the week.” Translations of Laborde by Hicham Chami.

¹³⁹ www.archive.org/details/essaisurlamusiqu01labo.

“ARABIAN INFLUENCE”: THE FARMER-SCHLESINGER DEBATE

Setting The Stage

This section delves into the “debate” sparked by Henry George Farmer’s article, “Clues for the Arabian Influence on European Musical Theory,” originally delivered as a lecture for the Glasgow University Oriental Society in October 1923 and subsequently published in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* in January 1925. Kathleen Schlesinger vigorously rebutted Farmer’s thesis, dismissing outright the possibility of Arab influence on European music theorists. In a pamphlet published in May 1925 entitled “Is European Musical Theory Indebted to the Arabs?” The foreword to Farmer’s 1930 book, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence*, indicates that he had written a “reply” to the pamphlet in issues of *The Musical Standard* entitled “Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence”; to which Schlesinger issued a counter-reply in the same publication, “The Greek Foundations of the Theory of Music.” Farmer’s 1930 volume represents a compilation of the “historical facts” articles incorporating Schlesinger’s objections.

Who Are The Players?

Henry George Farmer

British musicologist Henry George Farmer (born in Birr, Ireland, 17 January 1882; died in Law, Scotland, 30 December 1965) was a “pioneer” in the effort to codify Arabic music history. He embarked on Arabic language studies in 1913, after being commissioned by publisher William Reeves of London to translate F. S. Daniel's *La Musique Arabe* (1863). Israel J. Katz explains:

Relying for help on the available European literature on Arabic music, Farmer soon realized that he had to study Arabic to resolve the many unclear and conflicting views of such scholars as La Borde, Villoteau, Kiesewetter, Fétis,

Riemann and Collanettes. So in 1918 he enrolled as an external student at Glasgow University, studying Arabic with T. H. Wier.¹

Farmer received his doctorate from this institution in 1926. He was selected as the sole British representative at the historic *Congrès du Caire* (Congress of Arab Music) in 1932, convened by King Fuad I in response to the perceived “decline” in Arabic music.² On Leverhulme and Carnegie fellowships, Farmer visited European libraries in the 1930s to examine manuscripts and books on Arabic music (in his words, to “ransack library catalogues” and undertake “actual perusal of the manuscripts and books themselves”).³ His resulting bibliography, *Sources of Arabian Music*, published in 1940 and revised in 1965, is a fairly small volume but is comprehensive in its scope. Farmer’s focus is theoretical and historical treatises written between the 8th-17th centuries (including influential works by al-Farabi, al-Kindi, and al-Isfahani). Farmer’s lifetime publishing output totaled 67 books and articles, not including pieces in *The Musical Standard*.

¹ Israel J. Katz. "Farmer, Henry George," *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, Oxford University Press, accessed January 17, 2012, www.oxfordmusiconline.com.lp.hscl.ufl.edu/subscriber/article/grove/music/09318?q=farmer&search=quick&pos=2&_start=1#firsthit.

² *Ibid.*

³ Henry George Farmer, *The Sources of Arabian Music; An Annotated Bibliography of Arabic Manuscripts Which Deal with the Theory, Practice, and History of Arabian Music from the Eighth to the Seventeenth Century* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1965), vii.

Table 6.1 Publications: Henry George Farmer

	European music	Arabic music
monographs	16	7
--co-authored	1	
--edited/translated		2
articles	1	33
proceedings/transactions		7

Kathleen Schlesinger

Less is known about Kathleen Schlesinger. *The Oxford Dictionary of Music* simply refers to her as an “Irish musicologist” who was born in Hollywood, Belfast in 1862 and died in London in 1953; and states that she “made special study of ancient (esp. Gr. mus.) instrs. and wrote a book on modern orch. instr. (1910).”⁴ *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians* reports that she was educated in Switzerland and “settled in England.”⁵ According to entries in WorldCat, Schlesinger co-authored a book on the bowed-harp with Otto Emanuel Andersson and wrote *A Bibliography of Musical Instruments and Archaeology*, *The Instruments of the Modern Orchestra*, and *The Precursors of the Violin Family*, in addition to the pamphlet written in response to Farmer. Her “principal work,” according to *Baker’s*, was *The Greek aulos; a study of its mechanism and of its relation to the modal system of ancient Greek music, followed by a survey of the Greek harmoniai in survival or rebirth in folk-music*, published by Methuen & Co. in 1939. The entry in *Baker’s* adds that her “original theory” on the formation of Greek modes as

⁴ Michael Kennedy, *The Oxford Dictionary of Music*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 775

⁵ Nicolas Slonimsky, *Baker’s Biographical Dictionary of Musicians*, 8th ed. (New York: Schirmer Books, 1992), 1619.

detailed in this book “aroused much controversy” and that scholarly opinion went “against her hypothesis.”⁶ Schlesinger also contributed over 125 articles on music to the 11th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica* and wrote for *The Musical Standard*.

Round One: “Clues For The Arabian Influence On European Musical Theory” Overview

Farmer’s 1925 article, comprised of twenty pages,⁷ has as its starting-point the Mediæval quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy). He asserts: “That these Arabian sciences played an important part in the intellectual awakening of England, there cannot be much doubt.”⁸ He then singles out music: “No one has yet attempted to demonstrate how far Arabian musical science influenced Western Europe. That the Arabs did influence Western Europe...I will endeavour to show.”⁹ Farmer appears to have a dual purpose in writing this article: not only to show evidence of Arab influence on music theory and practice in Western Europe (primarily via Andalusian Spain), but also to highlight England’s role in transmitting Arab musical knowledge. Farmer provides a concise overview of this subject at the article’s conclusion:

What then was the total gain to Western Europe from the Arabian cultural contact? Through the *political contact* [“which began in the eighth century”] Europe seems to have come in contact with *discant*, *organum*, and *instrumental tablature*, and possibly *solfeggio*. I need not repeat what is already acknowledged in Europe’s indebtedness to the Arabs for many of its musical instruments. Through the *literary and intellectual contact* [“which began in the tenth-eleventh century] Europe may have got its first idea of a *definite pitch notation* (*vide* Hermann Contract). It certainly took partly, if not wholly, its system of *mensural*

⁶ Slonimsky, 1619.

⁷ Reprinted in *Studies in Oriental Music*, ed. Eckhard Neubauer (Frankfurt am Main: Institute for the History of Arab-Islamic Science, 1997), 271-290.

⁸ Farmer, “Clues,” 61.

⁹ *Ibid.*

music, and perhaps *mensural notation*, from the Arabs. Finally, Europe owed its revision of the *laws of consonances* to the Arabs.¹⁰

Translation, Education, and Transmission

The process of translation is outlined in the segment dealing with the phase of “literary and intellectual contact.” Between the 8th-11th centuries, Arabs translated Greek treatises “hitherto unknown to Western Europe,”¹¹ including works by Aristotle, Euclid, and Ptolemy; Charles Burnett asserts that “Arabic doctrines had arrived in England, perhaps already before 1066, via the monastic and cathedral schools of France and Lotharingia.”¹² This period also saw original treatises on music by Arab theorists al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina.¹³ The position of Spain as a scholastic hub is emphasized:

Europe soon began to feel the intellectual superiority of the Arabs, and its scholars were busy studying under Arabian masters at the Andalusian universities.... Among those students who carried the results of their musical studies back to Western Europe were Gerbert, Hermann Contract, Constantine the African, Jean of Seville, Gundisalvi, Gerard of Cremona, and Plato of Tivoli.^{14 15}

During the 12th century, Farmer claims, Adelard of Bath, Robert of Retine, and Daniel Morlay of the Toledo school of translation “were responsible for the spread of Arabian learning in Latin translation.”¹⁶ Farmer also cites Spanish Jews (e.g. Abraham ibn Ezra, who travelled to London in 1158-59 and whose works were copied). Jewish scholars were translating Arabic writings on

¹⁰ Farmer, “Clues,” 80.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹² Burnett, *Introduction*, 38.

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 69.

¹⁵ (Footnotes in the above passage indicate that early chroniclers’ documentation of Gerbert’s studies at Cordoba have been challenged; and that Constantine the African studied in Carthage and Babylon rather than Andalus).

¹⁶ Farmer, “Clues,” 70. Burnett verifies that Adelard undertook the *studia Arabum* “on a seven-year research trip which took in Southern Italy, Sicily and the Principality of Antioch.” (Burnett, *Introduction*, 34).

music into Hebrew, including al-Farabi's *Kitab al-Musiqi*.¹⁷ Farmer mentions Hermann Contract (1013-1054) as "one of the early Arabic students from Europe" and suggests that the "curious notation in his treatise in Gerbert's *Scriptores* is, perhaps, nothing more than a 'borrowing' from the Arabs."¹⁸

Farmer notes the end of this period of cultural enrichment (and the concomitant re-ascendancy of Europe):

After the fifteenth century the Arabian influence in the music of Western Europe practically ceased. With the political power of Andalus broken, an intellectual decline set in with the Arabs. Meanwhile, Europe was advancing by leaps and bounds along the path which led to the modern harmonic system, and it left the Arabs in music, as in political life, centuries behind.¹⁹

Commentary

"Clues" is heavily-referenced, with minimalist citations to Arab writers such as al-Kindi, al-Farabi, and Ibn Sina as well as some of the "European literature" mentioned by Katz (Laborde, Ribera, Soriano,²⁰ Bacon, etc.). Some footnotes include the location of cited manuscripts. Due to the short length of the article, extensive excerpts from these primary and secondary sources are not given in support of Farmer's claims, although some passages in Arabic occur as well as a paragraph in Latin by Vergilius Cordubensis regarding the teaching of organizing in Andalusian music schools.

¹⁷ Farmer, "Clues," 70.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 79.

²⁰ This highly-cited author is a critical--and disputed--link to key information on Guido d'Arezzo's purported study in Spain.

My reading of “Clues” left no doubt about Farmer’s strong conviction regarding the “Arabian influence” on Western European music theory. His presentation is methodical and convincing, and he makes it clear when a claim is definite (e.g. the attribution of instrumental tablature to “a Moor of the Kingdom of Granada”²¹), when it is likely or probable (cf. the second example below), and when it is merely speculative (as in his comment cited above that Contract’s “curious notation in his treatise in Gerbert’s *Scriptores* is, *perhaps*, nothing more than a ‘borrowing’ from the Arabs” [emphasis added]). Farmer’s essay hinges on the word “influence” and does not pretend that Arabs *invented* all of the instruments and theories discussed. He also admits when he is lacking in knowledge or information, e.g. “I have not been able to examine this work.”²² In other words, Farmer does not appear to be making rash and unsubstantiated claims; levels of certitude are constantly adjusted in his writing, with the language of uncertainty and presumption woven throughout the article. Some examples, with emphases added:

probably the term for a flourish of trumpets, *fanfare*, is the Arabic plural *anfar*.²³ Since these are found in Ibn Sina, there is every likelihood that Al-Farabi also dealt with them.²⁴

one may conclude that it was by these means that Europe first became dissatisfied with the Pythagorean thirds.²⁵

one can safely hazard the opinion that the studies of the Englishmen...included music.²⁶

²¹ Farmer, “Clues,” 67.

²² *Ibid.*, 69.

²³ *Ibid.*, 63.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 65.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 66.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 69.

It is highly probable also that Spanish Jews who visited their co-religionists in this country...played a part in strengthening this cultural contact.²⁷

But that [Ibn Sina's] musical writing or opinions were known in Latin translation is evident from quotations made by European musical theorists.²⁸

At times, Farmer “wonders out loud” as in a stage aside:

Yet who was it that took this first step [from *magadizing* to *organizing*]? Could it have been the Arabs?²⁹

Could he [Adelard of Bath] have introduced it [mensural music]?³⁰

Round Two: “Is European Musical Theory Indebted To The Arabs?”

Overview

Kathleen Schlesinger's pamphlet,³¹ written in response to “Clues,” was published the same year: it was reprinted with “considerable” additions and corrections from issues of *The Musical Standard*, dated May 2 and May 16, 1925. The 18-page essay operates on several levels. Ostensibly, it is intended to “meet on friendly ground” in a “common effort.”³² But the “gloves come off” by the third paragraph.

In the essay, Schlesinger rallies her extensive knowledge of instrumentation to cast doubt on Farmer's claims. Regrettably, intermingled with her technical expertise are the unmistakable whiff of racism, a consistently patronizing tone, and unscholarly “sweeping generalizations” that

²⁷ Farmer, “Clues,” 70.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 74.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 64.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 70.

³¹ Kathleen Schlesinger, “Is European Musical Theory Indebted to the Arabs? Reply to ‘The Arabian influence on musical theory’ by H. G. Farmer” (London, H. Reeves, 1925). Note: “edition limited to 250 copies.”

³² *Ibid.*, 3.

mar the credibility of her presentation. Schlesinger is apparently unwilling to grant the Arabs *any* credit for original contributions to music theory, deferring instead to the Persians and Greeks.

Schlesinger immediately demarcates the “clash of civilizations” by discounting Farmer’s premise of cultural influence:

The question of influence in matters musical assumes considerable importance when...it is claimed in respect of two civilisations which were, and have remained, so essentially different...the Mohammedan Arabs, as conquerors, had behind them a *racial*³³ past of some antiquity, created by restless nomads, whereas Europe was racially heterogeneous.³⁴

She continues:

The characteristic *quality* of European culture, the ideals pursued in the arts and crafts, have a common origin in the Hellenic civilisation, modified by contact with the Roman Empire and by Christianity, and the establishment and organisation of the Church and the Papacy.³⁵

Bypassing Farmer’s chronicle of the Andalusian milieu, Schlesinger instead credits France and Switzerland:

Before the full tide of Islam swept over the south-west of Europe in the eighth century, the foundations for the study of music had been laid, and at the end of the eighth century Charlemagne founded three schools of music at Metz, Soissons and St. Gallen.³⁶

Schlesinger misinterprets (or at least misreads) Farmer’s use of the word “influence” which, as noted above, was not used synonymously with “invention”:

The word “influence”...implies the possession by the Arabs of a body of theoretical and practical knowledge developed by them, and not only bearing an impress of their race acquired during the process of transmission, but also

³³ Note: the author uses significant underlining and italics in her text; in all quotes, these emphases are not added.

³⁴ Schlesinger, 3.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 4.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 5.

displaying novel features of which they were the originators.³⁷

Points of Contention

Which aspects of Farmer's essay evoked a response from Schlesinger? Setting aside the overall premise of Arab influence *per se*, Table 6.2 indicates specific topics or items of music theory addressed by Farmer (listed in sequence within his essay) along with excerpts from Schlesinger's comments.

It bears comparing the authors' sections on solfeggio verbatim. Farmer's section, along with its footnote, establishes the "lineage" of the ongoing controversy concerning Guido d'Arezzo's role in solmization:

There is yet one other point to be mentioned in connexion with the Arabs, and that is the introduction of the *sofeggio* and *instrumental tablature*. The claim that the Arabs introduced the *sofeggio* is one of old standing [here he enumerates the sources; cf. p. 105]. Pigeon de Saint-Paterne, an interpreter of Oriental languages to Louis XVI, gave material for this claim from an Arabic MS. presumably in the Bibliothèque Royale, now the Bibliothèque Nationale. I have not been able to trace this material in any of the Arabic/musical MSS. in this collection, so that it is impossible to do more than quote from this writer, who supplied information for La Borde's *Essai sur la musique*. In comparing the names of the Arabic notation with that of the European *sofeggio*, one cannot help being struck with the phonetic likeness. At the same time, the present writer has not seen any other example of the Arabic alphabet used in this sequence for musical notation. Here are the Arabian and Guidonian systems:

Arabian-- Mim Fa Sad Lam Sin Dal Ra
Guidonian Mi Fa Sol La Si Do Re

Schlesinger's response:

The unsubstantial nature of the scanty data upon which the suggestion or claim for an Arab origin of solfeggio rests compares unfavourably with the well

³⁷ Schlesinger 5.

authenticated data upon which is based the accepted theory of a European origin for the unmistakably Latin syllables of our *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si.*”³⁸

Table 6.2 Point/Counterpoint: Farmer-Schlesinger

FARMER	SCHLESINGER
INSTRUMENTS: Among these are the lute, guitar, rebec, naker, sonojas, adufe, pandere, quesse, tabel/taber/tabor, anafil, shawn, dulcayna, canon, and eschaquiel/exaquir.	Acknowledges that the lute and rebab “were only introduced by the Arabs, not invented by them”
discant (from <i>za’ida</i>)	--
organum	“One may crave indulgence for treating the claim with scepticism”
law of consonants	“extremely debatable”; “very insecure foundation”
solfeggio	“unsubstantial nature of the scanty data”
instrumental tablature (also referred to as “phonetic system of notation”)	“purely sporadic and exercised no influence”
mensural music	“A weighty matter which must be left to those who have made a specialised study of the subject”
pitch notation	attributed to Pythagoras
rhythms (6 Arabic rhythms, as opposed to 2 in Europe)	--
hoquetus (from <i>iqa’at</i>)	--
alentrade (from <i>tarada</i>)	--

³⁸ Schlesinger, 9.

Commentary

In comparison to the Farmer essay, Schlesinger's documentation is less substantial. Of the 17 footnotes, 3 refer to her own work. There is little of Farmer's tentative quality in her writing style, with a "declarative" tone in evidence. As noted above, Schlesinger's narrative style deviates from the generally neutral "voice" of Farmer. The informational portion of her rebuttal is interspersed with several needless and patronizing and dismissive comments:

more especially for the work achieved [by Farmer] as Research Student at Glasgow University, even if they do not see eye to eye with him concerning the conclusions.³⁹

It is a matter of congratulation to find Mr. Farmer possessed of sufficient enthusiasm and taste for the archaeology of music to induce him to become a student of Arabic. Thus equipped, he enters a field in which the French have done great work.⁴⁰

the Arabs did not contribute any new element to the theory of music, although as professors they proved brilliant teachers...but since [professorial influence] does not proceed from a creative impulse, it can hardly be said to have left its impress upon a body of science or theory.⁴¹

the Arabs had no use for the instrument [organ] and contributed nothing to its development.⁴²

In contrast to Farmer, whose basic stance is to bring attention to Arab contributions--and not at the expense of other cultures--Schlesinger's essay demonstrates a lack of respect for Arab accomplishments; note the contrast of the above comments with her statements on Western culture:

³⁹ Schlesinger, 3.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 16.

the Hellenic people were the only race of antiquity that left reasoned indices of a musical system which has never ceased to evoke wonder and admiration.⁴³

If we turn our attention to European music, we find that every step in evolution is accompanied by corresponding developments in the musical instruments.⁴⁴

Immediately following:

Now let us turn to the Arabs and Moors. What do we find? My *rebab* with primitive bent wood bow, my *zamr* and *bagpipe* from Northern Egypt, are all of precisely the same shape and structure as those represented in use among the fifty-two musicians of the “Cantigas de Santa Maria” (thirteenth century), which were introduced by the Moors into Spain. There is no development, no progress to be chronicled in all these seven centuries....The Arab lutes are still rough and primitive in design and execution.⁴⁵

The essay ends on a definitive yet negative note:

The Arabs had nothing new to offer: they introduced nothing which was not already within the grasp of the Western races, evolving more slowly, perhaps, but in obedience always to the inner urge. The Arabs transmitted acquired lore, and stimulated individuals, but there can be no question of an Arab influence on musical theory.⁴⁶

Round Three: “Historical Facts For The Arabian Musical Influence”

Farmer’s 1930 volume, *Historical Facts for the Arabian Musical Influence* (over 350 pages in length), is divided into two sections. The first reviews and expands on the main points of his original essay, “Clues.” The appendices review specific aspects of Arabic music in response to Schlesinger’s counter-reply. Germane to the topic of this thesis is Chapter V, “The Syllables of Solfeggio,” which cites Arabist scholars including Franciszek Meniński (1680), Jean-Benjamin Laborde (1780), and Guillaume André Villoteau⁴⁷ (1809), who maintained that

⁴³ Schlesinger, 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* The emphasis is the author's.

⁴⁷ Meniński and Villoteau are not cited in the 1925 “Clues” article.

comparable systems had existed in Arab musical practice centuries before; thus casting doubt on the role of 11th-century Benedictine monk Guido d'Arezzo in "inventing" solmization by means of syllables from the hymn *Ut Queant Laxis*.

Note that Farmer "ramps up" the title of his second publication: from "Clues" to "Facts." Yet Farmer's wording from the 1925 "Clues" article is slightly modified for the 1930 publication, suggesting an element of caution, even defensiveness:

The suggestion of the Arabian origin of the syllables of *solfeggio* was not made by me but by others. This was made clear by my identification of Pigeon de Saint Paterne, utilised by Laborde, as the main source for this claim....At the same time it was hazarded that Europe was *possibly* influenced by the Arabian contact in this matter...⁴⁸

Compare this hesitancy (and "disinheritance" of the suggestion!) with his more confident presentation only five years prior, as quoted above:

There is yet one other point to be mentioned in connexion with the Arabs, and that is the introduction of the *solfeggio* and *instrumental tablature*. The claim that the Arabs introduced the *solfeggio* is one of old standing. Pigeon de Saint-Paterne, an interpreter of Oriental languages to Louis XVI, gave material for this claim from an Arabic MS. presumably in the Bibliothèque Royale, now the Bibliothèque Nationale.⁴⁹

At the end of the opening paragraph of this chapter in *Facts*, Farmer repeats the notion of "phonetic likeness" and adds a new source: "there is a statement, *a century older than Laborde*, which was not mentioned in my monograph, but which will be adverted to presently."⁵⁰

⁴⁸ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, 72. The emphasis is the author's.

⁴⁹ Farmer, "Clues," 66. The footnote after "old standing" is removed.

⁵⁰ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, 73; this would refer to Meniński's "Thesaurus Linguarum Orientalium." The emphasis is the author's.

Following this introduction, he states that “Miss Schlesinger has preference for the old theory of a European origin, and she comments on the Arabian claim as follows.”⁵¹ Here he inserts Schlesinger’s “unsubstantial data” paragraph, cited above. Farmer then responds to this paragraph by singling out four phrases and using them repeatedly throughout the remainder of the chapter: first, “the unmistakably Latin syllables of our *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si.*” Farmer rejoins, “Most people will consider them, from a syllabic point of view, to be common to the human race!”⁵² He then moves on to a section on Guido of Arezzo, who is “usually credited with the ‘invention’ of the hexachord system, for which the above monosyllables were used, but that does not necessarily allow that he is to be credited with the latter.”⁵³ After citing the hymn *Ut Queant Laxis*, Farmer delivers his second “jab” at Schlesinger:

That, I presume, is the *accepted theory* [Farmer’s emphasis]. But it was also the “accepted theory” that Guido was the “inventor” of the Γ and scale, the hexachord, the stave, the clefs, diaphony, solmisation, organum, counterpoint, the harmonic hand, the mensural note, the monochord, etc. Nowadays, we know better...and Guido is now only credited with the hexachord, solmisation, and the harmonic hand. ⁵⁴

The third and fourth of Schlesinger’s phrases (repetitions of the second) occur in the following paragraph:

When, therefore, we are asked to disregard the Arabian claim, because of the “*well authenticated data*” which are said to justify the “accepted theory,” we have the right to enquire what these “proofs” are. It appears that about a thousand years ago someone said that these syllables had their origin in the Hymn to St. John! But surely this evidence is just as “unsubstantial” as that of Laborde, who, a hundred and fifty years ago, showed that they were identical with the Arabic. We certainly cannot establish the truth or falsity of a statement merely by an appeal to

⁴¹ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, 73.

⁵² *Ibid.*

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

its antiquity or otherwise. Indeed, it is because students refuse to accept a criterion of this sort, that the hymn origin is *not* the “accepted theory,” as Miss Schlesinger suggests.⁵⁵

Two pages later, Farmer repeats Schlesinger’s phrases “accepted theory” and “unmistakably Latin syllables” in connection with the hymn; and his parting salvo appears in the chapter’s conclusion:

In the various claims for the origin of the syllables of solmisation, two only would appear to be deserving of consideration--the time-honoured hymn theory, and the Arabian. That we have “*well authenticated data*” for the former, as Miss Schlesinger thinks, is unproven. The Arabian claim also lacks documentary proof, but it certainly looks quite as real as the hymn theory.⁵⁶

Evaluating The Debate

The academic debate between Farmer and Schlesinger concerning the extent (or even existence) of Arab influence on Western music occurred during the turbulent Interbellum period in Europe, just after the fall of the Ottoman Empire. While it is impossible to determine the authors’ complete motivations in taking their stands, this historical context could provide insights into, for example, Schlesinger’s apparent chauvinism in refusing to admit external, non-Western influence on European music.⁵⁷

Establishing author credentials is another tricky exercise. A comparison of publishing output clearly favors Farmer, who, in the words of Shai Burstyn, “flooded the musicological literature with studies of Arabic music”⁵⁸ for fifty years (while crediting Farmer with “cogent

⁵⁵ Farmer, *Historical Facts*, 74.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁵⁷ Note the explicit alterity in her phrase “our *do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, si*” [emphasis added].

⁵⁸ Shai Burstyn, “The ‘Arabian Influence’ Thesis Revisited,” *Current Musicology* 45-47 (1990): 120. The article is reprinted in *Medieval Music*, The Library of Essays on Music Performance Practice, ed. Honey Meconi (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011), 481-508.

arguments” in *Facts*, Burstyn dubs him a “maverick”). Schlesinger’s expertise in ancient Greek music is apparent in her discussion of the kithara; and she devotes over two pages to explaining her viewpoint on the development of *organum*. In technical matters, Schlesinger can be persuasive--her subjective commentary, however, tends to undermine her expertise. On the other hand, Burstyn charges Farmer with “excessive zeal” in forwarding *his* agenda.

CONCLUSION? A RETURN TO HISTORIOGRAPHY

Evaluating The Process, Changing The Focus

This exploration began in Fall 2011 as the result of the conjunction between two readings in two different courses, both written by British scholars. R. G. Collingwood's 1935 lecture/essay on the "historical imagination" and Henry George Farmer's 1925 article ("Clues for the Arabian Influence on European Musical Theory") leaped out at me and demanded attention and analysis. Farmer's article presents a tantalizing roster of possible links between "Arabian musical science" and practices of Western Europe. Especially intriguing was solfeggio; Farmer observes the "phonetic likeness" between the two systems (Dâl, Râ, Mîm, Fâ, Sâd, Lâm / Do [Ut], Re, Mi, Fa Sol, La). The Western system is usually credited to Guido d'Arezzo; but might he have been exposed to Arab music theory in the course of his monastic education or travels? An 1855 book by Mariano Soriano Fuertes asserts that "Guido had studied in Catalogna, a region neighbouring Andalusia renowned for teaching music in its colleges as early as the 9th century." Ample documentation exists regarding Gerbert d'Aurillac's study of the quadrivium at Vic and Ripoll monasteries in the region; the two monks, while not contemporaries, did overlap in their life spans.

I must confess that my initial response was to go on a "treasure hunt" in the spirit of *The DaVinci Code* to find the proof--the "missing link"--that would place Guido in Catalonia. That evidence, according to Dr. Charles M. Atkinson of Ohio State University, an internationally recognized authority on Mediæval theory and former president of the American Musicological Society, would solve one part of the puzzle; the other task would be to demonstrate that "Guido's writings show *clear parallels* (hence possible influence) with a system of solmization that is

demonstrably earlier than what is presented in those writings”¹ [emphasis added]. Dr. Atkinson stated that he would consider this evidence “quite interesting and even important.”²

Linking Guido To The Arab Tradition: An Exercise In Futility?

The process of looking for the “smoking gun” that would conclusively “prove” Guido d'Arezzo's exposure to Arab music theory has been a labyrinthine one, fraught with pitfalls and dead ends. This exercise, however, serves as an excellent example of the frustrations in dealing with the task of ascertaining information over a millennium old. The initial task was to “prove” that Guido had studied in Catalonia. But another option exists: even if Guido did not study in Spain, could it be shown that Gerbert (who was steeped in Arab learning at Catalonian monasteries) had contact with the young Guido in the course of Gerbert’s monastic postings in France and Italy?³

At this point, accurate dates of birth and death become crucial...and subject to scholarly debate (one-third of the first page of Oscar G. Darlington's article is devoted to a reprise of the conjectures surrounding Gerbert's dates).⁴ A sampling of the literature indicates the range of dates for Guido and Gerbert:

GUIDO ⁵	GERBERT
b. 990-999	b. <i>ca.</i> 945 (range: 938-950)
d. after 1033; 1050	d. 1002 or 1003

¹ E-mail communication from Dr. Margaret Butler, School of Music, University of Florida (January 14, 2012); excerpted with permission.

² *Ibid.*

³ The possibility of a meeting in Rome would, of course, be impossible, since Guido was summoned for an audience with Pope John XIX long after Gerbert/Pope Sylvester II) had died.

⁴ Darlington, 456.

⁵ cf. Table 4.1

Darlington claims that “Gerbert's great work was done in the cathedral school at Rheims between the years 972 and 989 A.D.”⁶ Keeping in mind that monasteries were places of education not only for monks but for youth of the vicinity, functioning as community schools where none existed, I searched the listing of Gerbert's students in a book by Pierre Riché,⁷ with no success. We are left with the conundrum that none of the biographical accounts of Guido's life (cf. *Grove*, Fétis, Oesch) indicate any study in Reims. Where could Gerbert and Guido have crossed paths? Or...could one of Gerbert's students or colleagues have influenced Guido during his monastic study? After entertaining endless “what-ifs,” one must ask: how effective *is* this strategy? Although this seems necessary in order to verify available facts (or reasonable assumptions), Collingwood's phrase “filling things in” (cf. the historiography section) come to mind.

Even if it could be proven beyond a doubt that Guido was Gerbert's student at some point, a host of other questions comes to the fore: Is their mere contact proof of anything? At age ten, for instance, what would Guido have absorbed from Gerbert's teaching? What subjects would Gerbert have taught to this child? What specific area of the curriculum would have influenced Guido? Did Guido have an early interest in music that would cause him to seek out Gerbert's knowledge outside of the formal classroom setting? Could some “kernel” of information derived from Arab sources have been planted, lying dormant until the moment of “discovering” solmization? Is there indeed any direct evidence of Arab influence in Guido's writing? It is obvious that, in the absence of a diary or eyewitness report, such questions are ultimately unanswerable.

⁶ Darlington, 457.

⁷ Pierre Riché, *Gerbert d'Aurillac, le Pape de l'An Mil* (Paris: Fayard, 1987).

Stepping back to see the broader picture...perhaps it is simply necessary to adjust the line of questioning. Why is this quest important? The rationale for attempting to authenticate Arab influence on Mediæval European music vis-à-vis solmization is two-fold: not only is it an important effort to bring attention to the neglected role of Arab scholarship, translation, and transmission that provided new vistas for both Eastern and Western music theorists, but also to critique the exclusionary Eurocentric approach⁸ which blocks the pursuit of historical truth and maintains an artificial East-West divide that is detrimental to scholarship and pedagogy--as exemplified by the Farmer-Schlesinger debate.

Reiterating The Core Argument

This thesis is built around several (sometimes interwoven) themes as leitmotifs:

1. The transmission of Eastern knowledge to and through Western Mediæval Europe
2. The likelihood of Arab influence on music theory during this period
3. The barriers to acknowledging this influence--e.g. Eurocentrism
4. The presence of bias in historiography
5. The artificial polarization of Eastern and Western knowledge

The period in question, the “Middle Ages,” represents parallel but unequal stages of development in Europe and the Orient. While Europe was mired in what was once popularly called the “Dark Ages,” a unique confluence of cultures was unfolding in Islamic Iberia--fueled by scientific advances originating from Baghdad and cultivated in the rich environment of al-Andalus and Catalonia. Arab contributions ranging from scientific discoveries and advances in medicine to artistic achievement and preservation of human knowledge in libraries are well-documented and cannot be discounted. Indeed, scholars and monastics migrated to Iberia to

⁸ Goody levels this accusation against Southern, citing his absence of “any treatment of possible external influences” (Goody, 237).

benefit first-hand, then returning to disseminate this knowledge. As Lisa Bitel writes, this mobility was not only connected with learning but with economic opportunity:

Beginning at the end of the eighth century, native Europeans began to brave the edges of their continent, pressing across seas and deserts....By the eleventh century, they were climbing into boats and sailing out to the Holy Land down to Africa, and beyond... southward through Spain.⁹

The East-West exchange that occurred during this specific period of time was, as Southern maintains in *The Making of the Middle Ages*, “a one-way traffic of ideas which...transformed the scientific knowledge of the Latin West.”¹⁰ This exchange in large part provided the impetus for the Renaissance in Europe¹¹ and can be seen as part of an ongoing cross-current of influence between East and West that is still in existence to this day.

Discussions of historiography serve to “bookend” this thesis by reflecting on several critical issues: How do we re-construct what cannot be fully known? What attitudes and assumptions do we all bring to this task? In the case study, how has Western scholarship reacted to Farmer? *Was* he merely a “maverick”? What is the stance of the Arabist and Western camps? What is the place of evidence? Which stories are told, and which are ignored or even suppressed? How is history written? What biases/viewpoints enter into its creation? How can we assess the value and reliability of material that is presented--whether a book by Mariano Soriano Fuertes or a pamphlet by Kathleen Schlesinger? What is the role of the “historical imagination” in promoting agendas? What is *left out* of historical accounts, and why? What “leaps of faith” are necessary to “fill things in” regarding music, specifically the example of solmization?

⁹ Lisa M. Bitel, *Women in Early Medieval Europe, 400-1100* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 200.

¹⁰ Southern, *The Making of the Middle Ages*, 66.

¹¹ cf. *The Genius of Arab Civilization: Source of Renaissance*.

Is Bias Inevitable?

In considering how the role of “historical imagination” has played out in the Guido issue, this writer is tempted to respond that bias (whether Eurocentric or Arabcentric) is indeed inevitable. For the anthropologist or ethnomusicologist conducting fieldwork--involving on-site, eyewitness observation (in Stanford’s terminology, a “first-order subject”)--differences in reportage and interpretation are likely to result. Variables include factors such as personal background, gender, ideological predispositions, extent of identification with informant/s, and so on. These variables necessarily dictate how the researcher interacts with and thereby selects details to present in written accounts. For the historical ethnomusicologist, a whole host of complications arises: with no opportunity to personally witness the proceedings, all resources are second-hand, if not third-, fourth-, fifth-, and greater.

The unavoidable factor of temporal remoteness puts the contemporary scholar in the unenviable position of evaluating the reliability of historical sources, or at least the interpretations contained within them. The Farmer-Schlesinger debate discussed in the previous section provides a clear example of unvarnished bias: Farmer, an Irish-born Arabist, presents his case for the likelihood of “Arab influence” on Western music theory. Schlesinger, also a native of Ireland, relentlessly upholds the Greek claim to musical influence. Not only do they clash over the interpretations, but Schlesinger resolutely refuses to acknowledge *any* Arab contributions. If, as Michael Stanford implies, the quest for a full historical account that “omits nothing” is “impossible,”¹² are there advantages in subjective, “unbalanced” treatments of historical subjects? Turning again to the Farmer-Schlesinger debate, with its utter transparency, we can

¹² Stanford, 58.

admit that each player served as an effective “advocate” for his/her position. The single-mindedness and passion that drive this argumentation leave no doubt as to each one’s position (Farmer, it must be said, exhibits a certain degree of caution in making sweeping claims even as he considers “evidence” of Arab influence). Reading Farmer and Schlesinger is similar to watching a televised Presidential debate in the U.S.--objectivity is at a minimum, but each position is crystal-clear.

Stanford points out this advantage to the subjective approach:

While it is certainly possible to read history in quite a detached way, either as a well-told story or as a fascinating exercise of the intellect, many (perhaps most) people read or view it with some feeling that it concerns them and their interests.¹³

He states that books on the Second World War were “remarkably popular” in Britain in the second half of the 20th century, and that “in almost every case the reader wanted history from the British point of view; few demanded an Italian or Japanese history of the war.”¹⁴ He interprets this phenomenon as connected with identity and belonging; he then, however, brings up the interest in black history and women’s history, “disadvantaged” groups which have sought accounts of history “from their point of view” as an antidote to the reality that “most historiography has been distorted by a white, male bias.” This, Stanford reasons, could “restore the balance and...ensure a greater degree of objectivity.”¹⁵

Covering the Arab/Eastern viewpoint--as an underrepresented one--fits well into Stanford's scheme. What, after all, is the consequence of suppressing the role of Arab culture in shaping European culture? Worse yet, what is the consequence to the historic record of not only

¹³ *Ibid.*, 57.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Stanford, 57.

suppressing, but distorting and even demonizing the Arab/Islamic role, perpetuating the image of Muslims as “symboliz[ing] terror, devastation...hordes of hated barbarians...a lasting trauma,” as Said laments?¹⁶ In recent decades, revisionist accounts have attempted to make amends for the one-sided/inaccurate coverage of history. One notable example is Ronald T. Takaki’s landmark text published in 1993, *A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America*, which “filled in the gaps” and highlighted contributions of ethnic and cultural minorities. Referring to Stanford’s conceptual comparison of history and geography (a stretch of the past/a stretch of country) and the “impossibility” of including everything,¹⁷ at the end of the day, is it not more “objective” to see the entire, full picture of history? In fact, it would *not* be objective unless the Eastern viewpoint *were* considered. Only a doctrinaire Eurocentric would dare propose that music theory simply “sprang up” independently in Europe without precedents.

Despite the spottiness of the historical record, there is ample evidence to establish the tangible influence of the Arab world on European thought. The celebrated period of al-Andalus brought together scholars from East and West to benefit from classical scholarship, translated into Arabic. Ziryāb founded the first recognized “conservatory” on the European continent. The system of Mediæval monastic education thrived on these scholarly advances and efficiently disseminated learning throughout Europe: both from monks who travelled from France, Italy, and elsewhere to study in Islamic Spain and through the books and manuscripts that found their way into monastic libraries.

¹⁶ Said, 59.

¹⁷ Stanford, 58.

Guido And The Historical Imagination

Within the context of this intellectual ferment, I propose that it is reasonable (while admittedly not absolutely provable) that the monk Guido d'Arezzo, credited with the sole discovery/invention of solmization, was indirectly or directly influenced by Arab scholarship in music theory.¹⁸ Why is this the case? The concept of “historical imagination” ultimately consists of possessing a coherent world-view which continues to operate even when it becomes impossible to “connect the dots.” Nearly every scholar writing on the Middle Ages bemoans the reality of incomplete or even non-existent information. Conflicts with dates are rampant: for instance, how could Guido have gone on pilgrimage to Canterbury when this practice did not take form until *after* the murder of Thomas à Becket at Canterbury Cathedral in 1170 (Guido was deceased by 1050)? The weapon of bias thus becomes an essential accessory in the scholar's arsenal.¹⁹

An Unexpected Coda

After nearly two years of research, discovering María Rosa Menocal's work was nothing short of a “beacon in the night” in its corroboration of my initial premise; for this scholar quite explicitly points out the intentional disregard of segments of the academic community toward accounts of Arab influence.

Menocal's critique of the dismissive attitude of academia toward Arab contributions in her field confirms my own discomfort in finding obvious omissions in, for example, Lawrence's book on Mediæval monasticism. The issue of what *is* and *isn't* included in scholarly writing is a

¹⁸ Christopher Page's schema limits Guido's mobility within a “circuit” he terms the “Alpine Gate,” but Page also cites “the nearness of southern Italy with its wide contacts in the Arab-Byzantine Mediterranean and links with Islamic science” (Page, 330).

¹⁹ The word “arsenal,” incidentally, is derived from the Arabic *dār ṣinā'a*, house of manufacture (www.m-w.com).

larger issue: Claude V. Palisca and Donald Jay Grout keep to the “party line” in their textbook on Western music. The 2001 edition, for instance, includes only the most meager and grudging reference to the enormous influence of Arab instrumentation: “The lute, known as early as the ninth century, was brought into Spain by the Arab conquerors [*n.b.*], but it did not become common elsewhere much before the Renaissance.”²⁰ The precursor Arab instrument, the 'ud, is not mentioned. Grout and Palisca, however, do credit Arab influence in the art of the troubadours and trouvères: “...taking its inspiration from the neighboring culture of Moorish Spain.”²¹ A sea change in the editorial stance of this venerable textbook is evident within a mere decade: the 8th edition not only explicitly mentions the 'ud as the “ancestor” of the lute²² but credits the Arab world as “the strongest and most vibrant” of the “three principal successors to the Roman Empire”²³ (the other two: the Byzantine Empire and western Europe). Arab accomplishments are enumerated:

The Arabs extended Greek philosophy and science, fostered trade and industry, and contributed to medicine, chemistry, technology, and mathematics. Arab rulers were patrons of literature, architecture, and other arts.²⁴

The textbook's use of the word “strongest” to describe the Arab world is significant vis-à-vis its description of western Europe as the “weakest, poorest, and most fragmented of the three.”²⁵

²⁰ Donald Jay Grout and Claude V. Palisca, *A History of Western Music*, 6th ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2001), 66.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 59.

²² “Lutes had been known in Europe for more than five hundred years, introduced by the Arabs into Spain.” Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca, 267.

²³ Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca, 68. Michael Frishkopf points out the actuality of the “superiority” of the Arabs during al-Andalus and its lasting effect on the Arab psyche, serving as a “potent literary symbol” for the Egyptian imagination, playing a role in supporting Arab nationalisms in the 1950s. Michael Frishkopf, “Some Meanings of the Spanish Tinge in Contemporary Egyptian Music,” in *Mediterranean Mosaic: Popular Music and Global Sounds*, ed. by Goffredo Plastino (New York: Routledge, 2004), 152.

²⁴ Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca, 69.

²⁵ *Ibid.*

Said emphasizes the contrary Eurocentric mindset, with its belief that “Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination.”²⁶ This perception of the balance of power between “strong and weak” is a critical one, leading to a whole conceptual vocabulary, as Said elaborates, of the Oriental as “irrational, depraved...childlike” and the European as “rational, virtuous, mature.”²⁷ The 8th edition of the textbook, however, hedges on “the origins of the troubadour tradition,” noting them as “unclear” but stating that “possible sources or influences include Arabic songs, known in southern France since the ninth century.”²⁸

The importance of Menocal's work to this project is that it not only unequivocally identifies Western scholarly bias--even in the face of “evidence” for Arab contributions--but legitimizes the discourse around anti-Oriental “attitudes”; an elusive and unquantifiable but nonetheless very real factor in scholarship. These attitudes prevent full acknowledgment, or at least consideration, of non-Western roles in Mediæval and Renaissance civilization/culture. “What is left out” of historical accounts is thus, in itself, worthy of analysis.

My reading of Menocal corroborates that two “parallel academic universes” indeed exist: one Western, one non-Western. The limitations of this segregated system are clear: valuable knowledge from the Eastern world is overlooked in the interest of maintaining Western superiority, thus resulting in a one-sided and parochial (and ultimately, inaccurate) account of history and culture. Edward Said indeed defines the “essence of Orientalism” as “the ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority.”²⁹ The

²⁶ Said, 40.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Burkholder, Grout, and Palisca, 78.

²⁹ Said, 42.

ideologically polarized Farmer-Schlesinger debate is one clear-cut example of this incomplete *weltanschauung*; the evolution of support for Arab influence as seen in the Western music textbook signals some degree of willingness to “amend” for prior oversight.

If some quarters of academia are reluctant to acknowledge Arab influence on Mediæval Europe, as Menocal maintains, the same cannot be said of the current popular press and public broadcasting networks in the U.S. and Great Britain. A spate of well-documented books for the general reader has been published in the last decade. Who would expect a full-length book on Gerbert to appear on public library shelves? Yet Brown's book *The Abacus and the Cross* has introduced this important historical figure to a non-academic audience, and has done so in a scholastically responsible manner. In the realm of visual media, popular PBS/BBC documentaries on Andalusian culture have promoted Arab contributions to audiences both in the U.S. and “across the pond.” The Rick Steves travel segment on Granada and Cordoba (from his “Travels in Europe” series) was produced in 2010 but aired on the Chicago PBS television affiliate, WTTW, as recently as mid-August, 2013. Steves's enthusiastic narrative explains Cordoba's place in transmitting classical knowledge as “giving back to Europe.” The BBC series “When the Moors Ruled Spain” is narrated by historian Bettany Hughes, who assumes a slightly Arabist stance.

These popularizations represent an important trend, for they indicate a willingness, or even eagerness, to remedy a heretofore Eurocentric view of the Middle Ages--to present a more complete account of what “really happened” (or “might have happened”). Advances in broadening education for the “masses” in the past several decades (e.g. bringing the work of women and minorities to the fore) have perhaps resulted in creating a richer, more tolerant, more

inclusive worldview in the populace that rightly honors the roles of non-Western peoples and indeed *expects* to see these roles given their due. Admittedly, the “romance” of al-Andalus carries the danger of Orientalism and exoticism in popular portrayals, but careful review of the examples cited suggests that these efforts are not mere “info-tainment” at the expense of valid historiography.

Alterity In Al-Andalus

Said maintains that “Orientalism was ultimately a political vision of reality whose structure promoted the difference between the familiar (Europe, the West, ‘us’) and the strange (the Orient, the East, ‘them’).”³⁰ In *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, Thomas F. Glick takes the concept a step further and offers a stimulating yet troubling discussion of history-as-myth as applied to Spanish Mediævalism, which prior to the mid-1970's focused on the Muslim as Other: “...the image of the 'Moor' remained as the quintessential stranger, an object to be feared. Case histories in recent Spanish clinical psychology bear out this contention.”³¹ Glick concludes that “subconscious fears became transferred into bias that underlies historical interpretation and contributes to misinterpretation.”³² Even as he claims his own “values,” he asserts that “ethnocentrism is the bane of peoples and of history.”³³ This revision of the first edition (1979) represents his application of “the new historiography.” Glick provides incisive analysis of facets of Andalusian culture, e.g. the “tribal settlement design” of the Arabs/Berbers that favored irrigation agriculture and resulted in conservation for future

³⁰ Said, 43.

³¹ Thomas F. Glick, *Islamic and Christian Spain in the Early Middle Ages*, 2nd. rev. ed. (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2005), xi.

³² *Ibid.*, xii.

³³ *Ibid.*

growth.³⁴ He takes pains (over several pages) to differentiate between Spain (or Isbāniyya, or Spania, or España) and al-Andalus (technically, “land of the Vandals,” or *bilad al-Andalus*).³⁵ As to the term “Moors,” Glick points out that it referred to the Mauri, Berbers living in the Roman province of Mauretania in North Africa. The Greek word *mauros* (black), hearkens to “its original racial connotation of blackness” as in Othello, “Moor of Venice.” Glick summarily declares, “In Spanish, the term *moro* is derogatory. It should not be used in scholarly--or any--discourse.”³⁶

The question remains: is Menocal's “*J'accuse*” warranted? Do Eurocentric scholars simply ignore--or refute--any possibility of an Arab origin for Western music theory? In a recently published volume of essays in honor of Menocal's 1987 book *The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History: A Forgotten Heritage*, Dwight Reynolds summarizes Menocal's central question:

Why had Romance Philology refused to explore the possibility of Arabic influence on European medieval literature despite abundant historical evidence that contact with Arabic literature, written and oral, had taken place in many different times, places, and manners throughout the Middle Ages?³⁷

Reynolds sanguinely surmises that “a new generation of scholars” has been trained to keep “open minds” with regard to influence. This refers to the field of literature; in his own field of music, he is less sanguine: Menocal's argument, he maintains, “can still be posed today in the field of

³⁴ *Ibid.*, xviii.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, xxi.

³⁶ Glick, xxi-xxii.

³⁷ Dwight Reynolds, “Arab Musical Influence on Medieval Europe: A Reassessment,” in *A Sea of Languages: Rethinking the Arabic Role in Medieval Literary History*, 3rd rev. ed., ed. by Suzanne Conklin Akbari and Karla Mallette (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 182.

music history.”³⁸ He then enumerates the theories of Ribera and Farmer surrounding Arab influence on troubadours and the *cantigas*; theories which were “vigorously denied by scholars who refused to acknowledge any influence.”³⁹ It should be noted that Reynolds does take the Arabists to task over their tendency to construct a "narrative of unidirectional transmission from the ancients to the Arabs, and then from the Arabs to western Europe.”⁴⁰ In place of this “static” model, he favors a mélange of hybridization: “complex genealogies.”⁴¹

Yet the issue of Western scholarship's acceptance or rejection of Arab influence remains. Jack Goody offers four “critical stances” which work to offset “the inevitably ethnocentric character of any attempt to describe the world, past or present; his third factor is “giving adequate weight to the non-European past.”⁴² Goody's discussion of Asín's study of Dante's *Divine Comedy* gives attention to this past by pointing out Asín's identification of “parallels” between the *Miraj* (ascension of the Prophet Muhammad and “nocturnal journey to Jerusalem”) and “Dante's journey to Heaven and Hell.”⁴³ In elaborating on likely information sources at the disposal of non-Muslims, Goody notes that a Mozarab Christian writer (“possibly Eulogius of Cordoba, d. 859 CE”) had written a biography of the Prophet; and that Robert of Reading, Archbishop of Pamplona, had produced a Latin translation of the Qur'an. Goody concludes:

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 182.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*

⁴² Goody, 13.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 238. Philip F. Kennedy points out the “anxiety of scholarship” which has resulted from “the singling out of the most exalted of medieval Euro-Christian texts to be stripped of their originality.” Philip F. Kennedy, “The Muslim Sources of Dante?” in *The Arab Influence in Medieval Europe*, Folia Scholastica Mediterranea, ed. Dionisius A. Agius and Richard Hitchcock (Reading, UK: Ithaca Press, 1994), 67.

“Knowledge of Islam and its mythology was therefore available.”⁴⁴ Goody writes of an exciting connection between Spain and Italy:

Dante's teacher, Brunetto Latini, was sent as ambassador of Florence to the court of Alphonso the Wise (1221-84) in 1260 where he would have had some exposure to that learning....At his court the ambassador would have become acquainted with much of the literary work from Spain, so that this contact may well have led to Dante being influenced by these ideas.⁴⁵

Not only does this passage bring Alfonso X and his *cantigas* project back into the narrative, emphasizing the monarch's significance in the encouragement and transmission of Arab culture--but demonstrates the importance of the teacher in serving as a direct and personal link in transmission, as amply evidenced by the influential Gerbert.

The Final Word

Due to the indisputable wave of Arab influence during the Middle Ages, I find it reasonable to contend that it is unlikely that Guido d'Arezzo--who was educated and lived within the monastic system his entire life--would have been unaware of at least some aspects of Arab music theory. However, it is impossible to identify the exact work, author, or teacher responsible for implanting a seed in Guido's subconscious. Perhaps, then, the question needs to be re-framed: not asking simply “was Guido in Catalonia” or “was Guido a student of Gerbert” but rather “what can we reasonably presume was the extent and impact of Arab influence on Guido?” and, furthermore, how was this influence manifested in his creative output?

Even larger questions emerge:

- What are the ramifications of upholding the Guido legend in the face of contradictory

⁴⁴ Goody, 13.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

evidence? Even if this practice may serve a function in church lore and in support of religious ideology, it denies acknowledging the contributions of Arab knowledge, keeping Western culture insular.

- How does this period of history symbolize recognition of the continual “flow” of influence between the East and West through time,⁴⁶ realizing that points of “common ground” and mutually beneficial influence exist at various periods of history, as exemplified by the *Convivencia*?

⁴⁶ Frishkopf comments on the enduring appeal of al-Andalus in the Egyptian imagination due to its “inversion” of the “power relations between the Arabs and the West” and its “constituting proof that Western modernity is indebted to the Arabs” (Frishkopf, 152).

APPENDIX:
TIMELINE¹

Henry George Farmer builds his periodization of Arabic music around the caliphates (ending, curiously, at 1258 C.E. rather than the watershed year of 1492, the Fall of Granada marking the end of the *Reconquista*). Since Farmer's timeframe coincides with the subject of this study, his schematic from *A History of Arabian Music* is reproduced below (highlighted in green), with references to major historical events included within each cluster. Significant authors and publications cited in this thesis are listed in blue.

-571	<i>Jāhiliyya</i>
476	Fall of the Western Roman Empire
<i>ca.</i> 524	<i>Bœthius: Consolation of Philosophy</i>
529	First Benedictine monastery at Monte Cassino
571-661	<i>The Heart of Islam</i>
618	Tang Dynasty in China
622	<i>Hejira</i> of Prophet Muhammad from Mecca to Medina
661-750	<i>Ummayyad Dynasty</i>
711	Arab/Berber invasion of Iberian peninsula
732	Battle of Tours (Charles Martel)
750-847	<i>‘Abbasids: Golden Age</i>
768	Reign of Charlemagne begins
786	Accession of Harun al-Rashid to Caliphate in Baghdad
822	Ziryāb migrates to Cordoba
847-945	<i>‘Abbasids: Disintegration</i>
860+	<i>Al-Kindi writes on astronomy, optics, and music</i>
913	Introduction of paper to the Muslim world
<i>ca.</i> 925	<i>Al-Farabi: Kitāb al-mūsīqī al-kabīr</i> (“Great Book on Music”)
945-1258	<i>‘Abbasids: The Falling Apart</i>
950	Earliest use of paper in Spain

¹ Sources include Grun and Simpson, *Grove*, and Collins, *Early Medieval Europe*.

953	John of Gorze sent by Emperor Otto I to Cordoba
967	Gerbert d'Aurillac begins study in Catalonia
988	Al-Azhar University in Cairo founded
<i>ca.</i> 1015	Ibn Sina: <i>Kitāb al-shifā</i> (“The Book of Healing”)
<i>ca.</i> 1026	Guido d'Arezzo: <i>Micrologus</i>
1050	Astrolabe first used in Europe
1054	East-West Schism
1085	Alfonso VI of Castile: Conquest of Toledo
1099	First Crusade
1117	Oxford University founded
1147	Second Crusade
1150	University of Paris founded
1158	University of Bologna founded
1170	Gerard of Cremona translates al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Ibn Sina in Toledo
1189	Third Crusade
1202	Fourth Crusade
1215	Magna Carta
1258	Siege of Baghdad

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Hicham Chami is a research fellow in the School of Music at the University of Florida, concurrently enrolled in the Islamic Studies program at Columbia University. His research interests are historical ethnomusicology, the aesthetics of classical Arab music, and the reciprocal influence betwixt mystical Islam and Andalusian music in Morocco.

Chami has presented his research at multiple conferences of the Society for Ethnomusicology and at major universities, and has been published in the academic press. He has recently compiled a comprehensive, 6,500-entry bibliography on Arab music. Chami is the acting editorial manager of the *Journal of Arab Music Research*, a publication he launched in conjunction with North American authorities in the field, and currently serves as the president-elect of the Society for Arab Music Research, an SEM interest group. He also presents educational programs and residencies throughout the U.S. and is the Executive Director of the Heartland Seminars on Arab Culture, which he founded in 2005.

Chami earned diplomas in qanun performance/instruction and Western music theory from the National Conservatory of Music and Dance in Rabat, Morocco. He is founder of the nationally recognized Arabesque Music Ensemble and the University of Florida's Near Eastern Orchestra, and performs qanun with the al-Bustan Seeds of Culture *takht* ensemble. Chami has produced three critically acclaimed CDs of traditional Arabic music, with *Soul of a People* named a top-ten world music recording of the year by the *Boston Globe*.