The Contribution of Arab Muslims to the Provencal Lyrical Poetry: the Troubadours in the Twelfth Century

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(Received 7/6/1435H; Accepted for publication 27/7/1435H)

Keywords: Arab Muslims, Contribution, Mawashahat, Zajal, Troubadours, Provencal, Poetry, Twelfth Century, Renaissance, literature

Abstract: This study is a historical-analytical attempt to demonstrate the influence and contribution of Arab Islamic Mawashahat and Zajal on the Provencal lyrical poets – the Troubadours that sprang in south of France during the eleventh century. The study consists of three parts in which the first part represents the main part. It sheds light on the influence of Muwashshah and Zajal on the poetry of troubadours. The second part deals with the nature of troubadours and their relation with the poetry of Muwashshah and Zajal. It is supported with five troubadour poets. The last part goes back to the beginning of the European Renaissance in the twelfth century. The European Renaissance started in Italy decades after translations of Islamic heritage, literature and science from Arabic into Latin then from Latin to other European languages. The eighth through the eleventh centuries witnessed the glorious ages of Islamic civilization and sciences in which great portion of it was shifted to Italy during and after the crusades. Thence, different parts of Europe were enlivened with the movement of translation and multi travels and cultural exchange. One of the changing factors is poetry as a branch of literature.

The Influence of Arab Muslims of Andalusia

Andalusia was the connecting link between the Islamic world – from the Arabic peninsula and North African countries – and the European countries.

It is in Andalusia – presumably because it was not completely Islamized or Arabized – that, in the tenth century, a small breach is found in the fortified walls of classicism. This was in an innovation: an elaborate kind of strophic poem known as the muwashshah composed entirely in the classical language except for the closing line or couplet, which is in a mixture of Arabic and Spanish….What is even more significant is that the muwashshah is almost certainly derived from a simpler form of folk poetry, the zajal, which is entirely in the local vernacular. It is true that in the literary record the zajal appeared later than the muwashshah (Pierre Cachia 2004, p 35).

“However, it is with Andalusian strophic poetry, the muwashshah and zajal that ghazal makes some of its most innovative contributions” (Roger Allen. 2000, p 108). Arab Muslims in Andalusia, from the beginning of the eighth century, wrote one of the brilliant, gleaming and shining chapters in the intellectual ancient times during the medieval Europe. Throughout the middle of the eighth and the commencement
of the thirteenth centuries, the Arabic-Muslim-speaking people were the major bearers of the torch of culture, knowledge and civilization throughout the world.

Islamic inauguration of Spain was not an army event as it was an event of civilization in which the Islamic civilization has merged and fused with other ancient civilizations such as the Roman Empire and others which resulted from this interpenetration a new prosperous civilization called the Andalusian Civilization reached and affected the European mind as well as deeply affected the Spanish life (1.121).

Moreover Muslims were the medium through which ancient science and philosophy were revived and put on the stage of life for everyone, supplemented and transmitted in a manner that made the Renaissance of Western Europe possible. Philip K Hitti, in his book, History of the Arabs assures that the Arabic Spain did a great contribution. Moreover, “In his music history, F´etis too insisted on the folk nature of troubadour melodies in particular, taking this one step further back and east, so to speak, by declaring that ‘the songs of the troubadours and trouv`eres … were inspired by those of the Arabs’” (Haines John. 2004, p 187).

In addition to that, Hitti declares that the passion for poetical composition was fervent in the Arabic language. Arabic verse was countless in number and is transmitted from mouth to mouth. It was of great attraction where all listeners admired them, whatever people were, high or low, rich or poor. Poetry in Arabic language is full of music and exquisite accent.

The poetry of Arab Muslims in Andalusia has acquired new receptivity and developed new metrical forms to present the magnificent nature and the age. Courtly love poetry manifested a great romantic emotion through its ballads and love poems that preceded the attitude of the European Middle Ages. “Local influence made itself felt primarily in lyrical poetry, where the Spanish Arabs created new forms not previously known in the Muslim East. These had a considerable influence on early Spanish Christian poetry and possibly also on the other literatures of Western Europe” (Bernard Lewis. 2002, p 139).

In Andalusia, love poetry such as Al Muwashahat - muwashashah –and zajar have been developed at the commencement of the tenth and eleventh centuries. Both were grounded on a refrain for the chorus. They were known also as songs. Music and song are clear characteristics of this sort of poetry. Al-Muwashahat was originally invented in Andalusia and from there it spread into Africa, East and north to Europe.

One of Al-Muwashahat pioneers is Abe-Bakribn-Quzmain (1160). He was a famous wandering minstrel from Cordoba – Cordova. He used to travel from a city to another singing the sort of praise which is later on called zajar. Al-Muwashahat is defined as; "The Arabic poetic form muwashashah was first developed in Spain 9th c.– 10th c. Its Kharja or refrain was not the classical tongue but in Romance or colloquial Arabic, known as the Mozarab

Zajal is a kind of improvisatory love lyrics, later on known as a literary form.
dialect. This form was popular in the 11th – 12th c. it may have been the forerunner of the Provencal lyric." (Cuddon J.A, 1998, p 522)

The Arabic zajal (known in Spanish as the zéjel) was a popular verse form that originated in Muslim Spain in the 12th century. Like the muwashshah, the zajal was a strophic form—that is, it was built of several stanzas, usually five to six or more". (Jay Ruud, 2006, p 707)

Zajal in its general meaning, first, evolved as a sort of imitation of the original native songs especially when Arabs were mixed with the natives in cities and organized mixed weddings and ceremonies. They – both – Arabs and native people of Andalusia needed public folk songs to be sung in such weddings, festivals, in the time of making juice and in the seasons of harvest. The next step was the attempt of narrowing the gap between the classical Arabic poetry and the public folk songs in which women, youngsters, craftsmen, laborers and laymen of low class became able to sing such mixed songs in vernacular Arabic language without skimming it from the foreign dialects acquired from neighbors, which became part of their language.

It is believed that Andalusia and the Moroccan States were two related parts of one world known to the orient citizens as the Islamic West. These parts continued during the Middle Ages to represent one civilization mixed in its connections with human relations, immigration, marriage, thought, social aspects, politics and trade. It is also said that, in the early medieval years or during the advent of the Renaissance, Toledo was a multi-cultural Muslim town, where Christians and Jews prosper under Arabic Islamic law.

Sicily formed with the Moroccan counties in North Africa and Andalusia a unified culture of private imprint of the Islamic Arabic heritage in which several transportations assisted in keeping it for long. Telling about Sicily, “It had been one of the wealthiest states in Europe in the twelfth century and its rulers had controlled the central Mediterranean, or had at least bullied people into thinking that they did. The royal palace had played host to an exceptionally lively troubadour and scientific court culture”. (Clifford Backman R, 2002, p 3)

Andalusia and Sicily played a pioneer role in the European Renaissance through shifting and moving their heritage. People of Andalusia used to have a great care of language and its arts and literature.

People of Andalusia have taken great care in learning; they put scholars in an elevated position. The Andalusiens did not have schools to help in learning but they used to have mosques – Masjeds – as their schools; scholars and teachers were not paid because their objectives were increasing and extending knowledge. It is not strange the illiteracy in Andalusia was rare and different from the rest of Europeans where illiteracy was wide except the high class of priests and monks who were able to read and write. Learning was not restricted to men only but women also had a great portion in learning and contributing in the cultural movement (ص 31- 1238 ه /1820 م).

Woman also occupied an elevated rank and gained great luck of learning which
assisted her to have a high rank in the society. It has been said that around a hundred and seventy women of the suburb of Cordova were working daily on handwritten copies of the Holy Quran using the Kofi bond (a style of writing). One of them is Ishraq Al Orodia, during the fifth century Hijri calendar, who memorized ‘Al Kamel’ (the Complete) written by Al Mbered and also ‘Al Nawader’ (Rear Anecdotes) by Al Gali (Abo Ali Ismael ibn Al Gasem Al Gali).

The poetesses were prominent as a sign of poetry in Andalusia and as a result of the numerous poetesses in addition to their intellectuality and smartness. The magical women poetry was connected with the name of Waladh (483 Hirji calendar), the daughter of Khalif Al Mustakfi in which her forum was attended by the pioneers of verse and prose, one of them is Ibn Zaidon (463 H) who penned some of the most beautiful and delicate verse.

People of Andalusia regulated verse for several traditional purposes such as flirtation, promiscuity, asceticism, mysticism, praise, satire, and lamentation. They developed the theme of lamentation; as a result, they revived pathos poetry on ancient cities and kingdoms. The poets lived and felt the political age then versed the poetry of ‘evocation’. They also expanded the portrait of the Andalusian environment and introduced the art of mawashashat and Zajal.

It is said that the muwashshah and zajal are lyrical songs that have their origins in the Arab countries, but were improved in Andalusia. When Muslims inaugurated North Africa, they found a kind of music that is different from theirs. A number of historians and researchers support the idea that music during pre-Islam was part of that world. They believe that music came from the Arabian Peninsula and transformed by the Arab-Muslim tribes who migrated to North Africa then to Andalusia.

This new branch of poetry, Muwashshah, tones with the environment in which, flirtation, drink and singing were widely spread in Andalusia. Muwashshah is a category of verse that includes more than one rhyme and more than one rhythm. The poets designed a category full of metrical variety and fascination. Mwashashah is derived from the Arabic verb ‘washaha’ that means ‘decorated’; it was named with such a name because of the decoration, retouch, symmetry and workmanship as if poets resembled the women’s scarf that is studded with pearls, jewels and gems.

As Ibn Khaldun mentioned, this kind of art was evolved in the third century – Hejri calendar by two poets from the village of Cabra in Andalusia. They are Mohammad ibn Hamoud Al Thurair and MagdmibnMoa'aфа. Furthermore, the critics Ribera and Garcia Gomez think that Muwashshah is a traditional imitation of romantic poetry used to be sung. The poets kept from their verse the foreign Kharja because the ‘Mawashah’ – a single stanza – consists of three parts: opening – one or two lines matching the next in rhyme, a group of roles and Kharjah. The idea is supported by Aimn Yousef Ibraheem Jarar in his theses The Poetical Movement in Andalusia: The
Period of Bani Al Ahmarshedding light on the characteristics of Muwashashah.

During the time that the art of Muwashashah was spread and widened within people of Andalusia, the laymen woven the art of zajal with a language close to the language spoken by the laymen. Zajal went by subsequent roles, started with the folk lyric songs then modified to zajal. Zajal was used for multi purposes such as praise, flirtation, mysticism and depiction.

Before the close of the twelfth century, the important legacy in the field of music to Europe was left to the Arabs. The Arab Muslims of Spain were fond of song writing. Some of the well-known composers of Al Muwashahat are Abu-al-Abbas al-Tutaili, died in 1129, Ibrahim ibn-Sahl (1251 or 1260), Muhammad ibn Yusuf abu-Hayyan (1256 – 1344) and the great ibn-Hani al-Andalusi (938 – 973).

Both Muwashasha and Zajals were improved into the Castilian Popular verse form of villancico that was used for Christian hymns, and even Christmas carols. Thus the arising of such literary work of 'platonic love' in Andalusia at the eighth century marked a clear contribution of Arabic poetry in the origination of courtly love of Troubadours who played a great role in opening the gate for a great literature in the twelfth century Renaissance. Moreover;

In southern France the first Provencal poets appear full-fledge toward the end of the eleventh century with palpitating love expressed in a wealth of fantastic imagery. The troubadours, who flourished in the twelfth century, imitated their southern contemporaries, the zajal-singers. Following the Arabic precedent the cult of the dame suddenly arises in south – Western Europe. (Hitti Philip K. 1964, p. 562)

Julian Ribera has searched a lot in the topic of the influence of Muwashasha and Zajal on the troubadour lyrical songs until he reached a frank clear link between the troubadour songs and Muwashasha. Ribera has found the connection in more than one face. He found such a connection in the outer form. He found the influence in the content and also Ribera discovered the influence from historical events and persons.

Many researchers say that the word 'troubadour' is compounded of two words. The first one is 'troub' derived from Spanish and its meaning is 'band' or group of singers. There is also a possibility that this part is derived from the Arabic adjective ‘TAROUB’ which means melodious or ‘TARAB’ which means enjoying music and singing. The second is 'dour' an Arabic word means houses. It makes it clear that troubadours are some minstrels who used to travel from a place to another to sing their lyrical love poems.

Moreover, the system of kharjah in the poems of troubadours is similar to the Mawashahat and Zajal and the troubadours had the same importance. This is from the aspect of the form, the similarity in content is clear that the imagination of Arabic poetry and its meaning which was embosomed by mawashasha and zagalhas transformed and used in the flirtation and other characteristics of troubadours poetry.

Concerning the historical events and persons it can be clearly seen that “Occitan lords were prominent in the early crusading
effort, both in Spanish *reconquista* and in Syria, and some settled there, so that many noble families of Occitania had relative in the Christian states of the Middle East or in Spain” (Simon Gaunt & S. K. 1999, P 9). Moreover, the first troubadour William of Aquitaine has a wide connection with Arabic culture and traditions. He participated in the Crusades and travelled to the East in 1101. He lived in Palestine awhile where he got familiarity with Arabic. He acquired good knowledge of Arabic. Levi Provencal, in his book *Arabic Civilization in Spain* that was translated into Arabic by Dr Al Taher Ahmad Maki, has narrated a poem of William of Aquitaine that talks of two ladies he met in one of his journeys where these ladies saluted him with high morals and a short dialogue occurred between him and the two ladies.

In the poem, there are two difficult lines cannot be understood by critics but Provencal realized that the difficulty is because their Arabic origin which denotes that William was acquainted with Arabic and talked with the people using their Arabic language. Such historical connections between the pioneer of troubadours, William of Aquitaine with the eastern Arabic countries, and between Spain and Arabic poetry confirms that troubadours were influenced by Muwashshah and Zajal.

If Zajal has appeared before the first troubadour with two centuries, it is no doubt that troubadours were influenced by Zajal not the opposite. It is a fact confirmed by several critics and historians on the concerned topic such as Julian Ribera, A. R. Nickel, Tal Green, Robert Briffault and Menndeth Bedal. Furthermore, Maria Rosa Menocal in her book, The Arabic Role in Medieval Literary Theory, depicts the influence of the Arabic love poems of *muwashshah* in the rising of the Troubadours courtly love poetry saying;

Perhaps in consideration the Hispano-Arabic texts as part of the European body of courtly love poems, a different view might emerge. It would appear that the Arabic texts allow us to see, more clearly than could the Provencal poetry alone, that the poems embodying this love ideology could be read as excellent examples of a condemnation of the love whose praises they at first seem to be singing. (Menocal Maria Rosa. 1990p. 109).

It is important here to shed light on the courtly love poetry of the troubadours through examining five troubadour poets as an instance.

**The Troubadours Courtly Love Poetry**

The troubadours are lyric poets who emerged in the south of France between the eleventh century and the fourteenth century. The troubadours were themselves a heterogeneous group of noble poets. Some of them made their songs as their profession in life. They were wandering from one place to another and from a town to another. The Crusades started in 1096 and the Troubadours simultaneously started their singing poems. The troubadours as a group of poets used to have the chance when peace truces were signed to perform their songs. “Richard I Lion-hearted, King of England (r. 1189–1199). The son of Henry II (r. 1154–1189) and Eleanor of Aquitaine, a knight and troubadour, … was perceived as the
greater monarch on the Third Crusade (1189–1192), but he failed to recover Jerusalem.” (Kenneth Harl W. 2003, p 46).

The themes of troubadours’ poetry dealt chiefly with love, and questions of politics and chivalry. Their love poetry was written in the musical Provencal dialect, or what is called the old French. The troubadour love poems offer advantages in developing music that draws Middle Ages to Renaissance. The majority of the singing poems addressed and were directed to ladies. The themes of most of the poems were about love or what is known as courtly love, love for noble birth ladies. Love songs used to depict and portray the beauty of women but the poets could not reach and share their love with those beloved, its border is the look and imagination.

Besides the charming love songs, the troubadours wrote poems about politics, and about war, satirizing their antagonists also composed laments for their dead leaders and friends. Troubadours were critics of their specific community and also active commentators on life. They were also musicians. Antony Bonner defines the troubadours as men who wrote lyric poetry in a language Called Provencal during the two centuries between 1095 and 1295. It was a poetry almost exclusively under the patronage of the greater noblemen of the day and is therefore predominantly aristocratic or courtly. … it was the first lyric poetry in any modern European language, and all other lyric poetry in Europe either descends from it or was at one time tremendously influenced by it. (Bonner Antony. 1972, p. 1)

So, the twelfth century witnessed the originating of a tradition of romantic love, which as it is said, commenced in France and spread in the north which affected the relationship of 'masculine-feminine' and continued until the second half of the twelfth century but its effects and power continued until today. Thus, the courtly love tradition affected the literature and history.

The twelfth century came with a great change especially in the field of literature and love poetry. The French historian, Charles Seignobos depicts the situation saying; “love is an invention of the twelfth century” (Wiener Philip 1973, p 97). It is love that stands for expressing passion and sentimental feeling. This meaning for love is the nature of the poetry of the troubadours. Love poetry is not only written but also sung. It spread from Poitou, Limousin and Languedoc in the south west of France all over Europe with astounding quickness.

These courtly love poems were new as if they descended from heaven. This new sort of poetry in the twelfth century transformed the ways of feeling, customs and arts for centuries. It could be said that courtly love is a sign of the general revolution, which effectively operated in the mind of western people during this period of time. In addition, it has been felt that some explanation is required to account for the extreme complexity and artificiality of troubadour poetry in its most highly developed stage. Some nine hundred different forms of stanza construction are to be found in the body of
troubadour poetry, and few, if any schools of lyric poetry in the world, can show a higher degree of technical perfection in point of metrical diversity, complex stanza construction and accuracy in the use of rime. This result has been ascribed to Arabic influence during the eighth century. (Chaytor, H. J. 1912, pp. 6-7)

This new appearance of poetry soon arose in Poitou and Limousin in France with the first works of Lord William, the duke of Aquitaine (1071 – 1126). After him, hundreds of the troubadour poets followed his way. The courtly love poetry exalted woman, and celebrated her with the name of 'lady'. “There were the poetry of the troubadours who originated in the south of France during the tenth and the eleventh centuries. The troubadours used to innovate, flirting, praise and describe but their poetry was meager in meaning and does not adhere to refrain and one rhyme” (جمال سلطان 1953، 36 -35.

In the twelfth century, it could be seen better that the troubadours have contributed in the use of language needed to express the ambition of the time's soul. The twelfth century was actually the theater of an original uprising in the European mind. It is a revolution that is manifested with morality and spirituality, also with the personification that appeared in the lyricism of the Provencal poetry.

This genre of literature had not been only encouraged and looked after by noble men in the south of France but, in fact, it started with the practice of one of them, a noble and a troubadour such as William, the Duke of Aquitaine. It is important to consolidate this search with some patterns of troubadours to sustain and support this research. It is preferred to start with the first pioneer of troubadours known as William of Aquitaine.

1. William of Aquitaine

William of Aquitaine was one of the most famous courtly men. Barbara Smythe, in her book *Trobador Poets* mentions that William or as she writes, Guilhem was born in 1071 and died in 1127. He was also one of the greatest deceivers of women; He was a brave knight and a good love poet and singer. Furthermore, he wandered for a long time in different places of the world seducing women. He was an irreverent and immoral man. Several of his lyrics were addressed, though not certain, to ladies specially Countess Amalberge. She was his mistress for a period of time. William of Aquitaine yet, was known as the VII of Poitiers and the IX of Aquitaine at the same time.

Besides, William of Aquitaine was a very powerful feudal lord in France at his time and was likely distinguished as the first courtly love poet. He was excommunicated because he was an enemy of all chastity and virtue. It is necessary to get an example of his lyrical poems explained.

One of his best love poems that portray the mind of the poet is; 

With the sweetness of the season
When forest leaves grow and the birds
Sings, each in his own way
And in a new key, it is then
That men draw near
To what they most desire ….

Our love is like
The hawthorn branch
Which, at night, trembles
Beneath rain and ice
Until day comes and the sun spread
Through the boughs and green leaves.
I still remember one morning
When our war ended
And she made me a gift
Of her love and ring.
May God grant that I live long enough
To have my hands beneath her cloak.
I care little for whatever evil talk
Could part me from my bon Vezi,
For I know well how words
Can spread from mouth to mouth.
Let others vainly boast of love;
But we two hold the bread and knife.
(Bonner Antony. 1972, pp. 38-9)

Naturally, the poets—old and modern—start their singing love poems with portraying the surroundings and nature to illustrate the beauty of trees and birds singing in the forests and woods with river sounds and the musical sound of water which can be a lovely warm environment for lovers. Here in the above poem, the poet William goes the same course as an introduction to his deep love description of his woman.

The poet describes the love with his lady as a bird shivering because of cold at night under the open sky that showers rain and the weather is cold and snowy. Here it is an image of what love does in the bodies, minds and hearts of lovers where trembling is understood as a sort of mixed feelings shown not only by the body but also through the abstract feelings of the heart. The process continues all during the night but when the day time is advent, the bright ray of the sun is spread all over the jungle to cover as a warm blanket every part of the boughs and leaves of trees.

The poet describes a day in the morning he cannot forget when after the war, his lady shared with him love as a reward after the battle but it is not only that, he was rewarded beside love with a ring as a symbol of love. The gift is binary, abstract and concrete, love and ring and both of them go together.

It is a wish of all lovers to spend as much of time with their beloveds. Here, the portrait is the same where the poet desires to be with his lady and enjoy love but in a sense. The poet troubadour, in this poem, shows his audacity simultaneously with indifference with what is going to happen. Even if evil takes his life by the rumors that are spread by mouths. It is believed that stories can move like storms specially those bad or immoral stories. A sort of pride obsesses the poet despising other poets. William of Aquitaine shows that he is the luckiest knight. He frankly tells about his love.

2. Jaufre Rudal

The second troubadour example is Jaufre Rudal de Blaia or Blaye. He was the Prince of Blaia—a town on the right bank of the Gironde Bordeaux and the sea. He was a noble man and of gentle origin. Rudalis is influenced by the poetry of the Arabs, “the most famous love-song, Jaufré Rudel’s celebration of amor de lonh, was inspired by a journey to the Holy Land” (Simon Gaunt & S. K. 1999, p 9). When Rudal heard the pilgrims, who returned from Antioch, talking about the Countess of Tripoli and her
beauty, he fell in love with her even before seeing her. He wrote her several beautiful poems. Once he took the Cross and went to the sea desiring to meet her. He became ill at the time he reached Tripoli and was about to die. Therefore, he was taken to an inn. When the Countess heard about him and his voyage, she came to him, beside him and in her arms she embraced him. He recognized that she is the countess and once upon a sudden quickly recovered his sense of smell and sight, for that he thanked and eulogized God for allowing him to see her. Immediately he died between her arms.

The countess ordered him to be buried in the 'knights Templars'. She then made him a great ceremony and on the same day the Countess became a nun as a result of the grief she felt after the death of Prince Jaufre Rudal in her love. From that day onward, she used the veil because of the sadness she felt after his death. It is said that he has participated in the second crusade of 1147.

In order to understand Jaufre Rudal perfectly, it is necessary to examine an example of his lyrical poetry. One of Rudal love poems is explained as follows:

When in May the days are long, I like  
To hear birds' sweet song from far away,  
And then, when I have gone,  
I can recall a love from far away.  
I go forth cheerlessly, with bowed head,  
So that song or hawthorne flowers  
Move me less than winter ice.  
I have faith that the lord will grant  
I see this love from far away;  
But for every good, it brings  
Two evils, since it lies too far away. (p. 63)

During the twelfth century, nature was described through images and symbols. Poets used to portray the beauty of woods and forests with all their dwellers and components – trees, birds, pouring water through fountains and rivers. In brief, all what pertains seasons and time. Here in these lines, the troubadour describes summers' days especially in the month of May where nights are short and days are long. The long days have a privilege that it is possible to spend time enjoying listening to the beautiful songs of birds even from far away. When listening and enjoying the music, the poet sets his thought free to recall love once was shared a long time ago.

The process of evoking his love with the beloved makes the poet depressed and when he walks, his steps are heavy and distressed. With such a feeling, he finds it difficult to cheer him up again owing to loneliness. The last stanza of the poem confirms that the main idea is a far-off love. It shows a clear term of Jaufre's yearning for his unseen beloved. Such a story of love between the troubadour Jaufre and his Countess of Tripoli is close to a myth but these lines above make the story probable.

3. Peired'Alvernhe

The next troubadour is Peired'Alvernhe. He was the son of a burgher. He is from Clermont. He was known for being handsome, gifted, well-read and of pleasant character. He wrote and sang many wonderful love poems. d'Alvernhe was greatly honored by all great barons of his day and by the most beautiful ladies too. He discarded the church to be a jongleur. He
praised himself a lot where it can be felt clearly in his songs. Here is an example of his lyrical love poetry that expresses his mood:

Nightingale, fly
To where my lady dwells
And tell her of my estate
That she may tell you hers;
Thus will I know
How she fares.
But she must not forget me
And somehow
Persuade you
To stay there with her.
When the gentle bird saw
Her beauty appear before him,
He began sweetly to sing
That song reserved for evening,
But then he stopped
And prepared himself
To tell her
Calmly
That to which she deigned to listen … (p 70)

The poet starts his singing by addressing the bird of melodious sound – nightingale. He commissions the bird as a messenger to the place where his beloved lives to convey a message proudly telling about his clear property but his love is implicitly understood. He asks his beloved to show her rank and love too. He hopes that they are both of the same caste to make sure that she treats him equivalently.

The poet warns the nightingale not to be seduced by the beauty of his lady which might make it stay with her instead of flying back to the lover with a positive reply of what he desires. The result returned by the messenger is not only positive but also encouraging. The bird indulged itself mutually and expressed its admiration by singing which is the language of love. This beautiful love song expresses the nature of ideal descriptive poetry. The poet communicates with his beloved through the possible means at that time, the bird, the only means of quick and secret messenger.

It is not only man, who wrote courtly love poetry but also woman has her influence in this field even if it is not so much popular. Here is a woman representation of a very passionate love poem. She is Lady Beatritz de Dia.

4. Beatritz de Dia

She is a lyric poetess from Languedoc of the mid-twelfth-century. She is somewhat an exception in which she shows deep emotions usually sung by males. 'I Live in Grave Anxiety' is a love poem by Beatritz which exemplifies the twelfth century southern France lyric tradition. She sings;

I live in grave anxiety
For one fair knight who loved me so.
It would have made him glad to know
I love him too-but silently.
I was mistaken, now I'm sure,
When I withheld myself from him.
My grief is deep, my days are dim,
My love for him surpasses all
The loves that famous lovers knew
My soul is his, my body, too,
My heart, my life, are at his call.
My most beloved, dearest friend,
When will you fall into my power?
That I might lie with you an hour,
And love you 'till my life should end!
My heart is filled with passion's fire.
My well-love knight, I grant thee grace, …
And do the things I so desire. (Hollister Warren C. 1969, p.102)

Because the beloved did not have enough time except one night with her lover, she feels as if she is heartrending in the grave. As women cannot declare their love frankly, the poetess expresses love to her lover but 'silently'. And this strengthens the shy-nature of women all over the ages. At the beginning she was not quite sure of her love toward her lover but now it is sure she loves him. She realizes that strongly when she is separated from him after a meeting or so. A love feeling is expressed to confirm that she is suffering the greatest degree of anguish after she withdraws herself from him.

The greatest degree of passionate and unexpressive love and feeling is shown in the above lines to describe the mental and physical state of the lady. Such feelings are expressed in words that can never be morally articulated except from a wife to her husband.

A question sent to the lover shows the poetess desire to have her lover back as soon as possible. Power here means love.

The reader may imagine that the troubadour poetess desires to spend a time with her lover-knight but this specific time shall continue until they pass away. She portrays her love and passion as hot as fire that she is ready to give her lover the greatest degree of joy – grace. She hopes to share with him what they both wish.

5. The Countess of Die

Here is another example of women love poetry. The Countess of Die is the wife of William of Poitiers. She was both beautiful and gracious. She fell in love with Rimboud'Orange and wrote several tremendous poems for him. Her love poems are of astonishing directness but what was preserved of her poems are only four. In her love poems she unveiled the sentiment of her clear passionate and sensual nature. Here is an example of her lyrical poetry. She sings;

For a while a certain knight
Has caused me great distress,
And I wanted it known, once and for all,
How excessively I have loved him;
Yet I've been betrayed
On pretext of not giving him my love
And ever since, in bed or dressed,
My life's been one of grief.
How I would like to hold him
One night in my naked arms …
For I am more
In love with him
Than Flore with Blanchfleur,
And offer him my heart, my love,
My mind, my eyes and my life.
My handsome friend, gracious and charming,
When will I hold you in my power?
Oh that I might lie with you
One night and kiss you lovingly!
Know how great is my desire
To treat you as a husband;
But you must promise me to do
Whatever I may wish.

During the period that provincial lyrical love poems thriving the best description of the lovers was through using a famous preferred title for them. It is the word knight.
The Countess of Die describes her love and feeling by starting to mention that when this lover knight passed close from her dwelling, she felt great agony because they did not have time to meet. She declared her love openly. She is not shy or afraid any more to tell about her excessive love.

The poetess shows her passion through an interrogation describing what she will do if she and her knight lover meet. She wishes to spend joyful time with him. There is a musical tune resulting from the repetition of using the Possessive Pronoun 'my' several times. The poetess describes her lover with all words admired by ladies such as charming, handsome and gracious to express how handsome he is. A question is asked to show the power of love. The beloved, as an eagle waiting for her prey to be hold in her power.

She answers with exclamation sign imagining that if the lover is with her, she would spend a lovely time. The poetess expresses her huge desire and wish to accept her lover as a husband. After she promised to make her lover happy and cheerful, she wants him to promise her and makes her happy as well.

**Renaissance in the Twelfth Century**

Historians and critics of the Renaissance generally report that the European Renaissance commenced in the fourteenth century. Some others opine that its outset was in the fifteenth century, for instance, Oxford advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English says that the Renaissance as a period of time means revival or giving birth again to literature, arts and painting in Europe during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries which is based on the ancient Greek learning. In addition, Al Mawrid: a modern English Arabic dictionary, also sheds light on the definition of Renaissance telling that The European Renaissance is a transition movement in Europe connecting the medieval and the modern age, initiated in the fourteenth century in Italy and continued until the seventeenth century.

According to the dictionary of the History of Ideas: Studies of Selected Pivotal Ideas by Philip Wiener, the Renaissance, means revival or rebirth, commenced during the fourteenth century in Italy and moved into Europe by the end of the fifteenth century. The Renaissance continued coloring and possibly conditioning several fundamental theories about art, scholarship, and morality till at least the eighteenth century.

The idea is supported by The New Oxford Dictionary of English which points out that the Renaissance occurred during the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries whereas The Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory by J. A. Cuddon confirms that the commence of the Renaissance "have been pushed further and further back, even as far as the 12th c." (Cuddon J. A. 1998, p.740).Cuddon adds that during the twelfth century, the Romanesque structural design as well as the vernacular literature reached an elevated degree of development. There was revival of Latin poetry as well as classics. The philosophy of Greece and the scientific discoveries of the Arabs were becoming known after ages of ban by the church. Greek literature, especially poetic
dramas, which narrated stories of multi-gods faced a struggle and refusal by the Christian churches.

With all these, the topic is still of much debate where there are some other historians and concerned figures who support the view that the European Renaissance might have started much earlier in the twelfth century. William J. Long in his book English Literature sheds light on the beginning of Renaissance saying that Renaissance denotes the whole transition from the Middle Ages to the modern world.

Charles Homer Haskins, one of those who dealt with this topic in his book, The Renaissance of the Twelfth-century, sheds light on the issue confirming that the history of any nation cannot be divided into standardized hundred-year fragments. For Haskins, the twelfth century Renaissance started perhaps in the second half of the eleventh century.

He depicts the mood of life in this period saying that the almost two hundred years of the Twelfth-Century Renaissance represented an epoch of outstanding augmentation in the European mind, art, literature, political affairs, and economical situation. It perceived the increase of municipality and trade, the maturation of Romanesque structural design and the innovation and superiority of the Gothic method.

Mair G. H. in the book of Modern English Literature shows the influence of Muslims on the Renaissance and its advent saying that the Renaissance was the result of, a numerous and various series of events, which followed one another. First and most immediate in its influence on literature was the rediscovery of the ancient literatures via the translations of Greek literature by Arab Muslims. In the Middle Ages knowledge of Greek literatures had kept into religious communities. What had been lost in the Western Empire existed in the East. The continual advance of the Islamic Othman Realm on the territories of Constantinople drove westward to Italy. Moreover, Donald Lemen Clark supports the contribution and influence of Arab Muslims on the European Renaissance especially in the field of literature and its branch of poetry saying: “The Poetics had been known to the Middle Ages only through a Latin abridgment by Hermannus Allemanus. This was derived from a Hebrew translation from the Arabic of Averroes, who, in turn, knew only a Syriac translation of the Greek” (Clark 1922, p. 43).

Such an age was known as the age of expressing constitutionalism in political theory and practice. It witnessed the birth of passionate love in the contemporary sagacity, an expansion of thoughtful rationalism and a quick augment in inhabitants. The era appeared with a significant movement in the direction of the freedom of serfs, a passionate interest in conventional literature, the appearance of the earliest universities, and several other experiences of the uppermost historical magnitude.

The Middle Ages recognized as a gloomy age in Europe. The period was influenced by illiteracy owing to the control and the pressure of the Church. The Church prevented and prohibited all kinds of
knowledge and teaching in contrary with its instructions and orders. People in this long epoch of time were placed between the hammer of the church and the anvil of kings. In this time life was static and unprogressive. Illiteracy, ignorance, backwardness, and superstition were remarkable marks in the Middle Ages.

In the midst of such darkness, which is full of false notions, superstition, mental repression and moral oppression, appeared a beginning and an enlightenment which people called Renaissance, a revolt or rebirth. But a question is aroused to ask how this awakening came. Such a question is answered by Naresh Chandra in his book *The Literature of English Renaissance* where he says:

While Europe was under the ban of the Church as regards the study of ancient Greek philosophy and literature, a new religion had risen in Arabia in the seventh century...the Arab people were temperamentally inclined to philosophy and learning, and therefore, its mission was not only to conquer and annex the geographic world in the name of Islam, but the world of knowledge and learning and culture as well, and for four centuries while the European mind was deep sunk in ignorance and sloth gave to the people of Islam the intellectual leadership of the world.(Chandra 1985, pp. 5-6)

As a result of the natural concept that permanence and alteration are characteristics of the continuous history of human development, Europe at the end of the tenth century and the commencement of the eleventh century, witnessed an important beginning toward development in many fields and disciplines where a new sort of civilization emerged. Population rapidly increased, educational institutions opened accompanied with the gradual political decline of the Church. It was found during the twelfth century several scholars like Peter Abelard, Duns Scotus, John of Salisbury, John de Garland at the University of Paris creating a rather uncomfortable atmosphere by questioning certain orthodox positions in the theology of the Church.

From this time (the tenth century) onward, Europe witnessed a quick transformation, great economic changes because of the open flow of trade with the Middle East, the new advent of new learning and knowledge of the Middle East and far east and the revival of the Latin and antique literature and arts. It could be said that there is unequal growth in several parts and countries of Europe. That is to say, the changes and development that happened in Italy, France or England might not have happened at other countries of Europe. That means any development in a country or a nation might not occur the same in another country or nation.

The Renaissance of the twelfth century might be possibly comprise all the changes through which the continent of Europe passed from almost the mid of the eleventh century to the time of taking Constantinople by the Latins in the year of 1204. In addition to the current events that went with it during the thirteenth century.

In this specific period appeared a new visage of history and culture, a new type of learning and new literature in Latin, great development of Romanesque art and full bud
of vernacular love poetry in epic and lyric. In this age, learning and knowledge flourished through the opening of the cathedral schools and establishing some universities such as Naples in 1224, Bologna in 1088 Salerno in Italy, Oxford in England which was founded in the eleventh century, and in France there was Montpellier, that was established in the south of France during the twelfth century and Paris was founded in the tenth century.

A new type of learning and knowledge commenced through studying the seven liberal arts which comprise the sciences of geometry, music, arithmetic, astronomy, logic, rhetoric and grammar, and studying the Greek and Arabic Muslim scientists. In addition to the broad study of Latin poetry and the formation of the liturgical drama which all opened the possibility for a new philosophy and a science.

Books notably increased in number and in fields of study. Through the period of the twelfth century many fields of learning started such as poetry, philosophy, mathematics, astronomy and others. Most of these sciences were unknown to the people of the Middle Ages and many of these sciences recovered from the Arab Muslims and Greeks. During this time arose the best of the Provencal lyrics, as similar to the earlier works of Middle High German. The Romanesque sculpture have reached and passed its prime, and the Gothic style has been resolutely established at Paris.

Several scholars and researchers have observed some parallels between Madrasahs and the early European colleges and universities. They have thus surmised that the first universities in Europe were influenced by the Madrasahs, which mean schools in Arabic language. They were famous and spread in Andalusia and the Emirate of Sicily where Islam was a dominant religion that appeals to learning and education.

Haskins makes it clear that at the late half of the eleventh century, a lot of signs and changes of new life in many scopes such as economics, politics, religion, intellectuality and new interest in the classics. From this time onward, the vernacular languages were running on parallel lines with Latin. Both of Latin and vernacular writings went on together to construct two interpenetrated literatures. Later on and by the passage of time, the vernacular languages have got more consideration and started to be dominant.

For better understanding of the beginning of the Renaissance, the reader may agree that history is as a chain of circles or rings linked together, the first is a base of the second and the second ring is a foundation of the third; thereby, it could be correct that the fourteenth century grows out of the thirteenth century and similarly the thirteenth century comes out of the twelfth century and so forth.

The famous Dante Alighieri [1265-1321] is one of the greatest Italian poets, and he is the composer of Divina Commedia or Divine Comedy. He describes and comments skillfully on the start of Renaissance and its splitting from the middle ages saying that the European man during such a period stood with one foot in the Middle Ages while the
other he saluted the growing luminary of the Renaissance.

As Haskins clarified that the Renaissance is well advanced by 1200 and in dealing with the twelfth century Renaissance the reader is kindly informed to imagine that the word century should be understood as not only the exact period of time attributed to the twelfth century [1100-1199] but also as covering years that immediately preceded or came after. It is accepted to a good extent that the revival of Latin classics started in the eleventh century. And it is regarded as a continuous advanced process.

Furthermore, the new sciences started likely in the mid of the first half of the twelfth century in a continuous process of working till the learning of Arabic and Greek is completely absorbed. The revival of philosophy that commenced in the twelfth century has a clear culmination in the thirteenth century. Here again it deserves to be reminded that the development does not carry on equal importance in a specific date where there might be a progress or advancement in a specific field in a specific place and by the passage of time improvement and development continues its progress and spreading.

It is the Arabs interest in Greek philosophy and science that conveyed the tradition to Europe, along the strap of Muslim civilization stretching from the Greek town Antioch in the northeast Mediterranean to Latin Toledo in the west. Historians confirm that the chain of communication elongates from the school of translators set up in Baghdad in the eighth century from Greek into Arabic then to a school of translators established in Toledo in the thirteenth century from Arabic into Latin. “Westerners seemed positively to prefer their Aristotle through the Arabic, rather than the Greek, tradition” (Baker 1973, p 80).

To cast light on the point, Renaissance in Italy had its part through the Roman and canon law, and also through the translations and transforming knowledge and learning from the Greek and Arab Muslims. Germany and England are noteworthy, most of the culture spread from Italy and France. Andalusia of Spain played a leading part to serve as the connection with the Islamic world. Besides, France was known for its philosophers and monks, with culmination in its cathedral schools and University of Paris, it was important for its central location in the new Gothic art and its vernacular poets.

On the intellectual and cultural plane, the Crusades achieved but little. Only in Spain and Sicily did positive good come from the clash of faiths. The capture of Toledo in 1085 brought Western Christendom into contact with the rich accumulation of Hellenic2-Arabic learning; a school of translators was set up there, and Arabic treatises on science and philosophy, and Arabic versions of Greek thinkers like Aristotle were turned with Jewish help into Latin and circulated in the rising schools of the West (Saunders 1965, p 167).

Conclusion

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2 Hellenic is referred to the most gorgeous Greek lady, Helen who caused the famous war between Sparta and Troy. Several poets praised her beauty in their works such as Christopher Marlowe in his poetic play Dr Faustus.
Having in consideration that this topic, *The Contribution of Arab Muslims to the Provencal Lyrical Poetry: the Troubadours*, is of great debate, the reader may conceive, with the short evidence shown here, that the European Renaissance started in the twelfth century not in the fourteenth century especially in the field of poetry and literature as such. Moreover, from this time arose a new life with more desire and freedom to acquire knowledge and learning than before. Of course, many factors played their own role by a way or another, such as the extensive translation of Greek literature and civilization by the Arab-Muslims then the great process of translation of Arabic heritage and literature to Latin after the crusades. Yet, the weakness of the dominant Church allowed interested historians and literates to, strongly, acquire knowledge, science and literature of Arabs and Greeks, which were banned.

Besides, the courtly love poetry of troubadours is a clear evidence of the intellectuality and great sense of developed life from the late eleventh century onward which was led by Arab Muslims who dwelled in Andalusia – Spain now. It is necessary to imagine a significant dimension that is an impact of Arab scholars on the European intelligence, which is essential, especially after the fall of Constantinople in 1204. The impact is felt earlier through the crusades when the European armed forces, including some of the noblest and most educated personages, participated in battles. There were several encounters with Arabs not only in the battle but elsewhere during the pause of the war such as the eminent meeting between Amir Saladin (Salah-ud-Din), Prince and Leader of Muslims and King Richard I of England during a truce. There is some verification that such contacts fashioned an alteration in the philosophy of Europe.

With these arguments, it is approved that European Renaissance in the field of literature in general and lyrical love poetry in particular emerged during the twelfth century or even before with palpable contribution of the Arab Muslims of Andalusia.


Naresh Chandra. The Literature of the English Renaissance, Delhi: Doaba House. 1985


