Sonderdruck aus:

ARABISCHE LITERATUR UND RHETORIK –
ELFHUNDERT BIS ACHTZEHNHUNDERT

(ALEA)

Herausgegeben von

Thomas Bauer – Syrinx von Hees

Band 2

Inḥiṭāṭ – The Decline Paradigm: Its Influence and Persistence in the Writing of Arab Cultural History

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ERGON VERLAG

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the
Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data
are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

Gedruckt auf alterungsbeständigem Papier.
Umschlaggestaltung: Jan von Hugo
Satz: Thomas Breier, Ergon-Verlag GmbH

www.ergon-verlag.de

ISSN 2365-8878
ISBN 978-3-95650-247-7

Table of Contents

The *Inḥiṭāṭ* Paradigm in Arab Music History

Ines Weinrich

Music, it seems, is the inevitable twin of poetry. If we take a look at the classifications and appraisals in writings on music history, we experience a déjà vu: we encounter the same chapter headings as in literary histories, the same arrangement of time and space, and the same vocabulary for describing these, such as *dhahabī*, *inḥiṭāṭ*, and *nahḍa*. This is, on the one hand, not particularly surprising. In the social reality of the Arab world between the 8th and 19th century, poetry was closely tied to music; this applied to the context of the performance as well as to the performance itself. The most important occasions for the performance of music and poetry – and a great part of poetry was performed musically – were the *majālis* at the different courts or in private houses, as well as social and official festivities.

On the other hand, the sources on cultural history and musical life are chiefly identical, whether we are talking about, for instance, *adab* literature, historiography, or biographical encyclopedias. Therefore, not only do evaluations of cultural history include evaluations of music; the very basis of these depends on the status of research on Arabic texts in general – and this volume is exactly about the discrepancy in the quantity of research carried out on texts of earlier and later periods.

The aim of this article is to shed some light on the research history of Arab musical culture and to suggest explanations for why the decline paradigm was able to work so successfully for those cultural insiders involved with music. It will give a short overview of the research history, evaluate some influential works on music in more detail, and highlight developments and events that have shaped both the research on and the perceptions of Arab music history.

Writing (on) Music

Sources on music cannot be confined to a single branch of "music scholarship" but are scattered among different disciplines and branches of knowledge like mathematics, medicine, and philosophy. The more specific music-related texts are treatises on music theory and 'song collections'. These treatises deal with the modal system, rhythms, composition, instruments, vocal techniques, and the relations of musical sounds to the human body and the cosmos.

One of the earliest examples of a 'song collection' is the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by Yūnus al-Kātib (d. 765). It contains more than eight hundred (825) song texts from compositions by almost forty (38) previous and contemporary male and female musicians.[1] Many other authors followed with this type of collection, often pro-

[1] Neubauer, "Neuere Bücher", 2 f.; Neubauer, "Arabic Writings on Music", 369.

viding not only the texts, but indicating the musical mode and metrics as well as supplying biographical data about the musicians and poets. By far the most famous collection of this type is Abū l-Faraj al-Iṣbahānī's (d. 967) more than twenty-volume compilation *Kitāb al-Aghānī (al-kabīr)*.[2] Later 'song collections' feature predominantly song texts and references to the modal and rhythmic framework.[3]

Nevertheless, the musical information we get from such sources does not enable us to reconstruct the actual musical process. Despite the huge amount of writings on music theory, the Arab musical tradition was – and in some domains still is – an oral tradition. The musical repertoire and related performance rules were taught through aural transmission (*samāʿ*). The process of teaching was characterized by a strong master-pupil relationship. The student worked intensively with his or her master to acquire a repertoire which then became the basis for him or her to transcend the learned, provide the songs with an individual character, or to compose new songs. Musicians often had more than one master in order to learn as much as possible. In biographical data, the names of all of these masters are always included. This is one way of placing the musician within the artistic tradition.

The nature of the musical apprenticeship and of musical performance – which included composing while performing – did not require the writing down of a composition in detail. In fact, prescriptive notation would not have been deemed an appropriate tool. Nevertheless, from early times until the 19th century we repeatedly encounter techniques for documenting the movements of the musical process. Musical notes are, for instance, identified by letters and their duration by numbers, or notes are named according to their position on the lute.[4] In fact, Eckhard Neubauer argues that musical notations were more common than usually assumed and were also practiced for other than didactic reasons.[5]

One may indeed wonder about the reasons for including these kinds of documentation: were they a description for the benefit of readers, a tool for the identification of different songs, or a mnemonic device for coming generations? For the musicians, it seems that notation would have been irrelevant or even redundant[6] – they knew the songs. The examinations of how far this fragmentary information would allow us to reconstruct concrete musical processes differ in their optimism.

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2 On this important compilation, see Kilpatrick, *Making the Great Book of Songs*.

3 For detailed examples of songbooks, see Reynolds, "Lost Virgins Found"; Wright, "Middle Eastern Song-Text Collections"; and Neubauer, "Glimpses", especially for changes in the 17th century.

4 Cf. Neubauer, "Zur Bedeutung der Begriffe", 320 f.; Neubauer, "Arabic Writings on Music", 364. For a detailed study of a 15th-century notation, see Owen Wright, "ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Marāghī and ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Bināʾī: Two Fifteenth-Century Examples of Notation Part 1: Text", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 57 (1994), 475-515; "ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Marāghī and ʿAlī b. Muḥammad Bināʾī: Two Fifteenth-Century Examples of Notation. Part II: Commentary", *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 58 (1995), 17-39; on the 16th-18th century, see Neubauer, "Glimpses", 326-329.

5 Neubauer, "Zur Bedeutung der Begriffe", 321.

6 Wright, "Music in Muslim Spain", 555.

One of the more skeptical views is expressed by Owen Wright, who states in the first volume of the *Cambridge History of Arabic Literature*:

> One might suggest as a literary parallel an attempted reconstruction of early poetry from much later forms based on a consideration of such diverse sources as the critical remarks of al-Jāḥiẓ and Ibn Qutaybah, the biographies of poets in the *Kitāb al-Aghānī* […], and one or two technical treatises on prosody and rhetoric – but with all the examples of poetry removed.[7]

While it is in some later cases possible to glean a rough melodic movement and hints about the modal framework, this still tells us nothing about the style, ornamentation, or the concrete melodic progression.[8] George Sawa has studied performance practices from older sources in their relation to contemporary ones.[9] Some contemporary musicians even set out to perform 'Abbasid music'.[10] However, the question discussed here is not so much a technical one but rather: Why is it considered important to be able to trace musical pieces back to the 9th or 12th or 15th century?

It is only since the 19th century that the absence of musical notation has been perceived as a considerable lack in Arab music. The notion that a recognized musical tradition must be old and set down in writing caused obvious discomfort among many Arabs unable to present a centuries-old written Arab music repertoire vis-à-vis a European art music tradition.

Writing Music History

Up to the early 20th century, there were no such titles as "Tārikh al-mūsiqā". In tune with literary conventions, treatises on music had long titles, often rhymed, and included expressions like "ʿilm al-mūsiqā", "maʿrifat al-anghām", or "aḥkām al-samāʿ"; sometimes there were no references to music at all in the title. The use of the term "mūsiqā" to refer to musical practice, including social-cultural phenomena and the concrete musical process, only became common in the early 20th century. *Al-Mūsiqā l-ʿarabiyya*, in the Western sense of "Arab music", referring to practiced music and associated with distinctive artistic characteristics, became the dominant term in the wake of the first conference of Arab music in 1932.[11]

In the 20th century, many music books were the product of a national endeavor to educate the population and were printed in series by state-owned pub-

7 Wright, "Music and Verse", 433.

8 Wright, "Music in Muslim Spain", 569 ff.

9 George Dimitri Sawa, *Musical Performance Practice in the Early ʿAbbāsid Era: 132-320 AH, 750-932 AD*. Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 2004 [1989]; George Dimitri Sawa, *Rhythmic Theories and Practices in Arabic Writings to 339AH/950CE*. Ottawa: Institute of Medieval Music, 2009.

10 *Music of the Abbasid Era: The Legacy of Ṣafy a-d-Dīn [sic] al-Urmawī*. CD W 260123, INEDIT, 2005.

11 See below for the impact of this conference.

lishing houses. They were written to evoke pride in the Arab past and to raise a new generation of students on 'modern scientific methods'. The examples which follow are typical of this trend. Aḥmad al-Jundī's book *Min tārīkh al-ghinā' ʿind al-ʿarab* (Damascus 1988) is an example of compiling in the *aʿlām*-style: it is chronologically structured and features entries according to singers' names. It starts with Ibn Surayj (d. 726) and deals almost exclusively with the Abbasid epoch, with the last chapter dedicated to female musicians of the Abbasid era.[12] No sources are mentioned, either in the text or at the end of the book. This is typical of many of these compilations, although the most heavily used source tends to be the *Kitāb al-Aghānī (al-kabīr)*, even if it is not explicitly mentioned.[13]

Two books by Maḥmūd ʿAbbās al-Ḥifnī focus on single musicians; they are the biographies of two famous musicians of the 9th century: *Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī* (Cairo 1964) and *Ziryāb* (Cairo 1966), both published in the series *Aʿlām al-ʿArab* (Famous Arabs).[14] Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī (d. 850), son of the musician Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī, was a widely respected musician under the Abbasid caliphs, from Hārūn ar-Rashīd to al-Mutawakkil. Having studied the Qur'an, Hadith, and *adab*, he was a man of great knowledge and a highly esteemed composer, poet, and singer. Ziryāb (d. 857)[15] was likewise a great musician and contemporary of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī, whose father was also his teacher. In addition to numerous other musical innovations attributed to him, Ziryāb is credited with having introduced the Eastern school at the court of ʿAbd ar-Raḥmān II (r. 822-852) in Córdoba.[16]

Both volumes include almost the same appendix, listing names and dates of the caliphs of the Abbasid era using the following categorization:[17]

al-ʿaṣr adh-dhahabī (750-847)	The Golden Period
ʿaṣr al-iḍmiḥlāl (848-945)	The Period of Evanescence
ʿaṣr as-suqūṭ (945-1258)	The Period of Decline

Kamāl an-Najmī's study *Turāth al-ghinā' al-ʿarabī* (Cairo 1993) starts with Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī and Ziryāb. He then jumps almost immediately – after only 60 of a total of nearly 300 pages – to the 19th century and ends his survey in the mid-20th century.[18] According to him and many other writers, the history of Arab singing ended with the Egyptian singer Umm Kulthūm (d. 1975) and her generation, and

12 al-Jundī, *Min tārīkh al-ghinā'*.
13 Cf. Neubauer, "Neuere Bücher", 22.
14 al-Ḥifnī, *Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī*; al-Ḥifnī, *Ziryāb*.
15 Davila, "Fixing a Misbegotten Biography", 121.
16 Much of his life as it is portrayed in later sources is legend and serves to prove that the prestigious Baghdad school was the basis of the Umayyad tradition in Spain (Wright, "Music at the Fatimid Court", 345). For a new critical evaluation, see Davila, "Fixing a Misbegotten Biography".
17 The biography of Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī furthermore includes the dates of the first four caliphs ("al-rāshidūn"), the Umayyad caliphs, and the Umayyad rulers in Andalusia ("dawlat banī umayya bi-l-Andalus"). Al-Ḥifnī, *Isḥāq al-Mawṣilī*, 252-256; al-Ḥifnī, *Ziryāb*, 180-182.
18 an-Najmī, *Turāth al-ghinā'*.

was followed by degeneration. The term for musical decline in the 20th century is usually *al-mawja al-hābiṭa*.

Such depictions are by no means only present in Arabic academic literature. We find these features in studies published in other languages as well. Two studies conducted at European universities will serve as an example. *Die Musik der Araber* by Habib Hassan Touma (Wilhelmshaven 1975) has frequently been translated into English, most recently in 2003[19]. The author obtained his Ph.D. from Freie Universität Berlin with a study on the manifestation of *maqām bayyātī* in the instrumental genre *taqsīm*.[20] Providing rich material on the modal system, rhythmical patterns, musical genres, and instruments, *Die Musik der Araber* is not without value for the reader. Nevertheless, in the historical section, the author follows the usual chronology of pre-Islamic – classical – decline – renaissance. In his words:

> Pre-Islamic times until 632 – Early Arab classical (until 850) – Renewal of the early classical tradition in Baghdad and Córdoba until 1258 respectively 1492 – Decline (13th to 19th century) – Cultural awakening and liberation from the Turks in the 19th century.[21]

He then adds a personal view with his examination of recent developments, titled "The 20th century: alienation from the authentic musical language". His main argument here is that the Arabs no longer know their musical tradition and instead blindly follow Europe in modern developments.[22]

A similar example is Samha El-Kholy's *The Function of Music in Islamic Culture in the Period up to 1100 A.D.* (Cairo 1984). In her introduction, she explains her chosen time frame through the emergence of a "different mood" after 1100: "it [the 12th century] has been conveniently chosen, as being the point of culmination of creative efforts, which just precedes the period of political, and cultural disintegration and stagnation, that were to cast their dark shadows over the muslim East for centuries to come."[23] Her book, published in 1984 in Cairo, is based on her Ph.D. dissertation from the University of Edinburgh in 1954 that was supervised by Henry George Farmer and William Montgomery Watt.

We find a striking similarity in these works and many more; indeed, an almost identical picture emerges. Common features and classifications are: the *jāhiliyya* – the so-called singing slaves (*qiyān*) – Abbasid court culture – Andalusia. Then, a huge gap emerges with only sporadic spotlights on Fatimid, Mamluk, and Ottoman culture. Much attention is then paid to the 'heroes' and pioneers of the late 19th century (*al-ruwwād*), such as ʿAbduh al-Ḥāmūlī (1841-1901), Almaẓ (d. 1891),

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19 Habib Hassan Touma, *The Music of the Arabs. New expanded edition*. Portland and Cambridge: Amadeus Press, 2003. The first English translation was published in 1996. In the same year, a French translation was released: *La musique arabe*. Paris: Buchet Chastel, 1996. I am using the second German edition: *Die Musik der Araber*. Wilhelmshaven: Florian Noetzel 1989 [1975].

20 Habib Hassan Touma, *Der Maqam Bayati im arabischen Taqsim*. Hamburg: Verlag der Musikalienhandlung Karl Dieter Wagner, 1976. This book has not been translated.

21 Touma, *Die Musik*, 20, 24, 31, 34, 36. Note the difference to al-Ḥifnī.

22 Touma, *Die Musik*, 40 f.

23 El-Kholy, *The Function of Music*, 6 [language and punctuation errors as in original].

Muḥammad ʿUthmān (1855-1900) for Egypt, or ʿAlī ad-Darwīsh (1883-1952) and ʿUmar al-Baṭsh (1892-1950) for Syria.

The 'liberation from Turkish music' features prominently in descriptions about the 19th century.[24] Other common features for the 19th century are the 'revival of *muwashshaḥāt*' and the development of the vocal genre *dawr* in Egypt. Finally, the first half of the 20th century is marked by the works of the so-called geniuses (*al-ʿamāliqa*): Sayyid Darwīsh (1892-1923), Muḥammad al-Qaṣabjī (1892-1966), Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahhāb (1902-1991), Zakariyyā Aḥmad (1896-1973), Umm Kulthūm (1904-1975), and Riyaḍ as-Sinbāṭī (1906-1981). Such books use the same sources and highlight the same figures. The result is an almost frozen picture which reduces the region's music history to a limited number of centuries and names.

This does not necessarily have to be the case. There has been excellent work done on music sources and manuscripts. The fact that many titles of Arabic treatises do not necessarily indicate that they are dealing with music gives us all the more reason to value these works. As a pioneering work, Farmer's *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 1965) must be mentioned; this is an update of his earlier work by the same title published in 1939 and translated into Arabic.[25] Farmer's bibliography of 1965 was further updated by Neubauer in 1971. Farmer covers the period from the 8th to the 17th century; Neubauer not only adds to this but covers titles up to the 20th century.[26] Both works are complemented by Amnon Shiloah's two-volume survey which extensively examines Arabic manuscripts on music theory in European, U.S., Russian, and some Middle Eastern libraries.[27]

Even a brief examination of these works reveals two crucial points. First, writing on music has not stopped or decreased significantly since the 13th century. Second, a large part of the manuscripts has still not been edited. Therefore, the reason for the customary gap between the 13th and the 18th century lies not in a decline in cultural or musical productivity, but rather in a *decline in research* about these periods. Consequently, when Neubauer in a later article (2002) lists edited Arabic sources on music from the 8th to the 19th century, his list mirrors precisely that gap: edited manuscripts from the late 14th to the late 17th century take up only one out of nine pages.[28]

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24 E.g. Buṭrus, *Aʿlām al-mūsiqā*, 14, 58; Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 223ff.; an-Najmī, *Turāth al-ghinā'*, 67. On this trope, see also below.

25 Ḥusayn Naṣṣār, *Maṣādir al-mūsiqā l-ʿarabiyya*. Cairo: Maṭbaʿat Miṣr, 1957.

26 Farmer, *The Sources of Arabian Music*; Neubauer, "Neuere Bücher". The first edition of Farmer's bibliography was used and also updated by ʿAbdalḥamīd al-ʿAlūčī, *Rā'id al-mūsiqā l-ʿarabiyya*. Baghdad: Maṭbaʿat Dār al-Jumhūriyya, 1964. Al-ʿAlūčī added Arabic secondary literature as well; cf. Neubauer, "Neuere Bücher", 16.

27 Shiloah, *The Theory of Music*. The first volume was published in 1979, the second in 2003.

28 Neubauer, "Arabic Writings", 381.

Early European studies on Arab music as well as critical editions of music treatises likewise concentrated on the Abbasid period. Recent research has slowly started to fill this gap and modify the picture. In his rich overview on Arab music in the encyclopedia *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (1994),[29] Shiloah avoids the typical categorization; this notwithstanding, he does not have much material at hand to fill the gap. Wright, in his contribution to the *New Grove Dictionary on Music and Musicians* (2001), provides some more material on Mamluk and Ottoman times, albeit mainly about theoretical systematization.[30]

Some Arabic works deal with periods other than the so-called Golden Age: Naṣr ad-Dīn Asad has authored a thorough study on the *qiyān* of pre-Islamic times, based on poetry. Shawqī Ḍayf has studied poetry and music up to Umayyad times; his book is partly composed in the *aʿlām* style. ʿAlī as-Sayyid Maḥmūd has compiled a book on the *jawārī* in Cairo in the Mamluk period.[31] ʿAbdalkarīm al-ʿAllāf focuses on Iraq. Although he begins with the Abbasid time, devoting more than half of the book to it, and uses conventional terminology like *dhahabī* (p. 11) and *fawḍā* (p. 193), he is one of the few Arab authors to include the Ottoman era, and to end with the present day.[32]

Both Neubauer and Wright have considerably contributed to our knowledge of Arab music after the 13th century. They have not only been active in editing music treatises, but also shed light on musical life in different periods and contexts by using hitherto unknown or unedited manuscripts. In addition to the aforementioned works, we should also name here Wright's study of the treatise of Ibn Kurr (d. 1357)[33] and their introductory evaluations of Arab music culture in Ottoman times.[34]

One reason for the prevailing picture in writing music history, at least up to the 20th century, lies in the changes, which many of its protagonists experienced, whether directly or indirectly. To understand the reflections on Arab Music in the 19th and 20th century, we need to take into consideration some of the major developments in musical life in the 19th and early 20th century.[35]

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29 Shiloah, "Arabische Musik".

30 Wright, "Arab Music".

31 al-Asad, *al-Qiyān*; Ḍaʿīf, *ash-Shiʿr wa-l-ghināʾ*; Maḥmūd, *al-Jawārī*.

32 al-ʿAllāf, *Qiyān Baghdād*.

33 Owen Wright, *Music Theory in Mamluk Cairo: The* ġāyat al-maṭlūb fi ʿilm al-adwār wa-'l-ḍurūb *by Ibn Kurr*. Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014.

34 Neubauer, "Glimpses"; Wright, "Under the Influence?"; the same period is covered by Salah Eddin Maraqa (*Die traditionelle Kunstmusik in Syrien und Ägypten von 1500 bis 1800. Eine Untersuchung der musiktheoretischen und historisch-biographischen Quellen*. Tutzing: Schneider, 2015) but his study was not available to me when I was completing the article for this volume. Excellent work has also been done on the Andalusian and North African music tradition, which cannot be enumerated here in detail. Needless to say, this short overview is far from being exhaustive.

35 The following explanations are mainly based on Racy, *Musical Change*; Marcus, *Arab Music Theory*, 18-41; El-Shawan, "Western Music"; Weinrich, "Musik zwischen den Welten". Whilst

Musical Changes in Egypt in 'the Long 19th Century'

Musicians were organized into guilds (*ṭā'ifa*), headed by a *shaykh aṭ-ṭā'ifa*; they had to pass a test and were then educated within the guild. Musicians were hired by clients via the *shaykh aṭ-ṭā'ifa*. There was a hierarchy of performance places: rich houses and palaces provided the best venues for the gifted musician, followed by coffee houses, streets, and other public places. As well as serving an important educational function for musicians, the religious domain, especially the Sufi orders, also provided performance venues. Military music schools were founded in Egypt in the 1820s, employing European teachers and European staff notation. European theater and opera troupes performed in the Middle East, and Arabic musical theater evolved from the 1840s onwards. On the intellectual scene, the periodical press, new education systems, and new cultural associations fostered discussions about music.

The incorporation of Egypt into the global capital market – international financial transactions resulted in indirect colonization[36] – led to the dissolution of the guilds. New social classes with money to spend evolved; they could afford to buy musical instruments and to pay for private tuition. The phonograph made its entry into the Middle East in the 1880s, and the commercial recording of Arab music started only a little later, around 1904. The early 20th century witnessed the foundation of music clubs, music journals, music schools, the birth of the amateur musician, and the diversification of musical tastes and cultural orientations. New performance venues like music halls, theaters, cabarets, bars, or public concerts evolved. The traditional Arab performance ensemble gradually incorporated new instruments, doubled up on existing ones, and grew considerably in size. Recording sessions and later, from the 1930s onwards, radio and music-film orchestras demanded instrumentalists who could also play sheet music.

In sum, the new socio-economic organization of music making, new didactic means – such as music schools, *solfeggio*, staff notation, or recordings –, and new performance contexts created new possibilities for, as well as new demands on, musicians. Mass media like the press, photographs, recordings, and film fostered the emergence of stardom. Many performers moved from the religious to the commercial sphere. Music gradually came to be perceived no longer as a craft but as an art form. This clearly affected the way of thinking about music history and music theory.

To illustrate this we will undertake a more thorough examination of an often cited – in Arabic as well as in European languages – music history: Muḥammad Maḥmūd Sāmī Ḥāfiẓ's *Tārikh al-mūsiqā wa-l-ghinā' al-ʿarabī* (Cairo 1971). The 260 pages of his book provide an overview of Arab music from pre-Islamic times until

they focus chiefly on Egypt, most of the described developments also apply to other regions of the Arab world, albeit in some cases a few years later.

36 Schölch, "Der arabische Osten", 395.

the 1920s. He chiefly presents his material in chronological order and uses conventional categorization, such as *jāhiliyya – rāshidūn – umawī – ʿabbāsī – Andalus* (which includes three chapters on the *nawba* in the Tunisian, Algerian, and Marrakesh Tradition). Here, he switches from the dynastical order to regional traditions, dealing after Andalusia and the Maghreb also with Iraq and Egypt. His weighting of the different periods is reflected in numbers, as follows:

al-ʿaṣr al-jāhilī	p. 1
ʿaṣr al-khulafāʾ ar-rāshidīn	p. 34
al-ʿaṣr al-umawī	p. 49
al-ʿaṣr al-ʿabbāsī	p. 64
al-andalus	p. 103
al-nawba at-tūnisiyya / al-jazāʾiriyya / al-marākishiyya	p. 113
al-mūsīqā l-ʿirāqiyya	p. 153
al-mūsīqā l-miṣriyya	pp. 173 – 260

In the historical section (up to Andalusia), he devotes some pages to poetry, meters, musical scale, and instruments and then switches to short biographical sketches of the musicians of the respective periods. In the sections on the Maghreb and Iraq, he almost exclusively covers outstanding art music traditions of the regions, such as the *nawba* and *al-maqām al-ʿirāqī*. Both of these are musical suites composed of various instrumental and vocal genres.

The region of Bilad al-Sham is excluded. In the last part of the book, he presents a historical sketch about music in Egypt from Fatimid times until the early 20th century. Nevertheless, there is not much information given about Fatimid times,[37] and he declares afterwards: "In the 13th century, Arab culture experienced a general relapse (*naksa*) due to political factionalism. People felt disorientation (*fawḍā*) and fear. Art fell victim to this weakness and fragmentation (*tafarruq*)."[38] He mentions the "Mamluk occupation" (*iḥtilāl al-mamālik*) and explains that due to wars and the absence of *majālis*, people were occupied with other things, and there was no atmosphere for the arts.[39] Terms like *fawḍā*, *tafarruq*, or *iḥtilāl* indicate the vocabulary of a 20th-century Arab-Egyptian nationalist who explains cultural production within this framework.

The last part of his book – which stretches over more than 80 pages – furthermore includes musical theory in the 18th century, a presentation of musical scales and rhythmic modes, followed by different aspects of musical life in Egypt in the 19th and early 20th century. These are arranged as follows: female musicians – vocal and instrumental genres – folk music – musical entertainment – in-

[37] It would have been difficult to draw an extensive picture of music in Fatimid times; see Wright, "Music at the Fatimid Court".

[38] Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārīkh al-mūsīqā*, 175.

[39] Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārīkh al-mūsīqā*, 175.

struments – military music – the opera house – 'national music' – recordings – musical theater – famous musicians (culminating with Sayyid Darwīsh[40]).

Hāfiẓ's explanations bear strong nationalist overtones, and he inserts short chapters with his personal opinion about a specific issue which start with "my opinion about … (*raʾī fī* …)". The following quotation may serve as an example:

> No doubt, there are some professional musicians in the Arab lands who do not see the necessity to notate music according to the modern school (*al-madrasa al-ḥadīṯha*). In my opinion, this is backward, because it is absolutely necessary for a composer or singer or player of any instrument to know how to read the musical language he is to perform, be it vocal or instrumental. And there are still lay musicians who notate according to the Arabic letters; they should know we are living in the age of nuclear fission and travel to the moon.[41]

'Modern school' for him means notation (*tadwīn*) in the European style and composition techniques for huge orchestras similar to European symphonies[42]. He praises the composer Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahhāb for his scarce use of micro intervals.[43] He welcomes any changes which bring Arab music closer to European music and is thoroughly optimistic: "We are living now in a time of musical *nahḍa*", he writes.[44]

The 'modern school' and the notation system were well implemented by his time. A major milestone in this process was the Arab music conference in Cairo of 1932.

The 1932 Cairo Conference on Arab Music (Muʾtamar al-Mūsiqā l-ʿArabiyya)

The first Conference on Arab Music, held in Cairo in 1932 under the patronage of King Fuʾād, is considered a landmark in the history of Arab music. As the conference has been well researched, only basic information which is relevant for our context is given here.[45]

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40 The common notion of Sayyid Darwīsh as the father of modern Arab music and as an Egyptian icon is nurtured on the one hand by the social criticism in many of his songs in colloquial Egyptian. On the other hand, it is based on his composition techniques which combine Arab vocal genres with elements from Western musical language. His continuing importance is highlighted not least by the strong presence of his songs during the Arab uprisings in 2011.

41 Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 183 f.

42 Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 208.

43 Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 184. Some authors view micro intervals as an obstacle for musicians composing in several parts, which in turn is viewed as a desirable composition technique.

44 Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 174.

45 For analyses of its East-West encounters see Racy, "Historical Worldviews"; Thomas, *Developing Arab Music*, 53-115. I am grateful for Adam Knobler's help in obtaining a copy of this important thesis. A useful documentation of sources and contemporary press coverage

Participants included delegates from Arab countries, both scholars and music ensembles, as well as European musicians and music scholars like Paul Hindemith, Béla Bartók, Erich Maria von Hornbostel, Robert Lachmann, and Henry George Farmer. The conference's agenda was divided among the following committees: General issues – Melodic modes, rhythmic modes, composition – Musical scales – Instruments – Recordings – Music education – Music history and manuscripts. Each committee submitted a report of its work and a recommendation for future progress. The conference proceedings were published in both Arabic (1933)[46] and French (1934).

The introduction by Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī reveals the same view of history as many of the other works introduced here (golden age, decline, revitalization under viceroy Muḥammad ʿAlī). It expresses the wish for Arabic music to catch up with European civilization and identifies as further goals the discussion, teaching, and rebuilding of music on the basis of established scientific principles.[47]

The conception of the congress involved Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī, Curt Sachs, and Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger. Who were these persons?

Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī (1896-1973)[48] was a medical student and amateur musician when he was sent by his family to Berlin in 1920 after being arrested for his participation in the 1919 demonstrations. In 1922, however, he dropped out of medicine and instead enrolled in the Higher Institute of Music to study flute performance. After his graduation he received a grant from the Egyptian Ministry of Education to continue his music studies in Berlin, where he worked with, amongst others, the German musicologist Robert Lachmann. He obtained his Ph.D. from Freie Universität Berlin and, together with Lachmann, translated the *Risāla fī khubr ta'līf al-alḥān* by Yaʿqūb b. Isḥāq al-Kindī into German (published 1931). After his return to Egypt, he served as inspector for music at the Ministry of Education. He founded the musical journal *al-Majalla al-Mūsīqiyya*[49] and published numerous books on music.

Curt Sachs represents the German School of Comparative Musicologists based in Berlin, a circle which also featured Erich Maria von Hornbostel and Carl Stumpf. The disciplines involved were the natural sciences, psychology, anthropology, and acoustics. One of its main activities was the collection of recordings from all over the world for comparative purposes. These collections laid the

is to be found in Saḥḥāb, *Muʾtamar al-mūsiqā*; French translations of some of the material are provided in the earlier work by Vigreux, *Musique Arabe*.

46 *Kitāb Muʾtamar*.

47 Racy, "Historical Worldviews", 68 f.; *Kitāb Muʾtamar*, 1-20. It should be noted that many of the Arab participants were eagerly opting for change, whereas many of the European musicologists were primarily interested in what they viewed as 'older forms of music civilization'.

48 For more on whom, see Racy, "Historical Worldviews", 69; Thomas, *Developing Arab Music*, 78-80.

49 1930 *al-Mūsīqā*, since 1936 *al-Majalla al-Musīqiyya*.

foundations of the *Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv*. Their *Association for Comparative Musicology* was actually the nucleus of today's *Society for Ethnomusicology*. After the takeover by the National Socialist Party in Germany, many of its members had to emigrate, and the association was handed over to their American colleagues, thus becoming the *American Association for Comparative Musicology* in 1934 with Charles Seeger as one of its founding members.[50]

Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger represents a different trajectory. An orientalist painter of a wealthy background, he settled in Tunisia for health reasons in 1911. Interested in music, he built up a relationship with Shaykh Aḥmad al-Wāfī (d. 1921), a representative of the local art music tradition *ma'lūf*, and later (1931) collaborated with the Syrian scholar and musician Shaykh ʿAlī ad-Darwīsh from Aleppo[51]. An article by d'Erlanger published in the *Revue Tunesienne* in 1917 shows that he saw himself as part of a rescue mission: he complained about the ignorance of his Tunisian contemporaries; he was afraid of a tradition disappearing, and he wanted to provide the Tunisians with 'scientific means' to preserve their music. He therefore gave public music classes and introduced Western techniques of solmization and staff notation.[52]

His works on the modal and rhythmic system were the basis for the corresponding committee at the conference (on *Melodic modes, rhythmic modes, composition*), were incorporated into the proceedings, and served as a model for many music books and educational institutions. His six-volume *La Musique Arabe* was published posthumously[53] and includes two volumes on the Arab modal and rhythmic system, records on selected vocal and instrumental pieces, and translations of some Arabic musical treatises into French.[54] D'Erlanger's views are echoed in the writings of Ḥāfiẓ (see above) and in al-Ḥifnī's very own textbook on music.

Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī's highly influential work on musical theory, *al-Mūsīqā n-naẓariyya* (Cairo 1938), was published in numerous editions.[55] It is divided into three sections: a general introduction (*qawāʿid ʿāmma*), a section on Arab music (*al-mūsīqā l-ʿarabiyya*), and one on musical instruments (*al-ālāt al-mūsīqiyya*). It concludes with a short glossary of musical terms.

What he terms *qawāʿid ʿāmma* (lit. "general foundations") in the title of the first section actually turns out to be an outline of European music theory. Whilst

50 Christensen et al., "Musikethnologie".

51 For more on whom, see Dalāl, *al-ʿĀlim ar-raḥḥāla*; ʿAlī ad-Darwīsh studied the Aleppo and Turkish music tradition and taught in Turkey, Syria, Tunis, Cairo, and Baghdad.

52 D'Erlanger, "Au sujet de la musique"; Davis, "Baron Rodolphe d'Erlanger".

53 D'Erlanger, *La Musique Arabe*.

54 The French translations are only of limited use: the translation of al-Farābī's *Kitāb al-mūsiqī l-kabīr* for instance takes great liberties, and only French termini are given without a single reference to the Arabic terminology; therefore, large parts of the translation only became understandable after the edition of the Arabic text in 1967 by Ghaṭṭās ʿAbdalmalik Khashaba/Maḥmūd Aḥmad al-Ḥifnī; see also Neubauer, "Neuere Bücher", 9 ff.

55 al-Ḥifnī, *al-Musīqā*. I have used the 6th edition, published in 1972.

this section encompasses 100 pages, he devotes only 55 pages to the complex Arab modal and rhythmic system in the following part. Another 50 pages deal with Arab musical instruments[56] and both Arab and European vocal and instrumental genres. The glossary also covers the terminology of both theories. Furthermore, his arrangements regarding the heading, sequence, and numbers of pages show that he regards European theory as the universal norm, whereas Arab theory represents a variation of it.

Given his position in government institutions, his writings were widely influential and were used as textbooks. In fact, his book reads like an implementation of the conference's goals and meets the often postulated triad of modernization, simplification, and standardization. Modernization stands for the prestige of European culture and sciences and the wish to 'catch up' through the implementation of 'scientific tools'. Simplification refers to the disparate picture of Arab modal and rhythmic theory and terminology which evolved over the centuries of musical history, and the aspiration to reduce this complexity in order that future students of music not be discouraged. Certainly, such a simplification would lead to a kind of standardization. But standardization was also sought in the wake of a nationalist endeavor for a unified Arab culture. Significantly, the conference's title uses *mūsīqā ʿarabiyya* instead of the then still more common *mūsīqā sharqiyya*. Accordingly, the name of the music institute in Cairo was changed after the conference from *Maʿhad al-mūsīqī sh-sharqī* to *al-Maʿhad al-malakī li-l-mūsīqā l-ʿarabiyya*.[57] It was only after the Cairo conference that *mūsīqā ʿarabiyya* became the dominant term.

From Inḥiṭāṭ *to* Nahḍa

It has been shown that the *inḥiṭāṭ* paradigm has also shaped the writing of Arab music history. Furthermore, socio-economic and political changes in the 19th and early 20th century had a deep impact on musical thinking, the organization of musical life, and the music itself. The result was an almost immediate leap from *inḥiṭāṭ* to *nahḍa*: protagonists wished to leave *inḥiṭāṭ* behind and to create a *nahḍa*, which in some cases marked a considerable break with existing traditions.

Addressing the research of the past is not only a problem of sources, or the accessibility of these, but also a question of choice: which period does one highlight? The highlighting of the *muwashshaḥ*-genre is interesting in this respect: it reveals the enthusiasm for the oral but at the same time old and 'authentic' prestigious tradition which furthermore links Arab music to Europe. The preoccupation with musical notation and musical change (*tajdīd*) reflects the necessity many writers felt to be closer to the European musical tradition. The chosen no-

[56] Here, the organology classification shows the influence of the German school.
[57] El Shawan, "Western Music", 95.

tation system bore no connection to the notation systems that Neubauer observed for the 17th and 18th century in Syrian and Egyptian manuscripts.[58]

The existence of a written repertoire as a condition for a recognized musical tradition reflects a *change of criteria* – not necessarily, in the beginning, a change in the music itself. The emergence of the favored European-style notation in the 19th century fostered the idea that the time before this, i.e. the time before writing in European notation, was less important and valuable. Later, together with the other factors described above, this development also resulted in changes within the musical material and musical practice, as descriptive notation became prescriptive notation.[59]

In the search for a history of *Arab* music, the Abbasid era and Andalusia served as main points of reference (despite the multilingualism of both!), whereas Mamluk and Ottoman times could easily be omitted as non-Arab and thus as irrelevant.

The practice of referring to *one* Arab musical culture, neglecting regional traditions or even regarding variety as weakness, is best exemplified in discussions about scales and intonation: here, one standardized system with one unified terminology instead of local traditions was favored by many.[60]

Patriotism and nationalisms provoked polemics against Turkish and Persian influences. After enumerating the great names of the 19th and some of the 20th century, an-Najmī resumes:

> Shaykh Abū l-ʿAlāʾ[61] fulfilled via the voice of Umm Kulthūm his important historic role... in ultimately liberating the Arab singing from the Ottoman un-Arab way (*ʿujma*) and the Persian gibberish (*riṭāna*) and the stammering (*fahāha*) of the gypsies that had stultified (*ʿabathat*) the Arab throat for hundreds of years![62]

In the figure of ʿAbduh al-Ḥāmūlī the contradiction between national ideology and historic social reality becomes apparent: On the one hand, he is credited with Egyptifying Egyptian music, cleansing it of its Turkish elements. Yet, al-Ḥāmūlī was a member of the multi-facetted 19th-century musical culture which transcended religious and linguistic boundaries. Therefore, we repeatedly come across statements that he introduced Turkish musical modes or melodies to Egypt.[63] The simultaneousness of the different languages and styles of the music culture in Ottoman times[64], which meant that the repertory and termini could differ according to the

58 Neubauer, "Glimpses".

59 On these developments e.g. in the *maʾlūf* tradition, see Davis, "The Effects of Notation".

60 There were also oppositional voices who manifested themselves either in a boycott of the conference or a vote against the propositions of the committee. *Kitāb muʾtamar*, 331-335; Thomas, *Developing Arab music*, 85 f., 92 f., 99 ff.

61 Abū l-ʿAlāʾ Muḥammad (1873-1943) was the first teacher of Umm Kulthūm after she moved to Cairo.

62 an-Najmī, *Turāth al-ghināʾ*, 67.

63 E.g. Buṭrus, *Aʿlām al-mūsiqā*, 12; Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 217, 223. al-Ḥāmūlī traveled to Istanbul to perform at the caliph's court.

64 Neubauer, "Glimpses"; Wright, "Under the Influence?".

audience and performance venues, make a streamlined history of a purely Arab cultural history virtually impossible. The use of *fawḍā* ("chaos") hints at problems encountered by authors when arranging material according to the dynastic model of writing history, which was typical of European historiography of the 19th century.[65]

There are other paradoxes, such as the occasionally identified 'lack of theory and scientific methods'[66] juxtaposed with the call for the simplification of complex Arab music theory[67].

Despite the promotion of the term 'Arab' by the Cairo conference and in many book titles, no homogeneous ideology of 'Arabness' in the place of Easternness or Egyptianness evolved in music writings; rather, the denominations 'Arab', 'Eastern', and 'Egyptian' were sometimes used interchangeably.[68] Furthermore, authors by no means drew a clear-cut dichotomy between Arab and European culture. Arab and European music were seen as part of the same musical culture, yet each with its own unique nature. Many writers thus advocated an assimilation of Arab music into European music with the preservation of its specifically Arab or Egyptian distinctiveness (*ṭābiʿ*).[69] Besides, Arab influences on European music were widely recognized.[70] Even Pharaonism was a point of reference in music, enhanced not least by the collaboration between al-Ḥifnī and Hans Hickmann, who had fled Germany and worked with al-Ḥifnī in his own area of expertise on ancient Egyptian music.[71]

Charles Smith has observed similar patterns in oscillating reference values for nationalism in Egypt in the late 19th and early 20th century.[72] Such views illustrate that for the relevant period we are not dealing with consecutive, clear-cut '–isms' as containers of ideology (Arab/Egyptian nationalism, Easternism, Pharaonism, Islamism),[73] but, rather, we can observe what Smith has called the "ability of multiple 'imaginings' to coexist"[74].

Indeed, many of the protagonists involved in shaping music education had their very own *naḥḍa* feeling: they witnessed and experienced great changes and felt part of them; in the case of those who advocated 'modern methods' and 'ta-

65 Noth, "Von der medinensischen ‚umma'", 113-115.
66 Thomas, *Developing Arab Music*, 82 f., 86; Racy, *Musical Chang*e, 35 f.
67 Marcus, *Arab Music Theory*, 35 f.
68 E.g. Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-musīqā*, 208.
69 E.g. Buṭrus, *Aʿlām al-mūsiqā*, 14; Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 208, 209.
70 Ḥāfiẓ, *Tārikh al-mūsiqā*, 139-152; al-Ḥifnī, "at-Turāth al-mūsīqī ʿind al-ʿarab", in *at-Turāth al-ʿarabi. Dirāsāt*, Cairo: Jamʿiyyat al-Udabāʾ, 1971, 49-58.
71 Thomas, *Developing Arab Music*, 79; one result is al-Ḥifnī's monograph *Mūsiqā qudamāʾ al-miṣriyin*, Cairo: al-Hayʾa al-Miṣriyya al-ʿĀmma li-l-Kitāb, 1992; music in Pharaonic times is also taken up in Rizq, *al-Mūsiqā sh-sharqiyya*, vol. 2, 9-61.
72 Smith, "Imagined Identities".
73 Sing, "Ideologische Transformationen".
74 Smith, "Imagined Identities", 619, with reference to Benedict Anderson's *imagined communities*.

jdīd' (renewal) they even felt themselves to be the initiators and promotors of change. They had either participated themselves in, or had close contact to, musicians of a *nahḍa* – which meant, amongst other things, the 'liberation from Turkish and Persian influences' – and therefore had no great interest in exploring the near past (i.e. the 16th-18th century). In 1931, music education started to be implemented in the curricula of state schools, including staff notation and *solfeggio*. Many of the individuals writing on music were either active in these developments or graduates of these schools. Alongside the promotion of these changes, there was also a strong sentiment of optimism.

This *nahḍa* feeling, of course, is a rather subjective categorization and does not give any indication of the *quality* of music before the *nahḍa*. The gap between the 13th and 18th century, the notion of decline and subsequent *nahḍa* in the late 19th century was just as much the result of a lack of examined sources as of changes in criteria: written, national, or Arabness became the standards for entering the canon. Nationalist patriotism and the promotion of the present *nahḍa* left little room for any real interest in researching the "dark centuries".

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